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THE AUTHORSHIP, DATE OF COMPOSITION AND PROVENANCE OF THE SO-CALLED *LORICA GILDAE*

MARIO ESPOSITO wrote in 1929: "The attribution of the *Lorica Ladcini Sapientis* to Gildas, championed by Zimmer, and accepted by the most recent editors, Bernard and Atkinson Blume, and Jenkinson, cannot be upheld. The evidence of the MSS is decisively against it, and Zimmer's thesis has been sufficiently refuted by Thurneysen followed by Mommsen and Strecker."[1] In addition to the authorities cited by Esposito, W. Meyer, some seventeen years earlier, effectively challenged the attribution to Gildas in an article[2] in which he published an "*Oratio rythmica Gildae*" (attributed by a previous editor to Alcuin), making a good case for its derivation from Gildas Sapiens, while at the same time showing that the same author could not have written—on grounds of metre and vocabulary—both the "*Oratio rythmica*" and the *Lorica*.

As late as 1955, Père P. Grosjean was troubled by the persistence of that attribution, and in a well-known article[3] wrote: "La fameuse *Lorica* en latin hispérique, *Suffragare Trinitatis unitas*, lui [Laidcenn] est attribuée dans les meilleurs manuscrits, mais la plupart des éditeurs modernes, sans raison valable, préfèrent suivre le *Lebor Brecc* (XIVe siècle), qui donne Gildas pour auteur et Laidcenn pour propagateur de cette prière. Ce n'est pas le lieu d'examiner une question qui nous entraînerait dans de longues discussions concernant le latin hispérique en Irlande et en Grande-Bretagne. Il se peut fort bien que la *Lorica* ne soit de Gildas ni de Laidcenn."

Grosjean's *dictum* is at the moment the last word, even though it lacks any elaborate defence by the distinguished Belgian scholar. In fact, his words constitute the summation of opinion on the *Lorica* by E. Coccia, in his lengthy article on Hiberno-Latin literature.[4] It would appear from the foregoing that the time has come for a thorough re-examination of the "*Lorica* question" in connection with the compositions known as the *Hisperica Famina*. However, before turning to the crucial questions of the vocabulary and sources of the *Lorica*, let us review the manuscript evidence for the authorship of that hymn, set forth in detail by L. Gougaud:[5]

[1] "Bachiarius, Arator, Lathcen" in *The Journal of Theological Studies* 30 (1929), p. 291.
[2] "Gildae oratio rythmica" in *Nachrichten v.d.k. Gesellschaft d. Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, phil-hist. Klasse*, 1912, pp. 50–57.
[3] "Quelques exégètes irlandais du VIIe s." in *Sacris Erudiri* 7 (1955), p. 94.
[4] "La cultura irlandese precarolingia" in *Studi Medievali*, 3a serie, anno VIII, fasc. 1 (giugno 1967), p. 315.
[5] "Le témoignage des manuscrits sur l'oeuvre littéraire du moine Lathcen," in *Revue Celtique* 30 (1909), pp. 43–46.

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1. H[1] [= *Book of Nunnaminster, Harl.* 2965, ff. 38–40, VIIIe siècle],[5a] fol. 38a: *"Hanc luricam Lodgen in anno periculoso constituit, et alii dicunt quod magna sit virtus eius, si ter in die ca[ntatur]."*
2. Co. [*Ms. de Cologne, No.* 106 (autrefois à Darmstadt, *No.* 2106), ff. 60–62; IXe siècle], fol. 62: *"Explicit hymnus quem Lathacan scotigena fecit."*
3. Ce. [*Book of Cerne, Ms.* Ll.I.10 de la bibliothèque de l'université de Cambridge; ff. 43–44; IXe siècle], fol. 43a: *"Hanc luricam Loding cantauit ter in omne die."*
4. Ve [Ms. de bibliothèque capitulaire de Vérone; *coté LXVII*, 64; ff. 32–32b; Xe siècle], fol. 32: *"Lorica Ladcini sapientis."*
5. LB [*Leabhar Breac.* bibl. de la Roy. Irish Academy 23. *P.* 16; fol. III; XIVe siècle], fol. III a–b: *"Gillas* (ou *Gillus*) *hanc loricam fecit ad demones expellendos qui adversarent illi . . . Laidcend mac Búith Bannaig venit ab eo in insulam Hiberniam transtulit et portauit super altari sancti Patricii episcopi, sa[l]vos nos facere amen . . ."*

Of the two remaining MSS, Vi (= *Ms. II* 857 [*Cod. theol.* 809] from the Imperial Library of Vienna; fol. 248; s. 16), according to Gougaud, *"n'est qu'une copie de Ce";* whereas H[2] (= Brit. Mus *Harl.* 585; ff. 152–57; s.10) *"n'indique aucun nom d'auteur."*[6]

Thus of the five independent witnesses that make an attribution, the four oldest—including one thought to be from the eighth century—associate the hymn with a certain Lodgen, Lathacan, Loding, or Ladcinus, as instigator, composer, or singer, while making no mention of Gildas, Gillas, or Gillus (presumably Gildas Sapiens, author of the *De Excidio Britanniae* and possibly of an *"Oratio rythmica"*). Only the youngest—and I think the worst[7] of these MSS (the *Lebor Brecc* in the Royal Irish Academy library) bears the tradition of an association with Gildas. It is indeed strange, therefore, as both Esposito and Grosjean have noted above, that editors persisted so long in accepting Zimmer's theory of Gildas' authorship.

The position originating with Gougaud,[8] and followed by Grosjean (and echoed by Coccia), that neither Gildas nor Laidcenn was the actual author of the *Lorica*, is based in part on the use of the verb

[5a] Lowe (*CIA* II, 199) dates this MS "saec. VIII–IX".
[6] *Art. cit.*, p. 44.
[7] In some cases the authors of this compendium did not employ the best sources. For example, the *LB* produces both an incomplete and decidedly inferior text of the hymn "Altus Prosatur," apparently not utilising either of the reasonably good witnesses of the Irish *Liber Hymnorum*: LH(T) and LH(F).
[8] *Art. cit.*, pp. 45–46.

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constituit by the oldest witness in reference to the activity of Laidcenn (Lodgen acc. to H). Does *constituit* mean something like "commissioned" or "instigated?" This seems unlikely in the case of Laidcenn who, as far as we know, was never abbot of a monastery. Perhaps a better interpretation of *constituit* in this case would be "arranged," or "put in final form" (cf. *Lewis and Short, q. v.*). If we understand a *lorica* as a special type of hymn—essentially formulaic in character[9]—then it makes perfect sense to say that a particular writer adapted certain words and phrases to the formulae on a particular occasion. We shall shortly pass on to the precise nature of the vocabulary that our author employed in his adaptation.

A further stumbling block to the acceptance of Laidcenn as the author of the *Lorica* is the reference in H^1 to *in anno periculoso*. The scribe of H^1 may have had in mind a particular year, or more likely he was basing his information on lines 5–6 of the hymn: "*Ut non secum trahat me mortalitas/huius anni neque mundi uanitas.*" Does the *mortalitas huius anni* refer to a pestilence, particularly to the "Yellow Plague?" Zimmer[10] certainly thought so, and he therefore assigned the *Lorica* to Gildas, as such a plague did occur in England (for the first time, according to the Annals) in 547, a year in which Gildas would have been active as a writer; on the other hand, no record of such a plague is recorded by the Annals in Ireland in the probable lifetime of Laidcenn, up to the year when, according to most testimony, he died (661).[11]

For those who do not accept the conclusion based on that argument,[12] there arises the more serious objection of the identification of the author of the *Lorica* with the Laidcenn who wrote an abridgement of Gregory's *Moralia in Job*. As to the authorship of the latter work we are on good ground. Apart from the clear attribution by two of the three MSS (Leningrad *Cod. Lat. F.* v.I. 7 and Karlsruhe *Cod. Augiensis* No. CXXXIV) to *Lathcen filius Baith*, there are two convincing pieces of external evidence. The first is from the *Félire* of Óengus:[13] "Crist *as runa rindaid Laidcenn macc Baith Bannaig.*" ("Laidcenn the son of Baeth Bannach proclaimed the mysteries of Christ.") The second is the by-now well known testimony of Notker Balbulus in his *Notatio de illustribus viris qui ex intentione sacras scripturas exponebat*:[14] "*excerptum Ladkeni Hyberniensis inquire, et*

[9] Gearóid S. MacEoin, "Some Icelandic Loricae" in *Studia Hibernica* III (1963), pp 143–45.

[10] *Nennius Vindicatus* (Berlin, 1893), pp. 299–306.

[11] For the sources, see Grosjean, *art. cit.*, p. 93.

[12] Kenney was among them. In a footnote to his discussion of the *Lorica* question (*Sources*, p. 272), he writes: "Some have seen in the 'mortalitas huius anni' . . . an allusion to the great pestilence mentioned in the *Annales Cambriae* in 547 and in AU 549. But epidemics were of such frequent occurrence that any such localization is uncertain."

[13] Cited by Grosjean, *art. cit.*, p. 93.

[14] P. L. CXXXI, cols. 996–97.

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post explanationem testimoniorum in medium adductorum, nihil tibi invenies ad plenum intellectum deesse."

We must now turn to the problem of whether the Laidcenn macc Baith Bannaig, monk of Clonfert-Mulloe[15] who died in 661, and was the author of an abridged version of St. Gregory's *Moralia*, could also have written (or adapted) the strange hymn *Suffragare Trinitatis unitas*, generally known as the *Lorica* or *Lurica*, both from the titles of the MSS and from its clear relation to that genre of hymn or prayer that invokes protection against all sorts of evils, both physical and spiritual. Gougaud was the first to express strong scepticism that the author of the abridgement could also have written the Lorica:

> Assurément, *l'Egloga de moralibus Iob* représente bien mieux le style de S. Grégoire que celui de cet abréviateur; néanmois il est à supposer que si celui-ci avait été capable d'écrire dans une langue aussi spéciale que celle de la *lorica*, il eût difficilement résisté à la tentation de glisser, çà et là dans le texte raccourci de Grégoire, quelque vocable excentrique. Or l'Egloga est tout à fait exempté de hispéricismes. Tout compte fait, il paraît donc bien improbable que la célèbre *lorica* soit sortie de la plume du pieux moine de Clonfert-Mulloe, qui cependant s'en serait singulièrement épris, sans doute à raison de la vertu quasi magique attribuée à cette sorte de prière.[16]

Prima facie, this is a good argument and one that will require some pains to refute. In the following portion of this article, I will attempt to show, by examining the relationship between the *Lorica* and the *Hisperica Famina*, and the relationship between both those works and the writings of Isidore, and by investigating the modes of composition of the first two works, that the *Lorica* could only have emanated from Ireland at some time between c. 650 and c. 660, most likely from the pen of Laidcenn of Clonfert-Mulloe.

In my forthcoming edition of the *Hisperica Famina*,[17] I believe that I have shown conclusively that the various recensions of the *H. F.* were heavily reliant on the works of Isidore of Seville, especially the *Etymologies*, and therefore, had to be written at some time around or after the middle of the seventh century, shortly after Isidore's writings reached Ireland.[18] The Irish origins of the *Hisperica Famina*, at least of the recensions we possess, can be demonstrated from internal evidence. I now hold that we can date the *H. F.* even more

[15] According to the testimony of the Lebor Breec; cf. Grosjean, *loc. cit.*

[16] *Art. cit.*, pp. 45–46.

[17] *The Hisperica Famina, vol. I: The A-Text: A New Critical Edition with Translations and Philological Commentary*, to appear in 1974 in the Texts and Studies Series of the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies Press, Toronto.

[18] There is no definite MS evidence for an Isidore tradition in Ireland before the middle of the seventh century. The earliest Irish Isidore Fragment is contained in St. Gall 1399 a. 1 (*CIA* VII, 995), dated by Bieler (*Scriptorium* III, p. 271f.) "saec. VII med." That scholar now inclines to a slightly later date.

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precisely than I had thought possible, that is, between c. 650 and c. 660.

Let us now turn to the question of the provenance of our only complete version of the *Hisperica Famina*, contained in Vat. Lat. Reg. 81, fol. 1–12, labelled the "A-text" by Jenkinson[19] and referred to subsequently by that name. Many passages and individual words and phrases have been adduced by various writers to argue for one place of origin or another—which *nimis longum esset hoc loco memorare*. However, to put matters briefly, many opinions advanced on this subject have often been based on piecemeal studies of that work rather than on a study of the whole. The *locus classicus* of Hisperic controversy is the passage A271–4: *"Quis tales poscet possores (= possessores)/ut melchilentum concesserint opiminium/Non* (lege *nam*)[20] *ausonica me subligat catena/ob hoc scottigenum haud cripitundo eulogium."* Zimmer, following Stowasser's edition that reads for the third line the MS *non*, and ends with a question mark, translates *"Bindet mich nicht die ausonische Kette? Deshalb klappere ich nicht irische Wohlredenheit."*[21] That writer goes on to argue that the speaker is contrasting his own *ausonica catena* (= *"reine ausonisch —hisperisch—italische Latinität"*) with the *scottigenum eulogium* (= *"irische Latinität"*). The speaker may therefore be a Briton monk in a community that includes Irish monks, possibly in Southwest Britain *"oder in der aremorikanischen Bretagne."* Zimmer offers us no convincing reasons for positing those localities, but is rather interested in showing that the above passage does not *prove* an Irish setting. A fuller understanding of the context of the passage should, I believe, conclusively demonstrate an Irish locale.

In the section with the title "Incipit Lex Diei" (lines 133–357) we find described (lines 222-end) a journey by a group of wandering scholars from their own monastic school to two other communities, at the first of which they beg their lunch, at the second their supper and night's lodging. Before they set out, one of the troop states (227–31): *"Has clandistinas frequenter lustraui termopilas/ac remota huius artici penetraui predia,/uenustosque exploro acculas,/qui uagos arcatorum pascunt choros."* "Frequently have I wandered over these secret passes, I have penetrated the remote farms of this region, and I seek out the charming inhabitants who feed the choirs of wandering scholars." Begging meals of friendly locals (whether monastic or lay is not specified) is therefore something of a tradition, and what is more, to acquire the food it is necessary to speak good Irish. A

[19] F. J. H. Jenkinson, *The Hisperica Famina*, Cambridge, 1908.

[20] Jenkinson's conjecture *nam* for *non*, which I have followed in my edition, is based upon a recognition of the confusion that continental scribes suffered because of the insular compendium ℕ; see Jenkinson's introduction, pp. xxvii–xxviii.

[21] *Op. cit.*, p. 293.

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parallel passage in the B-fragment reveals a similar language situation (65–68): *"Qui tales posseet (= poscet) lecto famine possessores/ut melchilenta largo fauore concesserint edulia/nam strictus romani tenoris me septricat nexus,/nec scotigenum aperto forcipe pompo seriem."* "Who will ask these owners with select speech to bestow their sweet victuals with great generosity? For a tight bond of the Roman tenor separates me; wherefore I cannot string out a series of Irish (words) from my open mouth." It seems clear from this parallel that the *scottigenum eulogium* of the A-passage has little to do with Irish Latinity. It means no more or less than "Irish speech" or "good Irish speech." (*Hispericum euloigium* at A128 *does* refer to what Zimmer calls *"reine ausonisch-hisperisch-italische Latinität."*)

The situation therefore cannot refer to a group of Anglo-Saxon or British monks comparing—or rather contrasting—their mastery of Latin to the accomplishment of their Irish confreres, but rather to a group of wandering scholars (who may or may not be studying to become monks), who make a practice of begging for their food after their morning study. The prevalence of this type of mendicancy is humorously alluded to in a passage in the B-fragment, where we learn that the day's handout is rather meagre, because (B71–3) *"Uenusti huius castelli marmoreo (= mormoreo) clangore excusant iccole,/nam uagis assiduo impetu grauantur coloni tormis;/licet tamen ex⟨i⟩guam cum uernia largientur epulam."* "The inhabitants of this fortified place loudly excuse (themselves), for the townsmen are burdened by regular incursions by the wandering hordes; nevertheless they will grant them a modest supper with pleasure." The important point, however, is that in both the A and B versions, one member of the group asks another to address the local inhabitants *in Irish* (to obtain food), because the asker is bound either by an *"ausonica catena"* (A) or by a *"strictus romani tenoris . . . nexus"* (B).

We must now ascertain the meaning of the *ausonica catena.* I see two possibilities. The first, advanced by Michael Winterbottom in a recent article,[22] argues by comparing the *Hisperica Famina* to a ninth- or tenth-century Anglo-Saxon Colloquy (*"Colloquia Hisperica"* in W. H. Stevenson's collection *Early Scholastic Colloquies*, Oxford, 1929), that the *ausonica catena* refers to a pledge among scholars learning Latin to speak nothing but Latin or pay a fine for lapsing into the vernacular. In that case our scholar who asks his friend to speak Irish may have been a student pledged to speak only Latin. The second possibility is that the scholars are foreign to Ireland and have only Latin as a *lingua franca*, though some members of the throng know a little "tourist Old-Irish." If we accept this second interpretation, then we shall be able to establish some continuity

[22] "On the Hisperica Famina," *Celtica* 8 (1967), pp. 127–39.

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between the first and second parts of the *H. F.* In the famous opening lines of the prologue, a local (and therefore Irish) member of a monastic school, seeing a throng of apparently foreign scholars, orates (A1–9):

> Ampla pectoralem suscitat uernia cauernam,
> mestum extrico pulmone tonstrum,
> sed gaudifluam pectoreis arto procellam arthereis,
> cum insignes sophiae speculator arcatores,
> qui egregiam urbani tenoris propinant faucibus linpham,
> uipereosque litteraturae plasmant syllogismos.
> Cui mundano triquadrae telluris artico
> rhetorum florigera flectit habenas caterua?
> et qui (= quae) remoti uasti fundaminis deseruere competa?

In my translation:

> Great jubilation excites the hollow of my breast,
> I pluck sorrowing pain from my lung,
> but I check the blast of joy in my windpipe,
> when I espy the scholars distinguished in learning,
> who spout from their mouths the sparkling water of urbanity,
> and form the wily syllogisms of erudition.
> To what earthly region of the tripartite world
> does this flourishing throng of rhetors bend its reins?
> and what distant zones of the vast fundament have they abandoned?

The situation seems to be this: a master (or scholar) in an Irish school is feeling cheerful until the moment he espies a group of apparently foreign scholars. (Is his change of mood prompted by the ubiquitousness of such bands? See B71–3, quoted p. 40.) He asks either himself or a companion where the savants may be headed and where they come from. Soon afterwards he addresses the newcomers themselves and asks (A20–1):

> Quos edocetis fastos?
> Cuique adheretis rhetori?
>
> What texts do you recite
> and what rhetor do you adhere to?

The home scholar wants to know what the newcomers have studied and with whom. It is possible that the arrivers have just come from another school in search of better, or at least fresh, instruction. This scene is strikingly reminiscent of the situation described in an oft-quoted passage in Bede (*H. E.* 3.27): "*erant ibidem* (sc. *in Hibernia*) *eo tempore multi nobilium simul et mediocrium de gente Anglorum, qui tempore Finani et Colmani episcoporum relicta insula patria vel divinae lectionis vel continentioris vitae gratia illo secesserant. Et*

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quidam quidem mox se monasticae conversationi fideliter mancipaverant, alii magis circueundo per cellas magistrorum lectioni operam dare gaudebant, quos omnes Scotti libentissime suscipientes victum eis cotidianum sine pretio, libros quoque ad legendum et magisterium gratuitum praebere curabant."

If the various versions of the *H. F.* describe this influx of Anglo-Saxon students to Ireland—and indeed so much of the *H. F.* is reminiscent of the latter part of the Bedan passage (*"alii magis . . . gratuitum praebere curabant"*), then we may ascribe the events in those works as occurring between 651 and 664, the *"tempore Finani et Colmani episcoporum."* In that case, the *ausonica catena* would refer to Latin as a *lingua franca*, though we need not exclude the possibility that young Irish scholars joined these bands, and that Latin was used within the group, whereas Irish was the medium of communication with the outside world. If our scholars are indeed the *"nobiles simul et mediocres de gente Anglorum"* mentioned by Bede, they spoke Latin exclusively, not because of some scholastic exercise or game but because of necessity.

So far we have set forth what I think is an attractive enough theory based upon a study of the *Hisperica Famina* as a literary whole, illuminated, as it were, by a random passage in Bede. If however, we could establish the strong probability through another means that the *H. F.* were written in Ireland some time between 651 and 664, then little doubt would remain that the events described therein are identical to those described by Bede.

Here I must refer to one of the chief discoveries that I made while preparing my edition of the A-text of the *Hisperica Famina*, namely that a great amount of the diction—and some of the "information" of that work—is heavily dependent upon the *Origines* and other works of Isidore of Seville. Jenkinson, I believe, was the first to muse aloud that there might be some connection between the *Famina* and Isidore.[23] And even though that conjecture was occasionally repeated, no scholar, to my knowledge, has attempted to investigate its ramifications, undoubtedly for the reason that so much of the vocabulary of the *H. F.* is so bizarre that one would not, *prima facie*, expect to find much of it in the Spanish bishop's sober compendium. Yet, as I believe we shall also discover when we examine the *Lorica* more closely, it is the numerous clusters of less fanciful words—coupled with a few words based on fanciful etymologies—that constitute the contribution of Isidore.

Here I hope that my readers will be content with but a few examples of the uses of Isidore made by the anonymous writers of the *Hisperica Famina*, as I have tried to be thorough in the commentary to my

[23] *Op. cit.*, pp. xiii–xiv.

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edition. A puzzling word at A137 and A357 is *proritus*: "*Alboreum febeus suffocat mene⟨m⟩ proritus.*" "Phoebus' glow extinguishes the white moon." ". . . *quatinus roseus phoebei orientis rutilauerit proritus.*" ". . . until the rosy glow of the rising sun flashes forth." By examining parallel passages in the *H. F.* we discover that *proritus* is a near-synonym of *arotus*, "star," or "burning." How did the faminator arrive at that meaning? First of all, *proritus* is a VL spelling of *pruritus*, with *o* for *u* (frequent in the *H. F.*). But how do we get from "itching" to a "star?" Let us look at Isidore's etymology of *prurigo*, another form of *pruritus:* Etym. 4, 8, 7, "*prurigo vocata a perurendo et ardendo.*" Hence *proritus/pruritus* for the faminator means "that which burns, a burning, glowing."

Though words with meanings based upon Isidorian etymologies are sprinkled throughout the *H. F.*, the far more significant influence of the *Origines* is to be seen in Hisperic passages employing strings of synonyms. Such clusters of synonyms appear throughout the *H. F.* and frequently have parallels in clusters of synonyms in Isidore, though in most cases the faminator will inject one or two words—usually very strange ones—not found in the parallel passage in Isidore. For example, in the passage "*De plurimis*" (A497–512) which describes in an exaggerated way the clothing of the scholars, most of the words occurring at or near the ends of lines—*stragulas, stolas, trabias, armellosas* (= *armelausas*)—occur in Isidore's list of vestments (*Etym.* 10, 22–24). Only *blemmos* (= βλήματα) seems to have been gleaned from another source. Again, all the words for "swords, knives, or daggers" that occur in the *H. F.*, occasionally *seriatim*, can be traced to Isidore's section "*De gladiis*" (*Etym.* 18, 6, 1–9): thus *spatham* A30, 428, 581 and Is. no. 4; *framea* A186, 278, 335 and Is. no. 3; *ensis* A238, 607 and Is. no. 1; *pugio* A34, 510 and Is. no. 6; *secures* (= "knives" or "swords") A62, 187, 539 and Is. no. 9. Further examples of such parallels can be adduced in the cases of the words for "serpents" and their derivatives; names of the winds; words for "ocean" and "tides" (utilising other Isidorian works). The entire passage "On the Twelve Faults of Ausonian Diction" appears to be a paraphrase of Isidore's "*De barbarismo*" and "*De solecismo*" (*Etym.* 1, 33, 1–2), not drawn from Charisius, as Stowasser suggested.[24]

If we can accept that the writers of the *Famina* were working either from lists compiled from Isidore, or, as I believe more likely, from Isidore directly, drawing from other glossaries of whose origins we are presently unsure, then we are compelled to admit that the *H. F.* were composed at some time around or after the middle of the seventh century, after Isidore's works would have reached Ireland

[24] See my commentary to A116–32.

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and been assimilated. It is only in the decade of the 650's that we have any evidence for literary activity in Ireland based on the writings of Isidore. To this we may cite the commentary on the *Moralia in Job* by Laidcenn himself that utilises the Isidorian treatise *De Ortu et Obitu Patrum*. Another product of that decade that utilised Isidore may well have been the Ps.-Isidorian *De Ordine Creaturarum*, which paraphrases "Augustinus Hibernicus" *De Mirabilibus Sacrae Scripturae*,[25] a work that has been assigned with certainty to the year 655.[26]

That the *Hisperica Famina* was not the product of a later imagination reflecting on earlier events is by now well established. Grosjean has shown conclusively[27] that the *Hisperica Famina* type of school treatise was already a feature of education in English schools with Irish masters by the very next decade. The education of Aldhelm at Malmesbury by the Irishman Mael Dubh is our best known example, and the pupil's mastery of Hisperic diction is ably demonstrated in his egregious letter to Eahfrid,[28] wherein Aldhelm wonders why his younger contemporaries continue to seek their education in Ireland now that England possesses such great masters as Hadrian and Theodore. That letter is thought to have been written no later than 690, and probably considerably earlier.[29] This evidence, coupled with the passage from Bede already cited, leads to the conclusion that English scholars emigrated to Ireland for their education between the mid-fifties and the eighties and that the "brain-drain" was probably not stopped (and reversed) until the nineties. As to the real reasons for going to Ireland, we may with some confidence attribute Bede's *"vel continentioris vitae gratia"* to the good monk's pious optimism (though doubtless there were a few such persons), while the group who went *"vel divinae lectionis"* could not have been too many, for surely that was available at home. More likely Aldhelm's somewhat defensive remark is nearer the truth: *"Quamvis enim praedictum Hiberniae rus discentium opulans vernansque, ut ita dixerim, pascuosa numerositate lectorum, quemadmodum poli cardines astriferis micantium vibraminibus siderum, ornetur* (*ornentur* var.)."[30] "How opulent the aforesaid country of Ireland (is) and flowering, so to speak, with a pasturing multitude of those who study how the hinges of heaven are adorned with the stellar flashings

[25] Díaz y Díaz, "Isidoriana I: Sobre el 'liber de ordine creaturarum,'" *Sacris Erudiri* 5 (1953), pp. 147–66.
[26] M. Esposito, "On the Pseudo-Augustinian Treatise, 'De Mirabilibus sanctae scripturae,'" *PRIA* 35, Section C, no. 2 (1919), 189–207; also Grosjean, *art. cit.*, pp. 72–75.
[27] "Confusa Caligo, Remarques sur les *Hisperica Famina*," *Celtica* 3 (1956), pp. 66–67.
[28] MGH, *Auct. Ant.* 15, 486–94.
[29] See Ehwald's edition, *ibid.*, p. 487, fn.
[30] *Ibid.*, p. 492.

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of twinkling stars." In Britain one can learn grammar and rhetoric and sacred exegesis—and indeed Theodore's accomplishments in philosophy are also touted—but it has to be admitted that Ireland can offer in addition to those a certain modicum of education in natural science. That curriculum of course scarcely went beyond Isidore's *De Natura Rerum*, gleanings from the *Origines*, the *De Mirabilibus Sacrae Scripturae* and the pseudo-Isidorian *De Ordine Creaturarum*; nonetheless, such were the beginnings of scientific writings in the British Isles. Further, the importation of Isidore's exegetical and hagiographical writings gave new impetus to those fields already flourishing in Ireland.

What we have in Ireland, then, in the second half of the seventh century, is a kind of "Isidorian revolution of knowledge" that diverged into three main branches: exegetical and hagiographical, scientific, and philological. (The *Hisperica Famina* belong, of course, largely to the third branch, but there are scattered references to natural phenomena drawn from Isidore.) Since in those days the schools were hardly divided into faculties, a student pursuing his education in Ireland was very likely to get a smattering in all three areas.

As to the general locale of this activity, it may have taken place in the western central monasteries of Ireland, at least at certain stages. We have already seen (p. 38) that Laidcenn was active at Clonfert. The *milieu* of the *Hisperica Famina* also appears to be western, though I willingly admit that the vocabulary of those works hold many pitfalls for the literalist. Still I think that the *Famina* passages at A303 and B100 are worth noting: (A) "*Titaneus occiduum rutilat arotus pontum.*" "The Titanian star reddens the Western Sea." (B) "*Salsugenas* (= *salsugena*) *occidui anfitritis inflamat titan cerula.*" "Titan inflames the briny blue of the Western Sea." The notion of the sun reddening the Western Sea before sinking into it can easily be dismissed as a *locus communis*. Yet the frequent references to the sea in all the versions of the *H. F.*, not merely as a theme for invention or composition, but as an important feature of daily life, do cause us to wonder if the *turmae arcatorum* did not frequent west coast monastic centres. In the *Lex Diei* section of the A-text, morning is announced by the glint of the sun on the sea (133–34 *Titaneus . . . arotus . . . Thalasicum illustrat uapore flustrum*). In the description of the awakening of nature, dolphins are depicted sweeping the foamy deep and devouring fish (175–77); then after lunch (at a site some distance from their starting point but apparently on the sea), one of the scholars (the "spokesman" for the group) requests his hostess to "make the salty draughts of water jump over the coals, that the curling flames may spew forth bits of salt": 293–94

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"ut salsas lixae tripudiauerit per cinerum lithias,/ ut crispantes salsugena spumauerint trices paula." (Salt water would have been used to extinguish a cooking fire in order to conserve the supply of fresh water.) It is at least a possibility, then, that the exploits of the wandering Anglo-Saxon scholars, with their Irish guides, centre on the Irish west coast, though there is no evidence that the compositions were written in a coastal monastery.

We now return to our original problem of the date, authorship, and provenance of the so-called *"Lorica Gildae."* Here, I think, it will be necessary to show its relationship to the *Origines* of Isidore and to the *Hisperica Famina* in order to solve those difficulties.

Zimmer remarked—ironically as it turned out—in respect to the Latinity of the *Lorica:* "Man braucht nur Isidors *Etymologiarum* lib. X (= XI, *M. H.*) cap. 1 *de homine et partibus ejus* zu vergleichen, um das ganz eigenartige Latein des Hymnus recht zu würdigen."[31] The famous Celticist then proceeds to quote lines 29–36 *"Mei gybrae . . . binas edumas (idumas)"* in order to demonstrate that point. He quite rightly shows the relationship between the vocabulary of that passage to a number of rarer words in the *Hisperica Famina* and concludes that they are from the same milieu, i.e., connected to Gildas and southwestern Britain toward the middle of the sixth century.[32] Had Zimmer gone farther with his sample, that is, past the more extraordinary instances of Hisperic *lexica*, he would have seen that a vast number, indeed the majority, of the substantives that refer to the parts of the body in the *Lorica* are ordinary, or at least not unusual, Latin, taken undoubtedly from the very section of Isidore to which he alludes (or at least from a glossary based on that section), as they frequently appear in the same order as Isidore's names. Often they are scrambled, but scrambled "methodically," as a comparison of the two texts will show.

Let us begin with line 34 of the passage quoted by Zimmer:

Patam (patham, rel. codd.) *liganam sennas atque michynas. Patham* is undoubtedly a scribal slip for *palatham* (cf. *possores* for *possessores H. F.* A271). *Palatham* in the *H. F.* (A117) = *palatum,* the "palate." *Palatum* appears at *Etym.* 11, 1, 55. The next word *liganam,* unattested elsewhere to my knowledge, can be explained by a look at 1,51, only four entries away: *"linguae a ligando cibo putat Varro nomen impositum."* We see here then the Hisperic phenomenon of coining words out of etymologies. The more usual *linguae* appears at 1,45.

[31] *Op. cit.,* p. 300.

[32] Zimmer bases this on a few significant vocabulary correspondences between the *De Excidio* and the *H. F.;* cf. *ibid.,* pp. 314f. The ultimate importance of these associations is queried by Roger, *l'Enseignement,* pp. 251–55, and Jenkinson, *op. cit.,* pp. xix–xxii.

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Beginning with line 37 up to line 77, most of the names for parts of the body are Latin words attested elsewhere, and of these the vast majority are drawn from *Etym.* 11, 1. Of the total of 120+ words that refer to parts of the body, at least 86 are attested in Isidore, and with very few exceptions, come from the aforementioned section. A list of such words in order from the *Lorica* with their references in Isidore should leave no doubt as to our author's method of working. In addition to giving references I shall cite those passages in Isidore that shed light on the text of the *Lorica:*

Lorica		*Isidore*
capillis	37	*Or.* 11, 1, 28
uertice	37	*Or.* 11, 1, 26: Vertex *est ea pars qua* capilli capitis *colliguntur*;
capiti	38	*Or.* 11, 1, 25
cerebro	39	cf. *Or.* 11, 1, 61: *cervix autem vocata quod per eam partem* cerebrum . . .
fronti	39	*Or.* 11, 1, 35: frons *ab* oculorum foraminibus *nominata est.*
oculis	39	*Or.* 11, 1, 36
labiae	40	*Or.* 11, 1, 50
facie	40	*Or.* 11, 1, 33
timpori	40	*Or.* 11, 1, 32(*tem-*)
mento	41	*Or.* 11, 1, 57
barbae	41	*Or.* 11, 1, 45
supercilis	41	*Or.* 11, 1, 42
auribus	41	*Or.* 11, 1, 46
genis	42	*Or.* 11, 1, 43
naribus	42	*Or.* 11, 1, 47
pupillis	43	*Or.* 11, 1, 37
rotis	43	cf. s. v. *circulus, Or.* 11, 1, 38: *circulus corona dicitur, quod* rotunditate . . .
palpebris	43	*Or.* 11, 1, 39
gingis	44	cf. s. v. *gingivae, Or.* 11, 1, 54
maxillis	44	*Or.* 11, 1, 45
faucibus	44	*Or.* 11, 1, 56
dentibus	45	*Or.* 11, 1, 52
lingue	45	*Or.* 11, 1, 51
ori	45	*Or.* 11, 1, 49
guttori	45	cf. s. v. *gurgulio, Or.* 11, 1, 58: Gurgulio *a* gutture *nomen traxit*
gurgulioni	46	*Ibid.*
sublingue	46	*Or.* 11, 1, 59: sublinguium *operculum* gurgulionis
cervice	46	*Or.* 11, 1, 61
cartilagini	47	*Or.* 11, 1, 88
collo	48	*Or.* 11, 1, 60
uiscera	50	*Or.* 11, 1, 116
humeros	54	*Or.* 11, 1, 62
scapulis	54	*Or.* 11, 1, 93
brachia	54	*Or.* 11, 1, 63

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ulnas	55	*Or.* 11, 1, 64: Ulna *secundum quosdam utriusque manus extensio est, secundum alios* cubitus.[33]
†cubitis	55	*Ibid.*
manibus	55	*Or.* 11, 1, 55
pugnas	56	*Or.* 11, 1, 69 (*pugnus*)
palmas	56	*Ibid.*
digitos	56	*Or.* 11, 1, 70
unguinibus	56	*Or.* 11, 1, 72 (*ungulis*)
spinam	57	*Or.* 11, 1, 95
costas	57	*Or.* 11, 1, 89
artibus	57	*Or.* 11, 1, 82 and 84
terga	58	*Or.* 11, 1, 92
dorsum	58	*Or.* 11, 1, 91
neruos	58	*Or.* 11, 1, 83
ossibus	58	*Or.* 11, 1, 86
cutem	59	*Or.* 11, 1, 72
sanguinem	59	*Or.* 11, 1, 122–23
renibus	59	*Or.* 11, 1, 97
†crinas	60	cf. s. v. *clunes*, *Or.* 11, 1, 101
nates	60	*Ibid.*
femoribus	60	*Or.* 11, 1, 106
femoralia	61	cf. *Or.* 19, 22, 29 (*De nom vest.*) femoralia *appellata eo quod* femora *tegunt*
genua	62	*Or.* 11, 1, 108
talos	63	*Or.* 11, 1, 111
tibiis	63	*Or.* 11, 1, 110
calcibus	63	*Or.* 11, 1, 114
crura	64	*Or.* 11, 1, 110
pedes	64	*Or.* 11, 1, 112
plantarum	64	*Or.* 11, 1, 113
pectusculum	67	cf. s. v. *pectus*, *Or.* 11, 1, 74
mamillas	68	*Ibid.*
stomachum	68	*Or.* 11, 1, 128
umbilicum	68	*Or.* 11, 1, 99
uentrem	69	*Or.* 11, 1, 132
lumbos	69	*Or.* 11, 1, 98
genitalia	69	*Or.* 11, 1, 102
album	70	*Or.* 11, 11, 133 (*alvum*)
cordis	70	*Or.* 11, 1, 118
uitalia	70	*Or.* 11, 1, 116: *Item viscera* vitalia, *id est circumfusa* cordis *loca*
iecur	71	*Or.* 11, 1, 125
ilia	71	*Or.* 11, 1, 100
toleam	73	cf. s. v. *toles* (?), *Or.* 11, 1, 57
thoracem	73	*Or.* 11, 1, 73
pulmone	73	*Or.* 11, 1, 124
uenas	74	*Or.* 11, 1, 121
fibras	74	*Or.* 11, 1, 126
fel	74	*Or.* 11, 1, 128
†bucliamine	74	cf. s. v. *folliculum* (?), *Or.* 11, 1, 128
†iunginam	75	cf. s. v. *ieiuna*, *Or.* 11, 1, 131: ieiuna *tenue intestinum, unde et* ieiunium *dicitur*

[33]The reference from Isidore may help us solve a textual *crux* in the *Lorica:* The Lebor Brecc, Book of Cerne[1] and the Köln MS read *cubis*.

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medullis	75	*Or.* 11, 1, 87
splenem	76	*Or.* 11, 1, 127
intestinis	76	*Or.* 11, 1, 129
uessicam	77	*Or.* 11, 1, 137

From such evidence, it is hardly deniable that the author of the *Lorica* was working from the *Origines* of Isidore in exactly the same fashion as the author or authors of the *H. F.* As for the thirty-odd words for parts of the body not traceable to Isidore, fully nine of these are in the *Hisperica Famina: pernas* L29: very freq. in *H. F.; gigram* L33 and A347, 421, 607, B28, 91 (*gugras* C29); *iaris* L33 and B90; *conas* L33 and C8; *sennas* L34 and C184 (cf. *sennosus* A158, 170, 290); *madianum* L35 and B16, 26 (cf. *madiada* A16, 72; *mediada* A191, 234, 501); *bathma* L36 and B164; *idumas* L36 and A32, 211, 281, 510, 543; *rotis* L43 and A334, 517 (though perhaps with a different meaning); *bassibus* L64 and A260, B36, C200. We should also mention words in common with the *H. F.* that do not refer to parts of the body: *anthletas, tutela, gibrae, pelta, librent, tutamine, sudes, binos* (for the simple cardinal), *pantes, compaginum, innumeros* (very freq. in *H. F.*), *aetheria.*

Finally, it is necessary to establish the order of precedence of the *Lorica* and the *H. F.* Certainly there can be little question that they belong to the same period and milieu. However, I incline to the view that the *H. F.* were prior for two related reasons: (1) the *Famina* were intended as models of diction and would therefore most likely be prior to other creations employing that type of language; (2) both the A and B versions contain as separate sections a kind of Hisperic hymn on which others could be modelled (*"De oratione"*). These models are not properly *loricae;*[34] yet they do set a precedent for composing hymns or prayers employing Hisperic diction.

Let us now review the evidence regarding the authorship of the *Lorica*, all of which, I believe, points conclusively to Laidcenn. All the earliest—and best—MSS ascribe the work to him; only the very late *Lebor Brecc* gives Gildas as the author and Laidcenn as *"propagateur."* Laidcenn died in 661 and had written, perhaps in the preceding decade, an abridgement of St. Gregory's *Moralia in Job* in which he employed the Isidorian or pseudo-Isidorian *De ortu et obitu patrum.* The *Lorica* is clearly reliant on a knowledge of Isidore's *Etymologies*, or on glossaries compiled from them, and therefore most probably must be dated after c.650. All evidence points to an Irish origin through its close association with the *Hisperica Famina*, not only through specific *lexica*, but more importantly through the mode of composition. The *Famina* were written around the middle

[34] However, compare *Lorica* 3–4 with A568–70.

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of the seventh century and the *Lorica* was written shortly afterwards, in order to demonstrate how a hymn could be composed after an Hisperic pattern. Laidcenn, monk of Clonfert-Mulloe, who died in 661 and wrote a treatise using Isidore probably at some time in the fifties, meets all the conditions for identification with the author of our hymn. This being so, and with the MS tradition so heavily in his favour, why should we seek elsewhere for its author?

Two objections may remain. The first is the problem of style raised by both Gougaud and Grosjean, who doubted that the author of the sober abridgement could also have penned the flamboyant *Lorica*. This is not as serious a problem as it appears. We need only look to Aldhelm, a veritable master of Hisperic diction, as one letter and certain passages of both the prose and poetic versions of the *De Virginitate* amply show, but who was also capable of a more restrained style in other places. The Hisperic style was a kind of fad, a type of erudite game for the *cognoscenti*, used on certain occasions. The more pedestrian and necessary task of illuminating the *sacra scriptura* was carried out in the medium of the Latin of the Vulgate, certainly in clear and understandable diction, in accordance with the teaching of Augustine and Gregory.

The second difficulty is the question of the "*mortalitas huius anni*" (ll. 5–6), generally interpreted as a reference to a plague. Whatever chronology we accept, Laidcenn would have died three years before the big plague of 664 (or 660 or 661, with revisions for the date of the author's death). This is hard to explain away, and in defense of Zimmer's objection to Laidcenn's authorship, we might cite *H. F.* A19 "*an horridum communi stragi rapuit acculas loetum* (= *letum*)," which, if referring to the same plague, would force us to date the A-text in 664 or later. Yet there must have been other perils to health than the Yellow Plague, and as Kenney noted (see above, n. 12), there must have been localised epidemics that were not recorded in annals. The steady flow of scholars from England and possible crowding and unsanitary conditions in certain centres would have contributed to the spread of disease. Finally, there is the definite possibility that "*mortalitas huius anni*" does not refer to a specific pestilence, but to the human condition in general, *Anni* could be a synonym for *saeculi* and the phrase could refer to the peril of bodily death (as opposed to spiritual death). The fact that the phrase is immediately followed by (6) "*neque mundi uanitas*" adds weight to that interpretation.

Let us therefore conclude with a tentative and very partial chronology of Hiberno-Latin literature in the seventh century:

1. The works of Isidore arrived in Ireland somewhat before 650 prompting considerable scholarly activity in a wide variety of fields.

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2. The *Hisperica Famina* are heavily reliant on the *Etymologies* of Isidore (and some other yet unidentified glossaries). They created a new type of diction and were intended to provide models for compositions of a very advanced—and *recherché*—nature. They were probably written between 650 and 660.

3. The *Lorica*, attributed by some scholars to Gildas, was written by Laidcenn, slightly after the *H. F.* and in imitation of its diction, but necessarily before that writer's death in 661.

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