Old English *mānwrēce* and *godwrēce*, with an emendation of *Elene* 811b

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The <manweorcum> transmitted in line 811b of the Old English poem *Elene* by Cynewulf has been generally regarded as representing an otherwise unattested adjective *mānweorc* composite of *mān* ‘crime’ and *weorc* ‘work’. Since *weorc* is unparalleled and unexpected as a second element in an adjectival compound, an alternative explanation of the manuscript reading is proposed here, scribal alteration of an adjective otherwise attested only in the First Cleopatra Glossary, occurring there in the written form <manwræce>. While this adjective is listed under various headword forms in dictionaries, it is probably to be described as *mānwrēce* (Anglian *mānwrēce*), having the same second element as another adjective in which Old English -wrēce has often been misunderstood, *godwrēce* ‘impious’. The origin of -wrēce is a Germanic verbal adjective in -i-/ja- derived from the etymon of Old English *wrecan* ‘drive’; the original meaning of *mānwrēce* may thus have been ‘perpetrating crime’. <manwrecum>, corresponding to the Anglian form that Cynewulf would have used in *Elene* 811b, would have been susceptible to alteration to <manweorcum> by a copyist unfamiliar with the word, as comparable instances of scribal transposition of elements suggest.

1. <manweorcum> in *Elene* 811b

In Cynewulf’s *Elene* the repentant Judas Cyriacus gives thanks to God for revealing the location of the Cross to him in these (among other) words:

> Sie ðe, mægena God,  
> þrymsittendum þanc butan ende,  
> þæs ðu me swa medum ond swa manweorcum  
> þurh þin wuldor inwrigce wyrda geryno.  

(*Elene* 809b–812)

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1. Thus in the editions of Krapp (1932: 88) and (with minor differences in punctuation) Gradon (1977: 56–57). *inwrigce*, preserved by most editors, represents a form of *onwrēon* ‘reveal’. Long vowels and diphthongs are regularly indicated here when abstract linguistic forms are cited, but
To you, God of hosts, dwelling in majesty, be thanks without end, that to me, so weary and so manweorc [?], you have through your glory revealed the mysteries of events.

Kemble (1843–1856: II, 48) translated manweorcum as ‘evil of deeds’ in his edition of Elene, and subsequent editors and lexicographers have been unanimous in taking this word as an adjective meaning ‘sinful’ or ‘wicked’ composite of the elements mān ‘crime, guilt’ and weorc ‘work’. As an adjective ending in -weorc it would seem to be unique: the entries for (-)weorc in Bosworth-Toller (BT) and Toller’s Supplement (BTS) provide cross-references to forty-seven substantives ending in -weorc, but only one adjective, the supposed mānweorc attested here alone. It may be asked whether a cognate of weorc ever occurs elsewhere as the final element in an adjectival compound in any Old Germanic language: an examination of dictionaries yields no instances.

This lack is not surprising. There are of course Old English adjectival compounds in which the second element is a noun, namely the exocentric or bahuvrihi compounds, in which the whole expresses an attribute of someone or something not named by either of the elements of the compound itself, like barefoot in modern English (Carr 1939: xxvi–xxvii; Kastovsky 2002: 37–41): thus the many compounds, mostly poetic, such as fāmigheals ‘foamy-necked’, wanfeax ‘dark-haired’, brūnecg ‘bright-edged’, blīþemōd ‘glad-hearted’, and wīdlāst ‘having a
wide track, wide-wandering’. In a few cases the first element is not an adjective but a noun: *hringmæl* ‘ornamented with inlaid rings’, *stylecg* ‘steel-edged’, *wulfheort* ‘wolf-hearted’, *gebyldmōd* ‘patient in mind’, *gūþmōd* ‘of warlike mind’, *wēamōd* ‘malice-minded, irascible’, and (with the extension -e added to the second element) *seolforhilte* ‘silver-hilted’ (Schön 1905: 21 § 22)). Since *mān* is a noun, an adjective *mānweorc* would be numbered among these instances, yet it seems out of place among them and among the *bahuvrihi* compounds generally. It is common to these that the second element is something possessed by or attached to the person or thing characterized by the whole: a part of an artifact; a part of the body of a person or animal; the mind or spirit; the track perpetually left by a wandering person (in *wīdlāst*) or object (in *sweartlāst*, of a pen that leaves a black track). Only in the hapax legomenon *byrhtword* does the second element seem to be something other than a possession or property, but its status as an authentic adjectival compound is open to doubt. If *byrhtword* is indeed an authentic *bahuvrihi* meaning ‘clear-voiced’, the poet who used it may have regarded *word* exceptionally as the property, rather than the product, of a speaker, that is, as the characteristic utterance or voice of a person. *weorc* seems less amenable to such a licence: if *word* may be easily associated with the speaking voice that belongs to an individual person, there is no analogous part or property of a human being that produces or comprises his or her works, considered in the abstract. Whatever the correct explanation of *byrhtword* may be, the adjective *mānweorc* that has been posited to explain <manweorcum> in *Elene* 811b is extraordinary enough that it is reasonable to investigate alternative explanations.

While the putative adjective is extraordinary in form, *mānweorc* is well attested as a noun with the meaning that its form most obviously suggests, ‘work of crime’ or ‘wicked deed’. Cynewulf, indeed, used the noun *mānweorc* three times in

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5. *byrhtword* (*Christ and Satan* 236b) is among the *bahuvrihis* listed by Kastosky (2002: 38), in accordance with the interpretation of the manuscript reading given in early dictionaries and glossaries (e.g. BT, s.v. *byrht-word*: ‘bright of word, clear in words or speech’). That this was the poet’s intent, however, is doubtful: there is no obvious motivation for the appearance of an adjective meaning ‘clear-voiced’ in 236b, since the referent of *byrhtword* is not described as speaking in the context, and the manuscript reading has indeed received alternative explanations. Clubb (1925: 83) took *byrhtword* as ‘clear-voiced’ in his edition, but seemed to regard the form with some suspicion, remarking that it was ‘a striking formation. One would hardly expect *word* to become the second member of such an adjective compound’. Other commentators have not acquiesced in the interpretation of BT: Hill (1970) proposed that *byrht* and *word* should be taken as separate words together referring to Christ as ‘the bright Word’, and Finnegan (1977: 101–102) regarded *byrhtword* as a compound noun ‘Bright-Word’ similar in sense, a reading accepted by the DOE, s.v. *beorht-word*. Cosijn (1896: 23) rejected the manuscript reading altogether and conjectured an original *burgweard*, which is used of Christ in *Andreas* 660b; *beorht weard* ‘bright guardian’ seems at least as plausible.
It is worth asking, then, whether *manweorcum* in 811b may be regarded as a noun rather than an adjective. Such a reading is possible, but only by recourse to thorough editorial revision of the half-line: if the *swa* that immediately precedes *manweorcum* is removed, and *ond* replaced with *on*, the phrase *me swa mēdum on manweorcum* is sensible, meaning ‘me, so weary in wicked deeds’. Yet the *swa* that precedes *manweorcum* seems to be original: its presence there is consistent with Cynewulf’s use of *swa* elsewhere in *Elene* before each member of a pair of coordinate adjectives: thus *swa geleafful … ond swa uncydig* (959a–960a) and *swa geleaffull ond swa leof Gode* (1047), both pairs describing the same Judas who is described as *swa mēdum ond swa manweorcum* in line 811. Even if the miscopying of an original *on* as *ond* is assumed, the scribal addition of *swa* would have been gratuitous; it might, in default of a better explanation, be ascribed to a hypothetical ‘Cynewulfizing’ copyist, but first it should be seen whether *swa* may be saved as an intelligible part of the authentic Cynewulfian text.

2. *<manwræce>* in the First Cleopatra Glossary

Another possibility is that *manweorcum* is the corruption of an original adjective misunderstood in copying. An adjective having the same initial element *mān* as the noun *mānweorc*, but a different second element of less frequent occurrence, might have been susceptible to misunderstanding, since a copyist of *Elene* would have been used to finding compounds in *-weorc* in Old English poetry: twenty-four of the forty-seven noted above are attested either exclusively or predominantly in verse. There is in fact an adjective composite of *mān* and a second element that resembles *weorc*, namely that attested in the form *<manwræce>* in the first of the glossaries contained in London, British Library, Cotton Cleopatra A. iii (Rusche 1996: 330, gloss I 303). Since *þæt manwræce* there glosses *infandum* (‘abominable’), it is plain that the meaning of this adjective is essentially the same as that which has been ascribed to the *mānweorc* posited in *Elene* 811b. The fact that its occurrence in the First Cleopatra Glossary is its only unambiguous attestation in the extant

6. *Juliana* 439a, 459a, and 505a. Other instances occur in *Christ III* 1210b and, in prose, in Napier Homily XLVII (Napier 1883: 243 [line 19]), and in the law-codes VIII Æthelred and II Cnut (Liebermann 1903–1916: I, 266 [§ 26] and 340 [§ 41]). The cognate *mēnueruk* occurs in the *Heliand* (Behaghel 1996) in 753a, 1032a, 1703a, and 5194b; *mēngīuerk*, in 4419a.

7. *beadu-*, *dǣd-*, *dæg-*, *ellen-*, *firen-*, *frum-*, *fyrn-*, *gūd-*, *hand-*, *hēah-*, *heāo-*, *here-*, *irre-*, *lād-*, *mān-*, *mægen-*, *mēr-*, *niht-*, *niþ-*, *orleg-*, *siger-*, *þrēa-*, *þrȳþ-*, and *wundor-weorc*.

8. The definition ‘wicked’ is offered in BTS, s.v. *mān-wræc*, as in Clark Hall (1960), there under the headword form *mānwræce*. 
corpus of Old English suggests that its currency was limited in dialect or time, or both: the hypothesis that this adjective, perhaps unfamiliar to the Vercelli scribe or an earlier copyist of Elene, was mistaken for a compound in -weorc thus seems initially plausible.

There is good reason to believe that a mistake of this kind might have occurred in the transmission of Elene. First of all, the specific stratum of glosses in Cleopatra A. iii to which <manwræce> belongs has been recognized as Anglian in origin by Wolfgang Kittllick, like most of the sources from which the glossaries of that manuscript were compiled. If this word was dialectally restricted as an item of Anglian vocabulary, its occurrence in Elene would not be out of place, given the Anglian (probably Mercian) dialect of Cynewulf (Fulk 2001: 10–15). It would also then have been particularly liable to misunderstanding by the Vercelli scribe, or an earlier copyist of Elene, if his own dialect was southern. In this regard an observation made by Fred Robinson (1985: 258), in a study of spellings exhibiting metathesis or transposition of letters from a wide range of Old English texts, is pertinent: some such spellings are not due to true linguistic variation between unmetathesized and metathesized forms of a single word, but rather to scribal confusion of similar words. The elements in a given word to be copied must thus sometimes have been susceptible to what might be called scribal metathesis, through either the aural similarity of an unfamiliar word to a familiar one, or the willingness of copyists to replace an unfamiliar form with a familiar one, even if a transposition of elements was required. That <manwræc-> in particular might have been thus altered to <manweorc-> seems possible in light of the ways in which Anglian wærc ‘pain’ is known to have been altered in transmission. The replacement of this word with wræc in southern copies of Anglian texts was noted by Richard Jordan (1906: 51–53), who supposed its confusion with the distinct word wræc, meaning ‘punishment’ or ‘misery’, rather than the existence of true metathesized variants of a single word, a conclusion corroborated by R. D. Fulk (2004: 7). What is more, the treatment of wærc by southern copyists affords examples not only of scribal transposition of r in order to produce a familiar West Saxon word, but also of the alteration of the vowel so as to yield a form of weorc, as both Jordan and Fulk


10. Instances of wræc for wærc occur in manuscript O of Wærferth’s translation of the Dialogues (Hecht 1900–1907: 182, l. 18, and 297, l. 7); the so-called Lacnunga (cf. Grattan and Singer 1952, 219–220); the Medicina de Quadrupedibus (cf. de Vriend 1984: lxxiii, 386 s.v. wræc); and Vercelli Homily IX (Scragg 1992: 166, l. 85), where Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 340 preserves the original wærc (Fulk 2004: 7).
remarked. Since there are clear instances of the replacement of Anglian \textit{wærc} with both \textit{wræc} and \textit{weorc}, it seems entirely possible that a southern copyist might have divined a form of \textit{mānweorc} in an unfamiliar adjective found as \textit{<manwraec->} in his exemplar, and altered both the vowel and the position of \textit{<r>}, especially if he had been used to finding \textit{weorc} as \textit{<werc>}, representing the smoothed Anglian form (Campbell 1959: § 227; Hogg 1992: § 5.96), in the texts that he was copying. It may be noted that \textit{<wærc>} is occasionally written for ‘work’ in late Anglian glosses rather than \textit{<werc>}, occurring in the Mercian part of the Rushworth Gospels gloss and in the Northumbrian gloss to the Lindisfarne Gospels. The Tanner manuscript of the Old English Bede, finally, provides a remarkable example of a substitution or miscopying just the opposite of the replacement of \textit{<wræc->} with \textit{<-weorc->} that might be supposed in \textit{Elene} 811b: there \textit{<wræc>} is written once where the sense demands \textit{weorc} (Miller 1890–1898: II, 414, l. 2).

3. The dictionaries’ \textit{godwræc}, \textit{godwrece} ‘impious’

The case for the originality in \textit{Elene} 811b of the adjective attested as \textit{<manwræce>} in the First Cleopatra Glossary is even stronger than that laid out in the preceding argument, for its \textit{<æ>} may be seen probably to belong to a West Saxon spelling of the word, whereas the Anglian form that Cynewulf might have known would have been spelled with \textit{<e>}. Since the form of the adjective attested in the First Cleopatra Glossary is the weak neuter nominative singular, its proper lemma or headword form might theoretically be \textit{mānwræc}, \textit{mānwrēc}, \textit{mānwrēce}, or even \textit{mānwracu}, assuming that \textit{mān} is indeed the first element. On this point BT and the dictionary of Clark Hall (1960) disagree, the former positing \textit{mānwræc} and the latter \textit{mānwrēce}. Investigation of the etymology suggests that Clark Hall is correct, and that the Anglian form of the adjective would have been \textit{mānwrēce}, the \textit{<æ>} of the form in the First Cleopatra Glossary representing West Saxon \textit{ā} from West Germanic \textit{ā}, corresponding to Anglian \textit{ē}.

To reach this conclusion, it is helpful first to consider another Old English adjective that may be related and also happens to be still in need of etymological

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11. Fulk (2004: 7) draws attention to two instances that occur as manuscript variants, one in the Old English Bede (Miller 1890–1898: II, 322, l. 24, where Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41 reads \textit{weorces} against the \textit{wærces} of the Tanner manuscript) and one in the recension of Vercelli Homily IX found in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 115 (Scrugg 1992: 167, l. 68). There may be many further instances of scribal \textit{weorc} for \textit{wær} that cannot be confirmed by other manuscript witnesses, as Fulk argued, ascribing the instances of \textit{weorc} in verse and Anglian prose texts where the sense ‘mental anguish’ is evident (see BT, s.v. \textit{weorc}, sense VII) to the same confusion.

12. See Skeat (1871–1887) at Matthew 23.3 and 23.5 in the Rushworth Gospels, and in the ‘Argument’ to John in the Lindisfarne Gospels (glossing \textit{opus} on p. 1, l. 6).
clarification, the word meaning ‘impious’ or ‘wicked’ that is found in the dictionaries under the alternate headword forms godwreæc and godwreæc.\textsuperscript{13} This adjective appears to be foreign to West Saxon, as Robert J. Menner (1949: 58–59, 62) declared, noting that godwreæc (Menner’s spelling) and its derivatives godwreæclic and godwreæcnes (the dictionaries’ forms) were found mainly in undoubtedly Anglian texts.\textsuperscript{14} Menner was willing to classify godwreæc further as specifically Mercian, a judgment that seems consistent with the attestation of the word and its derivatives: many of the witnesses are certainly Mercian, and the rest present linguistic features that admit possible Mercian origin or influence. The adjective itself is thus found in various texts commonly regarded as Mercian in origin: the Corpus Glossary (Hogg 1992: § 1.10), the Old English life of Malchus in London, British Library, Cotton Otho C. i, part 2 (Kenneth Sisam 1953: 208–210), and the Old English Martyrology.\textsuperscript{15} The derived adjective in -lic is attested only in the translation of Gregory’s Dialogues made by Waerferth, bishop of Worcester, whose speech has been recognized as Mercian (Harting 1937: 289–292; Wenisch 1979: 41), while the noun in -nis or -nes occurs in the Old English Bede, also seemingly Mercian in origin (Whitelock 1962: 57–59 and 78–79, notes 5 and 6), and the Letter of Wynfrith to Eadburga, a companion text to the life of Malchus in Cotton Otho C. i, to which it is similar in language (Kenneth Sisam 1953: 207–210). Other instances of the basic adjective and the noun in -nis or -nes occur elsewhere only in two anonymous homilies and in several glossaries or glossed texts. The homiletic witnesses, Blickling Homily VI and the homily designated HomM 5 in the DOE that is preserved in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 85/86, each exhibit substantial Anglian linguistic features.\textsuperscript{16} The gloss instances all occur in sources that have at least arguably Anglian components: the Sedulius Glosses in Cambridge Corpus Christi College 173, the ink glosses collected in the ‘Tiberius Bede’ (sometimes

\textsuperscript{13} DOE, s.v. god-wreæc, god-wreæc; BT, s.v. god-wræc, -wrec; BTS, s.v. god-wræc, -wrec, with a note correcting the entry in BT ‘For -wrec substitute god-wreæc (short i-stem?)’; Clark Hall (1960), s.vv. godwræc and godwreæc (= godwreæc).

\textsuperscript{14} Klaeber (1904: 251, note 3) had earlier included the occurrence of godwreæcan in the life of Malchus among the vocabulary suggestive of an Anglian origin, but did not offer evidence confirming its dialectal character. All the extant instances of the word and its derivatives are cited in the DOE, s.vv. (a) god-wreæc, god-wreæc, (b) godwreæclic, (c) godwreæcnes.

\textsuperscript{15} Rauer (2013: 4–7), surveying the evidence pertinent to the Martyrology, concludes that the dialect of the original cannot be certainly established. A notable argument in favor of a Mercian origin on the basis of linguistic features that seem to have been present in the archetype of the extant manuscripts was made by Celia Sisam (1953: 214–217).

\textsuperscript{16} See Menner (1949:58) on Anglian vocabulary in Blickling Homily VI, and Fulk (2008:95) on various non-West-Saxon linguistic features in HomM 5, most of which are presumably not to be ascribed to the probable southeastern origin of Junius 85/86 (see nos. 1, 12, 13, 17, 27, 29, and 30 in Fulk’s list on pp. 86–88). Hallander (1966:49, § 2.6.13) also supports an Anglian origin for HomM 5.
called the Bede Glosses), the Harley Glossary, and the First Cleopatra Glossary, which presents three instances of the adjective. The Sedulius Glosses consist of sporadic entries in a copy of the Carmen Paschale made by several glossators, largely dry-point, and often in abbreviated form: a generally valid statement about their dialect should not be expected, given the multiple hands and possibly multiple locales involved, but a number of Anglian lexical and morphological features were noted by Franz Wenisch (1979: 163), who concluded that the glosses are dialectally heterogeneous. 17 The dialect of the late ninth-century ink glosses in London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius c. ii (the Tiberius Bede) has long been the subject of controversy, partly obscured by contention over the origin of the manuscript itself; although the main text of the manuscript, Bede’s Historica ecclesiastica, is now thought to have been written in Canterbury circa 820 (Brown 1996: 171, 2001: 282), the linguistic features of the glosses that Sherman Kuhn (1948: 615–617) described in detail seem better explicable as resulting from the adaptation of an Anglian source than as the product purely of a Kentish glossator. 18 The Harley Glossary appears to be dialectally heterogeneous, as J. J. Campbell (1955) showed; the presence of Mercian vocabulary in it is consistent with the Worcester origin proposed by Cooke (1997: 445–448). The instances in the First Cleopatra Glossary, finally, all occur in groups that Kittlick judged to be derived from Anglian sources. 19

Menner’s conclusion that the adjective (or adjectives, if genuine by-forms are indeed concerned) treated by the dictionaries as godwræc or godwrece is Anglian, and probably particularly Mercian, thus seems well justified: it is important here, for it affects how the attested spellings of the godwr- words, many in manuscript copies produced in the south of England, are to be interpreted. A review of these spellings is essential, since it is they that have led the DOE, BTS, and Clark Hall

17. The edition of Meritt (1945: 29–38) is supplemented and corrected by Page (1973), where the dry-point gloss gdwr from fol. 75r is reported. On the locales (Winchester and Canterbury), see Parkes (1976) and Page (1982: 154).

18. Greg Waite (2013: 6), in a recent study showing that many of the scratched glosses in the Tiberius manuscript (separate from the earlier ink glosses) were drawn from the Old English Bede, also presents evidence suggesting that some of the lemmata of the collected ink glosses were copied directly from the Tiberius text of Bede, and conjectures that most or all of the glosses themselves were not copied from an existing source. This thesis, given the probable residence of the Tiberius Bede in Kent in the ninth and tenth centuries (suggested by southeastern spellings in the scratched glosses; see Getz 2013: 193, note 34), would seem to favor the conclusion that the ink glosses are purely Kentish. I hope to show elsewhere that there is reason to believe that many of the glosses were in fact copied from an earlier source, almost certainly Anglian. Supporters of Kuhn’s assessment of the ink glosses as Mercian include Wenisch (1979: 29) and Rusch (1992: 47–81); Campbell (1955: 55–56) notably demurred, pointing to forms suggesting a southeastern dialect.

19. They occur in his groups S1 (glosses A 94 and N 28) and S14 (gloss I 340); see Kittlick (1998: 222–227, 246).
(1960) to offer *godwraec* and *godwrece* as alternative headwords. The range of forms cannot be explained on the surface as exhibiting the normal vocalic variation that would result from either paradigm allomorphy or difference in dialect, if only a single second element is supposed. They exhibit a variation between <e>, <æ>, and <a> that may be outlined thus: 20

i. a. <e> in closed syllable or before front vowel in following syllable
   <-wretlican> (sic) : OE Dialogues, ms O
   <-wrencis>, <-wrencnes> : OE Bede, mss BOT; Harley Glossary
   <-wrecnisum> : Bede Glosses
   <-wrece> (nominative plural) : Martyrology, ms B
   <-uureci> : Corpus Glossary

   b. <e> before a in following syllable
   <-wrecan> : life of Malchus

ii. a. <æ> in closed syllable or before front vowel in following syllable
   <-wraetcian> (sic) : OE Dialogues, ms C (2x)
   <-wraelcicum> : OE Dialogues, ms O
   <-wraece> (nominative plural) : Martyrology, ms C
   <-wraece> (weak nominative singular) : First Cleopatra Glossary (2x)

   b. <æ> before a in following syllable
   <-wraecan> : First Cleopatra Glossary

iii. <a> before a in following syllable
   <-wraican> : Blickling Homily VI; HomM 5

The variation between <-wræc-> in ii.a and <-wraican> in iii suggests the alternation of short æ and a that would be expected of an adjective *godwraec*. Some of the instances of <-wrec-> in i.a might also be reconciled with *godwreccan*, if they are regarded as forms proper to a Mercian dialect with æ-raising, yet the *godwrĕcan* that might be inferred from the spelling under i.b would be anomalous in such a dialect, in which *godwreccan* by second fronting should be expected. Even more significantly, the <goduureci> attested in the Corpus Glossary cannot be explained this way, but must represent an early form (with -i for later -e) of an i- or ja-stem adjective, having e as the product of mutation. 21 The dictionaries have therefore

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20. Omitted here are the abbreviated form *gdwr* in the Sedulius Glosses, and the erroneous *godwyrcnisse* in the Letter of Wynfrith, which is discussed below.

21. Since *goduureci* glosses *scaeuum* (in the sense ‘pervasive, wicked’), it is presumably the masculine or neuter nominative or neuter accusative singular form of an i-/ja-stem adjective, whose endings are identical in these cases to those of the ja-stem nouns (Campbell 1959: § 645; cf. § 577), and not an early instrumental form in -i.
postulated two different underlying forms with a short root vowel in the second element, the godwrec implied by the spellings with <a> and an i-stem godwrece.

Yet one of the forms listed above raises an immediate doubt about this solution, the <godwraecan> that occurs in the First Cleopatra Glossary (ii.b), in which <æ> seems more likely to represent æ rather than æ̆. The analogical extension of æ̆ to an open syllable before a syllable with a back vowel is a recognized phenomenon in late Old English, but it is unusual even then, and thoroughly unexpected in the Cleopatra Glossaries, probably written in the 930s (Rusche 1996: 3–4).22 While *godwraecan might theoretically come from a second-fronting dialect in which -wræc- and -wræ-can alternated rather than -wraec- and -wraec-, the First Cleopatra Glossary attests two instances of <godwraec>, not the <godwrece> that would accord with the godwrece by æ-aising that such a dialect would produce. The <æ> that appears in all three instances of the word in the First Cleopatra Glossary seems more likely simply to represent a long vowel that is not subject to alternation.

4. Old Norse guðrékr, Old English godwræce

A long vowel should in fact be expected in the Old English word: both Toller (in BTS) and Menner observed that it corresponds to Old Norse guðrékr, which also means ‘impious’, although they did not note the discrepancy in vowel length between -rékr and the -wraec of the godwrec supposed in the dictionaries.23 Comparison of some other Old Norse words may help clarify the etymology of guðrékr, namely the simple adjective rǽkr and certain compounds in which -rǽkr

22. a is found regularly in late West Saxon in all open syllables in many adjectives like blec ‘black’, but a levelling of æ throughout declined forms seems to have occurred in a very few words, certainly in gledd ‘glad’, for which gleedum and gleedan are common forms in late West Saxon, in contrast to early West Saxon, in which glado and gladan are attested. Two other adjectives are cited in the grammars as showing such a levelling, stræc ‘severe, strict’ and hræd ‘quick’ (Brunner 1965: § 294, Anm. 1; Campbell 1959: §§ 161, 643.1; Hogg 1992: § 5.37.2). For the former of these the case is dubious, since the vowel concerned may be long, as Sievers suggested (see Brunner): <stræc-> is more frequently attested in late West Saxon documents than <stræc->; <stræc-> is invariable in Alfred’s Pastoral Care even when the following syllable contains a back vowel; and there are no instances at all of <stræc>. This distribution of forms is more consistent with dialectal variants stræc and stræ, the latter perhaps adopted in late West Saxon from another dialect, than with stræc. (Middle Dutch strac and Middle Low German strak ‘tight, taut’ would then not be cognate; cf. Heidermanns 1993: 559.) In the case of hræd, in early West Saxon, a seems to have been regular in all open syllables, and occurs indeed in the Third Cleopatra Glossary (hradan in gloss no. 258, and hradan in no. 1095: Rusche 1996: 482, 521).

23. Despite the dictionaries, two treatments of the Bede Glosses have explicitly considered the e in its godwreccnissum to be long. the edition by Holthausen (1917: 291, l. 36) and the discussion by Rusch (1992: 57), who classified it as a reflex of West Germanic a.
is evidently related to Old Norse reka, such as baðrǽkr ‘difficult to drive’, heraðrǽkr ‘expelled from the district’, and liðrǽkr ‘rejected as unfit for service in a comitatus’. Just as -rǽkr in these compounds, the simplex rǽkr has a passive meaning, being used of things that have been or are to be driven away or repelled from one’s person. Thus it occurs together with the passive participle of reka in the phrase rǽkr ok rekinn, describing outlaws as persons abhorred and repelled by society, and in its more general use in the sense ‘repulsive, detestable’, of things rejected as unsuitable for human use or morally abominable. The derived adjective rékiligr accordingly had the meaning ‘wicked, abominable’, and was thus used to render nefandus and nefarius in the early Rómverja saga (Fritzner 1883–1896, s.v. rékiligr).

The passive meaning of rǽkr may be explained by its origin as a verbal adjective in -i-/ja- derived from the etymon of reka and wrecan, as Frank Heidermanns (1993: 694–695) classified it in his dictionary of the primary adjectives in Germanic. Heidermanns (1999) has described elsewhere in detail how an ancient formation from the strong verbs gave rise to these adjectives-, which follow the ja-stem declension in the West Germanic languages and in Old Norse exhibit -j- in their inflectional endings (as long as this consonant was still preserved before back vowels). The verbal meaning that they preserve is very often passive, as in the case of rǽkr, reflecting a partially gerundival origin in which potentiality or necessity was expressed; thus the many Old English adjectives such as éafynde ‘easily found’ (related to findan), unbrǽce ‘unbreakable’ (brecan), wyrméte ‘worm-eaten’ (etan), and andfenge ‘acceptable’ (onfón). Those that are derived from verbs of the fourth and fifth ablaut series regularly exhibit the lengthened vowel grade that also occurs in the preterite plural of the verb (Proto-Norse and West Germanic ð, West Saxon ð, Anglian ð): thus rǽkr has ðe by i-mutation of the ð found in rákum (‘we drove’); the Old English equivalent would be, in West Saxon, *wrǽce, having ðe just like preterite plural wrǽcon (Old English ð was not altered by i-mutation). Although guðrǽkr is not as semantically transparent as rǽkr, there is no reason to doubt that its second element is identical, developing from Germanic *wrǽki-. The corresponding Old English adjective must then be godwrǽce, or, in its Anglian

24. Fritzner 1883–1896, s.v. rækkr (‘forkastelig, afskyelig, som man ikke tør have eller bruge’ [‘reprehensible, detestable, what one does not dare have or use']).

25. See Heidermanns 1993: 56–61 for a list of ‘i-adjective’ stems from which these and many other instances may be found.

26. The verbal adjectives in -i-/ja- are classed as ‘i-adjectives’ by Heidermanns (1993: 30; 1999), who argues that they belonged generally to a mixed inflection in Germanic to which earlier i- and ja-stems both contributed. The Old English nominative singular ending in -e that occurs in these adjectives even when the root is long is inherited from the ja-stem declension, since an endingless form is proper to the i-stems (cf. dáð); the formation with the root in the lengthened grade is derived from an original ja-inflection paralleled in Old Indic (Heidermanns 1999: 167–170).
form, *godwrēce*. The latter is consistent with the *goduureci* of the Corpus Glossary, in which */-i/* may represent the early Old English nominative singular ending of the *i*- and *ja*-stem adjectives. The semantic development of the compound is a more difficult matter. While the root *wrǣk-* is well attested in nouns meaning ‘vengeance’ in West Germanic languages (Old Saxon *wrāka*, Old High German *rāha*, Old Frisian *wrēke* or *wrēze*), it is also associated with the notion ‘rejection’ in *rǣkr* and in the derived weak verbs *rǣkja* in Old Norse, *wrāken* in Middle Low German and Middle Dutch, and *wrēka* in Old Frisian, all meaning ‘reject, refuse’. It is conceivable that it had a similar meaning in the etymon of *godwrēce* and *guðrǣkr*, the meaning of the compound originally being ‘rejected by God / a god’ or ‘detestable to God’, and subsequently developing to ‘impious’ and, more generally, ‘heinous, wicked’. This interpretation is evident in the definition ‘god-forsaken’ given for *goðrǣkr* (used of those impious towards a god of the pagans, *goð*, rather than the God of the Christians, *guð*) in Cleasby-Vigfusson (1957: s.v. *goð* part B).

The verbal adjectives in */-i/-ja/-*, however, may have an active verbal meaning rather than or in addition to a passive one (Heidermanns 1999: 146); Old English *-brēce* and *-ǣte*, passive in *unbrēce* and *wyrmēte*, are active in *ǣ(we)brēce* ‘marriage-breaking, adulterous’ and *felaēte* ‘eating much’. An alternative explanation of *godwrēce* and *guðrǣkr* is therefore possible that would accord with the definitions offered for *guðrǣkr* and *goðrǣkr* by Fritzner (1883–1896), ‘ugudelig, som forkaster Gud’ (‘impious, who rejects God’) and ‘gudsfornægtende’ (‘god-denying’) respectively. This interpretation is certainly congruent with the use of *guðrǣkr* and *godwrēce* to refer to persons perceived as impious toward God, and with the equation by writers or glossators of both *guðrǣkr* and Old English *godwrælic* with Latin *sacrilegus*, which suggests active impiety more than a state of divine reprobation. Icelanders, moreover, might well have understood *guðrǣkr* in this

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27. On the words for ‘vengeance’, see e.g. Lehmann (1986), s.v. *wrikan* (W93), and Kluge (2002), s.v. *Rache*; a similar Old English *wrēc* ‘vengeance’ is not attested with certainty but has often been postulated (BT, s.v. *wrēc*; Kurath, Kuhn, and Lewis 1952–2001, s.v. *wrēch(e* n.); *OED Online*: s.v. † *wreche*, n.). On the verbs, see de Vries (1961), s.v. *rækja*, and M. Philippa et al. (2003–2009), s.v. *wraken*. Old Frisian *wrēka* is found in the *ruēka* (by metathesis of *wr*-; see Bremmer 2009: 40) attested in the First Brokmer Manuscript; see van Helten (1889: 277–278), referring to Kern (1879: 177–178).

28. The separate entry for *guðrǣkr* offers only the definition ‘wicked’.

29. An active meaning is also supposed in the *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, s.v. *wrack* adj., where *goðrǣkr* is explained as ‘gott leugnend’.

30. *guðrǣkr* is used to render *sacrilegus* in *Rómverja saga*; see the second entry (by chronological listing) s.v. *guð-rǣkr* in the online wordlist provided by the Dictionary of Old Norse Prose. *godwrēelic* is similarly used in Werferth’s translation of the *Dialogues*, while *godwrēce* (or conceivably *godwrēelic*) is equated with *sacrilegus* in the dry-point gloss *gdwr* (see note 17 above).
way, associating it with rǽkja rather than reka. Yet the original meaning of the verbal element may nonetheless have been passive, and the senses ‘sacrilegious’ and ‘wicked’ have arisen gradually for the compound, much as in the case of English reprobate, in which the semantic development from ‘rejected by God’ to ‘nefarious, wicked’ is manifest (OED Online, s.v. reprobate, adj.). The first element of the compound would have ensured that the notion ‘detestable’ evident in rǽkr and rǽkiligr continued to be perceived in relation to divinity, so that the whole was used particularly of a person regarded as impious or sacrilegious.

5. mānwræc or mānwræce?

It is notable that the <godwræce> and <manwræce> of the First Cleopatra Glossary both occur in glosses to Latin words similar or identical to the nefandus that is rendered rékiligr in Rómverja saga: þæt manwræce and sio godwræce gloss infandum, while þæt godwræce glosses nefandum. This convergence might potentially be explained by the existence of an earlier sense ‘detestable’ for Old English -wræce shared with Old Norse rǽkr: an adjective mānwræce might then mean ‘made detestable by crime’ or ‘wicked in crime’. mānwræce, however, may be the proper form of the adjective even if this is not its original meaning: it seems more likely that -wræce is active in this case, giving mānwræce the underlying sense ‘perpetrating crime’, perhaps extended subsequently to mean ‘criminal, wicked’. This sense is consistent with both the gloss instance of the word and its possible occurrence in Elene 811b; the active use of -wræce would be paralleled by that of -rǽkr in Old Norse heiprǽkr ‘carrying out feud’, and thus ‘vindictive, revengeful’, and perhaps to that of -wṝēze in Old Frisian inwṝēze ‘piercing’, if the underlying meaning of this adjective, used of wounds, is ‘driving in’ rather than ‘driven in’.³¹

The obvious alternative possibility for the origin of the second element of this word is Germanic *wraka-, another verbal adjective from the etymon of wrecan. If this derivation cannot be certainly excluded, the potentially comparable adjectives derived from *wraka- in Middle Low German (wrak), Middle Dutch (wraeck), and East Frisian (wrek) (Heidermanns 1993: 692; Faltings 2010: 616), along with the nouns identical in form in these languages meaning ‘wrecked ship’ or ‘goods from a wrecked ship’ (Philippa et al. 2003–2009: s.v. wrak 1; Faltings 2010: 616), point only to an underlying sense ‘driven’ that does not help to explain a compound *mānwræc. While these adjectives both mean ‘damaged’ or ‘worthless’,

³¹ Faltings (2010: 618–619) admits both of these as possible meanings of inwṝēze, while raising the further possibility that it may be an exocentric adjective derived from a Proto-Frisian noun *inwṝēke referring to a wound penetrating into the body.
their semantic development was probably from ‘driven (on the sea)’ to ‘spoiled by seawater’, and thus ‘damaged, worthless’ (Philippa et al. 2003–2009: s.v. wrak 2). 32 The sense ‘driven’, indeed, is perhaps found in the Old English wraec that glosses Latin actuarius ‘easily driven’, used to describe a kind of ship, in several glossaries. 33 It thus seems unlikely that wraec had a distinct sense ‘worthless’ or ‘bad’ already in Old English that might have been used in *mänwraec.

There is, however, one other possible instance of an Old English -wraec that must be considered, occurring in the adjective attested in the form <sceþwrae-can> in Blickling Homily XIV (Morris 1874–80: 161, l. 33). 34 Holthausen (1963, s.v. wraec 3) compared the second element of this adjective (meaning ‘harmful’, as the context shows) to Middle Low German wraec, since the first <a> of this spelling is consistent with an ā restored before the back vowel of the inflectional ending. 35 When this written form, the lone attestation of the word, is considered together with the two instances of <godwracan> noted above, it must be asked whether these three manuscript instances bear witness to an element -wraec that existed beside -wræce, since it might possibly then be the former rather than the latter that is represented in the First Cleopatra Glossary’s <manwraec>. It seems a necessary conclusion, indeed, that a short vowel was intended by the scribes responsible for <godwracan> and <sceþwrae-can>, since ā from retraction of āe (a West Saxon phenomenon) should not be expected in any inflected form of -wræce. Even if it is assumed that godwræce had a genuine existence in spoken West Saxon – a doubtful assumption, given the dialectal nature of its attestation discussed above –, the West

32. In Middle English wrack is attested in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, once evidently meaning ‘worthless, evil’, but otherwise ‘damaged’ (of goods); see the OED Online, s.v. † wrack, adj., where it is regarded as a borrowing from Low German or Dutch.

33. Pheifer 1974: 7 (no. 87); Lindsay 1921: 4 (gloss A 135); Rusche 1996: 169 (gloss A 192 in the First Cleopatra Glossary). The wraec of these glosses has also been taken as designating a secretary (another sense of actuarius) or some other bureaucratic or legal agent, although the lemma seems to have originated in a phrase nauibus … actuariis in Orosius: see Pheifer’s note on p. 64, and Holthausen (1963), s.v. wraec 2, who compared Gothic wraks ‘persecutor’ and suggested the meaning ‘Prozeßführer’.

34. Cf. BTS (s.v. sceþwraec), with a citation of the Latin source and correction of a misinterpretation in the entry for sceþwraec in BT.

35. The Deutsches Wörterbuch (s.v. wrack adj.) compares all three Old English adjectives in question to wrac. BT and BTS likewise assume that all three have the same second element, which the latter clearly takes as having a short vowel: the entry for -wraec in BT provides cross-references to god-, män-, and sceþ-wraec, along with a parenthetical query ‘-wraec?’ deleted in BTS. Clark Hall (1960) does not attempt to reconcile the three adjectives, offering as headword forms manwraæce (as mentioned above), sceðwræce with no final -e, and the alternatives godwraæc and godwreæce (‘= godwræc’).
Saxon retraction of ǣ before a single consonant followed by a back vowel should not have occurred in -wrǣc- (with palatal է) developing from *-wrǣki- or *-wrǣkja-.

Consequently either a genuine by-form godwræc existing beside godwræce must be admitted, as must an adjective sceþwræc and potentially also mānwræc, or the written forms with <a> must be otherwise explained.

Here the range of attested spellings of godwræce and its derivatives should again be considered. Although the instances may well all be of Anglian origin, it is notable that the spellings with <e> that represent Anglian ē are only slightly more numerous than those with <æ>. The Corpus Glossary, where genuine Anglian spellings are expected, has <e>, as do the Bede Glosses, the Harley Glossary, the life of Malchus, and the manuscripts of the Old English Bede. The manuscripts, however, that preserve the Old English Martyrology and Wærferth’s translation of the Dialogues exhibit spellings with both <e> and <æ>. The obvious explanation of this variation is that the first group of texts preserves original Anglian spellings with <e>, whereas the scribes who copied the Martyrology and Wærferth sometimes transmitted such spellings, but sometimes replaced <e> with an <æ> that would better represent a West Saxon form.

Yet it is not necessarily the case that copyists of the Martyrology and Wærferth were consciously altering their spellings to reflect West Saxon ǣ rather than Anglian ē. It is likely that many southern scribes did not know Anglian godwræce at all, a word evidently foreign to West Saxon, at least in the literary period: some of these may have wrongly assumed that the <e> in the <godwrec-> of an exemplar represented the underlying vocalism that appears in the much more frequently occurring words wræc and wracu, both used with the various meanings ‘misery’, ‘exile’, and ‘vengeance’. This <e> they may have perceived as erroneous or dialectal (representing a Kentish or Mercian e corresponding to West Saxon æ), and so replaced it with <æ>, or even <a>, if the declined form seemed to demand it. This hypothesis would account for both the <godwraece> of manuscript C of the Martyrology and the <godwracan> of Blickling Homily VI and HomM 5, if not the <æ> in the <godwræcan> in the First Cleopatra Glossary. However, it seems possible that in the latter case a real knowledge of the word is to be assumed, together with an attempt to present it in a Saxonized form: in the First Cleopatra Glossary, despite the Anglian origin of most of the glosses, <æ> is written with few exceptions for West Germanic ā (Kittlick 1998: 93–96), suggesting a deliberate

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36. Thus e.g. læcce ‘physician’, from *lækja-, has only ǣ, never ā, in its plural forms. On West Saxon restoration of ā, see Hogg 1992: §§ 5.39–40; Campbell 1959: § 162; Brunner 1965: § 63.

37. A much more speculative explanation of the <wracan> forms would be confusion with an unattested adjective *wrāc cognate with Gothic wraiqs and Old Frisian wrāk, both meaning ‘crooked’ (cf. Heidermanns 1994:689–690 on wraik*a-).
effort to Saxonize the representation of this vowel. If the scribe had some acquaint-
ance with Anglian godwrēce, he might have written <æ> in copying it, preferring
a -wrēce adapted to the West Saxon ablaut series to a -wrēce that was foreign to
it, since he would have been able to identify the root vowel with the ë found in
the preterite plural of wrecan.\textsuperscript{38} In any case it is clearly possible that the scribe of
the First Cleopatra Glossary, who three times wrote <godwrec-> in transmitting
forms of what appears to be an Anglian adjective godwrēce, was likewise copying
a word whose Anglian form would have had ĕ when he wrote <manwraece>.

Some conclusions about the words discussed above may now be reached here.
First, Anglian godwrēce was sometimes replaced in the southern transmission of
Anglian texts with forms representative of godwraec, whether this by-form actu-
ally existed in speech or was purely a scribal invention. Second, it is possible that
a similar scribal replacement produced the <sceþwraecan> of Blickling Homily
XIV: a sceþwraec (or Anglian sceþwrēce) meaning ‘inflicting harm’ derived from
an active use of *wrēki-, seems at least as plausible as the derivation from *wra-
ka- offered by Heidermanns (1993: 692) with the passive meaning ‘von Schaden
erfolgt’. Finally, the adjective meaning ‘wicked’ attested as <manwraece> in the
First Cleopatra Glossary is reasonably interpreted as having a second element
derived from *wrēki-. If Cynewulf knew this word, he knew it in the Anglian
form mānwrēce.

6. **Scribal replacement of <manwrecum> with <manweorcum>**

While in \textit{Elene} the resulting syntax is deficient, there are errors elsewhere in this
poem that seem to be the work of a copyist more concerned with writing a familiar
word than producing an intelligible text. A particularly relevant example is the
replacement in line 124a of the dative plural of the poetic noun swēot ‘troop’ with
the adjective form sweotolum ‘clear’: here an entire syllable was added in order to
effect an alteration from an original noun form ending in -um to an adjective form,
thoroughly unapt in the context, that also ends in -um. The scribe responsible for
this alteration cannot be free from the suspicion of having altered a dative singular
form of the adjective mānwrēce, which may have been just as foreign to him as
poetic swēot, to a dative plural form of the noun mānweorc. A scribe capable of

\textsuperscript{38} There would thus have been a motivation to adapt, rather than adopt, Anglian ĕ, which is ab-
sent in the well-known case of mêce ‘sword’, written in southern documents with <e> rather than
the <æ> that would represent a native West Saxon development (Kenneth Sisam 1953: 126–128);
mêce seems to have been actually borrowed in West Saxon, as Sisam thought, with sound and
orthography unaltered, rather than merely transmitted in copies of Anglian texts.
transposing letters or sounds, moreover, is also implicated in the transmission of *Elene* by the manuscript readings *eðles* (‘of a native land’), where *ældes*, the genitive singular of poetic *æled* ‘fire’, is required (1294a), and *oferswiðende* ‘overcoming’ instead of the *oferswiðedne* ‘overcome’ necessary to the sense (957a).

7. *Elene* 811b revisited

Since *mānweorc* would be an adjective of a very extraordinary kind that finds no independent corroboration, it is reasonable to suppose the originality in *Elene* 811b of the adjective attested as *<manwæce>* in the First Cleopatra Glossary. The second element of this word may be probably identified with the second element in Anglian *godwrēce*, arising from Germanic *-wrēki*; the sense of *mānwæce* (or *mānwrēce*, as it would have been known to Cynewulf) may originally have been ‘perpetrating crime’ or, less probably, ‘made detestable by crime’. The alteration of a form of Cynewulf’s *mānwrēce* to a form of *mānweorc* by a copyist unfamiliar with the former word is entirely plausible, as various scribal errors or alterations mentioned above show, especially the many instances of *wærc* ‘misery’ as a scribal replacement of *wyrca* ‘pain’ and the *<-wycnisse>* written instead of *<-wrecnisse>* in the *Letter of Wynfrith*. *Elene* 811b may accordingly be read in its context thus:

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Sie ðe, mægena God,  
þrymsittendum þanc butan ende,  
þæs ðu me swa meðum ond swa manwrecum  
þurh þin wuldor inwrige wyrda geryno.
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To you, o God of hosts, dwelling in majesty, be thanks without end, that to me, so weary and so criminally wicked, you have through your glory revealed the mysteries of events.39

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Old English mānwrēce and godwrēce


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