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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.1 Along with twenty-one minor poems of scriptural subject, it includes the Bavarian Kaiserchronik2 and a ‘historical’ liet on Alexander


2 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). The ascertaintment 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. 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 (*einzelmörter, 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 *heden* and *gaben* (= *gäben*) 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, 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.


both Kinzel’s and Lienert’s editions). 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, have gradually been outdone by increasingly manuscript-oriented criticism and scholarly practice on never-before edited manuscripts. 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. 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

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9 On neutraler Reim and on the preference that northern poets accorded to it, see Herrmann, Mittelhochdeutsche Grammatik..., pp. 13–14 and 16.
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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 Staufer 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.\(^{10}\) 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.\(^{11}\) In the *Alexanderlied’s* scholarship gradually prevailed the reconstruction of a two-branched tree,\(^{12}\) so that in 1985 Werner Schröder could affirm that “Das Stemma […] ist prinzipiell nicht mehr strittig, birgt aber noch immer kontrovers beurteilte Fragen”.\(^{13}\) 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*.\(^{14}\) This

\(^{10}\) The lost Strasbourg manuscript (Straßburg, Stadtbibliothek, C.V. 16.6. 4\(^{o}\), ff. 13va–29ra, after 1187.

\(^{11}\) Basel, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. E V1 26, 14 (ff. 22vb–67va), c. 1420–1430.

\(^{12}\) In Kinzel’s schema (*Lamprechts Alexander…*, p. xv), two branches spread from the original, L\(_1\) (= V) and L\(_2\) (= 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 Lambrechts Alexander*, hg. von Rainer M. Werner, Tübingen 1881, p. 2).


\(^{14}\) 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”\textsuperscript{15}), 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”.\textsuperscript{16}

A certain Lamrecht, held as the same person, appears in the proemial
lines of Tobias, an early poem with a strongly clerical flavour. Here, an allu-
sion 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 Tris-
trant) only by a few parchment scraps, the so-called Stargarder fragments
(dated from the beginning of the 13th century),\textsuperscript{17} to which Thomas Klein
attributed Middle or Low German origins.\textsuperscript{18}

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.\textsuperscript{19}

\textit{wissenschaft: Tristan-Lektüren}, Berlin 2006, pp. 1–53; see also Klaus Gruhmüller, “Überlie-
ferung – Text – Autor. Zum Literaturverständnis des Mittelalters”, in \textit{Die Präsenz des Mitt-

\textsuperscript{15} Peter Shillingsburg, \textit{Resisting Texts: Authority and Submission in Construction of
Meaning}, Ann Arbor (MI) 1997, p. 73.

\textsuperscript{16} Joachim Bumke, “Untersuchungen zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der höfischen Epik
der höfischen Romane”, \textit{Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur} 120 (1991),

\textsuperscript{17} Kraków, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Berol. mgq 1418.

\textsuperscript{18} Thomas Klein, “Ermittlung, Darstellung und Deutung von Verbreitungstypen in der
Handschriftenüberlieferung mittelhochdeutscher Epik”, in \textit{Deutsche Handschriften 1100–
1400}, Oxford Kolloquium 1985, hg. von V. Honemann und N. F. Palmer, Tübingen 1988,
pp. 110–167, at p. 134; and \textit{Id.}, “Niederdeutsch und Hochdeutsch…”, p. 206 and fn. 5. One Eil-
hardus is documented as a ministerialis of the Saxon ducal pair of Henry the Lion of Welfen
and Margaret of England in Brunswick.

\textsuperscript{19} Cf. T. Klein / R. Peters, “Niederdeutsche Schreiber, Gottfried Hagen und die Anfänge
der deutschsprachigen Urkunde in Köln”, in \textit{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. The Annales Scitii 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. 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). The S version of the Alexanderlied was the first to be identified by scholars. 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-


22 ‘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.

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.24

Conversely, after Vorauer Alexander’s rediscovery in 1841 and publication in 1849,25 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.26

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.27 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


27 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. 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. This impacts dialectological hypotheses, which risk being grounded on insufficiently scrutinised and univocal criteria. In our case, the hints at a well-known rhymer (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.

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. 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

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30 Cipolla, Hystoria de Alexandro Magno..., pp. 63–64.
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).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V 939–940</th>
<th>S 1329–1330</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wande die burgere brachen si durch</td>
<td>doh brâchen di Týrère durh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unde wichen aber wider in die burch.</td>
<td>und wichen wider in di burch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Da verlos er manegen duren chent [ch dét]</td>
<td>Alexander tet in unreht.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander teht in groz unreht.</td>
<td>er verlôs dâ manigen tûren kneht.32</td>
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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

32 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).\textsuperscript{33}

A scribal note on f. 136r assigns the Latin part of the Vorau 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 Vorau 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.\textsuperscript{34} 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).\textsuperscript{35} Vorau was founded by the monks of Seckau in 1163:\textsuperscript{36} 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).


\textsuperscript{35} 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).

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.\textsuperscript{37} 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.\textsuperscript{38} The distribution and carefulness of emendations have also been employed to deduce the number and characteristics of the interpositi.\textsuperscript{39} 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.\textsuperscript{40}

Some of the poems (Genesis, Joseph, Moses / Exodus, Sündenklage and Himmlisches Jerusalem) are also contained in the Bavarian anthologies of Wien and Millstatt.\textsuperscript{41} 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


\textsuperscript{38} 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.


\textsuperscript{40} 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 wlich vol 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.

and imperial purpose. 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. 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*), 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.”

3. Scribal aberrations and editors

Inextricably mixed with tenets of locally variable usage (akin to Notker’s *Anlautgesetz*) and disturbed by scribal oddities, indisputable regionalisms


43 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).


in the Vorauer Alexander are scarce, and Lautverschiebung mainly conforms to Bavarian features. Before the destruction of the Strasbourg codex by fire, a transcript had been realised by Hans Roth to Weismann’s edition of 1850; this has recently been made public by Christoph Mackert, allowing us to collate the actual layout of the opening stanzas in both codices. For the shared proemial verse (ll. 1–18), the transcripts demonstrate a subdivision into two laisses 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. 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.

In the prologue of V the allophones 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. Gmc. */p/ also occurs in the Vorauer Alexander, uniquely in the adverb erhapt(e) (f. 111va31: V 619), a backward shift of the normal Early MHG suffix -haft. In addition,

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48 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.
50 Schneider, Paläographie und Handschriftenkunde..., p. 26.
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 (*et 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 sault du même au même), since in the following line the required verb faht ‘fought’ results from the erasure of fæzt. 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.53 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, /kw/ is rendered as (gr) in grîpe (f. 109va9: V 130; S 154: crisp) and grahp (f. 112ra37: V 743; S 1009: craft). In grîpe, the atypical spelling might descend from the rendering of Lat. /k-/ (crispus) in borrowings.54 In grahp, the backward shift of /kw/ represented as (gr) coexists with the reversal of (ph) as (hp) and the apocope of -t/.55 Waag considers both grahp – in lieu of craft – and fcahph (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: chrâft and 841: chrefte).56

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

54 Herrmann, Mittelhochdeutsche Grammatik..., p. 20, § 36,2.
56 The variant scaph concurs with one occurrence of the regular schaft (V 1221).
57 This latter form occurs within a defective line, reducing its value in dialectal examination.
58 Herrmann, Mittelhochdeutsche Grammatik..., p. 48.
the Vorauer Alexander, r-metathesis affects the clusters /rn/ (f. 109ra37: V 48: ırchron = irchron), /vr/ (f. 114rb15: V 1227: uurmeclııch = vrumeclich) and the prefix er- (repeatedly spelt re- as in the Siebenzahl). The ending -g is represented as -ch throughout V (as in chunich, V’s typical variant among those for ‘king’); however, up to Buzival’s taming (V 235) it is almost exclusively rendered as -c (while the Strasbourg hand regularises all occurrences as -ch). In the Vorau manuscript, the Jüngere Judith, Ava’s poems, the Ezzolied, and Priester Arnolt’s Siebenzahl all show similar distribution of -c and -ch. 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 Alamannic 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. */h/ as a fricative), was generalised in Bavarian hands (where the early shift concerns only final position). 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 idio graphic and peculiarly free usage of 〈h〉 (arbitrarily omitted or added), which can only be partially explained in terms of regional features and phonology. Bewilderingly, 〈h〉 is irregularly inserted or removed even at the beginning of words. For no apparently etymological reason it is often included

60 Herrmann, Mittelhochdeutsche Grammatik..., p. 52, § 106; Waag, “Die zusammensetzung...”, p. 145.
62 The occurrences of -c are: manec (V 8, 9, 41, 52), louc (V 18), inflic (V 19), ledec (V 27), genuc (V 35), kunic (V 42, 68, 87), creftc (V 51), gewaltic (V 52, 80), true (V 85, 90), manoc (V 86), nole wac (V 89, 167).
63 Waag, “Die zusammensetzung...”, pp. 121, 132, 140, and 144.
64 See Herrmann, Mittelhochdeutsche Grammatik..., p. 47 (for the Franconian feature), p. 36, § 3 (for the Bavarian feature).
65 Ibid., p. 50, § 103.
66 F. 112vb17 (= V 900–901): ur hetelcher for ir etelich her; f. 113rb24–25 (= V 1019): er wi - der for herwider; f. 114ra41 (= V 1201): haftent for ahiten (the misspelling in this case
within sonorant and tenuis consonants, like */nt/, */nk/: V 264 (gesaht), 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 / sb⟩.\(^\text{67}\) This cluster is produced inconsistently, with c and h often omitted:

- f. 109rb45, V 115: freșiht (= freiscit icht)\(^\text{68}\)
- f. 109va38, V 172: crheichiften (= chriechtsc)\(^\text{69}\)
- f. 109vb14, V 199: filte (= scilte);
- f. 110ra2, V 240: Gefephte (= Gescephte);
- f. 110vb18, V 428: freiste (= freiscte);
- f. 111vb39–40, V 688: udes (= judeisch);
- f. 112va17, V 842: fephf (= sceph)\(^\text{70}\)

In the prologue, however, this cluster is represented by the ligature /k/: f. 109ra11 and 12 (V 15–16), invat/sken and mdüt/sken. This peculiarity occurs twice more: f. 109va7, V 127 (ufjke) and f. 114va30, V 1306 (zewfken).

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:\(^\text{71}\)

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

2. V 286 (f. 110va41) dēht (det K, L) : fiet S om., B 598 tūt : mūt

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

\(^\text{67}\) Variability in this cluster characterises the whole German manuscript (Waag, “Die zusammensetzungen...”, p. 79).

\(^\text{68}\) Crossed with (e) = /ei/ (Waag, “Die zusammensetzungen...”, p. 123).

\(^\text{69}\) Crossed with (e) = /ie/, /i:/ (Waag, ibid.: “Ob man in diesem ei jenes fürs md. vindicierte wandlung von ie > ei [...] oder nur verschreibung sehen will, wird fraglich sein”).

\(^\text{70}\) The e spelling for sci, listed in grammars among Franconian isoglosses, characterises the complete manuscript, including supposed Bavarian texts (Waag, “Die zusammensetzung...”, p. 80).

\(^\text{71}\) K = Lamprechts Alexander... (Kinzel); L = Pfaffe Lambrecht, Alexanderroman,... (Lienert).
4. V 1086 (f. 113va34) têt (toet K, L) : uer fiet S om.

Preterite Indicative – Singular 3rd (Normalised MHG: tete)
6. V 353 (f. 110val) 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: täten)
8. V 741 (f. 112ra35) thadin (thâdin K, tädin L) : fersmaten S 1007 tâten : versmâten

Preterite Subjunctive – Singular 3rd (Normalised MHG: tete)

As a causative verb (V 353, 751, 895), tuon is replaced in S and B by heißen / 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, 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 : ubermüt. Lienert changes the vowel ⟨ê⟩ read uo while preserving the initial ⟨d⟩ from the manuscript, thereby creating a more hybrid unwitnessed form. We may, therefore, question their editorial rationale, observing that in V 123 and 286 (which we will examine

more closely below with regard to the superscripts) the editors behave differently, proposing to read těḥt and děḥt (=: stět, in both cases) as toet and det, respectively.  

Vowel notation is characterised by the baffling and interchangeable usage of superscripts: ⟨û⟩, which mostly corresponds to etymological /uo/ (that is /ʊː/, /uː/), can also represent etymological /ou/ (that is /ʌʊ/), /oː/, /uː/;⁷⁵ in V 306 (f. 110rb12: erblûte = erbluocõet) and 333 (f. 110rb31: mût = muget), the same sign indicates syllable contraction; ⟨ö⟩ corresponds either to etymological /ou/ (that is /ʌʊ/), or to /oː/⁷⁶ and /oː/.⁷⁷ The interchangeability of abbreviations for back vowels and diphthongs also extends to expanded forms, and ⟨ou⟩ can correspond to the phonologically reversed sequences /uː/: f. 112ra26 (V 730) troygen (= 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).⁷⁹

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 2003:⁸⁰ the Kombinationsschreibungen ⟨ö⟩ 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⟩:

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

⁷⁵ The spelling ⟨û⟩ represents /ou/ in V 233 (f. 109vb43: gelûben = gelouben), 325 (f. 110rb26: frût = frout), 912 (f. 112vb27: uer hüwen = verhouwen), 1353 (f. 114vb20: hûbet = houbet); ⟨ö⟩ represents /oː/, /aː/ in V 1025, 1497 (ff. 113rb30 and 115rb41: mühte, mûhten = mohte / mahte, mohten / mahten, according to both variants of this modal preterite: Waag, “Die zusammensetzung…”., p. 125); ⟨û⟩ represents /uː/, /uː/ in V 218 (f. 109vb31: gûnde = gunde), 455 (f. 110vb29: fûnf = fünf) and 1072 (f. 113va23: frûmmich cheit = frummiheat).

⁷⁶ V 117 (f. 109va1): glôbeht = gloubet; V 848 (f. 112va22): pômnen = poumen.

⁷⁷ V 554 (f. 111rb31): wûs = wôhs (crossed with the omission of ⟨h⟩); V 1224 (f. 114rb13): brovtes = brôtes.

⁷⁸ The form möhte is repeatedly used for mohte / mahte; in V 728 (f. 112ra24) fôrtten means forhten, in V 817 (f. 112rb44) môrgens means morgens, in V 886 (f. 112vb6) gûlde means golde, and in V 973 (f. 113ra33) fûr means vor.


⁸⁰ 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: lengı́hten (= lengisten), f. 112va22
V 1112: wolge ńı́m (≈ wol gezeme), f. 113vb9

In these instances (as in kaı̈ben for MHG gäben: f. 115ra18, V 1403), the digraph with ı could indicate Middle German vowel lengthening. On the other side, et could also represent /ie/, /iː/:

V 400: deı̂ (≈ die [here for diu]), f. 111va9
V 1108: mundı̂meı̂t (≈ min dienest), 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), paralleled in V by geuı̂ge (f. 109ra2–3). The Strasbourg reading had been closely rendered and italicised by Massmann as “gefövge”. Ensuing editions, however, endeavoured to make its phonological value explicit: Kinzel, for example, while recording the codex spelling in the apparatus, interprets the reading of S as gevöge (= /oː/), a Middle German feature, since central dialects pronounced

81 The neuter plural nominative of the definite article is diu; its allograph die (which in V 400 is represented as deı̂) is a Middle German feature. On deı̂ ovgen as possible dual, see Waag, “Die zusammensetzung…”, pp. 99 and 126.
84 Lamprechts Alexander..., p. 27; Pfaffe Lambrecht, Alexanderroman..., p. 156.
the Upper German diphthong /uə/ as a monophthong. 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 geuège in V, interpreted by Kinzel as (ů), 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.

Similarly, in the Jüngere Judith (presumably copied in the Vorau manuscript from a Middle German model, different from that of the Vorauer Alexander) ǿ represents either /oə/ (urówe = vrouwe, passim), or /o:/ (dó = dô, passim) and /uə/, /u:/ (getôt = ge-tuot: f. 100vb2, Jüngere Judith l. 10), also complying with Thomas Klein’s description. The form getôt appears in the couplet mút : getôt, which in the edition by Hiltgunt Monecke is rendered as mút : getût (ll. 9–10), according to a possible, but not exclusive, interpretation. Since a similar distribution of back vowels and diphthongs has been noticed within Ava’s poems, 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 〈û〉 (in ܷle), is used to abbreviate wole ‘well’. In the couplet V 1138–1139 (Mit zorn er ūf fûr, | bî sinem rîche er swûr), the manuscript reads fûr twice. In these latter instances, 〈û〉 corresponds functionally to 〈ū〉 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 pret-erites of the verbal root *fara-:

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

86 Pfaffe Lambrecht, Alexanderroman..., pp. 54 (V) and 156 (S).


89 Pfaffe Lambrecht, Alexanderroman..., p. 126.

90 F. 113vb32–33: mit zorn er uf fûr. | bî sinem rîche er swûr.
unde ARGV fie megypto
allefamt. unde ftiften da ʒeren fimes
namen. eine burch div wart nah im
genant. der er ñwre al div lant. er\textsuperscript{91}

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)\textsuperscript{92} 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 \(\langle\hat{e}\rangle\), 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.\textsuperscript{93} 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 tēht / tēt (ll. 123 and 1086), but det for deht (l. 286), despite the fact that the manuscript employs the same sign \(\hat{e}\) to render all three. The graph \(\hat{e}\) is uniquely used in V in deht / tēht / tēt, when they rhyme with the corresponding form of stân (always spelt steit), 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 müzechett and urfiett (ll. 29–30):

\[\text{‘He led them all in Egypt | and there, to honour his name, | they built a city, | which was named after him. | The man who travelled all around the world […]’}.\]

\[\text{Herrmann, Mittelhochdeutsche Grammatik…, in the chapter on Middle Franconian, records the regionalisms geit, steit and the ‘bes[onders] rip[uarisch]’ deit (p. 50; see also pp. 274–275).}\]

\[\text{Waag, ‘Die zusammensetzung…’, p. 127.}\]
S 31–32: wande des mannis múzicheit | zô dem lîbe noch zô der sêle nit ne versteit
V 29–30: wande des mannes múzechet | ze dem lîbe noh zeder fele nht urfte - | it .

S 147–148: sô sach er alse der wolf deit | alser ubir sinem âze steit
V 123–124: Êo fâhaer allô der wof | Êeht . Êo er ober Êîneme Êîzen Êfet .

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

In the continuatio of S, conversely, the normal forms tût and stât prevail. S employs tût in rhyme with mút (and its compounds) and, only once in each case, with gût and nôt. Judging from Massmann’s introductory note, tût in S should have been written tut or tvt.

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, fmaheit : tûht [< *dei], and f. 111ra45, ll. 510–511, reiht : deht [< *dei], 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 mút, gût, nôt, the latter with either the Franconian form of stât (steit) or the singular preterite of strong verbs with root-/-i:/ (ritten / 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.

94 S 4518–4519 and 3590–3591 respectively.
95 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, tūt and its variants (det / dēt / dēht / tēht etc.), on the contrary, are paired indiscriminately with either the present form of stān (allowing the reconstruction of the Middle Franconian couplet *deit : steit, though the prevailing form of the latter is stet = stêt) or with mūt 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 buʒual er reiht. do flūger alfo der thoner ‹…›), 96 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 / tūt]) 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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96 S 1697–1700: Er ne wolde niwit bīten, | er begunde rīten, | ergremet was ime sīn mūt. | Er slūc alse der donre tūt.


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