



University of
Zurich ^{UZH}

English Department

Old English in Switzerland

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ES Alumni Colloquium, 24 October 2023

amonebat Et in nra quoq; lingua
ut erat doctus in nostris carminib;
dicens detribili exitu animarum
et corpore Fore the ne id faerae na
enig uu ur thit thone Inot turra
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nae aer his him ionge huaet his gas
the godaef ad h tha y flaes aef ter
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solatione & sua quar u una est Ore
glorie dne uirtutū qui triū phator
hodie sup om̄ celos ascendisti ne de

Hwæt!

- Project in English Linguistics on “Old English in Switzerland” at the University of Zurich (academic year of 2022)
- 2022: 75th anniversary of the Swiss Association of University Teachers of English (SAUTE): “Places of English in Switzerland”
- Master students from the English Department: Bastian Burgermeister, Dominique Mühlebach, Jeannette Burri, Mengqing Duan, Mirjam Ott, Omar Itani, Peter Gwilliam, Philippe Mühlebach, Stephanie Caminada, Yuanyuan Xu
- Dr. Nicole Studer-Joho, Dr. Annina Seiler



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Today's programme

- Old English in Switzerland – how so?
- 3 examples:
 - Old English bird names
 - Old English names of the months
 - Bede's Death Song
- Teaching materials
- Suggestion for a field trip: Abbey Library of St Gall

Old English in Switzerland – yes, indeed!

- Four short **Old English legal documents** (10th c.), Bern, Burgerbibliothek, Cod. 671; in a 9th-c. Gospel book
- Fragment of a **homily by Ælfric** (late 11th c.), Coligny-Genève, Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, MS Bodmer 2
- **Old English names of the months** in Bede's *De temporum ratione*, various manuscripts in St. Gallen, Geneva, Einsiedeln, perhaps Schaffhausen
- **Bede's Death Song** in a letter on Bede's Death in Cod. Sang. 254 (9th c.)
- **Old English bird names** in various manuscripts from St. Gallen (Cod. Sang. 913 (8th c.), Cod. Sang. 283 (9th c.), etc.)
- Biblical glossaries with some **Old English glosses**, mixed with Old High German material
- **Old English runes** in several manuscripts from Bern and St. Gallen

How did OE texts end up in Switzerland?



How did OE texts end up in St. Gallen?



**Cuthbert, abbot of
Wearmouth and Jarrow
writes to bishop Lullus of
Mainz and sends works
by Bede (764)**

(MGH, Epp. sel. 1., Letter 116)

116.

*Abt Gutberct von Jarrow und Wearmouth an Lul; dankt
für empfangene Geschenke; schickt Gegengaben, darunter 15
Bedas Vita Cudbercti. (764.)*

Cod. 3 (fol. 57).

Edd. S 89, W 124, G 114, J 134, D 116.

Desiderantissimo^a et suavissimo
in Christi dilectione amico Lullo episcopo et omnium 20
antistitum carissimo Gutberct¹ discipulus Beda
presbiteri salutem.

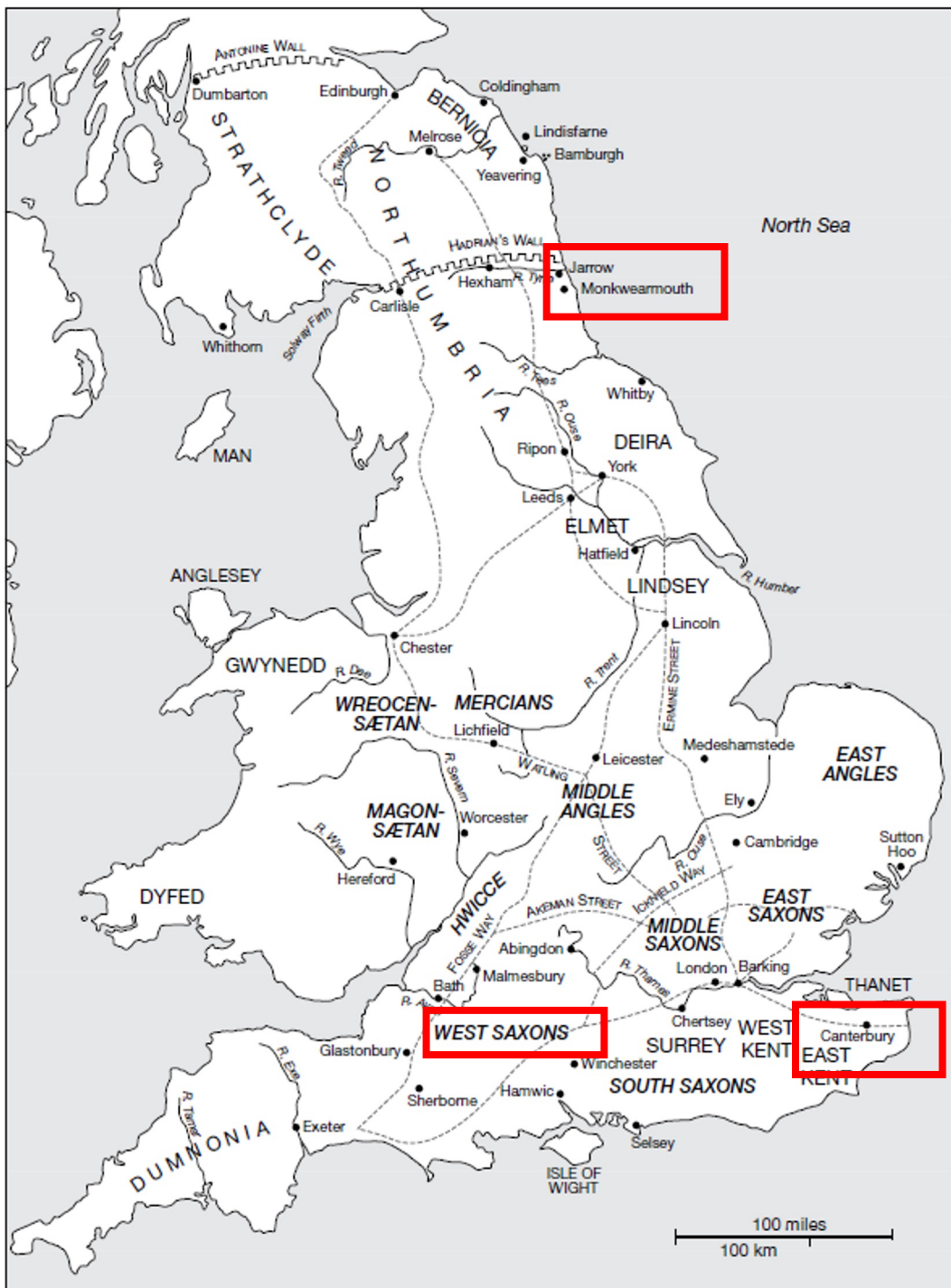
Gratanter quidem munuscula tuae caritatis suscepi et eo
gratantius, quo te haec intimo devocionis affectu mittere cog-
novi, id est olosericam ad reliquias beate memoriae Baeda magi- 25
stri nostri ob recordationem et illius venerationem destinasti.
Et rectum quidem mihi videtur, ut tota gens Anglorum in om-
nibus provinciis, ubicumque repperti sunt, gratias Deo referant,
quia tam mirabilem virum præditum in diversis donis tamque
ad exercenda dona studiosum similiterque in bonis moribus 30
viventem Deus illis in sua natione donavit, quia per experimen-
tum ad pedes eius nutritus hoc quod narro didici. Similiterque
mihimet ipsi coopertorium variatum ad tegendum scilicet propter
frigus meum corpus misisti. Quod videlicet omnipotenti Deo
et beato Paulo apostolo ad induendum altare, quod in eius 35

Anglo-Saxon England

Bede (c.673-735)
Abbot Cuthbert

A West-Saxon guild
(11th century)

Archbishop Theodore
(602-690)
Abbot Hadrian
(c. 630/637-710)



Old English glosses on Leviticus 11

5 The cherogrillus which cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof, is unclean. **6** The hare also: for that too cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof. **7** And the swine, which, though it divideth the hoof, cheweth not the cud. [...] **13** Of birds these are they which you must not eat, and which are to be avoided by you: The eagle, and the griffon, and the osprey, **14** And the kite, and the vulture, according to their kind, **15** And all that is of the raven kind, according to their likeness. **16** The ostrich, and the owl, and the larus, and the hawk according to its kind. **17** The screech owl, and the cormorant, and the ibis, **18** And the swan, and the bittern, and the porphyron, **19** The heron, and the charadrion according to its kind, the houp also, and the bat. **20** Of things that fly, whatsoever goeth upon four feet, shall be abominable to you. **21** But whatsoever walketh upon four feet, but hath the legs behind longer, wherewith it hoppeth upon the earth, **22** That you shall eat, as the bruchus in its kind, the attacus, and ophiomachus, and the locust, every one according to their kind. [...] **29** These also shall be reckoned among unclean things, of all that move upon the earth, the weasel, and the mouse, and the crocodile, every one according to their kind: **30** The shrew, and the chameleon, and the stello, and the lizard, and the mole [...] **34** Any meat which you eat, if water from such a vessel be poured upon it, shall be unclean; and every liquor that is drunk out of any such vessel, shall be unclean. [...]



PIKIPÆDIA
Sæo Fræo Þisdōmbōc

Hæafodtramet

Gemænscepes Ingang

Efenealde belimpas

Se Þorpes Wella

Bewitendas

Niwlica andwendunga

Hlietlic tramet

Giefan feoh

Help

Atēfran oþþe forþasendan

Wyrca**n** bōc

Hladan on rīmere tō

PDF

Gemælendlicu fadung

Ōðru weorc

Wikimedia Commons

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Ne ingemeldod Mötung for þissum IP Contributions Ûtmeldian Inmeldian

Gewrit

Mötung

Rædan

Ādihtan

Ādihtan fruman

Stær

Sēcan



Strȳta

Se **strȳta** (*Struthio camelus*) is se micelosta lifigenda **fugol**; hē is mæstum 2.5 **metera** hēah (8 **fōta**). Hē hæfþ langne hals and lange sceancan, is flihlēas, and cann rīnan swā swifte swā 65 þūsendmetera ælcra tīde (40 mīla ælcra tīde). Hē wunap on wēstne on **Affrice**, ac is geræred ofer eallre þære worulde.

Innungbred [hȳdan]

- 1 Bodiglicu ascrīfung
- 2 Endebyrdnesse settung and brædung
- 3 Gebære
- 4 Gepoftung
- 5 Ūtanwearde bendas
- 6 Fruman

Bodiglicu ascrīfung [adihtan | ādihtan fruman]

Werlice strȳtan sind mæst 155 þūsenda grama on wihte and sind mārān þonne wīf. hā feðera weaxena wera sind oftost swearta. hūton heora

Strȳta



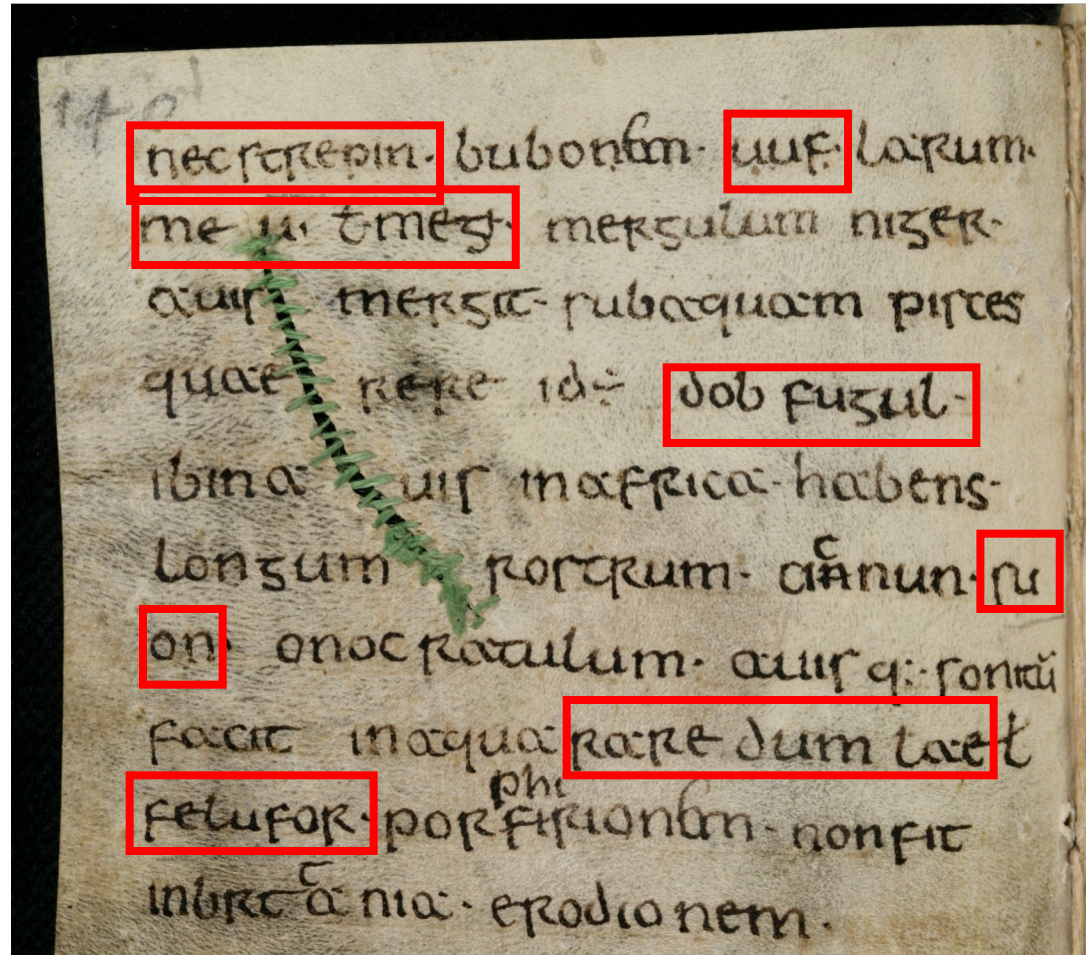
Cræftlicu endebyrdung

Rīce: **Animalia**

Stefn: **Chordata**

Old English names for birds and animals

Cod. Sang. 913, 8th century



- *necstrepin* 'night-raven'
- *uuf* 'owl'
- *meu vel meg* 'mew'
- *dobfugul* 'dipping fowl'
- *suon* 'swan'
- *raredumlae vel felufor* 'bittern or swamphen' (cf. German *Rohrdommel*)

The Canterbury school of Theodore and Hadrian

- Porphironem : non fit in Brittania.
'Porphyrio [Grk πορφυρίων 'water-hen']: it is not found in Britain.'
- Larum : **hragra** : Adrianus dicit **meum** esse.
'Larus [Grk λάρος 'gull']: heron (cf. German *Reiher*). Hadrian says it is a mew (cf. German *Möwe*).'

Old English names of the months

Cod. Sang. 251, 9th c., Beda Venerabilis, *De temporum ratione*

Primusque eorum mensis quem latini ianuarium vocant dicitur **giuli**.

Siquidem apud eos lāna mona mensis appellatur monath. 7 Primusque eorum mensis quem latini ianuarium uocant dicitur giuli. 7 deinde februcerus. sol monath. marti. bred monath. aprilis. aeustur monath. maius. drimrleci. iunius lida. lulius similiter lida. aug. ueod monath. september. aleg monath. octob. uintir frillith. noem. bloed monath. decem. giuli. 7 Eodem quo ianuarium nomine uocatur. 7

Old English names of the months and their meaning

- **I giuli:** midwinter, winter solstice (cf. *Yuletide*)
- **II solmonath:** month of sacrifices to gods (OE *sol:* perhaps 'cakes')
- **III hredmonath:** pagan cult goddess Rheda (only appears in Bede and - fun fact - in Tolkien!)
- **IV aeusturmonath:** month in which Easter takes place; Germanic goddess Eostre (connection to Easter hares)
- **V thrimylci:** agriculture → cattle can be milked three times a day
- **VI lida:** winds favouring naval expeditions, serenity of air and sea (cf. German 'lind')
- **VII lida:** see above
- **VIII veodmonath:** weod = weed, grows in that month
- **IX halegmonath:** month of worship (cf. ModE *holy*, German *heilig*)
- **X vintirfullith:** beginning of winter with the full moon in that month
- **XI blotmonath:** month of immolation, devoted cattle to gods (OE *blot* 'sacrifice')
- **XII giuli:** cf. I



The “Shire Reckoning”

J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-55)



APPENDIX D

SHIRE CALENDAR
FOR USE IN ALL YEARS

(1) <i>Afteryule</i> YULE 7 14 21 28 1 8 15 22 29 2 9 16 23 30 3 10 17 24 - 4 11 18 25 - 5 12 19 26 - 6 13 20 27 -	(4) <i>Astron</i> 1 8 15 22 29 2 9 16 23 30 3 10 17 24 - 4 11 18 25 - 5 12 19 26 - 6 13 20 27 - 7 14 21 28 -	(7) <i>Afterlith</i> LITH 7 14 21 28 1 8 15 22 29 2 9 16 23 30 3 10 17 24 - 4 11 18 25 - 5 12 19 26 - 6 13 20 27 -	(10) <i>Winterfilth</i> 1 8 15 22 29 2 9 16 23 30 3 10 17 24 - 4 11 18 25 - 5 12 19 26 - 6 13 20 27 - 7 14 21 28 -
(2) <i>Solmath</i> - 5 12 19 26 - 6 13 20 27 - 7 14 21 28 1 8 15 22 29 2 9 16 23 30 3 10 17 24 - 4 11 18 25 -	(5) <i>Thrimidge</i> - 6 13 20 27 - 7 14 21 28 1 8 15 22 29 2 9 16 23 30 3 10 17 24 - 4 11 18 25 - 5 12 19 26 -	(8) <i>Wedmath</i> - 5 12 19 26 - 6 13 20 27 - 7 14 21 28 1 8 15 22 29 2 9 16 23 30 3 10 17 24 - 4 11 18 25 -	(11) <i>Blotmath</i> - 6 13 20 27 - 7 14 21 28 1 8 15 22 29 2 9 16 23 30 3 10 17 24 - 4 11 18 25 - 5 12 19 26 -
(3) <i>Rethe</i> - 3 10 17 24 - 4 11 18 25 - 5 12 19 26 - 6 13 20 27 - 7 14 21 28 1 8 15 22 29 2 9 16 23 30	(6) <i>Forelith</i> - 4 11 18 25 - 5 12 19 26 - 6 13 20 27 - 7 14 21 28 1 8 15 22 29 2 9 16 23 30 3 10 17 24 LITH <i>Midyear's Day</i> <i>(Overlith)</i>	(9) <i>Halimath</i> - 3 10 17 24 - 4 11 18 25 - 5 12 19 26 - 6 13 20 27 - 7 14 21 28 1 8 15 22 29 2 9 16 23 30	(12) <i>Foreyule</i> - 4 11 18 25 - 5 12 19 26 - 6 13 20 27 - 7 14 21 28 1 8 15 22 29 2 9 16 23 30 3 10 17 24 YULE

Bede's Death Song

Cod. Sang. 254, Cuthbert's letter on Bede's death

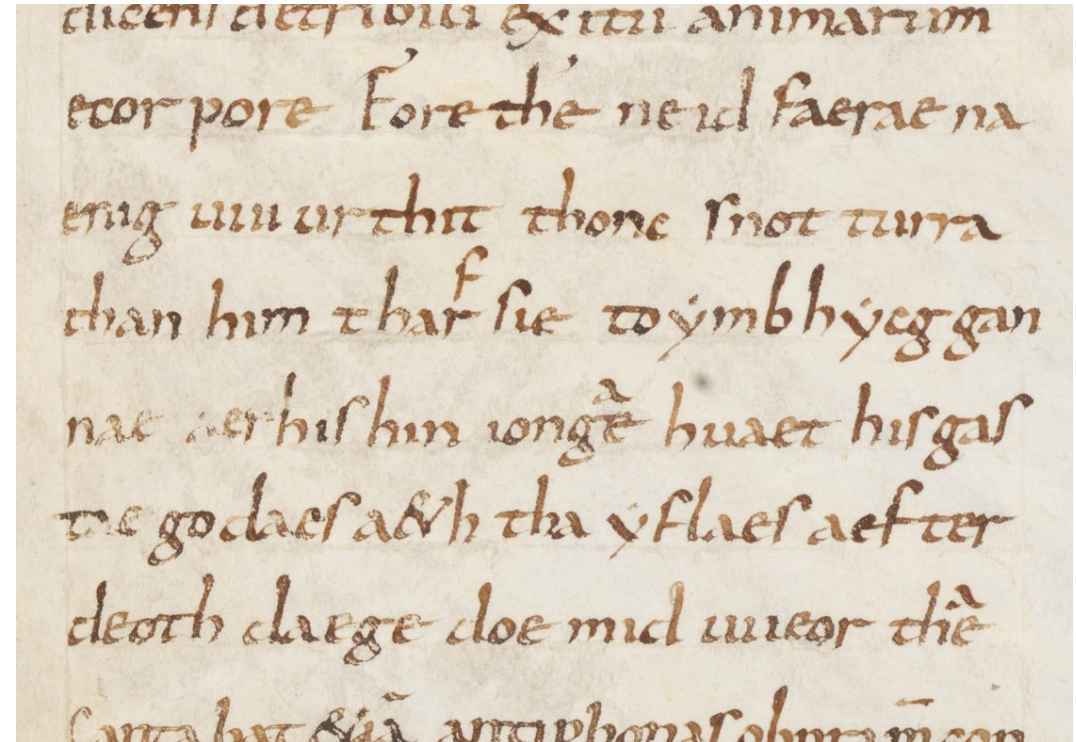
Fore th[aera]e neidfaerae naenig uuiurthit
before embarking on the peril of that fated
journey,

thoncsnotturra than him tharf sie
no man is above the necessary wisdom,

to ymbhycggannae aer his hin[g]ongae
that he must consider before his passing,

huaet his gastae godaes aeththa yflaes
what good and evil dwelled in his spirit,

aefter deothdaege doemid uueorthae
and what judgement he faces when he reaches
his end.



Readings of 2 versions of Bede's Death Song:

<https://www.patreon.com/posts/bedes-death-song-59267626?l=it>

Abbey Library of St Gallen: UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site (since 1983)

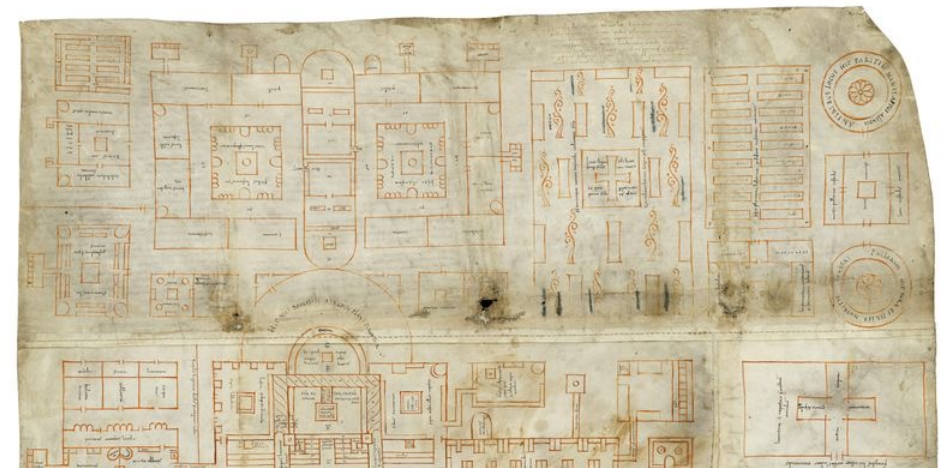
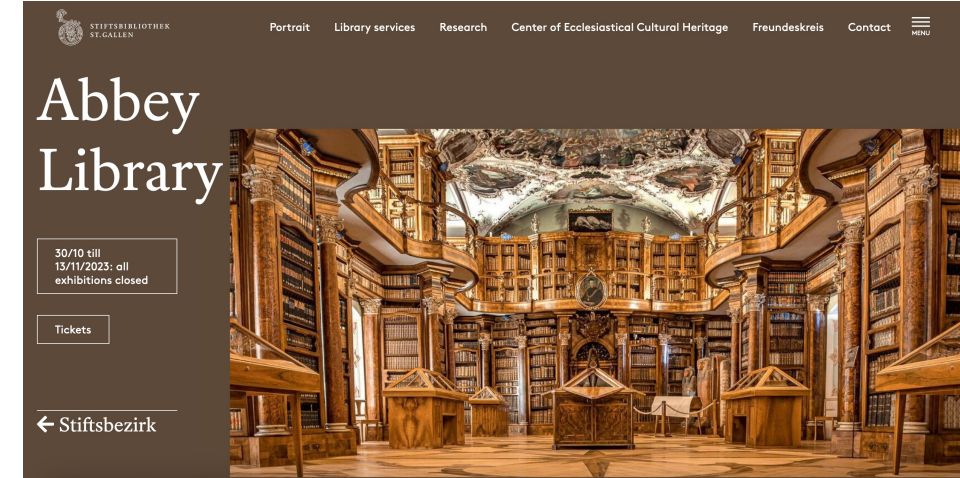
Exhibition spaces:

- **Abbey Library** (baroque library, display of manuscripts, reconstruction of 16th c. globe, Egyptian mummy c. 650-610 BC)
- **Vaulted Cellar** (permanent exhibition on Gallus and his Abbey; key manuscripts on display, including Old High German and Old Irish as well as Latin and Greek texts)
- **Abbey Archives** (excellent! Abbey Library plan installation, book production, place names first attested in St. Gall charters, archival history, early medieval charters, medieval dress display)

Other things to do in St Gallen:

- Visit the Cathedral
- Walk through the old town
- Go for a hike along the Panoramaweg, for example, from Mühlegg past Drei Weiher to St Georgen

6/24/2023



Additional resources

- Online Old English dictionary: <https://bosworthtoller.com/>
- Background on Early Germanic calendars: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early_Germanic_calendars
- Digital facsimiles of manuscripts in Swiss libraries: <https://www.e-codices.ch/en>
- Abbey Library:
 - <https://www.stiftsbezirk.ch/en/visitor-tip>
 - <https://www.stiftsbezirk.ch/en/how-to-get-here>
- Cathedral: <https://www.schweizmobil.ch/de/wanderland/services/sehenswuerdigkeiten/sehenswuerdigkeit-0270.html>
- Walk through the old town: <https://www.schweizmobil.ch/de/wanderland/services/sehenswuerdigkeiten/sehenswuerdigkeit-0306.html>
- St. Galler Panoramaweg: <https://www.schweizmobil.ch/de/wanderland/routen/route-0970.html>

- In preparation: Seiler, Annina & Nicole Studer-Joho (eds). *Old English in Switzerland*. Basel: Schwabe Verlag.