THAT Geoffrey of Monmouth was a thorough student and a literary craftsman of great ingenuity, few will deny. Nor will it be denied that his unmatched skill with which he transforms, develops, enlarges and actually dismembers various details drawn from his sources commands admiration,—and so does the facility with which he succeeded in piecing them together and making them an integral part of his narrative, which, strange to say, to use Geoffrey's own words, leaves the impression of a liber veraciter editus. Or perhaps the impression of fiction made plausible.

But the skill and facility with which a historian manipulates and effaces his sources render the task of tracing them all the more complex and difficult. This is especially true of Geoffrey. Among the many sources which he utilised in the composition of his Historia was the Bible, a fact noticed by many scholars,\(^1\) among whom Feuerherd, for example, devoted the larger part of his dissertation\(^2\) to the study of the influence of the Old Testament upon Geoffrey. All of these scholars, however, call attention to biblical reminiscences, motifs, situations, which Geoffrey, following his habit, transformed and incorporated in his Historia. Feuerherd goes even so far as to believe that Geoffrey wrote it "... in Parallele zu der Geschichte des Judenvolkes...,"\(^3\) and that he found the model for his work


\(^2\)Paul Feuerherd, Geoffrey von Monmouth und das alte Testament, etc. (Dissertation, Halle, 1915).

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 13.
in the History of the Jewish People. After examining the few passages in the Historia, in which Geoffrey himself refers to the Old Testament, he proceeds to a discussion of those which, through their contents, point to the Old Testament. An illustration is in order here. Feuerherd believes that Geoffrey endowed the two British princes, Dunwallo and Ebrauc, with the qualities of the three great Jewish Kings, Saul, David and Solomon.

However, none of the scholars mentioned stresses a question which in my opinion calls for an answer, namely, what imprint has the language of the Scriptures left upon Geoffrey's Historia? This question merits an answer, especially since it is an acknowledged fact that the Bible was prescribed reading for theologians in the schools of the Middle Ages. And Geoffrey, the future bishop of St. Asaph, was a theologian. Though I am not a biblical scholar, I shall attempt to give at least a partial answer to that question.

In Nennius' Historia Britonum (chap. 10), we read that Brutus, while playing with others, killed his father "ictu sagittae . . . non de industria, sed casa." This story of the accidental shooting by Brutus Geoffrey (Hist. 1. 3; Faral, chap. 6) took over from Nennius. But following his method of never adhering strictly to his sources, he added some details not found in his model. According to Geoffrey, Silvius, Brutus' father, was killed "in-opino ictu sagittae," during a hunt. For as the servants were driving up deer toward him, "Brutus, telum in ipso dirigere affectans, genitorem sub pectore percussit." With this compare the death of Achab in 3 Reg. 22. 34: "Vir autem quidam tetendit arcum, in incertum sagittam dirigens, et casa percussit regem Israel inter pulmonem. . . ." Thus Geoffrey's passage contains elements of both the Bible and Nennius.

1 Geoffrey von Monmouth und das alte Testament, p. 23.
2 Ibid., pp. 24-31.
3 Ibid., pp. 31-85.
4 This paper will not consider such phrases as "In diebus eius"; "usque in praesentem (or hodiernum) diem"; "sine intermissione"; "misericordiam facere"; "solium regni." These phrases occur frequently in the Historia and in the Scriptures.

All the references are to the traditional division of the Historia and to Faral's edition.
In the same chapter (Faral, chap. 7), Geoffrey relates how the Trojans hearing of Brutus' fame, flocked to him with the result that their forces soon reached the number of seven thousands "exceptis parvulis et mulieribus." Cf. Deut. 3. 19: "omnes viri...absque uxoribus, et parvulis"; Dan. 14. 9: "...exceptis uxoribus, et parvulis"; but especially Matth. 14. 21: "exceptis mulieribus et parvulis." Geoffrey, it is seen, reversed the word order.¹

Hist. 1. 7 (Faral, chap. 11). Brutus compels Anacletus, the companion of Antigonus "evaginato gladio" to do his bidding. See Num. 22. 23: "evaginato gladio"; also 22. 31 and Act. 16. 27.

Hist. 1. 10 (Faral, chap. 14). After taking Pandrasus' tent, Brutus spared his life. But Brutus' "turma" gave no quarter and "partem quam sortita fuerat, usque ad internecionem de-leverat." This destruction continued throughout the night and in the morning "tanta ruina patuit populi:"

In Num. 17. 13 the Jews say to Moses: "Num usque ad internecionem cuncti delendi sumus?" The phrase "usque ad internecionem" occurs repeatedly in the Bible. For "tanta...populi," see 1 Reg. 4. 17: "et ruina magna facta est in populo."

Mempricius, one of the Trojans, seeing that his countrymen were unable to agree on what to demand of King Pandrasus, suggested that they should ask for his daughter Innogen for Brutus and "cum ea aurum et argentum, naves et frumentum et quodcumque itineri nostro necessarium erit." Cf. Osee 2. 8: "ego dedi ei frumentum, et vinum, et oleum, et argentum multi-plicavi ei, et aurum"; Jud. 19. 20: "Pax tecum sit, ego prae-bebo omnia quae necessaria sunt"; Tob. 8. 21: "Uxori...dixit ut...praepararet omnia quae in cibos erant iter agentibus necessaria."

When the Trojans, under Brutus' leadership, came to Aquitaine (Hist. 1. 12; Faral, chap. 17), "Morati sunt ibi septem diebus situmque regni exploraverunt." Cf. Josue 3. 1: "...et

¹ In Hist., 1, 12 (Faral, chap. 18), Brutus hearing of the advance of Goffarius' army, sent away "mulieres et parvulos" to the ships. See Gen. 33, 5: "vidit mulieres et parvulos earum"; Esther 3, 13: "parvulos et mulieres".
morati sunt ibi tres dies”; Num. 13. 22: “... exploraverunt terram a deserto.”

The second book (2. 1; Faral, chap. 23) begins with “Cognoverat autem Brutus uxorem suam.” Cf. Gen. 4. 17: “Cognovit autem Cain uxorem suam”; also Gen. 4. 1: “Adam vero cognovit uxorem suam.”

To what degree Geoffrey was indebted to the Bible for his King Ebrauc story (Hist. 2. 7-8; Faral, chap. 27), has been demonstrated by Feuerherd.¹ I should like to add one parallel which seemingly escaped his attention. In 2. 8 (Faral, chap. 27) Geoffrey states that King Ebrauc, who had twenty sons and thirty daughters, sent all his daughters to Italy (direxit in Italiam), to Silvius Alba: “fuerunt ibi maritatae nobilioribus Troianis, . . .” Cf. Iud. 12. 9: “Qui (Abesan de Bethlehem) habuit triginta filios, et totidem filias, quas emittes foras, maritis dedit. . . .”

According to Feuerherd (p. 38), “machen die angegebenen Zahlen 20 und 30 ganz den Eindruck, als ob sie willkürlich angenommen wären.” The above biblical passage proves that this is not the case, since both Abesan and Ebrauc sent their daughters to foreign lands to be married off. There is, however, further evidence. Geoffrey gives a full list of names of Ebrauc’s sons, which he begins as follows: “Erant autem nomina filiorum eius. . . .” Cf. Gen. 25. 13: “et haec nomina filiorum eius. . . .”

Hist. 2. 10 (Faral, chap. 30). King Bladud built the city of Bath, and constructed hot baths there; these he dedicated to Minerva, “in cuius aede inextinguibles ignes posuit, qui numquam deficiebant in favillas. . . .”

Professor Faral pointed out ² that in the composition of this passage Geoffrey drew on Solinus (Polyhistoria 22), whom he copied in part. Here is what Solinus says: “Quibus fontibus praeasul est Minervae numen, in cuius aede perpetui ignes numquam canescunt in favillas. . . .”

I agree with Professor Faral that Geoffrey copied Solinus. But he also copied another source. Cf. Lev. 6. 13: “Ignis est iste perpetuus, qui numquam deficiet in altari.”

Since I have discussed the biblical parallels in the King Lear story elsewhere, there is no need to repeat them. Here I shall add two more. King Lear (Hist. 2. 11; Faral, chap. 31) "Aedificavit . . . super fluvium Soram civitatem, quae . . . de nomine eius Kaerleir . . . nuncupatur." Cf. Gen. 4. 17: "et aedificavit (Cain) civitatem, vocavitque nomen eius ex nomine filii sui, Henoch."

Lear, deprived of his kingdom, was compelled to stay in the house of his son-in-law Maglaunus. But after two years, "moram eo apud generum faciente, indignata est Conorilla. . . ." Cf. Matth. 25. 5: "Moram autem faciente sponso. . . ."

Hist. 2. 17 (Faral, chap. 34). When King Dunwallo reduced the entire island, "fecit sibi diadema ex auro. . . ." Cf. 1 Par. 20. 2: "David . . . fecit . . . sibi inde diadema. . . ."

Feuerherd (pp. 39-44) has discussed the Dunwallo Molmutius episode. To his discussion I shall add one parallel. In his Molmutine Laws King Dunwallo enacted that cities and temples should have the right "ut quicumque fugitivus sive reus ad ea confugeret, cum venia coram inimico suo abiret." In my opinion this passage was inspired by Josue 20. 2: "Separate urbes fugitivorum . . . ut confugerat ad eam quicumque animam percusserit nescius, et possit evadere iram proximi. . . ." See also Num. 35. 10-14; Deut. 4. 41. For "coram inimico," cf. Deut. 1. 42: "coram inimicis vestris"; also Ecclesiasticus 30. 5.

Hist. 3. 1 (Faral, chap. 35). After the death of King Dunwallo, his two sons Belinus and Brennius ruled peacefully for five years. However, some "fabricatores mendacii" gained the ear of Brennius and urged him to break the covenant entered upon with his brother. See Job 13. 4: "prius vos ostendens fabricatores mendacii."

Hist. 3. 6 (Faral, chap. 40). Brennius fled to Gaul and was honourably received by Seginus, duke of the Allobroges. He showed great ability in affairs; moreover, "Erat etiam pulcher aspectu, procera et gracilia membra habens. . . ." In Gen. 39. 6 Joseph is described as follows: "Erat autem Joseph pulchra facie, et decorus aspectu." As for David (1 Reg. 16. 12),

1 Latomus, 5 (1946), 299-301.
2 Faral's reading "pulcro" has no manuscript authority.
"Erat autem rufus, et pulcher aspectu decoraque facie"; cf. also 1 Reg. 17. 42: "erat enim (David) adolescens, rufus, et pulcher aspectu." Here it may be added that King Morvid (Hist. 3. 14; Faral, chap. 48) is also described as "pulcher aspectu."

After Seginus' death, Brennius, who became his successor, decided to take revenge upon his brother Belinus (Hist. 3. 7; Faral, chap. 41). He sailed with a mighty army to Britain and here was met by his brother who was accompanied by the whole strength of his kingdom. Before the armies met, Conwenna, their mother, rushed through the ranks and reaching the place where Brennius stood, kissed him and uncovering her bosom, pleaded with him as follows:

_Memento, fili, memento uberum istorum, quae suxisti, matrisque tuae uteri . . . Anxietatum igitur quas pro te passa sum reminiscens, petitioni meae adquiesce. . . ._

In the composition of this scene Geoffrey utilised several biblical parallels. Cf. Cant. 1. 3: " . . . memores uberum tuorum . . .," ibidem, 8. 1: "Quis mihi det te fratrem meum, sugentem ubera matris meae . . .," and above all Luke 11. 27: " . . . extollens vocem quaedam mulier de turba dixit illi: Beatus venter qui te portavit et ubera quae suxisti. . . ." Cf. also Tob. 4. 4: "et honorem habebis matri tuae omnibus diebus vitae eius: memor enim esse debes quae et quanta pericula passa sit propter te in utero suo." Cf. also Jud. 13. 5: "ex matris utero"; ibid. 13. 7: "ex utero matris suae"; Job 1. 21: "Nudus egressus sum de utero matris. . . ." and Psalm 138. 13: " . . . suscepisti me de utero matris meae." ¹

Continuing her plea, Conwenna asked Brennius not to carry out his revenge because Belinus had done him no injury. As to his complaint that he had been banished by Belinus, "si eventum rei diligentem intueri institeris, nullatenus reperies quod iniustitiam vocabis. Non enim fugavit te, ut deterius tibi contingeret. . . ." Cf. Gen. 41. 13: "audivimus quidquid postea rei probavit eventus"; Exod. 2. 4: " . . . et considerante eventum rei." Above all, see John 5. 14: "iam noli peccare,

¹ According to Professor Faral (op. cit. 2. 134), Geoffrey is indebted to Statius for this scene. I agree. But from the above it must become clear that Geoffrey combined two sources, Statius and the Bible.
ne deterius tibi aliquid contingat.” Here it may be added that the same biblical phrase occurs again in Hist. 8. 20 (Faral, chap. 138). When Gorlois was killed and messengers came to Igerna to inform her of his death, they found King Uther with her in Gorlois’ likeness. Pseudo-Gorlois assured Igerna that he was alive and then told her of his plan to go out to meet Uther and to make peace with him, “ne nobis deterius contingat.”

Hist. 3. 9 (Faral, chap. 43). After their reconciliation Belinus and Brennius crossed into Gaul and then marched into Italy and besieged Rome. To strike terror into the hearts of the Romans they ordered the erection of gibbets before the city and threatened that “obsides, quos dederant, in patibulo suspendere, nisi sese deditione submitterent.” It would seem that Geoffrey derived the phrase “in patibulo suspendere” from the Bible; see Gen. 40. 22: “(Pharao) alterum suspendit in patibulo”; Josue 8. 29: “regem quoque . . . suspendit in patibulo”; Esther 7. 10: “Suspensus est . . . Aman in patibulo.” The Romans, however, refused to surrender, whereupon Belinus and Brennius ordered their hostages to be hanged “in conspectu parentum.” The phrase “in conspectu” is very common in the Bible.

Hist. 3. 17 (Faral, chap. 50). When King Elidurus met his deposed brother Arthgallo, he conducted him to York, “cepitque diadema de capite suo et fratris capiti imposuit.” Cf. 2 Reg. 12. 30: “Et tulit diadema regis eorum de capite eius . . . et impositum est super caput David.”

Hist. 4. 3 (Faral, chap. 56). Geoffrey gives a graphic description of the first battle between Cassibellaunus and Caesar, in which “. . . hinc et inde corrunt vulnerati.” Cf. 1 Par. 5. 22: “Vulnerati autem multi corruerunt”; 2 Par. 13. 17: “et corruerunt vulnerati ex Israel. . . .”

Hist. 4. 8 (Faral, chap. 61). When Androgeus refused to deliver to Cassibellaunus his nephew Evelinus so that he might be punished for the murder of Hirelglas, Cassibellaunus invaded Androgeus’ provinces. But Androgeus “cotidie per cognatos et notos regem adibat. . . .” Cf. Luke 2. 44: “. . . et requirebant eum inter cognatos et notos.”

Hist. 4. 9 (Faral, chap. 62). Having failed in his attempt
to come to terms with Cassibellaunus, Androgeus appealed to Caesar and together they succeeded, after a furious battle, in cornering Cassibellaunus and his army on a rocky mountain. After a few days, due to a lack of provisions, Cassibellaunus sent a message to Androgeus, requesting him to act as a peacemaker between Caesar and himself. To this message Androgeus gave the following answer: “Non est diligendus princeps qui in bello est mitis ut agnus, in pace ferus ut leo. . . . Non eram igitur iniuste tractandus. . . .” For the thought Geoffrey may have been indebted to Ecclesiasticus 4. 35: “Noli esse sicut leo in domo tua, evertens domesticos tuos, et opprimens subiectos tibi.”

Hist. 4. 17 (Faral, chap. 70). King Marius permitted the people that came with King Rodric to settle in the part of Albania called Caithness. The new settlers, “uxores non habentes,” desired the daughters and kinswomen of the Britons, but meeting with a flat refusal, they sailed to Ireland, “duxeruntque ex patria illa mulieres. . . .” Cf. Iud. 3. 5-6: “Itaque filii Israel habitaverunt in medio Chananaei . . . et duxerunt uxores filias eorum, ipsisque filias suas filiis eorum tradiderunt. . . .” Here we have an example of Geoffrey’s departure from his source. While the Hebrews intermarried with Canaanites, Hittites and other tribes, no such thing was tolerated by the proud Britons.

Hist. 5. 8 (Faral, chap. 80). Trahern forced Octavius to flee to Norway. Before leaving Britain Octavius ordered his friends to watch for an opportunity to kill Trahern. One of Octavius’ most devoted followers succeeded in ambushing and killing Trahern. “Quod cum nuntiatum esset Octavio, reversus est in Britanniam. . . .” Cf. 1 Reg. 19. 21: “Quod cum nuntiatum esset Sauli. . . .”

Hist. 5. 10 (Faral, chap. 82). Maximian, pleased with Maurice’s offer, set out for Britain. When King Octavius heard the news of his arrival, “expavit stupore vehementi . . .,” because he believed it to be an invasion. Cf. Gen. 27. 33: “Expavit Isaac stupore vehementi.”

In Conan’s camp Maurice assured Conan that Maximian and his retinue landed with peaceful intentions. As proof he cited the fact that from the time of their arrival their conduct
was above reproach. Moreover, “Expensam nostram ut gens pacis ferimus, quia necessaria ementes nihil vi cuiquam sur-ripuimus.” Cf. Gen. 42. 2: “descendite, et emite nobis necessaria, ut possimus vivere . . .”; 42. 7: “(Venimus), ut emamus victui necessaria”; also Gen. 43. 4 and 43. 22: “Sed et alid attulimus argentum, ut emamus quae nobis necessaria sunt.”

Hist. 5. 11 (Faral, chap. 83). When Caradoc convinced King Octavius that he should bestow his kingdom and daughter on Maximian, Conan Meriadoc, who aspired to the throne, became indignant “ultra quam exprimi potest.” Cf. Gen. 27. 33: “et ultra quam credi potest, admirans ait.” Here Geoffrey substituted “exprimi” for “credi.” But the passage with “credi” occurs in Hist. 6. 7 (Faral, chap. 95): “Quo viso, ultra quam credi potest, contristati sunt Picti. . . .”

Hist. 5. 13 (Faral, chap. 85). Maximian crossed over to Gaul with large forces and took Rennes. The Gauls, hearing of the bravery and savagery of the Britons, abandoned their cities and towns, leaving their wives and children behind them. The Britons, “ubicumque intrabant, interficiebant quicquid erat masculini sexus, solis mulieribus parcentes.” Cf. Exod. 1. 22, where Pharao orders the Egyptians: “Quodquid masculini sexus natum fuerit, in flumen proicite; quidquid feminini, reservate.”


Upon his arrival the archbishop addressed King Aldroenus and delivered the kingdom of Britain into his hands (regnum Britanniae in manus tuas trado). Instead of accepting Aldroenus committed his brother Constantine to Guethelin’s charge. When Constantine was called in, Guethelin exclaimed: “. . . Assit modo Christus; ecce defensio nostra; ecce spes nostra et gaudium.” The phrase “in manus tradere” occurs frequently

¹ The phrase “inito consilio” occurs also in Nennius, chap. 37; in Geoffrey it occurs again in 6. 15 (Faral, chap. 103): “initoque consilio.”

Hist. 16. 6 (Faral, chap. 94). After the death of King Constantine “fuit dissensio inter proceres (Britonum).” Cf. John 10. 19: “Dissensio iterum facta est inter Iudaeos”; Act. 23. 7: “facta est dissensio inter pharisaeos et sadducaeos.”

Hist. 6. 11 (Faral, chap. 99). When Hengist realised to what degree the king depended upon him and his help, he made the following demand: “Quippe inter cetera danda esset mihi civitas, sive oppida, ut dignior . . . censerer.” This calls to mind 1 Reg. 27. 5: “Dixit . . . David ad Achis . . . detur mihi locus in una urbium regionis huius ut habitem ibi.”

Hist. 6. 12 (Faral, chap. 100). In this chapter Geoffrey describes the arrival of picked Saxon warriors who brought along Ronwen, the daughter of Hengist. To honour the occasion Hengist gave a banquet to which he invited King Vortegirn. After the banquet Ronwen stepped forth with a golden cup filled with wine and greeted the king. Vortegirn fell madly in love with her and demanded her of her father.

As is known, this episode is derived from Nennius, Historia Britonum, chap. 37. But to expect Geoffrey to adhere strictly to his source without expanding, remodelling or recolouring it, is to expect the impossible. To quote an example, in Nennius Hengist’s daughter served the guests “vinum et siceram”; but in Geoffrey, after the banquet royal, Ronwen stepped forth from her chamber with a “ciphus aureus” filled with wine, and, approaching Vortegirn, she bent her knees and greeted him.

From what source has Geoffrey derived these additional details? In my opinion from the Bible, and from Esther in particular. For even in Nennius’ account there are traces of the influence of Esther. Nennius describes Hengist’s daughter as “pulchra facie atque decorosa valde”; cf. Esther 1. 11: “Vashti . . . erat . . . pulchra valde”; 2. 7: “Esther pulchra nimis et decora facie”; 2. 15: “erat enim formosa valde, et

1 Observed by Feuerherd, p. 95.
incredibili pulchritudine (for all this Geoffrey substituted ‘cuius [Ronwen’s] pulchritudo nulli secunda videbatur’).” Nennius, too, tells us that after Vortegirn married Hengist’s daughter “amavit (some MSS. read: adamavit) eam valde”; cf. Esther 2.17: “Et adamavit eam rex plus quam omnes mulieres (cf. also Gen. 34.19: ‘amabat enim puellam valde.’”

Geoffrey who, as has become clear by this time, knew his Bible, must have undoubtedly realised Nennius’ indebtedness to the Bible and must have decided to enlarge his account by drawing additional details from the same source. Thus for Nennius’ “convivium” and for “grande convivium” and “convivium permagnificum” in Esther (1.3 and 2.18), Geoffrey substituted “regiae epulae”; Geoffrey tells us that Ronwen “Accedens deinde propius regi flexis genibus,” greeted him; cf. Esther 5.2: “Quae (Esther) accedens, osculata est summitatem virgae eius (of Ahasuerus).” While Geoffrey actually took over “Accedens” from the Esther passage, he remodelled the rest of that passage by making Vortegirn kiss Ronwen (osculatus est eam); in the original Esther kissed the top of Ahasuerus’ sceptre. It must also be remembered that Ronwen greeted Vortegirn “flexis genibus” holding a “ciphus aureus” in her hands. The term “flectere genua” occurs three times in Esther: “flectebant genua,” “flectebat genu” and “flecteret sibi genu (3.2; 3.5).” But for “flexis genibus”1 see 2 Par. 6.13: “et deinceps flexis genibus . . . ait.” As for the “ciphus aureus,” from which Ronwen drank and Vortegirn after her, it is worth recalling that the guests at Ahasuerus’ banquet “Bibebant . . . aureis poculis.”

Geoffrey makes two statements about Vortegirn’s love for Ronwen. The first is “amavit puellam,” and it agrees almost verbatim with the statement of Nennius, cited above. The second is that “quae (Ronwen) ultra modum placuit ei.” This latter statement deserves comparison with Esther 2.9: “Quae placuit ei (King Ahasuerus),” and 5.2: “Cumque vidisset2 Esther reginam stantem, placuit oculis eius.” Geoffrey’s “ultra

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1 “flexis genibus” occurs again in Hist. 9. 6 (Faral, chap. 149).
2 With this compare: “At ille (Vortegirn), visa facie puellae (Ronwen), admiratus est tantum eius decorem et incaluit.”
modum" corresponds with another statement in Esther 2. 17, quoted above: "Et adamavit eam rex plus quam omnes mulieres."

Another point of comparison may be mentioned. Esther succeeded Ahasuerus' first wife Vashti (fecit . . . eam regnare in loco Vashti). Geoffrey, it is true, does not mention the fact that Ronwen succeeded Vortegirn's first wife; but this may be surmised, since he does state that Vortegirn incurred the hatred of his three sons who had been born to him aforetime.

Hist. 6. 13 (Faral, chap. 101). After Vortegirn's marriage to Ronwen, Hengist suggested to the king that they invite Octa and Ebissa: "bellatores enim viri sunt." These four words Geoffrey lifted literally from Nennius, Historia Britonum, chapter 38. "Bellatores viri," or "viri bellatores" occurs frequently in the Bible; cf. for example, Josue 5. 4: "universi bellatores viri"; 3 Reg. 9. 22: "sed erant viri bellatores."

The gradual increase of Saxon strength caused terror among the Britons. They forsook Vortegirn and raised his son, Vortimer, to the throne, who fought four pitched battles against the Saxons. Of these Geoffrey enumerates three, as follows: "primum (bellum) super fluvium Derwent; secundum super vadum Episford," in which Horsus and Katigern met and "ceciderunt ambo"; "tertium super ripam maris. . . ." In all this Geoffrey followed Nennius (chap. 44), who also mentions three battles. Nennius' numerical sequence of the battles which Geoffrey took over, calls to mind a similar sequence in 2 Reg. 21. 18-19: "Secundum quoque bellum fuit in Gob contra Philistaeos"; "Tertium quoque fuit bellum in Gob. . . ." For "ceciderunt ambo," which is Geoffrey's variation for Nennius' "et ibi cecidit Hors cum filio Guorthigimi", see Jer. 46. 12: "et ambo pariter conciderunt."

Hist. 6. 14 (Faral, chap. 102). Vortimer was not destined to enjoy the fruits of his victories over the Saxons for a long time because "bonitati eius invidit illico diabolus," who egged on his stepmother Ronwen to poison him. Cf. Sap. 2. 24: "Invidia autem diaboli mors introivit in orbem terrarum."

When Vortimer realised that he was poisoned and that his end was near, he summoned his soldiers, distributed among them his treasures and comforted them by saying that the journey
he was entering upon was "viam universae carnis," the way of all flesh. Cf. for example, Gen. 6. 13: "Finis universae carnis venit"; ibidem, 9. 16: "... animam viventem universae carnis"; Job 12. 10: "et spiritus universae carnis..."; Jer. 32. 27: "... Deus universae carnis."

Hist. 6. 15 (Faral, chap. 103). After Vortimer's death, "Post obitum autem ipsius," Vortigern was restored to his kingdom. Cf. Gen. 25. 11: "Et post obitum illius..."; I Mac. 9. 23: "Et factum est, post obitum Judae..."

Hist. 6. 16 (Faral, chap. 105). After Hengist's betrayal of Vortegirn, the latter, to save his life, granted Hengist and his Saxons cities and fortified places. The Saxons wrought a terrible devastation and Vortegirn seeing it secessit in partibus (some MSS. read 'in partes') Kambriae. Cf. Matth. 2. 22: "... secessit in partes Galilaeae"; ibidem, 15. 21: "... secessit in partes Tyri..."

Hist. 6. 17 (Faral, chap. 106). Vortegirn, not knowing how to cope with the Saxons, called his wizards ("Vocatis denique magis suis") and asked their advice as to what he should do. Cf. Matth. 2. 7: "Tunc Herodes clam vocatis Magis..."

His wizards advised him to search for a lad who never had a father. Vortegirn sent messengers to find such a boy. Their mission was successful and they brought Merlin, with his mother, before the king (Hist. 6. 18; Faral, chap. 107). When the king asked Merlin's mother "ex quo viro conceperat," she answered (Cui illa dixit): "Vivit anima tua et vivit anima mea, domine mi rex, quia neminem agnovi, qui illum in me generavit. Unum... scio quod..."

Cf. I Reg. 1. 26: "Obsecro, mi domine, vivit anima tua, domine"; I Reg. 17. 55: "De qua stirpe descendit hic adolescens, Abner? Dixitque Abner: Vivit anima tua, rex, si novi." Cf. also 4 Reg. 2. 2 (and 2. 4 and 2. 6): "Cui ait Eliseus: Vivit Dominus, et vivit anima tua! quia non derelinquam te." See also Psalm 118. 175: "Vivet anima mea..." For "domine mi rex," see Jer. 38. 9: "Domine mi rex..."; for "unum... scio quod," see John 9. 25: "unum scio, quia..." 1

Hist. 6. 19 (Faral, chap. 108). When Merlin found out

1 For this compare also Nennius, chap. 41: "sed unum scio quia..."
from Vortegirn that, at the advice of his wizards, he was to be killed and his blood sprinkled upon the foundation of Vortegirn’s tower, Merlin addressed the king as follows: “Iube magos tuos venire coram me, et convincam illos mendacium adinvenisse.” This calls to mind Daniel 13. 61: “convicerat . . . eos Daniel ex ore suo falsum dixisse testimonium.”

The influence of the Scriptures upon Book VII of the Historia, that is the Prophecies of Merlin, has been discussed by Taylor (pp. 27-28), Feuerherd (pp. 70-73, 76-79) and Faral (op. cit. 2. 53). Hence there is no need to list the various parallels, except one, at the opening of the Prophecies (7. 1; Faral, chap. 111): “Sedente itaque Vortegirno, rege Britonum, super ripam exhausti stagni . . .”; this calls to mind Matth. 24. 3: “Sedente autem eo super montem Oliveti. . . .”

Hist. 8. 1 (Faral, chap. 118): After Merlin delivered his prophecies, Vortegirn, above all others, expressed his admiration and “Scire igitur volens exitum vitae suae,” he asked Merlin to tell him what he knew of his end. Cf. perhaps Gen. 24. 21: “. . . scire volens utrum prosperum iter suum fecisset Dominus.”

Hist. 8. 10 (Faral, chap. 128). When King Aurelius decided to erect a monument to honour the memory of the heroes whom Hengist had treacherously murdered, the king first summoned his master craftsmen (artifices lignorum et lapidum), who refused to undertake the task. Thereupon, at the suggestion of archbishop Tremorin, he summoned Merlin who advised that the Giants’ Dance be brought over from Ireland. The stones (lapides) of this structure, said Merlin, “. . . si eo modo, quo ibidem positi sunt, circa plateam locabuntur, stabunt in aeternum.” This calls to mind Josue’s command to the twelve priests to carry twelve stones out of the Jordan (Jos. 4. 7): “idcirco positi sunt lapides isti in monumentum filiorum Israel usque in aeternum.”

Hist. 8. 14 (Faral, chap. 132). Pascentius, Vortegirn’s son, entered into a covenant with the Saxon Eopa (pepigit foedus
cum illo) to kill King Aurelius Ambrosius, who lay ill at Winchester. Disguised as a monk and pretending to be a physician he reached Winchester, and, as far as the king’s household was concerned “gratiam in oculis eorum invenit.” Under the pretext of administering a potion he poisoned the king and disappeared. Cf. Gen. 15. 18: “In illo die pepigit Dominus foedus cum Abram”; 1 Reg. 20. 16: “Pepigit ergo Jonathas foedus cum domo David,” et passim. See also Gen. 33. 10: “sed si inveni gratiam in oculis tuis . . .”; 1 Reg. 16. 22: “. . . David . . . invenit . . . gratiam in oculis meis,” et passim.

Hist. 8. 14 (Faral, chap. 133). At Winchester “Haec dum . . . agerentur,” a star of marvellous brightness appeared, sending forth a ray with a globe of fire on it in the shape of a dragon and “ex ore eius procedebant duo radii. . . .” Cf. 2 Reg. 11. 2: “Dum haec agerentur, accidit . . .”; 2 Mac. 4. 30: “Et cum haec agerentur, contigit . . .”; Job 41. 10: “De ore eius (Leviathan) lampades procedunt, sicut taedae ignis accensae”; Isaiah 34. 16: “quia quod ex ore meo procedit . . .” et passim; also Apoc. 9. 17: “et de ore eorum (equorum) procedit ignis, et fumus, et sulphur.”


Uther rushed against them but was forced to retreat and the Saxons “insecuti sunt eos cedentes usque ad montem Damen”. Cf. 1 Mac. 5. 22: “(Simon) . . . persecutus est eos usque ad portam . . .”; 1 Mac. 9. 15: “. . . et persecutus est eos usque ad montem Azoti.”

When the daylight failed them, the Saxons ceased their pursuit and during the night Corlois, Duke of Cornwall, advised the king to attack the enemy under the cover of darkness. “Placuit regi omnibusque sententia illius (Corlois) monitisque suis paruerunt.” Cf. Josue 22. 33: “Placuitque sermo cunctis audientibus”;

1 Cf. also, Hist. 8. 18 (Faral, chap. 136): “soluti . . . a foedere quod pepigerant.”
2 Reg. 17. 4: "Placuitque sermo eius Absalom, et cunctis maioribus natu Israel"; 2 Par. 30. 4: "Placuitque sermo regi et omni multitudini"; Esther 1. 21: "Placuitque consilium eius regi et principibus; fecitque rex iuxta consilium. . . ."

The Britons attacked, defeated the Saxons and after the victory Uther repaired to Alclud and then (Hist. 8. 19; Faral, chap. 137) "Circuivit etiam omnes Scotorum nationes rebellemque populum a feritate sua depositit." Cf. Matth. 9. 35: "Et circumbat Jesus omnes civitates et castella, docens . . . et curans omnem languorem. . . ."

Having established peace in the North, Uther returned to London to celebrate with his nobles the Easter festival. "Laetitiam agebant cuncti," because the king welcomed them in a joyful manner. Cf. 1 Mac. 7. 48: "Et laetatus est populus valde, et egerunt diem illam in laetitia magna"; 2 Mac. 10. 6: "Et cum laetitia diebus octo egerunt."

Hist. 8. 20 (Faral, chap. 138). When Gorlois fell in battle, "venerunt nuntii ad Igernam, qui . . . necem . . . indicarent." Cf. 1 Reg. 11. 4: "Venerunt ergo nuntii in Gabaa Saulis, et locuti sunt . . ."; 2 Par. 20. 2: "Veneruntque nuntii, et indicaverunt Josaphat, dicentes."

With their customary treachery (Hist. 8. 24; Faral, chap. 142), the Saxons devised a plan to poison King Uther and succeeded. After the king's death "advenerunt pontifices cum clero regni, tuleruntque corpus eius ad coenobium Ambrii, et infra Choream Gigantum iuxta Aurelium Ambrosis regio more humaverunt." Cf. 2 Reg. 2. 32: "Tuleruntque Asael, et sepelierunt eum in sepulchro patris sui in Bethlehem"; see also 2 Par. 35. 24: "Qui transtulerunt eum de curru . . . more regio et asportaverunt eum in Jerusalem; mortuusque est, et sepultus in mausoleo patrum suorum."

Hist. 9. 1 (Faral, chap. 143). The ninth book begins with the words: "Defuncto igitur Utherpendragon . . ."; cf. Matth. 2. 19: "Defuncto autem Herode. . . ."

In the wood of Celidon the Saxons resisted bitterly and, by hiding behind the trees, avoided the arrows of the Britons. Arthur ordered his men to fell the trees and place the trunks "in circuitu," in order to prevent the Saxons from getting out. The phrase "in circuitu" occurs repeatedly in the Bible; cf. for example, 1 Reg. 10. 1; 2 Reg. 22. 12.

When his order was complied with, Arthur ordered his men to patrol the wood "mansitque tribus diebus ibi." Cf. 1 Esdras 8. 15 and 32: "et mansimus ibi tribus diebus"; 1 Mac. 11. 40: et mansit ibi diebus multis"; John 4. 40: "Et mansit ibi duos dies."

Hist. 9. 4 (Faral, chap. 147). Cheered by archbishop Dubric's speech against the Saxons the Britons rushed to arm themselves. As for Arthur, he put on (indutus) a coat of mail (lorica) worthy of so great a king; on his head (capiti) he set a golden helmet (galea) with a figure of a dragon engraved on it and on his shoulders his shield, Pridwen, with the image of the Blessed Mary painted upon it. Finally, "Accinctus etiam Caliburno, gladio optimo et in insula Avallonis fabricato," he graced his right hand with his lance, called Ron.

From Nennius, as is known (chap. 56), Geoffrey derived the fact that in the eighth battle against the Saxons Arthur "portavit imaginem sanctae Mariae perpetuae virginis super humeros suos." But from what source, the names of the weapons excepted, did Geoffrey, in part at least, derive the picture of the rest of Arthur's armour? I think from the Scriptures. Cf. 1 Reg. 17. 38-39: "Et induit Saul David vestimentis suis, et imposuit galeam aeream super caput eius, et vestivit eum lorica. Accinctus ergo David gladio eius super vestem suam, coepit tentare si armatus posset incedere." 2 Reg. 20. 8: "Porro Joab vestitus erat tunica stricta ad mensuram habitus sui, et desuper accinctus gladio . . . qui fabricatus Levi motu egredi poterat et percutere."

These two passages contain the same phraseology as the passage of Geoffrey: induere, lorica, galea, gladius, fabricatus,

1 Cf. also Hist. 1. 6 (Faral, chap. 10): . . . "turmas . . . in circuitu locavit."
and like David and Joab, Arthur is "Accinctus gladio." All this, it seems to me, is not accidental.


_Hist._ 9. 10 (Faral, chap. 154). After adding to his realm Ireland, Iceland and other islands, Arthur invited to his court all that were distinguished for their valour. "Denique, _fama_ largitatis atque probitatis illius, per extremos _mundi cardines_ divulgata,\(^1\) reges . . . invadebat timor. . . ." With this we may compare _Esther_ 9. 4: "_Fama_ quoque nominis eius _crescebat_ quotidie, et per _cunctorum ora volitabit_; 2 _Mac._ 8. 7: " . . . et _fama_ virtutis eius _ubique_ diffundebatur"; 2 _Mac._ 4. 39: "divulgata _fama_; _Luke_ 4. 37: "Et _divulgabatur_ _fama_ de _illo_ in _omnem locum regionis._" For "cardines _mundi," cp. 1 _Reg._ 2. 8: "cardines _terrae_; _Prov._ 8. 26: "cardines _orbis_ _terrae_."

_Hist._ 10. 5 (Faral, chap. 167). The Romans hid in a place intending to ambush the Britons, who "Mane autem _facto_ . . . viam ineunt. . . ." Cf. _Iud._ 19. 8: "Mane autem _facto_; also _Iud._ 19. 27; _Matth._ 27. 1 and _John_ 21. 4.

_Hist._ 12. 4 (Faral, chap. 193). Vanquished by Edwin, Cadwallo, accompanied by Brian, landed after a shipwreck on the island of Garnareia. Here he was seized with a desire for venison. Unable to secure it, Brian cut a piece of his own thigh, roasted it and gave it to Cadwallo, who "Satiatus tandem _hilarior_ factus est et _levior_. . . ." Cf. _Ruth_ 3. 7: "Cumque _comedisset_ Booz et _bibisset_, et _factus esset_ _hilarior_, _issetque ad dormiendum_."

_Hist._ 12. 13 (Faral, chap. 201). After Cadwallo's death, the Britons embalmed his body and placed it in a brazen statue

\(^1\) Cf. also _Hist._ 1. 3 (Faral, chap. 7): "Divulgata itaque per universas nationes ipsius (Bruti) _fama_ . . . ."
"ad mensuram staturae suae fusa." Cf. 2 Reg. 20. 8: "Joab . . . vestitus . . . tunica stricta ad mensuram habitus sui. . . ."

The passages listed in this paper (and there are many more) clearly show that the Bible exerted a powerful influence upon Geoffrey. Though he introduced some biblical passages verbatim into the fabric of his narrative and brought in others with some modifications and, though scriptural phrases are found scattered throughout the Historia, this does not mean that Geoffrey copied these passages and phrases. When one takes into consideration to what degree the Middle Ages had to rely on memory, it is more likely that Geoffrey quoted them from his memory,—a memory which surely has not been impaired, as modern memories are, by print.¹

Moreover, from some biblical motifs and situations he derived general ideas of various incidents which he recast, recoloured, expanded and sometimes combined with an incident from another source. But while he succeeded to a remarkable degree in remodelling and reconstructing statements from other sources—a method which renders the study of his borrowings and imitations so difficult,—he was less successful in applying this procedure to the material drawn from the Scriptures. The reason for this is not far to seek: the Bible was an integral part of Geoffrey’s spiritual background and consciousness. Hence the deeper imprint upon his work and upon its language.