

Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic Alumni Newsletter

Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic

Issue 9 August 2018

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Is it a charter or is it a cake? Celebrating Prof. Simon Keynes's 65th birthday.



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CAMBRIDGE



Hwæt! and welcome to this summer's Alumni Newsletter.

As usual, there's been lots of excitement this year for ASNCs past and present. In the Department, activities have been as eclectic and diverting as ever, as the news pages in this issue reveal!

One of our favourite events is always the Reading Prize in memory of Professor Peter Clemoes, now in its twenty-first year — the very first winner was Dan Starkey, back in 1998. Congratulations to this year's winner, Amrit Sidhu-Brar, for his brilliant performance as Ælfric, teaching us all about interjections from his *Grammar* — as wonderfully entertaining a language class as you will ever see.

There have been some other really special events this year. Everyone in ASNC was thrilled when Dr Rosalind Love was awarded a Pilkington Prize for outstanding teaching; a tremendous honour, richly deserved. And we celebrated the work and achievements of both Dr Debby Banham and Professor Simon Keynes — including by means of the cake that features on this issue's cover!

ASNCs have been getting out and about, too, to all kinds of places and in all kinds of media. Excursions range from conferences in the likes of Kalamazoo, Leeds, Bergen, Venice and Reykjavik, to a trip to the inaugural *Beowulf* festival in Woodbridge, to a voyage into the world of video games: we congratulate Dr Elizabeth Rowe for her involvement in 'Hellblade: Senua's Sacrifice', which has won cabinet-fuls of awards!

As always, we've welcomed world-leading scholars to speak in our series of named lectures, with Pierre-Yves Lambert (Paris), Greg Toner (Queen's Belfast) and David Parsons (Aberystwyth) giving the Quiggin, Chadwick and Hughes lectures respectively. The subjects of these lectures were connected with three of the major collaborative research projects carrying on in the Department this year: 'Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago: Contact, Myth and History, 450–1200', 'Text and Meaning: Contributions to a Revised Dictionary of Medieval Irish' and '*Vitae Sanctorum Cambriae*: The Latin Lives of the Welsh Saints'.

Two of the researchers on these projects are sadly leaving us during 2018: Dr Dagmar Wodtko (Text and Meaning) is departing to return to Germany, but Dr David Callander (Welsh Saints) is not going so far; we congratulate him on his election to a Research Fellowship at St Catharine's College, starting this October. Recent British Academy post-doc Dr Paul Gazzoli is also off to pastures new, to a prestigious Fellowship in Vienna; well done, Paul! Joining us are new



Amrit Sidhu-Brar performs at the Clemoes Reading Prize (Photo: M. Ní Mhaonaigh).

faces Dr Marie-Luise Theuerkauf (Text and Meaning) and Dr Francesco Marzella (Welsh Saints), and we're delighted to welcome them to the ASNC family.

You can read the latest news about all our projects, and other research, symposia and workshops happening in the Department, elsewhere in this issue, including about new books from Dr Ali Bonner, Professor Paul Russell, and Drs Rory Naismith and David Woodman.

As always, it's wonderful to know what friends from ASNC past have been up to. It's been fabulous to see so many of you in Cambridge this year, at the alumni reunion drinks last September, at the Garden Party in June, and of course at the ever-marvellous Black Tie Dinner in January. News in this issue includes Elin Manahan Thomas and the Royal Wedding, a translation prize for Vicky Cribb, and a new arrival for Velda Elliot. Congratulations to you all!

Please keep on staying in touch and let us know what you've been doing: you can reach us any time through the Alumni Facebook group, or through email, an ASNaCy-themed postcard, or however you like (though please allow extra time for symbol stones and sword-hilts to be deciphered — sometimes the light has to be just right ...).

Lastly, gigantic thanks to Dr Brittany Schorn for editing this newsletter, and to all ASNCs — from the most grizzled senior member (and I speak as one who is getting grizzlier all the time), to the newest undergrads, to the furthest flung alumni — for making this year such a pleasure. Like Grendel, I give you all a big hand.

Richard Dance
Head of Department



New Research Staff

Dr Marie-Luise Theuerkauf
Research Associate, eDIL

Marie-Luise Theuerkauf has joined the staff of ASNC as a post-doctoral researcher on the AHRC-funded project: Text and Meaning: Contributions to a Revised Dictionary of Medieval Irish, hosted jointly by the University of Cambridge and Queen's University Belfast. Originally, from Germany, Marie-Luise came to University College Cork in 2007 where she subsequently completed a Certificate in Irish Studies, before graduating with a B.A. in Celtic Civilisation and French in 2009 and a PhD in Early Irish and Old French in 2015. She has been working as an O'Donovan scholar at the School of Celtic Studies, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies for the past three years. Her primary research interests are Old Irish language and literature, Irish metrics, and the corpus of place-name lore known as *Dindshenchas Éirenn*. She is in the process of editing parts of that corpus as a monograph.



David Callander
Junior Research Fellow, St Catharine's College



David Callander, currently a research associate on the *Vitae Sanctorum Cambriae* project, will be joining St Catharine's College as a junior research fellow from October. David is looking forward to the opportunities this new role will provide, and is planning to make particular study of the reception and translation of Middle English texts in early modern Wales, though he still hopes to find some time for saints!

Dr Francesco Marzella

Research Associate, Vitae Sanctorum Cambriae project

As a researcher in the field of medieval Latin literature, I soon developed an interest in Latin literature written in Britain, a fascinating point of convergence for different ethnic and cultural identities.

I obtained my PhD at the Istituto Italiano di Scienze Umane (Florence) with the critical edition of a 12th-century hagiographical text, the *Life of St. Edward King and Confessor* by Aelred of Rievaulx (now published in Brepols' Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis series). Later on I moved back to L'Aquila, where I come from, as a postdoctoral researcher on *mirabilia* and the supernatural in Anglo-Latin literature. After that I worked in Tuscany and Rome as a high-school

teacher.

I am now honoured to have the opportunity to come back to Cambridge – where I spent the last year of my PhD – as a Research Associate working on the *Vitae Sanctorum Cambriae* project. I am looking forward to joining again the vibrant community of ASNC and I hope to contribute to the project and make the best of this new exciting experience!

Hellblade: Senua's Sacrifice
Elizabeth Ashman Rowe

As Reader in Scandinavian History in the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, I am often contacted by the media to answer questions about the Vikings, but in 2015 it was two video-game developers from local Cambridge company Ninja Theory who requested a meeting. They were working on a game that involved Norse mythology, and they needed help in understanding the material. Would I advise? I had some concerns, but I couldn't pass up the opportunity to bring accurate knowledge of Viking culture and beliefs to a wide popular audience.



Hellblade: Senua's Sacrifice is about a young Celtic woman whose troubled background has brought her to the edge of psychosis. She undertakes a quest to bring her slain lover back from Helheim, the Norse realm of the dead, a task complicated by the voices in her head and the uncertain boundary between reality and hallucination. Just as the developers were keen to make use of real Viking culture, so too were they set on an accurate rendering of the visual and aural experiences of schizophrenia. They consulted with Cambridge specialists and recovering patients and were supported by the Wellcome Trust. My job was to supply the narratives, runes, and artistic details from the Viking Age that would give Senua's journey through Helheim the integrity and coherence that comes from rooting a fantasy in historical reality. I combed the Old Norse sources for appropriate stories and translated them into short dramatic segments of 'lore', some of which is told to Senua and some of which the player learns from rune-

stones along her path. The combination of psychological and historical accuracy made *Senua's Sacrifice* a video game like no other: it received five BAFTA game awards, and the chief creative director and I won the Writers' Guild of Great Britain award for best writing in a video game.



Pilkington Prize Awarded to Dr Rosalind Love

Richard Dance

The whole department was thrilled when Dr Rosalind Love was named as one of the winners of this year’s Pilkington Prize for outstanding teaching in the University of Cambridge. Just twelve of these incredibly prestigious prizes are awarded annually, and so this is a tremendous achievement — albeit one which should not surprise anyone who has been taught by, or worked with, Rosalind!



Pilkington Prize winners (Photo: University of Cambridge).

The awards were presented at an appropriately glitzy ceremony and dinner (at Robinson College) on 21 June, which also celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Prize. Here is the text of the citation which was read about Dr Love at the ceremony:

Dr Rosalind Love is Reader in Insular Latin in the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic. She is an outstanding teacher: creative, sympathetic and much admired by her students and colleagues. She works tirelessly and with unflinching enthusiasm, including continuing with her full teach-

ing load throughout her term as Head of Department over the last three years. She is a brilliant teacher of the medieval Latin language and literature of Britain and Ireland — so much so that, by the end of the two years of Part I, she has got absolute beginners in Latin up to the same reading standard as those who have studied it to A-level. Many of these students, indeed, go on to write dissertations on Latin subjects, to take Dr Love’s outstanding Part II special paper ‘Writing Women’, and to conduct graduate research in the field. Amongst the many innovations in teaching and learning that she has made in the Department, she has also been the driving force behind our adoption of VLE teaching materials (first CamTools, then Moodle), and has created language-learning resources which have been adopted by other institutions. In short, Rosalind Love is a magnificent colleague, richly deserving of a Pilkington Prize.

Many congratulations, Rosalind, from all of us!



Rosalind Love and Bathsheba Wells-Dion (Photo: University of Cambridge).



The Cambridge contingent in Bergen, at Håkonshallen (photo L. Cangemij).

Old Norse Graduate Symposium in Bergen

Tom Grant

This April, many of the department's resident Nordacists and teaching staff jetted off to Bergen for the 12th International Postgraduate Symposium in Old Norse Studies. Joined by graduate students and lecturers from across Europe working on medieval Scandinavia, ASNC's own MPhil and PhD students had the opportunity to present their research to an international audience. Outside of the auditoria, there were plenty of opportunities for the Cambridge cohort to experience the city of Bergen and all it had to offer. The first day saw a visit to the special collections at the university library, where the group was able to get up close and personal with some medieval manuscripts. On the second day, all of the attendees enjoyed a wonder-

ful conference dinner at Matbørsen. When the papers had been wrapped up, the ASNCs were rewarded with a tour of the splendid royal hall, Håkonshallen, and its environs. Bergen was blessed with rare sunshine for the entire symposium, and this made the trip all the more memorable.



View from the fish market in Bergen (photo B. Schorn).

Beowulf Festival
Debby Banham

Debby Banham took part in the Beowulf Festival at Woodbridge, Suffolk (just across the estuary from Sutton Hoo), along with five current students from the Department (some of them also alumni) on 5 May this year. Debby gave a talk in the historic Tide Mill, en-

titled ‘What did Beowulf eat? Food and farming in Anglo-Saxon England’, and then the students performed scenes from the poem in front of Saewylfing, the half-size replica of the Sutton Hoo ship. We were blessed with sunny weather, and a good time was had by all.

Photo: J. McIntosh.



A student’s-eye view from James McIntosh:

On May 5th a group of students from the department were invited to perform at the Spirit of Beowulf Festival at Woodbridge, Suffolk. On a blazing hot day (a far cry from the frozen wastes of Grendel’s Mere) three postgraduate students (James McIntosh, Amrit Sidhu-Brar and Eleanor Smith) and two first-years (Nia Griffiths and James Millington) rose to the challenge.

Following on from Debby Banham’s talk on ‘What Did Beowulf Eat?’ and Kevin Crossley-Holland’s dramatic reading from his new translation, the troupe ‘seriously read, and not so seriously acted’ the Building of Heorot and the Fight with Grendel, complete with a highly realistic Grendel costume constructed from rubber gloves and electrical tape. A good time was had by all, not least the performers, and the public were very interested to pick our brains on medieval studies afterwards – Nia, the Society Access Officer, even managed to encourage a couple of potential applicants! Surely Beowulf would be proud.



**Leeds IMC
Sessions in
Honour of Dr
Debby
Banham**

Chris Voth

Over the course of her career, Dr

Debby Banham has contributed generously to the field of medieval studies, as well as to her students and colleagues. To celebrate her career and accomplishments, we held three wonderful and informative sessions in celebration of Debby and her important scholarship in the fields of medieval medicine, farming and agriculture, diet, food, and food production. These sessions were also a sneak-peak into the forthcoming *Festschrift* in Debby's honour:

Cultivating the Early, Nurturing the Body & Soul: Daily Life in Early Medieval England. Essays in Honour of Dr Debby Banham.

The forthcoming collection includes essays that will offer new insights into the intersection of gender and agricultural/food production. Furthermore, they will explore the reproduction and ritual use of vernacular charms, examine theory and practice of medieval medicine, elucidate monastic economies and production, and uncover the circumstances behind the production of medical manuscripts in early medieval England.

Contributors include: Rosamond Faith, Alex Woolf, Christina Lee, Martha Bayless, Lea Olsan, Karen Jolly,

Rory Naismith, Christine Voth, Faith Wallis, Sarah Gilbert, Bethany Christiansen, Conan Doyle, Carol Biggam, and Peregrine Horden.

Celebrating Prof. Simon Keynes's 65th Birthday
Rory Naismith

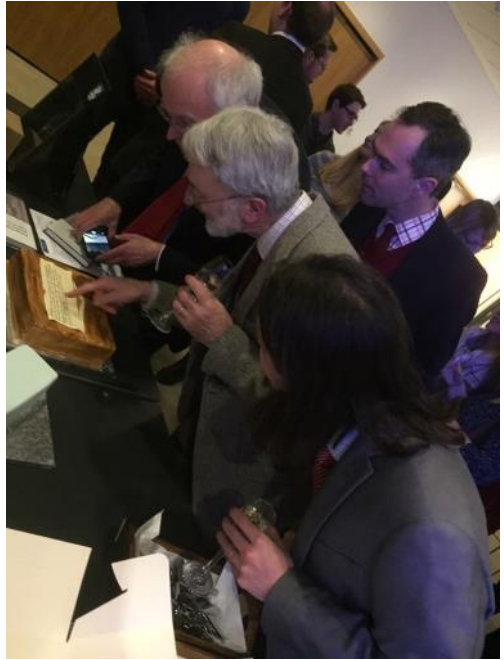
Colleagues and students past and present gathered at Robinson College in November 2017 to celebrate Prof. Simon Keynes's 65th birthday, and the publication of a new volume of essays in his honour.

Simon has been a stalwart of ASNC since his undergraduate days in the early 1970s, and over the subsequent five decades has risen to become lecturer (1978) and (from 1998) Elrington and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon. He is a leading expert on Anglo-Saxon history, and has redefined scholars' appreciation of Æthelred II and of Anglo-Saxon charters, and much more besides. Alumni and alumnae will remember his lucid and light-hearted teaching style, as well as his elegant handouts. He has always inspired students to return to the primary sources, and a class with Simon might well involve a charter or coin being whipped out for circulation and discussion.



The number of former students and colleagues who travelled from afar to be with Simon at the celebration in November is testimony to the affection in which he is held. The main event of the evening was the presentation to Simon of a copy of the new book edited in his honour, *Writing, Kingship and Power in Anglo-Saxon England* (edited by Rory Naismith and David Woodman).

One of the highlights of the evening was a startling new discovery in the field of Anglo-Saxon diplomatic: the first ever known single-sheet original writ of Æthelred II. It had previously languished unknown in the form of sugar, butter and flour, and was re-discovered and lovingly restored to its pristine condition by Dr Myriah Williams.



This writ has the unusual distinction of being the most tasty Anglo-Saxon charter ever consumed, as those who were present can attest. Specialists in Old English have produced the following translation of part of the text: 'King Æthelred greets Earl Richard and all the men and women in the guild of ASNaCs, and I say to you that I have granted to Earl Simon all the honours and books that rightly pertain to him, because of the many people who esteem him ...'. The written portion of the writ was not consumed at the party, but is preserved in a certain private collection in Trinity College, Cambridge.

Left: Myriah Williams, with the writ-cake; Above: Simon, Dr Oliver Padel, Dr David Pratt and Dr Levi Roach examine the new discovery (photos: B. Schorn).

Electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language

Prof. Máire Ní Mhaonaigh



Work on the electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language

(eDIL: www.dil.ie) has continued apace this year with research on various words being conducted by Dagmar Wodtko, Marie-Luise Theuerkauf and Máire Ní Mhaonaigh in Cambridge, alongside Belfast colleagues, Sharon Arbuthnot and Gregory Toner. The team was delighted to participate in an interactive event with GERSUM researchers which formed part of the Cambridge Festival of Ideas. And eDIL has been out and about as well with Máire Ní Mhaonaigh speaking to audiences in Tromsø, Norway, as well as at Dublin City University, while Sharon Arbuthnot presented the work of eDIL at a conference on lexicography in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Research has illuminated the meanings of known words, but has also brought new words and concepts to light. Vocabulary concerning medicine has been particularly to the fore in this phase of the project. The unusual word *smiramair*, literally 'marrow-tub', is a bath of marrow from crushed bones which is said to have been used in the treatment of wounded warriors. Sharon Arbuthnot has drawn attention to medical texts in Irish and other languages which emphasise the dangers attendant upon injuries which allow marrow to escape and on the role of marrow in strengthening bones. In this context, it becomes clear why marrow is presented as having particularly powerful healing properties in medieval Irish literature

and how a wonderful word like *smiramair* might come into being. You can read about *smiramair* and other eDIL discoveries at www.dil.ie, or follow us on Facebook or @eDIL_Dictionary.

Welsh Saints: the Vitae Sanctorum Cambriae Project

Dr David Callander

The *Vitae Sanctorum Cambriae* project, run between ASNC and the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies in Aberystwyth, is moving full steam ahead and has yielded several fascinating new discoveries. Much will be unveiled over the coming year in the run-up to the project's major conference in September 2019. Current research associate David Callander is being succeeded in October by Francesco Marzella, who will be working in particular on the John of Tynemouth recensions of the Cambro-Latin saints' lives.



Perhaps St Beuno or St Deiniol, probably early sixteenth century, Church of St Beuno, Penmorfa, Gwynedd. Photo: Martin Crampin.

Gersum

Dr Brittany Schorn

The Gersum Project is named after the Middle English word *gersum*, borrowed from Old Norse *gersemi* 'treasure'. One of the most lasting impacts of the Viking Age, especially in the north and east of England, and probably its most enduring and significant effect, was on the English language. The aim of our project is to understand Scandinavian influence on English vocabulary by examining the origins of a large corpus of words in Middle English poems from the north of England. English words with Old Norse origins certainly enriched the language and include such basic items as *sky*, *egg*, *law*, *leg*, *call*, *take*, *window*, *knife*, *die* and *skin*, and the pronouns *they*, *their* and *them*, as well as others as diverse and intriguing as *hernez* 'brains', *muged* 'drizzled', *stange* 'pole' and *wothe* 'danger'. Follow @GersumProject on twitter, where #Gersumwow unveils a different Norse-derived word every week!

The Project is an AHRC-funded collaboration led by Richard Dance, and involving ASNC alumna Sara Pons-Sanz (now of Cardiff University) and Brittany Schorn. We continued with another busy calendar of events this year, with highlights including talks at the Yorkshire Dialect Society, the University of Nottingham's 'Bringing the Vikings Back to the East Midlands' exhibitions and the Cambridge Festival of Ideas. Richard gave keynote lectures to the International Conference on Medieval English in Stavanger, Norway, and the International Medieval Congress at the University of Leeds, and Sara delivered

the Helen Thirza Addyman lecture at the Jorvik Centre in York. Our own conference will take place at St Catharine's College on September 5-7 this year. All are welcome to join us as we explore the historical and cultural contexts and legacies of Anglo-Scandinavian encounters in the Viking Age from cross-disciplinary perspectives. Get more information and register at www.gersum.org.



eSenchas: An Electronic Resource for the Study of Medieval Irish Texts

Rebecca Shercliff

On 31st October 2017, the ASNaC Department was delighted to launch a new website, *eSenchas: An Electronic Resource for the Study of Medieval Irish Texts*

(www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/esenchas/).

The aim of the website is to bring together into a single site the many diverse online tools which are currently available for analysing medieval Irish texts, such as digital manuscript images and online databases. The medieval Irish word *senchas* means 'tradition, old tales, history', referring to the material which the learned classes drew on to explore Ireland's past. This website seeks to gather together *Electronic Senchas*



(i.e. *eSenchas*), the modern equivalent of the accumulation of lore through which the medieval Irish understood their past. The Researcher was Rebecca Shercliff and the Project Advisors were Prof. Máire Ní Mhaonaigh and Dr Dagmar Wodtko. This project was funded by Cambridge University's Research Student Development Fund and Isaac Newton Trust, and was produced in association with the project currently taking place jointly at the University of Cambridge and Queen's University Belfast, which is undertaking a revision of eDIL, the Electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language (www.dil.ie).

Literary Genre in Old Norse-Icelandic Literature

Dr Judy Quinn and Dr Brittany Schorn

Judy Quinn, Elizabeth Ashman Rowe and Brittany Schorn are taking part in an international research project on 'Literary Genre in Old Norse-Icelandic Literature'. The project entails a thorough investigation of genre across all literary modes in medieval Scandinavia, informed by broader considerations about theoretical approach and the role of orality, textuality, per-

formativity and codicology. Medieval authors and redactors negotiated a complex and ever-evolving range of choices when mediating different kinds of thematic material. Revisiting traditional generic and subgeneric categories, the participants reflected on their origins and questioned their ongoing usefulness, as well as considering how they corresponded to the evidence we have for medieval theorisation of genre. These discussions took place at a workshop in the idyllic setting of Ca'Foscari in Venice on April 19–20, and the results will be published by Boydell and Brewer in a forthcoming volume entitled *A Critical Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literary Genre*, edited by Massimiliano Bampi, Carolyne Larrington and Sif Rikarðsdóttir.



View from the workshop venue at Ca'Foscari, Venice (B. Schorn).



Claude Poulin and Ben Guy looked for signs of ongoing communication between Brittany and western Britain in ‘coded’ texts such as saints’ lives and genealogies. Magali Coumert gave a fresh view of historical geography. David Dumville gave an update on manuscripts and Katharine Keats-Rohan on Brittany’s contacts with the wider world as

Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago Dr Caroline Brett

On 1-2 December 2017 the four-year research project ‘Brittany and the Atlantic Archipelago’, funded by the Leverhulme Trust, held its project conference. The project, led by Professor Paul Russell with Fiona Edmonds as Co-Investigator and Caroline Brett as research assistant, aims to shed light on one of the most mysterious episodes of post-Roman Europe, the migration that turned part of north-western Gaul into ‘Brittany’ and gave it its Celtic language. No contemporary author has left an account of how, why or exactly when the Britons arrived in Brittany. It is necessary to use indirect evidence that needs a range of specialized techniques for its interpretation.

A dozen international speakers gave the audience the results of their latest research. Paul Russell and Oliver Padel considered the evidence of language and place-names. Joseph-

evidenced in *libri memoriales* – obituary lists kept by monasteries. Archaeologists John Hines and Patrick Galliou tackled the problem of the shortage of material evidence for migration and trade between western Britain and Brittany. Perhaps the most exciting communication was from Isabelle Catteddu, who has been working on rescue archaeology in Brittany over the past few years. She reported on new discoveries of ‘Dark Age’ settlements in Brittany which show that although Brittany may not have shared the ‘elite’ culture of its neighbours – fortified high-status centres, precious metalwork, furnished burials and the like – yet in terms of aspects of the basic agricultural economy such as utilitarian buildings and crops, it took part in technological interchange with the rest of north-western Europe. Perhaps Brittany, without being culturally isolated, really was an effective retreat from the endemic political conflict of the early Middle Ages.

Eddic Poetry Workshops

Dr Brittany Schorn

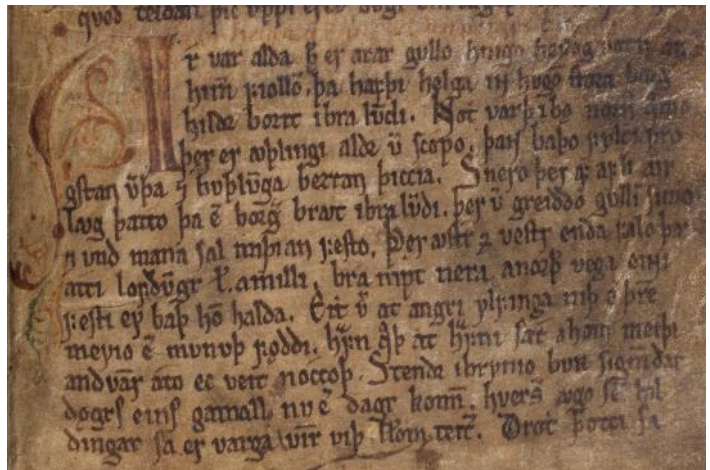
Collaborative research on Old Norse eddic poetry has continued this year in the form of two workshops organised by Judy Quinn, Brittany Schorn and Carolyn Larrington (Oxford). The first was held in Cambridge in February 2018, and the second will follow the International Saga Conference in Reykjavík this August.

These unconventional workshops are an Old Norse poetry devotee's dream: half-day sessions are designed to allow for the sort of close textual work that the usual conference format does not allow. Each half day is devoted to a particular eddic poem, each selected because it raises complex interpretative questions that speak to our larger research questions and to fill a lacuna in current scholarship. Thus through case studies we are reconsidering fundamental questions such as the relationship between poetry and prose and the interpretation of manuscript layouts.

Poems studied in the first workshop included *Hymiskviða*, *Völundarkviða*, *Helgakviða Hjörvarðssonar* and *Hárbarðsljóð*. In the second workshop, we will be examining *Grímnismál*, *Lokasenna*, *Helgakviða Hundingsbana II*, *Sigrdrífumál* and *Guðrúnarhvöt*.

These poems tell stories of conflict between the gods and the giants and within the ranks of the Æsir themselves, of the fickle and tenuous divine patronage of human heroes, and of the tragic downfall of the great heroic dynasties of the migration age. They also exemplify the full range of styles exploited by versatile eddic poets, who called on the full range of the rich Old Norse poetic material in order to put their own stamp on well-known legends.

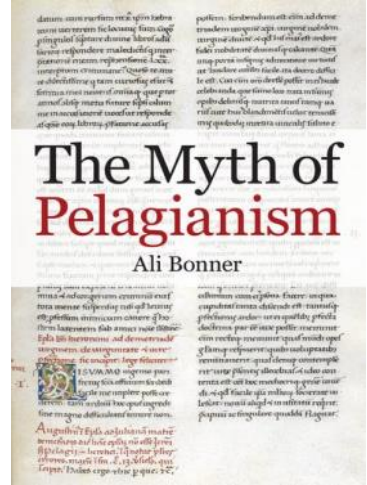
These workshops have brought together specialists at all stages of their academic careers, including scholars from Oxford, the University of California at Berkeley, and the University of Zürich, as well as Cambridge. Current Cambridge PhD students involved in the project include Francesco Colombo, Tom Grant, Katie Haley-Halinski and Katherine Olley. A book will be published after the final workshop bringing together the results of the project, so watch this space!



The beginning of Helgakviða Hundingsbana I in the Codex Regius (photo: handrit.is).

Ali Bonner, *The Myth of Pelagianism*

At the end of August 2018 my book, *The Myth of Pelagianism*, will be published by OUP. It is the result of my research for my PhD in ASNC, and a subsequent British Academy postdoctoral fellowship. To explain a little about Pelagius and how he fits into the field of Asnac studies: Pelagius is the first known British author, famous for his defence of free will as the Roman empire disintegrated. He advocated two ideas: that human nature was inclined to goodness, and that man had free will. After a campaign to vilify him, he was excommunicated in AD 418 for allegedly inventing a new and dangerous heresy, and his name was made a byword for wilful arrogance. My book sets out evidence to show that Pelagius defended what was the mainstream understanding of Christianity; far from being the leader of a separatist group, he was one of many propagandists for the ascetic movement. I assess the accusation of heresy against Pelagius in the context of scholarship on the function of heresy in religion, and sociological analysis of the creation of deviance. Manuscript evidence supports the argument that ‘Pelagianism’ was a deliberately created myth; Pelagius’ writings were staples of medieval monastic book collections because they contained the same ideas as those of other writers promoting asceticism, and medieval readers were strikingly unable to see a difference between Pelagius’ works and the writings of Jerome, for example. Pelagius is a paradigmatic heretic because he is a prime example of the constructed nature of heresy, and because the issues surrounding his condemnation have never been resolved; the accusation of heresy still finds traction. Taking an interdisciplinary approach and using manuscript evidence that has not been considered before, *The Myth of Pelagianism* represents a paradigm shift in understanding late antique Christianity. Pelagius’ opponents invented a narrative about him that has stood for 1,600 years; my aim is finally to dispel that myth, and set its creation in the political, cultural and ecclesiastical contexts of the day.



Paul Russell, *Reading Ovid in Medieval Wales*

Reading Ovid in Medieval Wales provides the first complete edition and discussion of the earliest surviving fragment of Ovid’s *Ars amatoria*, or *The Art of Love*, which derives from ninth-century Wales; the manuscript, which is preserved in Oxford, is heavily glossed mainly in Latin but also in Old Welsh. This study discusses the significance of the manuscript for classical studies and how it was absorbed into the classical Ovidian tradition. This volume’s main focus, however, is on the glossing and commentary and what these can teach us about the pedagogical approaches to Ovid’s text in medieval Europe and Britain and, more specifically, in Wales. Professor Catherine McKenna notes in her



Reading Ovid in Medieval Wales

PAUL RUSSELL

review for *Speculum* that ‘Paul Russell is known for illuminating the entire landscape of literary culture in medieval Wales and Ireland by reading between the lines’ as he does in this ‘latest example of his painstaking scholarship’ which provides a ‘range of insights into Latin learning in medieval Wales’.

Russell argues that this annotated version of the *Ars amatoria* arose out of the teaching traditions of the Carolingian world and that the annotation, as we have it, was the product of a cumulative process of glossing and commenting on the text. He then surveys other glossed Ovid manuscripts to demonstrate how that accumulation was built up. Russell also explores the fascinating issue of why Ovid’s love poetry should be used to teach Latin verse in monastic contexts. Finally, he discusses the connection between this manuscript and the

numerous references to Ovid in later Welsh poetry, suggesting that the Ovidian references should perhaps be taken to refer to love poetry more generically.

Rory Naismith and David Woodman, *Writing, Kingship and Power in Anglo-Saxon England*

This volume of essays has been written in honour of Prof. Simon Keynes, in the year of his 65th birthday. It assembles the work of over a dozen of Simon’s colleagues and former students on topics relating to Simon’s interests in Anglo-Saxon history, diplomatic and manuscripts. The contributors include Julia Crick, Katy Cubitt, David Dumville, Sarah Foot, Helen Foxhall Forbes, Rory Naismith, Jinty Nelson, Oliver Padel, David Pratt, Levi Roach, Pauline Stafford, Francesca Tinti and David Woodman. Their essays show how the workings of royal and ecclesiastical authority in Anglo-Saxon England can only be understood on the basis of direct engagement with original texts and material artefacts. Ranging from the seventh to the eleventh century, central themes include the formation of power in early Anglo-Saxon kingdoms during the age of Bede (d. 735) and Offa of Mercia (757–96), authority and its articulation in the century from Edgar (959–75) to 1066, and the significance of books and texts in expressing power across the period.

Writing, Kingship and Power in Anglo-Saxon England

Edited by Rory Naismith
and David A. Woodman





ASNC Society

Kate Barber

Continuing the tradition of many years, the ASNaC society has been very active in 2017-18. Once again, the Yule Play was held in Decem-

ber, in which King Óláfr of Norway encouraged his subjects to convert to the tune of 'call me maybe', Proinsias mac Cana baked sovereignty goddesses at the Bake Off, and the audience was taught how to 'reach for the schwas'.





In January, several of us went on a trip to Argyll to catch a bit of sun and a few old churches. The most resounding success of the trip was clearly the travel, with several people driven in a tow truck to the hostel like kings in a chariot. Nevertheless, we had a good time looking at old rocks and buildings because we are nerds.

Once again, as many alumni will be aware, the Black-Tie Dinner was held again to the enjoyment of many in 2018, this time in Selwyn college. As new presidents of the society, Ela and Kate would like to thank Amrit and Robin for all their efforts this past year and congratulate them on how wonderful it has been. We can only hope to equal their achievements in the coming year.

COLSONOEL 2018

Emma Knowles

On May 18th 2018 the department hosted the 2018 Cambridge, Oxford and London Symposium on Old Norse, Old English and Latin. We enjoyed 11 excellent papers given by participants from Oxford University, University College London and the ASNC department in Cambridge on a range of topics ranging from the paleography of Danish Latin manuscript fragments through to the particulars of the Alfredian canon. Each paper received comments from a respondent before being opened to the floor for other questions, leading to many interesting discussions which continued over tea breaks and into a wine reception following the event. As organisers we were thankful for all the great papers, for participants turning up ready to ask stimulating questions, and that we never ran out of biscuits!

Vicky Cribb has been presented with a hugely prestigious award by the President of Iceland for her translation work.

The honorary award **ORDSTÍR**, which literally means honour or renown of the word, is meant to highlight the invaluable work of the numerous translators in the field, in addition to being a token of gratitude and encouragement to those translators who receive the award each given time. The award is presented biennially to one or two individuals, who have delivered translations of the highest quality of Icelandic works into another language and in doing so, have brought attention to Icelandic culture on an international level.

Congratulations, Vicky!



Photo: P. Gazzoli.

Paul Gazzoli, former PhD Student and British Academy Post-Doctoral Fellow in the Department, has been awarded an EU Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship for his project **GENTES** (Genesis of Ethnicities in Textual Evidence for Scandinavia, c. 750-c. 1000), which will be hosted by the Austrian Academy of Sciences' Institute for Medieval Research in Vienna for the years 2018-20. The project deals with the emergence and transformations of identities and polities in Scandinavia's earliest historical period, with a focus on the earliest Latin sources, and will result in a monograph.

ASNCs watching the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle in 2018 will have been delighted by the performance of ASNC alumna **Elin Manahan Thomas** as she sang Handel's 'Eternal Source of Light Divine' during the ceremony.



Photo: E. Manahan Thomas.

Congratulations to ASNC alumna **Velda Elliott** on the birth of her son Harry Peter Aspinall on 9 September 2017!

All at 9 West Road unless otherwise stated.

ASNC Alumni Reunion:

22 September 2018, 5–7 pm drinks in the ASNC Common Room

University Festival of Ideas: 15-28 October 2018

The theme of this year's Festival will be 'Extremes', and feature a number of talks by members of the department, including Dr Ali Bonner, Dr Ben Guy, Dr David Callander, Dr Rosalind Love, Professor Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, Dr Richard Dance, James McIntosh, Dara Hellman, Emma Knowles, Calum Platts and Becky Shercliff. For details see www.festivalofideas.cam.ac.uk/.

Quiggin Lecture:

29 November 2018, 5 pm: Professor Jayne Carroll (University of Nottingham)

ASNC Society Black-tie Dinner:

Date in January/February 2019 to be confirmed.

Chadwick Lecture:

14 March 2019, 5 pm: Professor Judith Jesch (University of Nottingham)

Kathleen Hughes Lecture (at Hughes Hall, Pavilion Room):

29 April 2019, 5.45 pm: Dr Jacopo Bisagni (NUI Galway)

ASNC Summer Garden Party:

19 June 2019, 6 pm: Trinity College, Fellows' Bowling Green

ASNC Alumni are warmly welcome to attend any of these events (see www.asnc.cam.ac.uk for updates)

You are warmly invited to join the ASNaC Alumni **Facebook** group (Anglo-Saxon, Norse & Celtic Alumni) for further announcements and updates, and to keep in touch! If you are interested in finding out more about our current research and teaching or our future plans, or would like to tell us news that you would like reported in future newsletters, please contact us through the Departmental Secretary at asnc@hermes.cam.ac.uk or by post: Dept of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic, 9 West Road, Cambridge CB3 9DP, United Kingdom. The Departmental website also has an alumni section (www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/alumni/index.htm).