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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AB</i>	<i>Analecta Bollandiana</i>
<i>ANS</i>	<i>Anglo-Norman Studies</i>
<i>ASE</i>	<i>Anglo-Saxon England</i>
<i>ASPR</i>	Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records
<i>BHL</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina</i>
<i>CMCS</i>	<i>Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies</i>
<i>CSASE</i>	Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England
<i>EHR</i>	<i>English Historical Review</i>
<i>JEGP</i>	<i>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</i>
<i>MLR</i>	<i>Modern Language Review</i>
<i>MGH</i>	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
Auct. antiq.	Auctores antiquissimi
rer. Germ.	rerum Germanicarum
<i>MScand</i>	<i>Mediaeval Scandinavia</i>
<i>PL</i>	Patrologia Latina
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue Bénédictine</i>
<i>RS</i>	Rolls Series
<i>SBVS</i>	<i>Saga-Book of the Viking Society for Northern Research</i>
<i>SS</i>	<i>Scandinavian Studies</i>
<i>VMS</i>	<i>Viking and Medieval Scandinavia</i>

PREFACE

It is a real pleasure to welcome the eleventh number of the annual volume, *Quaestio Insularis*. The postgraduate community of the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, established the important Colloquium, the edited proceedings of which *Quaestio* represents, over a decade ago, and they have continued to organise it and to edit the associated journal in the intervening period. The 2010 conference at which the papers published here were read was, like previous conferences, a highly successful event. *Quaestio* 11 and all back numbers can be ordered directly from the Department's website (www.asnc.cam.ac.uk). The Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic is delighted to be associated with both the Cambridge Colloquium in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic and *Quaestio Insularis* and wishes them continued success for a long time to come.

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COLLOQUIUM REPORT

The 2010 Colloquium in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, 'Kith and Kin', held in Room G/R 06-7 of the English Faculty on Saturday 27 February was a very successful and enjoyable event. This year, in addition to the proceedings of the conference, we are pleased also to include a response to the paper by Professor Michael Winterbottom, the plenary speaker from the previous year's Colloquium. His paper can be found in *Quaestio Insularis* 10, and the response by Dr Andrew Breeze can be found following the conference proceedings below.

Plenary Speaker (*Chair: Megan Cavell*)

Dr Carolyne Larrington, 'Family Drama in the Heroic Poetry of the Edda'

Session I (*Chair: Philip Dunsbea*)

Stephanie Fishwick, 'Unnatural Affections: The Unusual Addition to the Family in the *Íslendingasögur*'

Veronica Phillips, 'Exile, Family and the Medieval Irish Exilic Vocabulary'

Joanne Shortt Butler, "'Megi faðir sinn ráða því, en helzt vili hann þó heima sitja": Snorri Goði, His Sons, and the Weight of Expectation'

Session II (*Chair: Simon Patterson*)

Ed Carlsson Browne, 'Roger of Howden and the Unknown Royalty of Twelfth-Century Norway'

Erin Goeres, 'Constructing Kin(g)ship: Eyvindr Skáldaspillir as Spokesman for the Earls of Hlaðir'

Eric Denton, 'Caring for Kith and Kin in Wulfstan Cantor's *Narratio Metrica de Sancto Swithuno*'

Session III (*Chair: Levi Roach*)

David Baker, 'The End of the Affair? The Topos of the Marriage of Óðinn and Jörð in Skaldic Verse Before and After the Conversion'

Helen F. Leslie, 'Continuum of Tradition and the Men of Hrafnista'

Julie Mumby, 'Fathers or Uncles? A Problem in the Old English Tract Known as Wergeld'

The members of the colloquium committee for 2009–10 were:

Megan Cavell, Christine Bolze, Philip Dunshea, Simon Patterson and Levi Roach.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Quaestio Insularis 11 was edited by Megan Cavell, Christine Bolze, Philip Dunshea, Simon Patterson and Levi Roach. The editors also wish to acknowledge the assistance of Dr Paul Russell, Dr Carlyne Larrington, Dr Judy Quinn, Dr Rory Naismith, Eric Denton, Veronica Phillips, Jayne Riley, Victoria Lever, Lizzy O'Hara and our peer reviewers. Editorial design is by Alistair Vining and the *Quaestio Insularis* logo was drawn by Katharine Scarfe Beckett. The production of this volume and the successful running of the conference have been made possible through the generosity of the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic and the support of the Faculty of English.

Family Drama in the Heroic Poetry of the Edda

Dr. Carlyne Larrington

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INTRODUCTION

The critical trend in Old Norse studies recently has, it seems to me, been in favour of large topics: identity, nation, religion and conversion for example. Partly because of my own immediate projects, I thought it might be interesting and challenging to invite a narrowing of focus once again and try to discover not only what various kinds of texts and artefacts produced across the three cultures can tell us about kinship, but also allow us to think about what kinds of theoretical frameworks might be valid in reconstructing the implications of kin relationships in the pre-industrial, even pre-Christian, or imagined pre-Christian societies of a millennium ago.

What can we know about how relatives behaved towards one another and how they felt about each other, or were expected to behave and feel according to the prevailing social norms? Where do we literary scholars, historians, archaeologists and philologists intervene in such large debates as essentialism versus social constructionism—what do we understand as 'natural' within the family and what is produced by social conditioning? To open up, rather than to answer such questions, I discuss four texts which unsettle profoundly our ideas about what is 'natural' within the family and how we expect mothers to feel about their children.

'Family drama' is ordinarily regarded as a critical / psychoanalytical term reserved for tragedy. In its archetypal form the family drama centres on a son's resolution—or failed resolution—of

the Œdipus complex; it focuses then on the parent-child relationship, an emphasis which accords with the interest in genealogy and lineage in the *Íslendingasögur*. By contrast, the heroic poems, I have argued in a book chapter about to appear, attend much more acutely to lateral relations: those between brothers, sisters and affines, i.e. in-laws. Sometimes the conflict in these poems may involve frustrated affines—the rejected suitor who allies himself with his beloved's brother to attack the successful suitor, a pattern typical of the Helgi poems in the Poetic Edda.¹

This essay discusses four poems—the last four in the collection of eddic poems in the Codex Regius manuscript. These poems have most recently been considered by David Clark in two articles, in which he reads them against the ethos of revenge, particularly in the context of the manuscript's compilation in late thirteenth-century Iceland.² These poems occur only in this manuscript, though their content is paraphrased in prose in *Völsunga saga* and in the *Snorra Edda*; the *Hamðismál* material is also found in the tenth-century skaldic poem *Ragnarsdrápa*. Two of these, *Atlakviða* and *Atlamál*, tell the same story from two rather different perspectives, and feature both the conflict between brothers and their sister's husband and the sister's murder of her children by that same husband: so involving both vertical and lateral bonds. The second pair also deal with dramatic material: a mother—indeed that same mother's—demand that her surviving sons effectively mount a suicide mission to avenge the death of their half-sister. This unusual calculus, one which

¹ C. Larrington, 'Sibling Drama: Laterality in the Heroic Poems of the Edda', in *Myth, Legends, and Heroes: Studies in Old Norse and Old English Literature in Honour of John McKinnell*, ed. D. Anlezark (Toronto, 2011), pp. 169–87.

² D. Clark, 'Undermining and En-Gendering Vengeance: Distancing and Anti-Feminism in the Poetic Edda', *SS* 77 (2005), 173–200 and 'Kin-Slaying in the Poetic Edda: the End of the World', *VMS* 3 (2007), 21–41.

appears to privilege revenge for a dead daughter over the survival of the last male offspring, triggers a review of family history which highlights the extremes of sibling and marital emotion.³ The key concepts which I will be bringing to bear on these poems are: first the anthropological principle of the exchange of women between social groups, of the trade in this 'vile and precious merchandise' as Monique Wittig terms women.⁴ As the anthropologist Gayle Rubin points out, unlike the other commodities, 'shells, words, cattle names, fish, ancestors, whale's teeth, pigs, yams, spell, dances, mats, etc', which pass between exchanging groups, women alone possess subjectivity, even if they often have no legitimate agency in the exchange.⁵ Secondly I will explore cultural understandings and the inter-relatedness of child-bearing, child-killing and sacrifice, drawing on the work of Walter Burkert and Nancy Jay.⁶

GUÐRÚN AND ATLI

The poems *Atlakviða* and *Atlamál* continue the history of Guðrún Gjúkadóttir from earlier in the Codex Regius. Guðrún was married to Sigurðr the dragonslayer, and mostly through the machinations of Brynhildr, Sigurðr's former lover, Guðrún's own brothers Gunnarr

³ J. Jochens, *Old Norse Images of Women* (Philadelphia, 1996), p. 147.

⁴ C. Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (London and Boston, 1969, 1970); M. Wittig, *Les Guérillères*, trans. D. Le Vay (Boston, 1985), p. 89.

⁵ G. Rubin, 'The Traffic in Women: Notes on the "Political Economy" of Sex', in *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. R. R. Reiter (New York, 1975), pp. 157–210, at p. 174.

⁶ W. Burkert, *Homo Necans: the Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth*, trans. P. Bing (Berkeley, 1983); N. Jay, 'Sacrifice as Remedy for Having Been Born of Woman', in *Immaculate and Powerful: the Female in Sacred Image and Social Reality*, ed. C. W. Atkinson, C. H. Buchanan and M. R. Miles (Boston, 1985), pp. 283–309.

and Högni have brought about her husband's death. After this, Guðrún is married off by her brothers, with her mother's agreement, to Atli, king of the Huns, Brynhildr's brother. The two poems are very different in likely age, style and delineation of family relations. *Atlakviða* is regarded as one of the oldest poems of the Edda, heroic in its ethos and highly stylised in its form and diction. *Atlamál*, thought to be later, is domestic and more expansive in its retelling of the narrative.

Atlakviða opens at the court of the brothers Gunnarr and Högni, in a high-status Continental hall. A messenger has come from Atli with an invitation to visit him, and a promise of great reward. The brothers scent an ulterior motive; why should they want treasure when they possess the riches of their former brother-in-law, the dragon's hoard? Högni notices that the ring which the messenger bears as a token has a wolf's hair twisted around it by their sister and asks:

Hvat hyggur þú brúði bendo, þá er hon ocr baug sendi,
varinn váðom heiðingia? hygg ec, at hon vornuð byði.⁷

Significantly Högni identifies his sister as *brúði* 'a bride'; as in the earlier poems involving these siblings and Sigurðr, Guðrún's chief significance to her brothers is as a woman to be exchanged with other elite families, a bride who cements alliances. Her marriage is intended to compensate for the unfortunate treatment of Atli's sister Brynhildr

⁷ *Atlakviða*, st. 8: 'What do you think the lady meant when she sent us a ring / wrapped in the coat of the heath-wanderer? / I think that she was giving us a warning'. All eddic poetry cited from *Edda: die Lieder des Codex Regius nebst verwandten Denkmälern*, ed. G. Neckel, rev. H. Kuhn, vol. I, *Text*, Germanische Bibliothek 4, 2 vols. 4th ed. (Heidelberg, 1962–8); all translations from *The Poetic Edda*, trans. C. Larrington (Oxford, 1996).

among the Gjúkungs, who was deceived into a disappointing marriage and who ultimately chose to commit suicide.⁸

In *Atlamál* the scene is laid somewhat differently. Vingi (the messenger) rows over the fjord to a farmstead. The gifts are hung on the hall-pillar and the invitation extended to visit Atli on behalf of the *husfreyja*—Guðrún is envisaged as the mistress of a household. Gunnarr and Högni live together with their wives and children at this farmstead; Högni's wife Kostbera knows her sister-in-law well enough to recognise Guðrún's style in carving runes. Högni's sister, the *björt* 'radiant lady', Kostbera claims, has not sent this message—or else the import has been distorted.

In *Atlakviða* the brothers set out for Atli's apparently unaccompanied, for when they enter the hall Guðrún reproaches them for not having brought a troop of warriors. Guðrún (their *systir*) quickly notes the arrival of both her brothers in the hall and cries out to her *bróðir* Gunnarr that he is betrayed. In his response Gunnarr addresses her as sister, noting 'Seinað er nú, systir'⁹ to summon the rest of the clan group. The interchanges here play markedly on sibling relations as the old bonds of blood begin to reassert themselves. The brothers are seized and Gunnarr announces that he will never reveal the hiding-place of the treasure until he sees Högni's heart in his hand. After some blackly-comic play with the substituted heart of a slave, Högni is killed and Gunnarr triumphantly announces that *now* he will never tell. He is solemnly led forth to the snakepit where he meets his end. In *Atlakviða* Högni's son stays at home, bidding goodbye to his father and uncle; in *Atlamál*, in contrast, all the men of the immediate kin-group, Gunnarr, Högni, Högni's two sons, and Kostbera's brother form a strong male, clan-based force. Crossing the

⁸ For Guðrún and Brynhildr's dealings in this part of the Edda, see Larrington, 'Sibling Drama'.

⁹ *Atlakviða*, st. 17: 'It is (too late) now, sister'.

fjord they arrive at Atli's farmstead and as Vingi finally admits his treachery, they kill him. Atli and his men rush to the fence, quickly arming themselves. Unlike the Guðrún of *Atlakviða* who watches powerlessly as her brothers are murdered, the Guðrún of *Atlámál* recalls her youth as a warrior-woman. Throwing off her necklaces, she seizes a sword and runs to fight side-by-side with her brothers, nephews and brother-in-law. Her instant reversion from membership of her marital family to her natal family speaks to the social anxieties identified by Zoe Borovsky as produced by the woman's role in exchange situations; that the mediation fails and the woman's *blandinn* 'mixed' loyalties become a vulnerable spot in the formerly *heill* 'unified' male kin-group.¹⁰ Guðrún fights effectively—soon she has killed two of Atli's brothers. The *þorm Gjúka*¹¹ form an impressive fighting unit; they are only overcome by force of numbers, but by the end of the battle the poet notes that Kostbera's boys and brother are dead. That these three are identified by their relationship with their mother and sister is significant, for just as Kostbera loses brother and sons, so too will Guðrún's brothers and sons die through a different kind of agency. Atli complains to his wife about the death of his brothers, and the couple fall into an undignified wrangling about each other's behaviour towards their respective families. In this poem the torture and killing of Gunnarr and Högni is not motivated by the treasure—indeed it is never mentioned—but by Atli's sadistic desire to hurt Guðrún, 'at klöcqví Guðrún'.¹² The rancour and score-settling here is very different from the icy dignity and cruel authority

¹⁰ Z. Borovsky, "En hon er blandin mjök": Women and Insults in Old Norse Literature', in *Cold Counsel: Women in Old Norse Literature and Mythology*, ed. S. M. Anderson with K. Swenson (London, 2002), pp. 1–14.

¹¹ *Atlámál*, st. 52 'children of Gjúki'.

¹² *Atlámál*, st. 58: 'to make Guðrún sob'.

displayed in *Atlakviða*; in *Atlámál* we see the claustrophobic domestic tensions generated in a loveless marriage.

If Guðrún stands helplessly by in *Atlakviða* as her brothers are killed—though she utters a curse Atli would have done well to heed—her revenge is both swift and clandestine. As Atli returns from the snakepit, she is standing outside with a golden cup which she offers in a formal greeting ritual. Her enigmatic remark that she will now serve him *gnadda niðfarna*¹³ obscures what she has done; full revelation is postponed until Atli and his Huns have gathered in the hall, drunk their ale and eaten their *qlkrásir*.¹⁴ Now Atli can be publicly shamed, told his *nið* with a macabre recipe:

Sona hefir þinna, sverða deilir,
hierto hrædreyrug við hunang of tuggin;
melta knáttu, móðugr, manna valbráðir
eta at qlkrásom, oc í qndugi at senda.¹⁵

Trading heart for heart, the boys' offal recalling the unquivering heart of Högni, Guðrún's revenge strikes immediately at the centre of Atli's lordship: his relationship to his men. The Huns groan aloud when they hear how they are implicated in the act of cannibalism, and the high-status guests are also shamed, those whom Atli favoured with the choicest food, that which the lord is eating himself. Ursula Dronke rightly observes that 'Guðrún defiles Atli both as a father and as a king'.¹⁶ The actual killings take place offstage, but the pathos of the children's deaths is carefully evoked by Guðrún's description for

¹³ *Atlakviða*, st. 33: 'little creatures gone into darkness'.

¹⁴ *Atlakviða*, st. 35: 'ale-morsels'.

¹⁵ *Atlakviða*, st. 36: 'Your own sons'—sharer-out of swords—hearts, corpse-bloody, you are chewing up with honey, you are savouring, proud lord, human flesh, eating it as ale-appetizers and sending it to the high-seat'.

¹⁶ *The Poetic Edda*, ed. and trans. U. Dronke, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1969–2011), I, 28.

Atli of what he will never see again: his boys coming to him from the aristocratic activities connected with the ownership of horses. Everyone in the hall weeps, except for Guðrún. Unlike the earlier poems on the death of Sigurðr, (in which her weeping was a contested domain), the poet notes that she never weeps for her two children. Swiftly Guðrún brings down the curtain on the drama, stabbing Atli in their bed and firing the hall. The final stanza of *Atlakviða* returns Guðrún to the status of bride once again, but 'brúðr í brynio bræðra at hefna',¹⁷ resolving the tension between wifeliness and sisterliness which has been at stake from the poem's opening. Guðrún has proved where her loyalties lie—still with her birth family, with her brothers, despite their killing of her first husband and her exchanged status. Though there was an erotic attraction between husband and wife in the past, stanza 40 suggests the products of that union, her children, are no more than tender young animals ready for eating. Cold-blooded rage and an exultant joy in humiliation are the dominant emotions here.

If the pathos of the child-killing in *Atlakviða* is carefully modulated, it is given free rein in *Atlamál* where every last drop of emotion is wrung from the scene. As Vésteinn Ólason has noted, 'the killing of the children is even more horrible in *Atlamál*'s mundane surroundings and realistic detail than in the swift and stylized account of *Atlakviða*'.¹⁸ Once the brothers are dead, Guðrún entices her little children to her and they come willingly to the arms of their mother. With the black quip, 'lyst váromc þess lengi, at lyfia ycr elli'¹⁹, she cuts their throats. Guðrún's treatment of the children's bodies recalls the

¹⁷ *Atlakviða*, st. 43: 'a bride in a mailshirt to avenge her brothers'.

¹⁸ Vésteinn Ólason, 'Gísli Súrsson—a flawless or flawed hero?', in *Die Aktualität der Saga: Festschrift für Hans Schottmann*, ed. S. Toftgaard Andersen (Berlin, 1999), pp. 163–76, at p. 169.

¹⁹ *Atlamál*, st. 78: 'I have long desired to cure you of old age'.

baroque and impractical detail of the earlier eddic poem *Völundarkviða*: she mixes the children's blood with Atli's drink, has their skulls shaped into drinking bowls, roasts their hearts on a stick, and gives them to Atli, claiming that they are calf-hearts.²⁰ The imagery of young animals, so subtly used in *Atlakviða*, reappears here in Guðrún's lie, but the accretion of detail detracts from the realism of the scene. Unlike the speedy resolution of *Atlakviða*, *Atlamál* drags out the marital recriminations for many more stanzas until Atli is finally killed.

THE EXCHANGE OF WOMEN AND MATERNAL SACRIFICE

The woman exchanged in marriage, as Guðrún is, to seal a peace-settlement between feuding groups is a familiar figure in Germanic tradition. In *Beowulf* for example we find the cases of Hildeburh and Freawaru. The exchange of women depends crucially on women's reproductive capacity; the birth of children to the new couple incarnates the new accord. If that offspring dies, so too may the peace agreement. And conversely, if the peace agreement is violated, this risks, but does not necessarily entail, the death of the offspring.²¹

In the Finnesburh story we can see this principle in action: the peace agreement is broken by the Frisians' attack on the Danes and the son of Hildeburh and Finn dies in the consequent battle. Thus the woman's kin, the Danes, destroy in retaliation the symbol of accord, born from the exchange. What is exceptional about Guðrún is not just that she is a vocal and reluctant peace-weaver, but that she herself kills the children—her children—whose mixed blood should have sealed the union. Where does a woman's loyalty lie?, the poets ask. It depends on how much—or whether—she loves her husband; what

²⁰ This is the version of the killing largely followed by Snorri. See Snorri Sturluson, *Edda. Skáldskaparmál*, ed. A. Faulkes, 2 vols. (London, 1998), I, 49.

²¹ Compare the fate of Gwern in the Second Branch of the *Mabinogi*.

account has been taken of her subjectivity, of her feelings in the exchange. Across the two poems Guðrún is depicted uncritically, with epithets emphasising her strength and resolution, though precisely in the context of the child-murder in *Atlakviða* she is characterised as *afkár dís*, a 'terrible supernatural female'. In *Atlamál* the word *afkár*, perhaps in deliberate recall of the other poem, is used by Guðrún herself to warn Atli that if he thought her behaviour was *afkár* before he killed her brothers, now it will be even worse.²²

Mothers killing their children are very rare in western myth and legend, if we leave aside the infanticide of newborns. As often noted, the closest parallel to Guðrún's revenge on Atli is the archaic Greek myth of Philomela, Tereus and Procne.²³ In this story, Tereus's rape and mutilation of Procne, his wife's sister is avenged by the two sisters killing and cooking Philomela's son Itys, and serving him to his father. After this all the protagonists metamorphose into birds; significantly Tereus' offence is also committed against his wife's sibling. In an insightful article on a twelfth-century French retelling of this story, Peggy McCracken explores the distinctions between child-killing by men and child-killing by women in western tradition.²⁴

²² T. Andersson, 'Did the Poet of *Atlamál* Know *Atlakviða*?', in *Edda: a Collection of Essays*, ed. R. J. Glendinning and Haraldur Bessason (Manitoba, 1983), pp. 243–57; T. Andersson, 'Is There A History of Emotions in Eddic Heroic Poetry?', in *Codierungen von Emotionen im Mittelalter*, ed. C. S. Jaeger and I. Kasten (Berlin, 2003), pp. 191–202; M. Melli, 'Riscritture eddiche. Il caso della *Atlakviða* e degli *Atlamál*', in *The Garden of Crossing Paths: the Manipulation and Rewriting of Medieval Texts*, ed. M. Buzzoni and M. Bampi (Venice, 2005), pp. 272–82.

²³ Burkert, *Homo Necans*, pp. 179–85. For discussion of the possibility that Ovid's *Metamorphoses* might have influenced the use of the motif here, see Dronke, *Poetic Edda*, I, 70.

²⁴ P. McCracken, 'Engendering Sacrifice: Blood, Lineage, and Infanticide in Old French Literature', *Speculum* 77 (2002), 55–75.

Fathers engender offspring, it is they who give them life, and thus they have the cultural right to kill their children, usually in a sacrificial context. Mothers, at least in Aristotelian thought, simply provide the matter for making the child, as it were 'cooking' the foetus in the womb until it is ready to be born.²⁵ Mother-love is construed as 'natural' and not especially meritorious, while the father's relation to his child is culturally determined and quite variable. In Old Norse society the father grants his offspring social existence; he accepts a new baby into the family, sprinkling water on it and naming it or else he rejects it and orders its exposure.²⁶ In such cases mothers work, usually successfully, to circumvent the child's death.²⁷ And Norse fathers sacrifice their sons to the gods: Hákon jarl sacrifices his son to the mysterious female figures Þórgerðr *Þorgabrúðr* and her sister in order to obtain victory in battle in *Jómsvíkinga saga*, a story also mentioned by Snorri in *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, without the reference to Þórgerðr.²⁸ In *Ynglingatal* stanza 13, the Swedish king Aun sacrifices a whole succession of sons in order to keep himself alive, while the death of Baldr can also be read in these terms, as a sacrifice by and to

²⁵ T. Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (London, 1990), pp. 25–62.

²⁶ See A. Hansen, 'Representations of Children in Early Icelandic Society' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Sydney Univ., 2007), ch. 2.

²⁷ See for example, G. Kreutzer, *Kindheit und Jugend in der altnordischen Literatur* (Münster, 1987), pp. 173–96; C. J. Clover, 'The Politics of Scarcity: Notes on the Sex Ratio in Early Scandinavia', in *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature*, ed. H. Damico and A. Hennessey Olsen (Bloomington, IN, 1990), pp. 100–34, at p. 106.

²⁸ See *Jómsvíkinga saga / The Saga of the Jomsvikings*, ed. and trans. N. F. Blake (London, 1962), pp. 36, 38; Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, ed. Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, Íslenzk fornrit 26–8, 3 vols. (Reykjavík, 1941–51) I, 286; for discussion, see F. Ström, *Diser, nornor, valkyrjor: frukbarhetskult och sakralt kungadöme i Norden* (Stockholm, 1954), p. 50.

Óðinn.²⁹ Dronke astutely comments that Guðrún ‘sacrifices her own flesh to the perfection of revenge’; an observation which I intend to unpack.³⁰

We do not find examples of women performing sacrifice in Old Norse; as Nancy Jay has noted, ‘Around the world, ordinarily only adult males (fathers, real and metaphorical) may perform sacrifice. Where women do so it is as virgins or in some other specifically non-child-bearing role’.³¹ Female figures do receive sacrifice however: the sacrificial feast of *dísablót* is celebrated during the winter, the *dísir* being most likely female ancestors. They gladly receive king Aðils who falls from his horse and dies during their feast in *Ynglingatal*. As Judy Quinn has pointed out, the *dísir* clearly intervene in this poem in order to disrupt the patriarchal succession.³² The poet’s choice of the word *dís* in *Atlakviða* then, in the phrase *afkár dís*, may point to Guðrún’s highly anomalous role as sacrificer, one who enforces her will through the killing of high-born male victims, kings in waiting. In sacrificing cultures, as Nancy Jay argues, women of child-bearing age cannot—indeed must not—sacrifice, for sacrifice functions as a sign of incorporation or belonging to a patriarchal lineage, a ritual which counterbalances the problematic condition of having been born of a woman.³³ ‘Unlike childbirth, sacrificial killing is deliberate, purposeful, “rational” action, under perfect control. Both birth and killing are acts

²⁹ *Ynglingatal*, st. 16. On the sacrifice of Aun’s sons, and other examples of paternal sacrifice in Old Norse, see J. Harris, ‘Sacrifice and Guilt in *Sonatorrek*’, in *Studien zum Altgermanischen: Festschrift für Heinrich Beck*, ed. H. Uecker (Berlin, 1994), pp. 173–96, and more recently, taking close account of Jay’s work, ‘Homo Necans Borealis: Fatherhood and Sacrifice in *Sonatorrek*’, in *Myth in Early Northwest Europe*, ed. S. O. Glosecki (Tempe, AZ, 2007), pp. 152–73.

³⁰ Dronke, *Poetic Edda*, I, 16.

³¹ Jay, ‘Sacrifice as Remedy’, p. 284.

³² J. Quinn, pers. comm.

³³ Jay, ‘Sacrifice as Remedy’.

of power, but sacrificial ideology commonly construes childbirth as the quintessence of vulnerability, passivity and powerless suffering’, Jay writes.³⁴

‘Unsex me here’, Lady Macbeth cries as she claims she would metaphorically sacrifice her child—‘have pluck’d [her] nipple from his boneless gums and dashed the brains out’—to gain political power and resolution for her husband.³⁵ So too Guðrún transforms herself from the child-bearer, vulnerable, passive, powerless and suffering, as Jay has it, to take on the role of sacrificer. In so doing she achieves more than a personal revenge; when a mother sacrifices she strikes at the heart of patriarchy and lineage, undoing both literally and metaphorically her own maternity and the alliance which her exchanged body sealed. Her savagery is dignified in *Atlakviða* by ‘Othering’ her children, envisaging them as sacrificial animals, *gnadda niðfarna*. The poet draws on the imagery of sacrifice, the ceremonial framing of the feast after Gunnarr’s slaying, to imbue Guðrún with a terrible agency, acting both on family and tribe. What Walter Burkert terms the ‘unspeakable sacrifice’, infanticide or symbolic infanticide in Greek ritual, lies behind Guðrún’s action; that she then flings herself into the sea, which apparently rejects her, is a recurrent closing motif in Greek myth related to this kind of religious practice.³⁶ These sacrificial implications are confirmed by the ending of *Guðrúnarkviða II*, a little earlier in the Codex Regius, in which Atli dreams of eating the hearts of hawks and the corpses of dogs. This dream is interpreted by Guðrún thus: ‘Þar muno seggir um sæng dæma / oc hvítainga hofði næma’.³⁷ The sacrificial creatures are imagined as white,

³⁴ Jay, ‘Sacrifice as Remedy’, p. 294.

³⁵ William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* Act I, sc. V; Act I, sc. VII.

³⁶ Burkert, *Homo Necans*, pp. 282; 176–8.

³⁷ *Guðrúnarkviða II*, st 43: ‘That means men will discuss sacrifice and cut off the heads of white (sacrificial) beasts’.

pure and fit for ritual slaughter here, in contrast to their designation as *Níflungar* 'the dark ones' in *Guðrúnarhvöt* stanza 12. Guðrún seems then already to foresee the role that the 'unspeakable sacrifice' will play in working her will.³⁸ These associations are active in *Atlakviða* and its immediate contexts in the Codex Regius; they do not transfer to *Atlamál*. The poet of this text transposes the grand mythic drama to a domestic, perhaps Greenlandic setting, as David Clark notes, making 'Guðrún's vengeance appear the action of one inspired less by necessity than by spite'.³⁹

The sacrificial animal is normally shared and consumed in the sacrificial feast, binding the patriline together. But for Atli, eating his own children does not infuse him with the power of the god; rather it pollutes him utterly. In the Norse cultural sphere consuming tabooed flesh is a *nið*-accusation.⁴⁰ Atli has allowed into his body something doubly unclean; not just dead human meat, but meat which is metonymic of his own engendering power; the end-product of a system in which 'marital debts are reckoned in female flesh' as Rubin terms it.⁴¹ Guðrún's action then speaks to some profound anxieties about women. Not only do these two poems, *Atlakviða* and *Atlamál*, offer a terrifying glimpse into the psyche of the exchanged woman who has not accepted her fate as a patriarchal commodity, they

³⁸ If *Guðrúnarkviða II* is later than and dependent on *Atlakviða*, this suggests that its poet recognised the import of Guðrún's sacrificial behaviour in the earlier poem. The author of *Volsunga saga* seems to have found Guðrún's interpretation too obscure, for he omits this part of her reply; see the discussion in *Kommentar zu den Liedern der Edda*, ed. K. von See et al. 6 vols (Heidelberg, 1997–2009), IV, 765–71.

³⁹ Clark, 'Engendering', p. 189. Clark's reference to 'necessity' here recalls the importance of the Greek concept of *ananke* in narratives of sacrifice.

⁴⁰ Paralleled by Guðmundr's claim in the Helgi Hundingsbani poems that Sinfjötli has eaten corpses.

⁴¹ Rubin, 'Traffic in Women', p. 182.

unsettle fundamental ideas of the woman as natural care-giver, provider and nurturer. Category confusion perverts the 'natural' in the direction of patriarchal paranoia about its own vulnerability: what is my wife feeding me? what is she doing with my children?—and can I safely fall asleep in her arms? The final 'murder in marital bed', as Preben Meulengracht Sørensen characterises the thematically-related affinal killing in *Gísla saga*, ends both the relationship and the exchange in the place where the children were conceived, erasing the initial reproductive acts and the possibilities for their reiteration in the birth of new children to the exchanged woman and her hated husband.⁴²

Guðrún's actions are not simply aberrant; their monstrosity operates in the sphere of J. J. Cohen's concept of *extimité*, an intimate alterity which brings terror into the home, but which also heralds wider social dislocation and breakdown.⁴³ For as Jay observes, 'when a form of social organization is dependent on sacrifice for its identification and maintenance, it can also be lost by failure to sacrifice or endangered by improper sacrifice'.⁴⁴ Guðrún strikes not just at her husband and sons, or household, but at the whole patriline to which her boys were assimilated.

GUÐRÚN, HAMÐIR AND SQRLLI

Failing to drown in the sea, Guðrún is washed up on another land where she marries a third husband, king Íónakr and bears him two sons. The action of the next poem, *Guðrúnarhvöt*, begins when this

⁴² P. Meulengracht Sørensen, 'Murder in marital bed: an attempt at understanding a crucial scene in *Gísla saga*', in *Structure and Meaning in Old Norse Literature*, ed. J. Lindow et al. (Odense, 1986), pp. 235–63.

⁴³ J. J. Cohen, *Of Giants: Sex, Monsters and the Middle Ages* (Minneapolis, 1999), pp. ix, 94.

⁴⁴ Jay, 'Sacrifice as Remedy', p. 293.

new set of sons has grown to adulthood. Guðrún had also raised Svanhildr, her daughter by Sigurðr, at Íónakr's court; somewhat older than Hamðir and Sqrli, Svanhildr is given in marriage to the notoriously cruel Iqrmunrekkr, king of the Goths. The prose preceding *Guðrúnarhvot* blames Bicci, Iqrmunrekkr's evil counsellor for telling Iqrmunrekkr that his adult son Randvér has begun an affair with his new stepmother. Iqrmunrekkr has his son hanged and his new wife trampled to death by horses.⁴⁵ As *Guðrúnarhvot* and the poem which follows it in the manuscript, the final poem, *Hamðismál*, open, Guðrún challenges her sons Hamðir and Sqrli with having forgotten their sister and her terrible fate.⁴⁶ *Guðrúnarhvot* makes an explicit comparison with Guðrún's dead brothers:

Urðoa iþ glíkir þeim Gunnari,
né in heldr hugðir, sem var Hogni;
hennar myndoð iþ hefna leita,
ef iþ móð ættið minna bræðra
eða harðan hug Húnkonunga.⁴⁷

Guðrún's opening gambit pitches her sons against the ideal of her lost brothers, but Hamðir ripostes with a reminder about the complexity of her past dealings with her siblings, reminding her that she did not praise those brothers when they murdered her first husband, Sigurðr, stabbing him in the marital bed.⁴⁸ Nor had her

⁴⁵ On Svanhildr's fate, see C. Larrington, 'Stjúpmæðrasögur and Sigurðr's Daughters', in *Preprint papers of the 14th International Saga Conference, Uppsala, 9th–15th August 2009*, ed. A. Ney, H. Williams and F. Charpentier Ljungqvist, 2 vols. (Gävle, 2009), II, 568–75.

⁴⁶ *Ghv*, st. 2 and *Hm*, st. 3.

⁴⁷ st. 3: 'You haven't become like Gunnarr and his brother, nor any the more been brave, as Hogni was; you would have tried to avenge her, if you'd had the temperaments of my brothers or the fierce spirit of the kings of the Huns'.

⁴⁸ See note 42 above.

revenge against Atli brought satisfaction, Hamðir notes: 'Urðo þér bræðra hefndir / slíðrar oc sárar, er þú sono myrðir'.⁴⁹ Hamðir is unsparing in his estimation of his mother's killing of his half-brothers as murder; in pragmatic terms he also notes that, had these brothers been alive, they could all together have set out to attack Iqrmunrekkr, perhaps with a better chance of success. Though the brothers predict that revenge for Svanhildr will result in a memorial feast for all three of Guðrún's children—and implicitly perhaps for the earlier unmourned sons—they ride off to exact vengeance on their erstwhile brother-in-law.

Hamðismál follows the brothers on their journey, narrating how they foolishly kill their half-brother Erpr on the way and come to the court of Iqrmunrekkr, where they maim, but cannot kill, the Gothic king before they are stoned to death. In *Guðrúnarhvot*, the narrative remains with Guðrún. Now the woman who never wept for her sons and brothers in *Atlakviða* embarks on a more typical female speech act: tallying up her losses and wrongs, from the death of Sigurðr via the loss of her brothers to the death of Svanhildr. Significantly and despite the comments of Hamðir just a few verses earlier, Guðrún still regards the killing of her *húna hvassa*,⁵⁰ her sons by Atli, as having apparently provided some compensation for her wrongs, *batr* for her *þolva*. The adjectives *slíðrar oc sárar*,⁵¹ it should be noted are not applied to the death of Atli's children by their mother, but by Hamðir, who identifies all too closely with his doomed half-brothers. In stanzas 16 and 17 Guðrún launches a series of superlative comparisons of her grief, partly determined by alliteration. So her *harðastr*⁵² harm was the

⁴⁹ *Guðrúnarhvot*, st. 5: 'Vengeance for your brothers was wounding and painful to you when you murdered your sons'.

⁵⁰ *Guðrúnarhvot*, st. 12: 'sharp young cubs'.

⁵¹ 'wounding and painful'.

⁵² 'worst'.

trampling of Svanhildr, the *sárastr*⁵³ experience of her life was the murder of Sigurðr; the *grimmast*⁵⁴ the death of Gunnarr; the *hvassastr*⁵⁵ the killing of Högni. Strikingly there is no room here for regret at the deaths of any of Guðrún's sons, even though, in sending Hamðir and Sqrli on their suicide mission, she has exterminated the last of her line. All that remains for her now is suicide on a funeral pyre, imitating the example of Brynhildr, so much earlier in the Poetic Edda. Her *bíri svasa*,⁵⁶ invoked along with her brothers by Hamðir in *Hm* 10, in a phrase also used by the narrator in *Akv* 38/8, whether her sons by Atli, by Iónakr, or most likely all her male offspring, remain notably unmourned. In *Atlakviða* Guðrún sheds no tear for brothers or sons; here her tears may be triggered by the departure of her sons, as Clark argues, but it is her first husband, her daughter and her brothers, the ones whom she loved unconditionally, who are explicitly mentioned in her lament.⁵⁷

CONCLUSION

What kind of emotional calculus is this, that weighs the lives of brothers, sons and daughters against one another, and which finds the sons expendable? Guðrún both problematises and dramatises the emotional value of different kin-relations, measured by the agency accorded to her in the exchanges in which she has participated. This conceptualisation does not recognise the individual as possessing worth in him- or herself, but rather as laying claim to identity by occupying a particular functional slot in the kin-system. Self-definition in terms of kin is a common trope in pre-modern

⁵³ 'sweetest'.

⁵⁴ 'grimmiest'.

⁵⁵ 'sharpest'.

⁵⁶ 'sweet sons'.

⁵⁷ Clark, 'Engendering', p. 179, n.7.

theorisation of identity, as 'the point of orientation for the individual's self-understanding', as Meulengracht Sørensen notes.⁵⁸ Thus Beowulf identifies himself as Ecgtheow's son and the sister's son of Hygelac. And, as various sagas, in particular *Grettis saga*, confirm, the role of brother is also one which crucially defines the self. While Norse social norms expect sibling loyalty between brothers, the models for brother-sister relations are less clear from the saga or poetic corpus. As the cross-cultural psychologist Victor Cicerelli has noted for non-industrial societies, these relations tend only to be foregrounded in marital negotiations.⁵⁹ For Gunnarr and Högni, Guðrún is expendable when it comes to the politico-social exchange of women in order to mend a feud not of her making. Even so, Guðrún becomes their avenger, prioritising her sibling relationship over that with her husband and children, her vengeful recourse against Atli strikes at the wife-mother role that is a consequence of the exchange of women. The functions of food-provider and son-bearer are horribly conflated in Guðrún's revenge, while the implications of Guðrún's depiction as sacrificer in *Atlakviða* unsettle our reactions to what to us is 'unnatural' behaviour, signalling a strike at the very heart of the patriline and the systems by which it reproduces itself. The recasting of the story in domestic and psychological terms in *Atlamál* is scarcely more reassuring. When the flesh which is only partly Guðrún's own flesh is reincorporated in the hated body of the husband, the affective calculation that makes siblings closer than sons finds its epitome.⁶⁰ Female identity is forged both by vertical and lateral blood-ties; as one of the children of Gjúki, as sister, but emphatically not as bride. These poems retain their

⁵⁸ Meulengracht Sørensen, 'Murder in Marital Bed', p. 258.

⁵⁹ V. Cicerelli, *Sibling Relationships across the Life Span* (New York, 1995), p. 74.

⁶⁰ See T. Garbaty, 'The Uncle-Nephew Motif: New Light into its Origins and Development', *Folklore* 88 (1972), 220–35.

power because of their ambivalences about the family; the claustrophobia of Atli's Greenlandic farm, the chilly dignity of Atli's grand hall in *Atlakviða*, the threshold where Guðrún challenges her last remaining sons are all stage-sets for extreme dramas of family relations, yet nevertheless probe into fundamental questions about larger social organisation.

Unnatural Affections: Problems with Fosterage in the
Íslendigasögur

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INTRODUCTION

It is no exaggeration to say that a concern with family, both past and present, runs through Old Norse literature. No character in the sagas is considered complete without a genealogy to give the most important ancestors in his family tree and the key connections within his living family.¹ These genealogical introductions are used to flesh out a character, give insights into his or her past and present situation, and foreshadow future actions. Furthermore, the genealogies reinforce a perception of continuity between the world of the saga and the world of its audience. The descriptions of settlers in the Icelandic Book of Settlements, *Landnámabók* frequently trace genealogies as far as five generations and reckon kinship bilaterally, that is, through both male and female links. Kinship, through both marriage and blood lines, provided a cultural structure which determined inheritance, legal rights to compensation and duties to pay the same, and duties of support for poorer relations.² The general

¹ See J. Harris, 'Saga as Historical Novel', in *Structure and Meaning in Old Norse Literature*, ed. J. Lindow, L. Lönnroth and G. W. Weber (Odense, 1986), pp. 187–219; K. Hume, 'Beginnings and Endings in the Icelandic Family Sagas', *MLR* 68 (1973), 594–606; M. Clunies Ross, 'The Development of Old Norse Textual Worlds: Genealogical Structure as a Principle of Literary Organization in Early Iceland', *JEGP* 92 (1993), 372–85.

² For a general discussion see W. Miller, *Bloodtaking and Peacemaking: Feud, Law, and Society in Saga Iceland* (Chicago, 1990).

word for kinship, *frændsemi*, was used to describe relations by marriage as well as blood.³ In legal terms, the recognition of a blood relationship varied from the level of second cousins to that of fourth cousins. Examples taken from the legal code of the Icelandic Commonwealth, *Grágás*, indicate the strong social attachment formed by blood-ties in early Iceland. These examples suggest that a perception of a familial bond, with corresponding legal obligations, existed between quite distant relatives. For example, *Grágás* stipulates that a fourth cousin of a killer lodged in the same house as the fourth cousin of the victim must leave.⁴ The section of *Grágás* which sets out the requirements for compensation to victims compels fourth cousins to participate in the payment.⁵ The law restricted family members down to the second cousins from sitting as judge or jury in trials involving their kin.⁶ Second cousins once removed were permitted to sit in judgement on their relative but there were still moments—one is recorded in *Eyrbyggja saga*, another in *Valla-Ljóts saga*—in which second cousins once removed address each other as *frændi* (kinsman).⁷ Blood-ties, these examples suggest, were a powerful force in determining rights and responsibilities within early Icelandic society.

³ *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*, ed. R. Cleasby and G. Vigfusson, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1957), p. 177.

⁴ *Grágás: Islandernes Lovbog i Fristatens Tid, udgivet efter det kongelige Bibliotheks Haandskrift*, ed. Vilhjálmur Finsen, 2 vols. (Copenhagen, 1852) Ia, 136.

⁵ *Ibid.* Ia, 37; Ia, 194; Ib, 25–6.

⁶ *Ibid.* Ia, 47; Ia, 62; *Grágás efter det Arnarnagnaanske Haandskrift Nr. 334 fol., Stadarhólsbók*, ed. Vilhjálmur Finsen (Copenhagen, 1879), p. 318.

⁷ *Eyrbyggja saga*, ed. Einar Ólafur Sveinsson and Matthías Þórðarson, Íslenzk fornrit 4 (Reykjavík, 1959), 16; *Eyfirðinga sögur*, ed. Jónás Kristjánsson, Íslenzk fornrit 9 (Reykjavík, 1956), 236–7.

FOSTERAGE

Kinship by blood provided a metaphor for the bonds between a foster parent and child. Sagas consistently portray a strong bond between the foster parent and child and foster children frequently avenge the deaths of their foster parent, as we see in *Víga-Glúms saga*,⁸ *Egils saga*⁹ and *Njáls saga*.¹⁰ Fosterage could take place between and within households. In the case of fosterage within the parental home, the child was attached to a servant of either sex who has particular responsibility for raising the child.¹¹ In other cases children are sent to another farm to be raised by the householder. Here, as in the case of fosterage within the parental household, the status of the fosterer is apparently lower than that of the parents of the child being fostered. This is supported by the proverb in *Laxdæla saga* that he who fosters another man's child is always considered the lesser man.¹² Forced inter-household fostering could be a form of humiliation. In *Sturlu saga* Sturla forces a farmer who had sold him worm-infested meal to foster his young son.¹³ The difference in status may also be proverbial rather than actual; an offer to foster could be a form of deference to another powerful man.¹⁴ The proverb of *Laxdæla saga* cited above is

⁸ *Eyfirðinga sögur*, ed. Jónas Kristjánsson, p. 61.

⁹ *Egils saga Skalla-Grimssonar*, ed. Sigurður Nordal, Íslenzk fornrit 2 (Reykjavík, 1933), 101–2.

¹⁰ *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. Einar Ólafur Sveinsson, Íslenzk fornrit 12 (Reykjavík, 1954), 232.

¹¹ See, for example, *Egils saga Skalla-Grimssonar*, ed. Sigurður Nordal, p. 101; *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. Einar Ólafur Sveinsson, p. 103.

¹² *Laxdæla saga*, ed. Einar Ólafur Sveinsson, Íslenzk fornrit 5 (Reykjavík, 1934), p. 75.

¹³ *Sturlunga saga*, ed. Jón Jóhanesson, Magnús Finnbogason and Kristján Eldjárn, 2 vols. (Reykjavík, 1946), I, 98.

¹⁴ See, for example, *Laxdæla saga*, ed. Einar Ólafur Sveinsson, p. 75; *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. Einar Ólafur Sveinsson, p. 237; *Sturlu saga* in *Sturlunga saga*, ed. Jón

used to calm tensions between the wealthy Olafur paí and his half-brother, Þorleikr. In the example of Höskuldr Þrainsson and Njáll, of *Njáls saga*, Njál is not considered a lesser man than Þrain Sigfusson, but by offering to foster Þrain's son, in full awareness of the proverbial lower status of the fosterer, he adopts a social posture of humility and deference which reflects a desire to heal the enmity between their families. It is important to note that the foster-child gained no links to the wider family of the one who fostered him or her, as one would through marriage. The allegiance of the fostered child to the new household or fostering servant was limited to the foster-parent and immediate family.¹⁵

THE PROBLEM WITH FOSTER RELATIONSHIPS

In the examples taken from *Grágás* above, it is clear that blood relatives have legal obligations to their close families. However, this exploration of family relationships will focus upon the problem of unusual additions to the family, who do not fully share these legal obligations, and specifically upon problematical cases of foster-relationships. The bonds of affection between a foster-parent and child imaginatively construct a familial bond outside a legal framework. However, the lack of a legal framework for such bonds leads to conflicts as characters try to negotiate the position of the

Jóhanesson, Magnús Finnbogason and Kristján Eldjárn, I, 113; *Eyfirðinga sögur*, ed. Jónas Kristjánsson, pp. 40–1.

¹⁵ The law permitted a man to kill if his foster-daughter or foster-mother were sexually assaulted. See *Grágás: Íslendernes Lovbog i Fristatens Tid*, ed. Vilhjálmur Finsen, Ia, 164; *Grágás efter det Arnemagnæanske Haandskrift*, ed. Vilhjálmur Finsen, II, 331; Miller, *Bloodtaking and Peacemaking*, p. 172. However, there may have been a wider social connection which is untraceable in surviving legal texts. In *Njáls saga* the killing of a foster-brother is noted within the saga at the time and remains the cause of insults for years. *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. Einar Ólafur Sveinsson, pp. 72 and 371.

addition to the family. It will here be contended that figures bound to a family by a foster relationship commonly play a destructive role within the sagas by triggering feud situations, each in different ways. This role results from a tension between strong affections and the legally weak bonds between the individual and the members of the wider household to which the individual is attached. This tension is often reflected in the relative social weakness of the character who nevertheless often functions as a catalyst for the actions of the more powerful figures of the saga.

INTEREST IN FAMILY TENSIONS IN THE ÍSLENDINGASÖGUR

The entry of new figures into family networks could cause great disruption through the formation of new alliances and duties. The concern with family relationships is particularly prominent in the *Íslendingasögur* with their intense local interest. The collection of sagas known as the *Íslendingasögur* or in English 'family sagas' are characterised by their anonymous composition, their generally secular, naturalistic perspective, and by a deep concern with the minutiae of the lives of Icelanders in the tenth and eleventh centuries, the period of the early Icelandic Commonwealth. The *Íslendingasögur* frequently trace the progress of feuds, the fragmentation of family bonds, and the development of alliances over several generations of family lives. Many tensions within these sagas are driven by competing demands for support between the various groups to which an individual is connected due to the inescapable fact that each individual possesses, through blood and marriage, a unique gathering of relatives. The tensions within *Gísli saga*, for example, arise between four men: two brothers-in-law and their two sworn brothers. The various possible permutations of alliances formed from these unique groups give rise to the tensions of the sagas. Often, as in the case of Gísli Súrsson and his family, tensions arise from the inability of an

individual to act in the best interests of all relatives simultaneously during periods in which competing groups had hostile relationships. The particular focus upon familial interactions within the *Íslendingasögur* provides strong examples of both the benefits and also the dangers created by additions to family groups and therefore it is from the *Íslendingasögur* that examples of problems arising from foster-relations will be taken.

The examples through which this problem will be explored are the foster-son, Hǫskuldr, of *Brennu-Njáls saga*, Þjóstólfr the foster-father and maternal uncle of Hallgerðr, also of *Brennu-Njáls saga*,¹⁶ and the horse, Freyfaxi, of *Hrafnkels saga* whom Hrafnkell addresses as *fóstri minn*, 'my foster-child.'¹⁷ It is significant that these figures are primarily attached to only one member of the household they enter and have no legal claim upon the wider familial or household group. In each case it is noteworthy that the individual joining the household, the unusual addition, has little or limited support from pre-existing family and necessarily looks to the new household for protection and support.

NJÁLS SAGA: HǪSKULDR AND NJÁLL

The first example which will be discussed is that of the foster-son, Hǫskuldr Þrainsson of *Njáls saga*. The relationship between Hǫskuldr Þrainsson, his foster-father Njáll and the sons of Njáll is born of difficult circumstances. Þrain was killed by the eldest son of Njáll. However, the friendship between Njáll and Hǫskuldr is remarkably warm from its opening stages. Njáll and Hǫskuldr conclude their

¹⁶ Hereafter referred to as *Njáls saga*.

¹⁷ *Austfirðingasögur*, ed. Jón Jóhanesson, Íslensk fornrit 11 (Reykjavík, 1950), 104. The term *fóstri* which Hrafnkell uses in fact interchangeably designates both foster-father, foster-son and, in rare circumstances, a foster-brother. See *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*, ed. Cleasby and Vigfusson, p. 168.

initial conversation with an agreement to establish a foster-relationship:

Njáll mælti: 'Nú vil ek bjóða þér fóstr, ef þú vill þiggja.' Hann kvezk þiggja vilja bæði þann góða ok annan, þann sem hann gerði honum. Urðu þær málalyktir, at Hǫskuldr fór heim með Njáli, ok fóstraði Njáll hann. Hann lét sveininum ekki í mein ok unni honum mikit.¹⁸

The author consistently emphasises the love which Njáll and Hǫskuldr swiftly develop for each other following the establishment of their foster-relationship. This love is demonstrated by the exceptional favour Njáll shows to Hǫskuldr throughout the course of their relationship. For Hǫskuldr's sake Njáll proposes a radical change in the Icelandic legal system which would create an extra chieftaincy, a *godorð*, for Hǫskuldr.¹⁹ Upon hearing of Hǫskuldr's death, Njáll expresses the wish that two of his own sons had died rather than Hǫskuldr.²⁰

Unfortunately, however, the support given to Hǫskuldr by Njáll and the newly created *godorð*, leads to Hǫskuldr's death. The support of Njáll and the friendship of the Njálssons fuel the jealousy of the most clearly drawn villain of *Njáls saga*, Morðr Valgarðsson who succeeds in fuelling the Njálssons' fear that Hǫskuldr would assert his blood-relationship to his father above the bonds created by the fosterage.²¹ The potential for this hostility is hinted at in the description of the first meeting between the young Hǫskuldr and

¹⁸ *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. Einar Ólafur Sveinsson, p. 237: 'Njál said: "Now I wish to adopt you as my foster-son if you are willing". Hǫskuldr said that he would accept this and any other kindnesses that Njál bestowed upon him. The arrangements were made and Hǫskuldr went home with Njál and Njál fostered him. He loved the boy dearly, and shielded him from all harm'.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 242–8.

²⁰ *Ibid.* p. 281.

²¹ *Ibid.* p. 275.

Njáll. From the beginning, Hǫskuldr adopts a social stance which belies his apparently vulnerable status. The author writes:

Um kveldit gekk sveinninn at honum, ok kallaði Njáll á hann. Njáll hafði fingurgull á hendi ok syndi sveininum; sveinninn tók við gullinu ok leit á dró á fingr sér. Njáll mælti: 'Villtú þiggja gullit at gjöf?' 'Vil ek' segir sveinninn. 'Veiztú,' segir Njáll, 'hvat föður þínum varð at bana? Sveinninn svarar, 'Veit ek, at Skarpheðinn vá hann, ok þurfu vit ekki á þat at minnask, er sætzk hefir á verit ok fuller bætr hafa fyrir komit.' 'Betra er svarat,' segir Njáll, 'en ek spurða.'²²

It is interesting to note hints within this short conversation of the deliberate construction of a familial relationship between them in the conscious mirroring of their posture and language within the scene. Njáll displays his ring to Hǫskuldr who takes it and immediately puts it on. This first conversation between them in the saga is balanced: both partners speak for approximately equal lengths of time. Linguistically, they mirror each other. 'Villtú þiggja gullit' Njáll begins and Hǫskuldr responds, 'Vil ek'. 'Veiztú', Njáll asks and Hǫskuldr begins his answer with the words, 'Veit ek'.²³ This culminates in Njáll's flattering deference to Hǫskuldr: 'your answer is better than my question.' There are hints in this scene that Hǫskuldr is echoing Njáll, physically and linguistically, in order, it may be suggested, to establish a bond between them.

²² *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. Einar Ólafur Sveinsson, pp. 236–7: 'In the evening the boy came up to him and Njál spoke to him. Njál had a golden ring on his finger and showed it to the boy; the boy received the ring and examined it and drew it onto his finger. Njál said: "Will you accept the ring as a gift?" "I will", said the boy. "You know", said Njál, "what caused your father's death?" The boy answered, "I know that Skarpheðinn killed him, and there is no need to call that to mind for that has been settled and full compensation has come". "Better is your answer", said Njáll, "than my question".

²³ "Will you", "I will"; "Do you know", "I know".

However, there are a number of interesting features which indicate the tensions caused by the murder of Þrain Sigfusson by Skarpheðinn Njálsson. Ostensibly Njáll occupies the dominant social position in the scene, as a mature man, wealthy householder and respected lawyer talking to a fatherless boy. However, Njáll's desire to heal the conflicts caused by the killing of Þrain Sigfusson leads to the adoption of a position of deference throughout the scene in this unusual offer of fosterage. Firstly, we have the problem of the ring. Njáll does not, at first, offer the ring to Hǫskuldr. He shows the ring to the boy and Hǫskuldr takes it from him, examines it, and then put it on. The verb used here for Hǫskuldr's actions: *taka*, which carries the primary meanings, 'to take, catch, seize',²⁴ suggests that Hǫskuldr's actions may be interpreted as slightly presumptuous. It is only after Hǫskuldr puts on the ring that Njáll asks: 'Villtú þiggja gullit at gjöf?'²⁵ Njáll's final words to him in this extract: 'Betra er svarat...en ek spurða'²⁶ may be interpreted as not only honest approval of Hǫskuldr's willingness to halt the cycle of vengeance, but also flattery. This flattery is also highlighted by the ironic contrast of the use of *sveinninn*, 'the boy' to describe Hǫskuldr throughout the passage. Through Hǫskuldr's words and actions within this scene, the author foreshadows Hǫskuldr's later social power: the power which inspires the jealousy of Morðr Valgarðsson. Although it is clear that the blame for Hǫskuldr's death can be laid upon the treachery of Morðr Valgarðsson, the plausibility of Hǫskuldr's supposed wish to avenge his father with an attack upon the perpetrators undermines the weaker ties of previous friendship and Hǫskuldr's peaceable behaviour. Hǫskuldr's death proves to be the catalyst for destruction,

²⁴ *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*, ed. Cleasby and Vigfusson, p. 622.

²⁵ 'Will you accept this ring as a gift?'

²⁶ *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. Einar Ólafur Sveinsson, p. 237: 'Better is your answer...than my question'.

leading swiftly, as Njáll himself foresees,²⁷ to the deaths of Njáll, his wife, sons, grandson and servants in their burning house.

NJÁLS SAGA: HALLGERÐR AND ÞJÓSTÓLFR

The second example of an individual joining a family due to a foster-relationship and subsequently acting as a catalyst for destruction is also taken from *Njáls saga*. In this case the character plays a rather more direct role in wrecking havoc. Þjóstólfr, the maternal uncle of Hallgerðr and foster-father of Hallgerðr joins Hallgerðr in the marital household in both her first and second marriages. In both cases he makes short work of dispatching her husband. Hallgerðr and her foster-father, Þjóstólfr are linked by temperament as much as the bonds of affection. The author tells us: 'Hon var orlynd ok skaphörð'.²⁸ The description links Hallgerðr's character to that of her foster-father. The author introduces him with the following description:

Þjóstólfr hét fóstri hennar; hann var suðreyskr at ætt. Hann var styrkr maðr ok vígr vel ok hafði margan mann drepit ok bætti engan mann fé. Þat var mælt, at hann væri engi skapbættir Hallgerði.²⁹

This similarity between the temperaments of Hallgerðr and Þjóstólfr established an alternate bond to the legal bond formed by Hallgerðr's marriages. It is interesting to note that Þjóstólfr is here introduced in

²⁷ *Ibid.* p. 281. Flosi Þorðarson also displays notable foresight in this regard, describing the relationship between Hǫskuldr and Njáll as *hattumikill* ('very dangerous', p. 241); *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*, ed. Cleasby and Vigfusson, p. 306.

²⁸ *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. Einar Ólafur Sveinsson, p. 29: 'She was imperious and wilful'.

²⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 29–30: 'She had a foster father called Þjóstólfr, a Hebridean by descent. He was strong and skilled in arms; he had killed many men and paid compensation for none of them. It was said that he did little to temper Hallgerðr's character'.

relation to Hallgerðr rather than vice versa. Furthermore, although we hear of his previous killings in this short introduction his actions within the saga are carried out solely in relationship to Hallgerðr.³⁰ This suggests that, although Hallgerðr may be his foster-daughter, Þjóstólfr is clearly placed in the marginalised position of an addition to the household, bound only through foster-ties to one individual. The ominous introduction is fulfilled by the murder of Hallgerðr's first husband, Þorvaldr, as an act of vengeance for slapping Hallgerðr who promptly complains to Þjóstólfr over this ill-treatment. When Hallgerðr remarries, her husband is strongly advised not to permit Þjóstólfr to reside in his household and for some years the couple live happily together, until Þjóstólfr joins the household. Þjóstólfr's behaviour provokes a quarrel between Hallgerðr and her husband which results in Glúmr slapping Hallgerðr. The immediate result of the quarrel is quoted below:

Hon unni honum mikit ok mátti eigi stilla sik ok grét hástöfum. Þjóstólfr gekk at henna ok mælti: 'Sárt ert þú leikin, ok skyldi eigi svá opt.' 'Ekki skalt þú þessa hefna,' segir hon 'ok engan hlut í eiga hversu sem með okkr ferr.' Hann gekk í braut ok glotti við.³¹

The introduction of Þjóstólfr into the family is the cause of its destruction against the will of both Glúmr and Hallgerðr. The bonds of wilful behaviour and a proud temperament which previously united Hallgerðr and her foster-father prove, in this case, to overwhelm the family. It seems here that Þjóstólfr is asserting their

³⁰ The killing of Hallgerðr's first two husbands.

³¹ *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. Einar Ólafur Sveinsson, p. 48: 'She loved him greatly and was unable to calm herself and wept loudly. Þjóstólfr came up to her and said: "You have been sorely treated and it shall not happen again". "You shall not avenge this", she said, "and you shall not be involved in our affairs however they may go". He walked away and grinned'.

former, pseudo-familial relationship over and above that of Hallgerðr's legal family, her husband. It is notable that Þjóstólfr has no legal ties to Glúmr's family: no claims upon a relationship. Furthermore, the bond of affection between Hallgerðr and Þjóstólfr is unable to form an effective restraint for his behaviour. Hallgerðr promptly gains vengeance upon her foster-father by sending him to his death at the hands of her uncle, Hrútr. Again, the addition to the family proves to have a destructive power within the wider action of the saga; the effects of his actions stretching far beyond his death. Þjóstólfr's actions free Hallgerðr to marry again and her actions during her third marriage, to Gunnar of Hliðarendi, spark the central feud of the saga. In this regard, it may be said that Þjóstólfr, although not a central character of the saga, destroys one family and acts as a catalyst for the destructive action of the central feud of the saga.

HRAFNKELS SAGA

The third example of an unnatural addition to the family will be taken from *Hrafnkels saga*. The character in question has been chosen in order to broaden the discussion of foster relationships. This is Freyfaxi, Hrafnkell's stallion, whom Hrafnkell calls *fóstri minn*, 'my foster-child.'³² Although Konrad Maurer suggests that this term merely expresses affection towards a favourite pet,³³ as we see in *Borgils saga ok Hafliða*,³⁴ another example of the term suggests that it indicates a deeper bond. We have another pet addressed in such a way in *Njáls saga*; Sámr, the unnaturally perceptive guard-dog belonging to Gunnarr of Hliðarendi, described as having human

³² *Hrafnkels saga* in *Austfirðinga sögur*, ed. Jón Jóhanesson, p. 104.

³³ Valtýr Guðmundsson, 'Fóstbræðralag', *Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde* 3 (1894), 100–7, at p. 104.

³⁴ *Borgils saga ok Hafliða* in *Sturlunga saga*, ed. Jón Jóhanesson, Magnús Finnbogason and Kristján Eldjárn, I, 44.

intelligence.³⁵ In the same way, Freyfaxi's actions seem to indicate a quasi-human intelligence. The quasi-human intelligence of the horse deserves some elucidation. The feud of *Hrafnkels saga* begins with the unfortunate ride of Hrafnkell's young shepherd, Einarr, upon Freyfaxi. Having dedicated the stallion, Freyfaxi, to Freyr, and having clearly stated his intention to kill any who dared ride the horse, Hrafnkell feels bound to honour his oath.³⁶ There is some supernatural justification for Einarr's unfortunate ride. The horses upon whom Einarr was permitted to ride galloped off, the saga tells us, at his approach, while Freyfaxi remained entirely still in his presence.³⁷ However, Einarr's ride upon the forbidden stallion results in his death, for as soon as horse and man return to Freyfaxi's fields, the horse, covered with the mud and sweat of hard riding, gallops away down the valley without stopping, until he reaches Hrafnkell's door and neighs loudly to draw attention to himself, in order to present Hrafnkell with immediate evidence of the broken vow.³⁸ It is noteworthy that Hrafnkell, upon seeing the condition of the horse, vows vengeance as if to a person, as the following example demonstrates:

Síðan gekk hann út ok sér Freyfaxa ok mælti við hann: 'Ílla þykki mér, at þú ert þann veg til görr, fóstri minn, en heima hafðir þú vit þitt, er þú sagðir mér til, ok skal þessa hefnt verða.'³⁹

Freyfaxi's apparent determination to reveal to Hrafnkell Einarr's broken vow never to ride the horse suggests an unnatural intelligence.

³⁵ *Brennu-Njáls saga*, ed. Einar Ólafur Sveinsson, p. 173.

³⁶ *Hrafnkels saga* in *Austfirðinga sögur*, ed. Jón Jóhanesson, p. 105.

³⁷ *Ibid.* p. 103.

³⁸ *Ibid.* p. 104.

³⁹ *Ibid.* 'Afterwards he went out and saw Freyfaxi and spoke with him: "It grieves me that you have been badly treated, my foster-child, but you had your wits about you when you came to me and this shall be avenged!"'

Furthermore, Hrafnkell here offers a rare sign of affection. In fact, Hrafnkell's admission that the condition of the horse sorrows him is a remarkably rare glimpse into his thoughts for *Hrafnkells saga* is noted for the process which Heather O'Donoghue describes as 'external focalisation', in which interpretations of thought and feelings amongst saga characters are perceived through their actions.⁴⁰ Although the saga's author explicitly tells us that Hrafnkell punishes Einarr for riding the forbidden horse because of the solemn vow he has made to do so, it may be suggested that his affection for the horse drives his anger, just as the foster-relationship between Hallgerðr and Þjóstólfr is given by Þjóstólfr as the reason for the killing of both her husbands. Hrafnkell's comments to the horse are significant. He uses the word *hefnd*; a word used in the context of feuding.⁴¹ Hrafnkell's vengeance for injuries done to his pseudo-family creates the central feud of the saga which engulfs the district. Later in the saga, the horse is explicitly blamed for the death of Einarr and put to death.⁴² It is interesting to note that at that point, Þorgeirr Þjóstarson, one of the powerful brothers who support Einarr's uncle in punishing Hrafnkell for Einarr's death, explicitly counsels the death of the horse in order to prevent further deaths.⁴³ Although ostensibly powerless, the stallion plays a pivotal role within the text in allowing, whether with or without supernatural agency, Einarr to break his vow. This is the catalyst for the death of Einarr and the feud of *Hrafnkells saga*.

⁴⁰ H. O'Donoghue, *Skaldic Verse and the Poetics of Saga Narrative* (Oxford, 2005), p. 141.

⁴¹ *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*, ed. Cleasby and Vigfusson, p. 246: 'vengeance'.

⁴² *Hrafnkells saga* in *Austfirðinga sögur*, ed. Jón Jóhanesson, pp. 123–4.

⁴³ *Ibid.* p. 123.

Clearly, there are many more examples of unusual additions to a family in the *Íslendingasögur* which, had space permitted, could have been explored here. These three examples are chosen, however, as exemplars of the differences between bonds which are all classified under the common heading of foster-relationships. However, there are notable features in common in these cases. These are: the relative weakness of the individual joining the larger household, not so much physically as in social terms; the lack of an extensive family network actively supporting these individuals; the lack of legal ties to their new wider families and an intense, close friendship with one individual. It is significant that these individuals, joined to a household through only a foster-relationship, effectively stand alone in their households, with no legal claims to the support of others. The cases of Høskuldr, Þjóstólfr and Freyfaxi, explored above, suggest that the authors of *Hrafnkells saga* and *Njáls saga* draw a deliberate contrast between the social weakness of these characters (the initial social weakness, in Høskuldr's case) and the emotions and actions which they inspire. This contrast leads to the creation of their ultimate role as a catalyst for a wider feud within the saga.

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The notion of exile in the corpus of medieval Irish literature is a complex concept. Depictions of exile vary from text to text, according to the broader ideas of the narrative and the cultural context within which they were written. In many texts, it seems that exile, rather than being about isolation from all other human beings, relates more to dispossession and separation from one's position in society. As such, it is possible, as in the texts examined in this paper, to be in a kind of exile while accompanied by one's family members, or to go into exile in lands controlled by one's kin. This is the definition of exile as understood and used within this article. Exile is, in this sense, a space that characters occupy, a space that is not merely physical, but on occasions also supernatural and psychological. This paper examines five medieval Irish texts, ranging chronologically from the ninth to the twelfth century, and assesses the literary reasons for their depiction of characters occupying exilic space while accompanied by members of their kin.

The five texts¹ examined are two *immrama* ('voyage tales'), that is, the ninth-century *Immram Curaig Maíle Dúin* ('The Voyage of Máel Dúin's Coracle')² and the twelfth-century *Immram Curaig Ua Corra*

¹ All citations are from the editions listed below. All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.

² For text and translation see *The Voyage of Máel Dúin: a Study in Early Voyage Literature Followed by an Edition of Immram curaig Máele Dúin from the Yellow Book of Lecan in Trinity College*, ed. and trans. H. P. A. Oskamp, (Groningen, 1970).

('The Voyage of the Uí Chorra Coracle'),³ as well as three texts associated with the seventh-century Battle of Mag Rath, which was fought between Domnall mac Áeda of the Cenél Conaill kindred, who is described in the texts as high king of Ireland and was the head of the Northern Uí Néill dynasty from 628 until his death in 642, and Congal Cláen or Cáech, a king of the Ulaid: two tenth-century versions of *Cath Maige Rath* ('The Battle of Mag Rath'),⁴ and a twelfth-century text, *Fled Dúin na nGéd* ('The Banquet of Dún na nGéd').⁵ These texts have been selected because they depict various types of kinship (and other familial) relationships—maternal and paternal kin, foster relationships—and exile in a variety of locations both physical and psychological. The Mag Rath texts and the *immrama* do not immediately appear to have many similarities, but, as will become apparent, they share several elements. Most importantly, they all feature a struggle relating to duty towards one's kin, and exile plays a key role in determining how this struggle is resolved.

In the ninth-century voyage tale *Immram Curaig Maíle Dúin*, family obligations occupy a prominent position against the backdrop of the

³ For text and translation see W. Stokes, 'The Voyage of the Hui Corra', *Revue Celtique* 14 (1893), 22–69.

⁴ For texts and translations see *The Banquet of Dun na nGedh and the Battle of Magh Rath: an Ancient Historical Tale From a Manuscript in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin, with a Translation and Notes*, ed. and trans. J. O'Donovan (Dublin, 1842, repr. Felinich, 1995) and C. Marstrander, 'A New Version of the Battle of Magh Rath', *Ériu* 5 (1911), 226–47. The editions of *Cath Maige Rath* and *Immram Curaig Ua Corra* do not include line references, while the edition of *Immram Maíle Dúin* marks lines on a page-by-page basis (that is, each new page begins at line 1 again). As such, my citations refer to page numbers and paragraph references for these editions.

⁵ For text see *Fled Dúin na nGéd*, ed. R. Lehmann, *Medieval and Modern Irish Series* 21 (Dublin, 1964). For translation see R. Lehmann, 'The Banquet of the Fort of Geese', *Lochlann* 4 (1969), 131–59.

tale's larger concerns of penance and redemption.⁶ Máel Dúin begins the tale as a marginal figure due to his family heritage—the child of a rapist and a nun, brought up by foster-parents. This troublesome heritage puts him further outside society when he is goaded into committing murder in order to avenge his father's death, and it is for this reason that he initially undertakes a sea-voyage.⁷ There is a conflict throughout between duty to one's kin and duty to God. This tension between his desire to seek revenge on behalf of his father, and the fact that he would have to commit murder in order to do so is one of the primary conflicts of the text. That he is instantly driven away from the island where his father's murderers are dwelling shows that his purpose is questionable: his desire for revenge is wrong, and in fact must be repented. He is blown into an exilic journey around a series of islands that symbolise different stages of repentance, as well as the consequences of dying without repenting one's sins.⁸ The

⁶ There is significant overlap in terms of form and content between Irish vernacular voyage tales, as well as a strong link to the Latin *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*, and some other Irish hagiographical texts. Most importantly, it should be noted that although texts like *Immram Maíle Dúin* feature characters who embark on exilic sea-voyages for ostensibly 'secular' reasons, these voyages bear striking similarities to those undertaken by saints in hagiographical literature. For the text of *Navigatio Sancti Brendani*, see *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis from Early Latin Manuscripts*, ed. C. Selmer (Notre Dame, Ind., 1959). For the similarities between *immrama* and Irish hagiography, see M. Herbert, 'Literary Sea-Voyages and Early Munster Hagiography', in *Celtic Connections: Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Celtic Studies*, 2 vols. (1999), I, 182–9 (at pp. 183, 186 and 189).

⁷ *Immram Maíle Dúin* 15–25 (ed. Oskamp, p. 104).

⁸ The Island of the Weepers could conceivably be construed as an example of this, as the Weepers wail in despair that they did not repent before being moved into an exilic space; in contrast, Máel Dúin encounters many figures who did repent, and moved into exilic spaces as part of their penance. The contrast is

further he is separated from society, and the deeper he moves into this spiritual exile, however, the closer Máel Dúin comes to achieving repentance. Thus the text uses different kinds of space and distance to illustrate Máel Dúin's progress from a potential murderer to a repentant, redeemed Christian. First, he is separated from society due to birth, and then, physically and metaphysically due to the intention to sin. This is followed by a further separation, his exilic voyage, that in fact brings Máel Dúin back within the Christian fold. It is significant that the voyage begins where it ends, but with Máel Dúin's mental state greatly transformed. Rather than wishing to kill the men who murdered his father, he enters their house as a guest and enjoys their hospitality. This meeting is foretold by a hermit Máel Dúin encounters towards the end of his journey:

Ricfaidh uile do for tír ocus an fer ro marb t'athairseo a Mael Duin
fonngébaigh a ndun ar for cind ocus níro marbaigh acht tabruidh
dilghudh dó fo bithin robar saersi dia di morgudasachtaib imdaib ocus
basa firbidhbuidh báis do chena.⁹

In this way, the text configures the transformation of the repentant soul as a movement through physical and supernatural space, using Máel Dúin's family background as a mechanism to drive this thematic concern.

The text makes use of Máel Dúin's family in further ways in order to illustrate the proper manner of repentance. *Immram Maíle Dúin* includes an instance of the trope of supernumerary companions going on a voyage and in some way preventing the legitimate

obvious—the Weepers lament wordlessly, the repentant sinners welcome Máel Dúin and his companions with offers of food and shelter.

⁹ *Immram Maíle Dúin* 30–4, (ed. Oskamp, p. 172): 'You will all reach your country, and the man who killed your father, Máel Dúin, you will find him in a fortress before you. And do not kill him, but forgive him, because God has freed you from many great dangers, and you are also men deserving death.'

members of the voyage from attaining their goals. This also occurs in *Vita Columbae* in the section dealing with Cormac's voyage, where a monk joins the party without his abbot's permission.¹⁰ In *Navigatio Sancti Brendani* and *Immram Curaig Ua Corra*, three other monks, and a jester, respectively, join the travellers without being invited, with similarly disastrous effects.¹¹ In *Immram Maíle Dúin*, however, the extra companions are Máel Dúin's three fosterbrothers. Family ties mean that Máel Dúin cannot ignore their pleas to join the voyage, despite the fact that the druid Nuca explicitly warned Máel Dúin that the number of his party could not exceed or be less than seventeen (or sixty).¹² The foster-brothers, in effect, force Máel Dúin's hand, as they walk into the sea and insist that they will drown if he does not turn the boat to them and rescue them:

'Ar cia risam for culo,' ar Mael Duin, 'ni raga lim-sa acht an lín atam sund.' 'Ragmuidne at deghaig isin múir conor mbáiter and mína tisiu cuccaind.' Doscoradh a triur iarom isin muir ocus snagid co cian a thír. Ot conair iarom mael duin impais cuco ara cend arnato baiditis ocus dobert cuce ina curach iat.¹³

¹⁰ *Adomnan's Life of Columba*, ed. and trans. A. O and M. O. Anderson (London, 1961), I, 6, pp. 222 and 224.

¹¹ *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis*, Chapter 5 (ed. Selmer, pp. 11–2); *Immram Curaig Ua Corra*, §§ 36–7 (ed. Stokes, pp. 38 and 40).

¹² *Immram Maíle Dúin* 25–31 (ed. Oskamp, p. 104). Oskamp has argued that seventeen is the correct number, and sixty was an error that crept into the text, or belonged to a different textual tradition. He cites the island with seventeen women—to correspond to the seventeen members of Máel Dúin's party—as evidence for this: *Immram Maíle Dúin*, p. 52.

¹³ *Immram Maíle Dúin* 38–43 (ed. Oskamp, p. 106): "For although we may go back", Máel Dúin said, "there will not go with me but the number [of people] which is here". "We will go after you into the sea and we will be drowned, unless you come to us". Then the three lowered themselves into the sea and they swam far out from land. When Máel Dúin saw that he turned to them so that they might not drown and he brought them to him into his boat'.

This leaves Máel Dúin faced with an impossible conundrum: he must choose between being disobedient to the druid or destructive to his family. Oskamp, in an analysis of the tale, summarises the tensions that the brothers' demands present to Máel Dúin:

They [the foster-brothers] have left their parents – 'the king and the queen of the district' – to follow Máel Dúin to his place of origin; they were brought up together with Máel Dúin, and they certainly have those strong emotional ties with the hero which we know from other tales: fosterbrothers are often even more attached to one another than natural brothers. And yet, Máel Dúin sets out on an expedition to avenge his father without asking his fosterbrothers to join him. No explanation of this contradictory behaviour by the hero is satisfactory. The 'latecomers' must be the fosterbrothers to emphasise Máel Dúin's dilemma, the choice between the druid's words and his obligations to his fosterbrothers.¹⁴

As in the other examples of this literary trope, the illicit presence of Máel Dúin's foster-brothers on the voyage seems to be used to demonstrate the dangers of not repenting properly. That is, Máel Dúin's foster-brothers have not undertaken a sea-voyage out of a desire for penance, and they are punished accordingly. That the 'latecomers' in *Immram Maíle Dúin* are Máel Dúin's foster-brothers gives his dilemma an added tension.

The presence of supernumerary companions then provides an inbuilt mechanism and explanation for any problems that may arise on the journey, as the extra members of the party tend to prove a hindrance for the legitimate members. This is certainly the case in *Immram Maíle Dúin*, where the three foster-brothers are left on the Island of the Wailers, the Island of the Laughters and killed as a result of stealing a golden necklet respectively.¹⁵ As each island encountered

¹⁴ Oskamp, introduction to *Immram Maíle Dúin*, p. 53.

¹⁵ *Immram Maíle Dúin* 22–5, 27–30 and 41–2 (ed. Oskamp, pp. 128, 166 and 122).

in this text symbolises stages of the soul's journey towards repentance, the fact that the brothers are left behind at these points suggests that they are incapable of moving any closer to a state of repentance than the symbolic stages where they were left. We should note that in the cases of the brothers being left on the Islands of the Wailers and Laughers, the crew drew lots to determine who should go to the two islands. Thus the elimination of the brothers from the voyaging party reduces the number back to that prescribed by the druid, without Maél Dúin having to deny or abandon his foster-brothers. This, in a sense, relieves the tension between the demands of the druid and the demands of Maél Dúin's family by taking the decision out of Maél Dúin's hands. The brother left at the Island of the Wailers is rescued by Máel Dúin's companions, however, which suggests that his spiritual state is better than that of the other brothers, with greater potential for redemption. This also causes problems for the fulfilment of the druid's prophecy regarding the number of the group—although it can certainly be argued that the group was reduced to this number without Máel Dúin having to have any input, removing the greatest tension of the text, that is the conflicting demands of family and spiritual redemption.

In a later *immram* text—the twelfth-century *Immram Curaig ua Corra*—family background separates the characters from society to begin with, and then their crimes (which are also related to their family background) exile them further—all before they have even gone into what may be termed exile proper. The crimes of the Uí Chorra stem from their demonic heritage: their parents, unable to conceive, 'make communion with the Devil' (*cumann do dhéanamh ria Deamhan*).¹⁶ The sons soon embrace their demonic inheritance, using it as an excuse to upset the social order with great destructiveness.

¹⁶ *Immram Curaig Ua Corra*, §4 (ed. Stokes, pp. 26 and 28).

As doilg tra dhuinne,' ol siad, 'gan foghail agus dibhearg agus ingreim do dhéanamh ar naimhdibh Diabhail madh é is triath nó is tigherna dhuinn i. cleirigh do mharbadh agus cealla do losgadh agus d'argain.'

Is annsin ro eirghetar an meic sin, agus roghabh siad a n-arma, agus tangadar go Tuaim dá Ghualainn, agus ró airgsiad agus roloisgsiad an baile, agus doronnsad foghail agus díbhearg adhbhal mhor arfedh chóighidh Chonnacht ar cheallaibh agus ar chleircibh.¹⁷

Although the Uí Chorra face many of the same experiences on their voyage as those encountered by Máel Dúin and his companions (including one of the islands where Máel Dúin leaves his foster-brothers), *Immram Curaig ua Corra* sidesteps all of the tension between the obligations of family and penance that are present in *Immram Maíle Dúin*. When encountering the Island of the Wailers, none of the Uí Chorra go ashore, and the episode is used as a warning about fulfilling the conditions of one's repentance:

'Leac do leacuibh ifirn so,' ar siat, 'ocus [anmanna sinne nár' chomhall ar mbreath aithrige 'san saoghal, agus] abraidhsi fri gach nduine a n-imdhiten ar in leic sí, uair gibe tic sunna ni tiagait as co brath.'¹⁸

This is because the fact that the three Uí Chorra are brothers is essentially irrelevant to the tale. In fact, the (unrelated) clerics Snédgus and Mac Riagla function in a similar way in the eleventh- or twelfth-century texts *Immram Snédgusa agus maic Riagla* and *Echtrae*

¹⁷ *Immram Curaig Ua Corra*, §§7–8 (ed. Stokes, pp. 28 and 30): "If", say the sons, "it is the Devil who is our king or lord, it is hard for us not to rob and plunder and persecute his enemies, that is, killing clerics and burning and wrecking churches." Then those sons arose, and they took their weapons and came to Tuam. And they wrecked and burnt the place, and committed robbery and outrageous brigandage throughout the province of Connacht upon churches and clerics.'

¹⁸ *Immram Curaig Ua Corra*, §56. (ed. Stokes, p. 46): "This is a flagstone of the flagstones of Hell," they say, "and we are souls that did not fulfil our judgement of repentance in earthly life. And tell everyone to save himself from this flagstone, for whoever comes here will not leave until Judgement Day".

Clérech Cholaim Cille.¹⁹ None of these characters are clearly-defined individuals, and the tales they appear in would, in fact, work just as well with a single character going into exile. They are a group collectively going on a journey that mirrors the soul's journey towards God, not a collection of individuals each travelling into exile for a range of distinct and different reasons. Unlike in *Immram Maile Dúin*, family heritage and relationships set the Uí Chorra apart initially, but they do not further affect the brothers' separation from society once they make the decision to go on their journey, or cause any tension within the narrative.

However, *Immram Curaig Ua Corra* has different tensions relating to the family: the tensions between the Uí Chorra's different relatives and the behaviour which these conflicting heritages encourage. While the brothers initially revel in their demonic inheritance, their repentance is directly preceded and facilitated by an encounter with their mother's uncle, and he is the one who encourages and directs their spiritual growth and repentance.²⁰ While in *Immram Maile Dúin*, the tensions between family demands and spiritual needs continue throughout the voyage, the voyage in *Immram Curaig Ua Corra* seems to signal their end.

The two *immrama* examined, one from the ninth century and one from the twelfth, have a focus on the journey of the repentant soul towards God, depicting this spiritual journey as one which takes place in a supernatural, physical exilic space. At various stages, physical and supernatural impediments appear, hampering the would-be penitent in achieving redemption. In *Immram Maile Dúin*, these impediments come in the form of Máel Dúin's three foster-brothers, who

¹⁹ For texts and translations see W. Stokes, 'The Voyage of Snedgus and Mac Riagla', *Revue Celtique* 9 (1888), 14–25 and 'The Adventure of St. Columba's Clerics', *Revue Celtique* 26 (1905), 130–70.

²⁰ *Immram Curaig Ua Corra*, §§28–32 (ed. Stokes, pp. 36 and 38).

accompany him illicitly on his voyage and are left behind at different stages of the journey. Their status as members of his family serves to underscore the difficulty of Máel Dúin's dilemma—choosing between the demands of his kin and of God—and the strength of his commitment to repentance. In *Immram Curaig Ua Corra*, the three foster-brothers have been replaced by a jester, and the single penitent sinner has become three brothers. The number of Uí Chorra brothers is not insignificant—it reflects the Trinity, and they act as a unit, rather than three separate people—but it marks a divergence from the depiction of a family in exile as portrayed in *Immram Maile Dúin*. Why there is such a difference in two texts that deal with an exilic penitential journey into essentially the same locations is a question that is, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this paper.

We have been focusing above on texts where people go into exile with family members, but there are also texts where people go into exile in regions controlled by their family. Such tales appear to reflect both changing attitudes to kinship and wider concerns about the stability and harmony of a kingdom. In these texts, exile functions as a kind of marker of outsider status. We can see this at work clearly in a group of texts associated with the seventh-century Battle of Mag Rath. These texts feature a dispute between Congal Claen (or Caech) and his overlord Domnall mac Áeda, and are firmly partisan towards Domnall. This means that they go out of their way to demonstrate Congal's outsider status, and exile is one way they do so. In all these texts, family is front and centre.

The first text of this group is the tenth-century *Cath Maige Rath*. There are two versions, which I will distinguish by calling 'the shorter version' and 'the longer version'. The focus is on the battle itself, but they both—the shorter version in particular—also deal with the events leading up to the battle: a dispute at a banquet and Congal's subsequent flight to Alba. His actions prior to the flight are utterly

destructive of the social order. As well as disrupting the feast by starting an argument and refusing Domnall's attempts to apologise,²¹ between fleeing to Alba and battling Domnall, Congal finds the time to lead a raid upon Domnall's mother—his own foster-grandmother.²² This episode is not present in the longer version of *Cath Maige Rath*. The two versions use lineage to reinforce Domnall's authority, with an extensive listing of his genealogy, but Congal is given none of the same treatment—his genealogy is not listed beyond his father. In fact, Congal is grafted onto Domnall's family tree, in order to reinforce the scale of his betrayal, as seen in this excerpt from the longer version of the text:

Am goistibe fa dó de,
 am ailene ocus am aide;
 [...] Mo debaid is Congail Claen
 is debaid elli re laeg,
 debaid mic is a mathar,
 is troid desi dearbrathar.
 Mo gleó-sa is Congail fá'n clad,
 is gleo mic is a athar,
 [...] Me ro togaib Congal Claen,
 ocus a mac imaraen,
 do thogbus Congal 's a mac,
 inmain dias chubaid, chomnart.
 Do glún Scannnlain tolaib gal,
 do thogbusa in cur Congal,
 do glún Chongail fa caem clú,

²¹ Philip O'Leary has suggested that Congal's anger stems mainly from outrage that he has not been accorded the proper respect due to a nobleman at a feast. In O'Leary's view, feasts in Irish literature were sites of conflict where anxieties about hierarchy and status were enacted. From Philip O'Leary, 'Contention at Feasts in Early Irish Literature', *Éigse* 20 (1984), 115–128, (at p. 116).

²² *Cath Maige Rath* (ed. Marstrander, p. 236).

do thogbusa fein Faelchú.²³

The tradition of Congal being Domnall's foster-son is present in all the tales dealing with the Battle of Mag Rath, and it emphasises the magnitude of Congal's destructive behaviour. That is, Congal is rebelling not just against his overlord, but also against the man who raised him (and, in this longer version of the tale, his son). Congal is further exiled by being portrayed as fighting at the head of an invading army of soldiers from Alba, Britain, France and England, in sharp contrast to Domnall, whose achievements include 'defending Ireland against adventurers and the attacks of adventurers, strange tribes and foreigners' (*ic imdegail Erenn ar fogail ocus ar echtrann, ar cogad eachtrann ocus ainfine, ocus allmurach*).²⁴ There is no description of Congal's journey to gather such foreign troops in the longer version of the tale, and the addition of such troops in that version seems merely to highlight the unconscionable nature of Congal's actions and reinforce his outsider status. The shorter version does, however, mention Congal's flight to Alba for the purpose of gathering troops.

²³ *Cath Maige Rath*, (ed. O'Donovan, pp. 134 and 136): 'I [Domnall] am his godparent doubly, on account of it, / I am his fosterer and tutor [...] / My battle with Congal Claen / Is the battle of a doe with her fawn, / The battle of a son and his mother, / And the fight of two true brothers. / My conflict with Congal concerning the field / Is the conflict of a son and his father [...] / It is I who reared Congal Claen, / And his son in like manner, / I reared Congal and his son; / Dear to me are the noble, very strong pair. / From the knee of Scannlán of much valour / I took the hero Congal; / From the knee of Congal of fair fame / I myself took Faelchú his son.'

²⁴ *Cath Maige Rath* (ed. O'Donovan, pp. 100).

Luid iarom Congal fochetoir a crích nAlban .i. co Domnall mac Echach Buidhi co tucad leis firu Alban co tancadar caicthigis riasin cath.²⁵

In the two versions of *Cath Maige Rath*, the concept of exilic space interacts with notions of power and authority. Congal is setting himself up as an alternative king—that is, he wants to be in Domnall's place, at the centre of things. There is a curious juxtaposition of battle and feast. At the feast, all is harmonious, and, in the shorter version of the text, the kings of Ireland are arranged around Domnall according to geography.²⁶ Their placement mirrors both the physical and political geography of Ireland. Congal's actions thus disrupt this order and place him outside its boundaries. His journey to Alba is a physical manifestation of this. It is almost as if he went into exile in spite of himself, intending a short trip to Alba in order to gather allies, and in reality was taking the final steps outside the order and harmony of Ireland into chaos and destruction. He took the first steps when he disrupted the feast and disturbed the political and geographical order, and his journey into Alba confirmed his outsider status, rather than providing the mechanism for his reintegration into Irish society.

During the battle, Congal meets the troops of all the different regions, with hostile intentions. He, like Domnall, is surrounded on all sides by Ireland, but unlike Domnall, he is being attacked by its rulers.²⁷ Just as Domnall sat at the centre of a unified social order, Congal is besieged at the centre of a disrupted social order. Space—

²⁵ *Cath Maige Rath*, (ed. Marstrander, p. 236): 'Congal went immediately to the territory of Alba, that is to Domnall son of Eochaid Buide and the men of Alba were brought by him so that they arrived a fortnight before the battle'.

²⁶ *Cath Maige Rath* (ed. Marstrander, pp. 323 and 324).

²⁷ *Cath Maige Rath* (ed. Marstrander, p. 238).

Congal's place within, and movement through it—is, therefore, crucial in understanding this important aspect of the tale.

In the eleventh- or twelfth-century text *Fled Dúin na nGéd*, Congal's flight is presented in much greater detail and in much more explicitly exilic terms. Here he leaves the feast and goes straight to his paternal uncle Cellach for advice. It should be noted that although Congal is still in Ireland, and presumably still in his home territory in Cellach's house, his actions prior to his flight put him outside society. Thus, although he is still in Ireland, he is in exile the minute he disrupts Domnall's feast and disrespects his overlord and foster-father. Cellach, after promising that his seven sons will fight with Congal,²⁸ advises Congal to go to his maternal relatives in Alba:

'Eirg i nAlban,' ol sé, 'do shaigid do shenathar .i. Eochaid Buide mac Áedáin mic Gabráin. Is é is ríg for Albain, ar is ingen dó do máthair, ocus ingen ríg Bretan .i. Eochaid Aingces ben ríg Alban do shenmáthair .i. máthair do máthar, ocus tabar lat firu Alban ocus Bretan ar in ngáel sin dochum nÉrenn do thabairt catha don ríg.'²⁹

It is interesting to stop at this point and consider the extremely complex portrayal of family in *Fled Dúin na nGéd* in comparison to the *Cath Maige Rath* texts. In *Fled Dúin na nGéd*, Congal interacts with a variety of relatives: maternal relatives, relatives who are in Alba and Britain, and thus non-Irish, as well as foster-relatives. In portraying Congal's time with his relatives in Britain and Alba as exilic, the text appears to be privileging paternal (and possibly foster) relationships at

²⁸ *Fled Dúin na nGéd* 404–7 (ed. Lehmann p. 13).

²⁹ *Fled Dúin na nGéd* 432–8 (ed. Lehmann, p. 14): "Go to Alba", he said, "to your grandfather, that is Eochaid Buide son of Áedán son of Gabrán. He is king of Alba, for your mother is his daughter, and your grandmother, that is the mother of your mother is the daughter of the king of the Britons, that is Eochaid Aingces, is the wife of the king of Alba, and because of that relationship bring with you the men of Alba and Britain to Ireland to wage battle against the king".

the expense of maternal blood relationships. However, he is still exiled while visiting his paternal relative Cellach, because exile is related not merely to the physical space one occupies, but also to the psychological or spiritual reasons for which one is occupying it. As someone who has insulted his overlord and foster-father, Congal is bereft. He has lost his position in society, and as such is in exile even in the home of his paternal kin.

We again find Congal depicted as a rebellious and disloyal foster-son. In *Fled Dúin na nGéd*, the cleric Máel Coba, Domnall's brother, prophesies Congal's betrayal. In this interpretation of the circumstances leading to the Battle of Mag Rath, Congal's iniquitous behaviour is given an added level of depravity by the inclusion of a virtuous and loyal foster-son of Domnall's:

'Ar atát dá dalta dile agutsa, a rí,' ol sé [Máel Coba], 'i. Cobthach Cáem mac Ragallaig mic Úadach (rí Connacht in Ragallach) agus Congal Cláen mac Scannlán Scíathlethain (rí Ulad fesin intí Congal). Ardaífid cechtar díb it agaidisú, a rí, agus dobéra díbergaig agus óes dénma uilc Alban agus Franc agus Saxan agus Bretan lais dochum nÉirenn agus dobérat secht catha duitsiú.³⁰

Again we can see this notion of exilic space at work, and in particular its interaction with authority. According to the prophecy, Congal will move outside the boundaries of acceptable behaviour for a foster-son when he rises up against his foster-father. At the same time, he will

³⁰ *Fled Dúin na nGéd* 74–80 (ed. Lehmann, p. 2): "For you have two beloved fostersons, king", he said, "that is Cobthach Cáem son of Ragallach son of Úadach (Ragallach is the king of Connacht) and Congal Cláen son of Scannlán Scíathlethan (that is Congal is the king of Ulster himself). One or the other of them will rise against you, king, and bring the plunderers and evil-doers of Alba, France, England and Britain to you to Ireland and they will wage battles against you".

physically move out of Ireland in order to gather these foreign troops before bringing them back in to Ireland in order to destroy it.

Máire Herbert has noted that the text is in fact an exploration of changing attitudes towards family. She notes that in the Alba and Britain episodes of the text (when Congal is there attempting to gather troops), Congal observes two examples of family tension—the first, in Alba, where the king's four sons argue over precedence and decide who should accompany Congal in battle in Ireland, and in Britain where four men claim to be the king's son and have to undergo a series of tests to determine who is the genuine son. As Herbert writes, "[t]he father's role [...] is one of provider of inheritance. [...] In all three representations of familial relations, we sense the sympathy of the storyteller with these fathers."³¹ Herbert suggests that this tale was written in response to changes taking place during the tenth to twelfth centuries, which she describes as 'branching broad-based lineage to the narrow line of filiation, emergence of surnames, single family unit rather than a wider group, emphasis on preserving patrimony.'³² In Congal's relationship with Domnall, the text presents the father-son relationship as negative and mercenary as a result of these social changes.

When viewed through this prism, it is clear that the emphasis on Congal and Domnall's foster-familial relationship is deliberate. Tensions between fathers and sons occupy a prominent place in *Fled Dúin na nGéd*, and Congal's status as an exile reinforces the text's preoccupation with the negative aspects of social changes in attitudes towards the family, depicting Congal as a greedy, power-hungry son whose greed puts him outside society and causes great destruction.

³¹ M. Herbert, 'Fled Dúin na nGéd: a Reappraisal', *CMCS* 18 (1989), 75–87 (at pp. 82–3).

³² *Ibid.* p. 83.

The five texts discussed here are responses to a variety of cultural and social phenomena in Ireland from the ninth to twelfth centuries. Common to all of them is a preoccupation with notions of exile as expressed through distance and dispossession, rather than complete isolation and solitude. However, each text uses this theme to explore a range of different concepts, responding to a variety of social, cultural and literary concerns.

The two *immrama* depict tensions between duty to one's family and to God as being resolved in a penitential, exilic space. In *Immram Máile Dúin*, Máel Dúin must choose between the demands of his family and his desire to revenge his father's death, and obedience to God. In this text, the decision is in effect taken out of his hands, as he is swept out to sea on a voyage of penance which ultimately returns him to the home of his father's murderers, where he is welcomed as a guest. In *Immram Curaig Ua Corra*, the three Uí Chorra brothers make a conscious decision to abandon a life of marauding for repentance and a sea-voyage, after being inspired to leave their destructive ways by their maternal uncle. Three texts dealing with the seventh-century Battle of Mag Rath—two tenth-century versions of *Cath Maige Rath*, and the eleventh or twelfth-century text *Fled Dúin na nGéd*—look at exile in terms of flight from foster-family and to blood relatives. Congal Claen's foster-familial ties to his overlord Domnall mac Áeda are used in all texts to emphasise the depravity of his actions and the depth of his betrayal. The shorter version of *Cath Maige Rath* in particular also has a focus on notions of space and distance as they relate to authority, and its opposite, exile. As Congal moves further away from Domnall, he is increasingly dispossessed of his status as a territorial ruler until he moves into an entirely exilic space. Despite the fact that he is surrounded by his blood relatives in Alba and when he returns to Ireland, he never regains his non-exiled status, and his death at the hands of Domnall serves to further underscore this. In

Fled Dúin na nGéd, as well as exploring this concept of exilic space, the text uses Congal's experiences in Ireland and Alba to critique recent changes in attitudes towards inheritance and family relationships, portraying the changes as having transformed the father-son relationship into one of mercenary self-interest. Thus, while all five texts explore notions of exile and family, they all look at slightly different aspects of these concepts, and arrive at very different conclusions.

“Megi faðir sinn ráða því, en helzt vili hann þó heima sitja”¹:
Snorri Goði, his Sons, and the Weight of Expectation

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Snorri goði is one of the most enigmatic figures to emerge from sources on Saga Age Iceland, though he enjoys an unusually consistent and positive portrayal across a number of texts. These texts are largely assumed to have been written, compiled or composed during the thirteenth century, a period dominated to a significant degree by the successful descendants of Snorri goði.² The volume of narrative devoted to Snorri goði and his descendants, the ambitious Sturlungar, stands in stark contrast to the silence of the generations in between.³ It has long been recognised that the events of the late eleventh and the twelfth century are, on the whole, poorly represented by the *Íslendingasögur*,⁴ accounting for this gap concerning

¹ *Heiðarníga saga*, ed. Sigurður Nordal and Guðni Jónsson, *Íslenskt fornrit* (henceforth *ÍF*) 3 (Reykjavik, 1972, rpt. 2001), pp. 215–328, at ch. 12, p. 246; trans. K. Kunz, ‘The Saga of the Slayings on the Heath’, in *The Complete Sagas of Icelanders VI* (Reykjavik, 1997), pp. 67–129, at p. 88: ‘His father could decide ... but for his part he would rather remain at home’.

² Vésteinn Ólason, *Dialogues with the Viking Age: Narration and Representation in the Sagas of the Icelanders*, trans. A. Wawn (Reykjavik, 1998), p. 62.

³ The Sturlungar claimed descent from Snorri through both Halldórr and Hallbera, two of Snorri’s children by Hallfríðr Einarsdóttir Þværingis. Halldórr’s granddaughter Þórdís married Hallbera’s grandson Gils, and their son Þórðr’s child was Hvamm-Sturla, the chieftain who gave his name to the Sturlungar dynasty.

⁴ *Bandamanna saga*, *Þorgils saga ok Hafliða* and a number of *þattir* are the exceptions to this general trend, but the ‘Saga Age’ is usually defined as encompassing action that occurred between c. 930–1050. M. Clunies Ross, *The*

the generations between Snorri and the Sturlungar. However, it does not explain why such a gap exists and it is this question with which I shall partially engage in this paper.

It has been said that Snorri represents an ‘extreme illustration of the masculine reproductive capacity’,⁵ with two sources claiming that he left behind ten well-provided for sons (as well as nine daughters and three illegitimate children).⁶ Despite the generation gap that is reflected by the sources, one might still be surprised to learn that only four of Snorri’s twelve sons are given a voice by the sagas.⁷ It seems counter-intuitive that the thirteenth century writers would emphasise the power and influence of Snorri goði and yet leave little evidence of these self-same attributes in intervening generations.

In this paper I will examine the interactions of these four characters with their ambitious father in the relevant *Íslendingasögur*, treating the sources as works of literary compilation based to varying degrees upon genuine oral memories of the people they describe. It is intended that this approach will yield insight into the way in which a powerful man’s relationship with his less memorable sons was perceived by medieval audiences and story-tellers. The attitude that the thirteenth-century compilers of information held towards the men who followed on from the famously memorable characters of the Saga Age will be an important factor in this. I will begin with a brief look at the character of Snorri goði himself and an introduction to an

Cambridge Introduction to Old Norse Icelandic Literature (Cambridge, 2010), p. 29 in conjunction with p. 8.

⁵ J. Jochens, *Women in Old Norse Society*, 2nd ed. (Ithaca, NY, 1988), p. 81.

⁶ The final chapter of *Eyrbyggja saga* and the unusual *Ævi Snorra goða* to be discussed below.

⁷ These are Guðlaugr, Þóroddr, Halldórr and Þórðr kausi. In one chapter of *Eyrbyggja saga* Þorsteinn Snorrason is also mentioned, however he plays no individual role in the action of the scene. *Eyrbyggja saga*, ed. Matthías Þórðarson, *ÍF* 4 (Reykjavik, 1935), ch. 62, p. 167.

important source for his life, the *Ævi Snorra goða*, before moving on to the episodes in which his sons appear and analysis of said episodes.

THE LIFE OF SNORRI GOÐI

Snorri is represented by a multitude of sagas in all kinds of situations, in which he is both compared with a Norwegian king and mocked as one of the self-important rulers tripped up by the simple brewer Olkofri;⁸ he facilitates the scheming Guðrún Ósvifsdóttir in *Laxdæla saga* and orchestrates the controlled violence of the Alþingi in *Njáls saga*. Within the apparent scope of his life, Snorri is shown consistently by these sagas to be a very ambitious and successful man and by his death is a figure of paramount importance in Iceland—a large fish in a rather small pond. His influence is such in *Eyrbyggja saga* that Helgi Þórláksson has doubted the authenticity of the saga's claim that a Saga Age chieftain could have held such a disproportionate amount of power.⁹

I have previously looked into the life of Snorri goði as it emerges from the *Íslendingasögur* as an immanent, biographical saga in the vein of Gísli Sigurðsson's reconstruction of a saga of Guðmundr ríki.¹⁰ When all narratives concerning Snorri were compared across a reconstructed chronology of his life, my findings were of a chieftain's

⁸ *Halldórs þáttur inn síðari*, ed. Einar Ólafur Sveinsson, *ÍF* 5 (Reykjavík, 1934), ch. 2, p. 269; *Olkofra þáttur*, ed. Jón Jóhannesson, *ÍF* 11 (Reykjavík, 1950), ch. 3, p. 92.

⁹ Helgi Þórláksson, 'Snorri goði og Snorri Sturluson', *Skírnir* 166 (1992), 295–320.

¹⁰ J. Shortt Butler, 'Hann var vitr maðr ok forspár um marga bluti, langrækr ok heiptudágr. Representations of Snorri goði in the *Íslendingasögur*' (unpubl. BA dissertation, Cambridge Univ., 2009); Gísli Sigurðsson, '*The Immanent Saga of Guðmundr ríki', trans. N. Jones, in *Learning and Understanding in the Old Norse World: Essays in Honour of Margaret Clunies Ross*, ed. J. Quinn et al., *Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe* 18 (Turnhout, 2007), pp. 202–18.

career in which a man's reaction to and involvement in perilous and agonistic situations changed markedly as his station stabilized. Certain aspects of this Saga Age character emerge as especially consistent through the sources: he lived to an advanced age and held both respect and wealth. These assets, combined with a willingness to pay compensation and a disinterest in the way in which honour usually dictated the course of a tit-for-tat family feud, are ultimately what led to this representation of Snorri goði's unusually high position of influence and power in the sources.

Þormódr Trefilsson's poem *Hrafnsmál* (composed c. 1012) is a bloody account of the battles that bolstered Snorri's power, but its value as a trustworthy source has been questioned by scholars because of differences between its account of events and the prose of *Eyrbyggja saga*, in which the poem is preserved.¹¹ In search of similarities to—or constructive difference from—the prose, I concluded that both are consistent in suggesting that from a cautious beginning Snorri's active role in battle and thenceforth in scheming is increasingly prominent throughout his encounters with other powerful contemporaries, from the defeat of Arnkell Þorólfsson to the larger battle at Alptafjörðr. At this battle the importance of family becomes apparent, as Snorri has to both avenge a son's injury and maintain his alliance with his father-in-law. A skirmish defined by family further describes the episode surrounding the fourth of the five surviving verses of *Hrafnsmál*, in which Snorri begins a dispute through a disagreement on family alliances and is assisted in battle by his nephew.¹² The final verse sees Snorri's allies, his followers and his

¹¹ *Den norske-islandske skjaldedigtning*, ed. Finnur Jónsson (Copenhagen, 1912–15), AI, p. 206; H. O'Donoghue, *Skaldic Verse and the Poetics of Saga Narrative* (New York, NY, 2005), p. 85.

¹² *Eyrbyggja saga*, ch. 56, p. 155.

younger relatives do most of the fighting whilst the elderly chieftain leads from the sidelines.¹³

We see a similar trend across the other sagas in which Snorri appears.¹⁴ In his youth he is proactive in forming alliances, notably with Guðrún Ósvífsdóttir in *Laxdæla saga* and with the advocates of a new religion in *Kristni þátr*.¹⁵ The continuation of Snorri's rising power is represented elsewhere by those who approach him in order to make alliances rather than vice versa; he is approached by supplicants such as Víga-Barði Guðmundarson in *Heiðarvíga saga* and the eponymous outlaw of *Grettis saga*.¹⁶

Amongst the sources for Snorri's life is the fascinating *Ævi Snorra goða*, a sparse summary of Snorri's marriages, children and church-

¹³ *Eyrbyggja saga*, ch. 62, p. 168.

¹⁴ Snorri plays a significant role in *Eyrbyggja saga*, *Heiðarvíga saga*, *Laxdæla saga*, *Njáls saga* and *Grettis saga*; he is an important figure in *Kristni þátr*, *Olkofra þátr* and *Gísla saga* and also receives a mention in *Þórðar saga breðu*.

¹⁵ At my estimate, Snorri took Guðrún's son Þórðr kausi to foster in c. 993, before taking a leading role in the church-building and conversions that followed the c. 1000 decision to make Iceland a Christian country. *Laxdæla saga*, ed. Einar Ól. Sveinsson, ÍF 5 (Reykjavik, 1934), ch. 36, p. 100; *Kristni saga*, ed. Sigurgeir Steingrímsson, Ólafur Halldórsson and P. Foote, ÍF 15 (Reykjavik, 2003), ch. 12, p. 33. Estimated dates will be expressly referred to as my own estimates throughout; these were reached through internal analysis of each narrative's mention of seasons or events in relation to more concrete dates, such as the conversion of Iceland, death of Snorri etcetera. Other dates not referred to as my own will be taken from the introduction to the relevant edition of *Íslenzk fornrit*. See also Clunies Ross, *Introduction*, p. 8, for a list of reasonably certain dates in Sage Age Iceland.

¹⁶ Barði received Snorri's help following the Heath-Slayings (c. 1017/8). Grettir requested Snorri's help first in roughly 1016 (according to my estimate of the saga's vague chronology) and Snorri is said to speak on Grettir's behalf up until his death in c. 1031. *Heiðarvíga saga*, ed. Sigurður Nordal and Guðni Jónsson, ÍF 3 (Reykjavik, 1938), ch. 33, pp. 312–3; *Grettis saga*, ed. Guðni Jónsson, ÍF 7 (Reykjavik, 1939), ch. 49, p. 158.

building. It appears incomplete, surviving only in two manuscripts of *Eyrbyggja saga*, where it is a separate text appended to the saga itself. The earlier version (Mélabók, fifteenth-century) ends the *Ævi* abruptly with the beginning of a new sentence, 'þá' at the bottom of the page.¹⁷ Whatever might have followed has not been preserved elsewhere. It has been speculated that the *Ævi* was a bridge between the oral transmission of evidence and the earliest notions of written sagas, partly because of Þuríðr Snorradóttir's role in the transmission of spoken stories to Ari fróði Þórgilsson as recounted in *Íslendingabók*.¹⁸ The *Ævi* and *Eyrbyggja saga*, which likely relied upon the *Ævi* to some extent, are in many instances the only sources we have for the existence of many of Snorri's children—although there is one discrepancy between the texts as mentioned below. Of the twenty-two children named by the *Ævi* it has been noted above that only four sons appear elsewhere in the sagas. Only three of these sons appear in sagas alongside Snorri, and one other in his own right. It is these four sons whom I will discuss below: Halldórr, Guðlaugr, Þórðr kausi and Þóroddr.

SNORRI AND HIS SONS IN THE SOURCES

For the purpose of clarity I have provided a brief explanation of the scenes and sagas in which the four sons whom I shall discuss appear. They will be discussed in roughly the order presented below, and it must be kept in mind that discussion of the text of *Heiðarvíga saga* must be of slightly limited reliability owing to the loss of the section

¹⁷ Although this 'þá' is edited out in the later manuscript AM 447 4to: F. Scott, *Eyrbyggja saga; The Vellum Tradition*, Editiones Arnamagnænae, A 18 (Copenhagen, 2003), p. 15*. The full text of the *Ævi* is published in Scott, *The Vellum Tradition* and following the close of *Eyrbyggja saga*, pp. 185–6.

¹⁸ Þuríðr was Snorri's sixteenth legitimate child according to the *Ævi*. ÍF 4, p. xiii.

of the saga to be examined. Arguments below concerning *Heiðarvígja saga* are based on the text of Jón Ólafsson's early eighteenth century reconstruction of the lost half of the saga.¹⁹

Guðlaugr

Snorri's fourth son (according to the *Ævi*), Guðlaugr is not remembered in *Eyrbyggja saga*'s closing list of Snorri's children, which matches the *Ævi* in all other ways. This is perhaps because in the only saga in which Guðlaugr appears he is said to have ended his days at an English monastery; *Heiðarvígja saga* features Guðlaugr in just one scene, in which Snorri tries to convince his pious son to assist him in killing Þorsteinn Gíslason, who was an ally of Gestr Þorhallson, the young killer of Snorri's father-in-law, Víga-Styrr Þorgrímsson.²⁰ The scene takes place in church and much has been made of Guðlaugr's flushed appearance as he indirectly disapproves of his father's suggestion; 'hafi hann þá verit rauðr sem blóð at sjá í andliti'.²¹

Þórðr kausi

Þórðr kausi ('the cat') appears in the same section of *Heiðarvígja saga* as Guðlaugr, but unlike his brother he is said to accompany Snorri to Þorsteinn's home. Þórðr is described by the saga as the youngest of Snorri's children, so we must assume that he was one of the illegitimate children named by the *Ævi* rather than Snorri's oldest son, also a Þórðr kausi.²² To add to the confusion Snorri's foster son Þórðr kotttr (also 'the cat') Þórðarson is also present in this scene and is not much older than the illegitimate Þórðr kausi. Þórðr Snorrason

¹⁹ For an introduction to the state of preservation of *Heiðarvígja saga* see ÍF 3, pp. xcvi–cvi.

²⁰ *Heiðarvígja saga*, ch. 12, p. 246.

²¹ *Ibid.* p. 247; trans. Kunz, p. 88: 'His face was red as blood'.

²² ÍF 3, p. 246, n. 1.

is encouraged by his father to attack Þorsteinn Gíslason's young son; Þórðr Þórðarson admonishes Snorri for his bloodlust.²³

Þóroddr

Þóroddr is the oldest of Snorri's sons to feature in a narrative scene alongside his father. According to *Eyrbyggja saga* he was supposed to have taken part in the lead-up to the battle of Alptafjörðr aged only twelve; in the saga Þóroddr indirectly causes the battle itself when he is wounded during a skirmish.²⁴ When asked by his father who injured him, Þóroddr names Steinþórr af Eyri and Snorri consequently engages Steinþórr in battle.

Þóroddr also appears as a much older man, perhaps about forty years old, in *Grettis saga*.²⁵ Having fallen out of favour with his father Þóroddr enters into combat with Grettir, who humiliates Snorri's son but sends him back unharmed. The elderly chieftain admires Grettir's sense and restraint and agrees to support him where possible. Outside the *Íslendingasögur* Þóroddr also enjoys a brief appearance in *Heimskringla* at a date by which he would have been rather old for the traditional 'coming-of-age' adventure of an Icelander's first trip abroad; this is, however, a troublesome episode that will not be discussed here.²⁶

²³ *Heiðarvígja saga*, ch. 12, p. 249.

²⁴ *Eyrbyggja saga*, ch. 44, p. 121.

²⁵ The events of the saga takes place c. 1026/7 according to my estimate based upon the date of Snorri's death and internal mentions of seasons provided by the saga.

²⁶ Þóroddr's stay at the court of St Óláfr in *Heimskringla* is an adventure-filled one. He is part of a group of prominent Icelanders held hostage at the court of the Norwegian king, although I have not found any other references to his time at St Óláfr's court in *Íslendingasögur* or other *konungasögur*. Given that St Óláfr was a figure of significance to learned Icelanders one would expect Þóroddr's interactions with this particular Norwegian king to have been remembered

Halldórr

Halldórr does not quite appear alongside his father in any texts but he features in two *þættir* which take his name and he is also mentioned at the close of *Íslendinga þáttir sögufróða* as the source for the titular Icelander's tales.²⁷ Both *Eyrbyggja saga* and *Laxdæla saga* name him as heir to Snorri's *goðorð* and it is this point of inheritance that I will focus on.

THE WEIGHT OF EXPECTATION

I shall begin by examining the contrasting representation in *Heiðarvíga saga* of a powerful chieftain's interactions with one of his eldest sons and with one of his young, illegitimate sons. Parallels with other sagas will be drawn to demonstrate that at least three sagas—*Heiðarvíga saga*, *Eyrbyggja saga* and *Laxdæla saga*—present a surprisingly consistent picture of Snorri's ambitions at this period, in keeping with the rough timeline of his life as outlined above.

The scene involving Snorri and Guðlaugr is highly charged with the expectation of family loyalty. Snorri emphasises a family connection in his attempt to get Guðlaugr on his side:

more frequently in the sagas. St Óláfr holds the sons of familiar figures—Skapti Þoroddsson, Síðu-Hallr, Snorri goði—at his court, intending to release them only if Iceland agrees to adopt the Christian laws of Norway. They distinctly echo the elite hostages held by Óláfr Tryggvason during his attempts to impose Christianity upon Iceland. As well as participating in this delegation, Þoroddr adventures in the manner of *fornaldarsögur* heroes, outwitting Swedes and encountering trolls in his reluctant service of the king. These events occur during the mid to late 1020s, making Þoroddr older even than when he supposedly went in search of Grettir. *Heimskringla; Óláfs saga helga*, ed. Bjarni Aðalbjarnason, *ÍF* 27 (Reykjavík, 1942, 3rd ed. 2002), chs. 129, 136, 138 and 141, pp. 220, 240, 243 and 255–61.

²⁷ *Morkinskinna*, ed. Finnur Jónsson, *Samfund til udgivelse af gammel nordisk litteratur* (STUAGNL) 53 (Copenhagen, 1932), p. 200.

Snorri mælir, hvárt hann vili eigi með sér fara at hefna móðurfoður síns. Guðlaugr svarar, at hann ætli, svá muni vel mannat, at eigi þurfi síns liðs við, ok hafi hann eigi skipt sér af vígaferlum hingat til; megi faðir sinn ráða því, en helzt vili hann þó heima sitja.²⁸

The *Ævi* names Guðlaugr as the youngest of the four children born to Snorri and Ásdís Víga-Styrsdóttir, and it is probably for this reason that *Heiðarvíga saga* depicts this interaction between Snorri and Guðlaugr. It is also likely that the setting of the scene in Snorri's church is significant. William Sayers and Thomas Hill have debated the moral outlook of the scene and their arguments present the scene in entirely different lights. Hill argues that Guðlaugr's flushed appearance denotes religious fervour and references continental depictions of saints, whereas Sayers sees anger at Snorri's presumptuous request and an apparent insult to Guðlaugr's honour.²⁹

Svá hefir Snorri frá sagt, at hann hafi aldri slíka manns ásjónu sét sem Guðlaugs, sonar síns, þá er hann mætti honum í kirkjunni; hafi hann þá verit rauðr sem blóð at sjá í andliti, ok hafi sér svá sem nokkur ógn af staðit.³⁰

²⁸ *Heiðarvíga saga*, ch. 12, p. 246. trans. Kunz, p. 88: 'Snorri asked him whether he did not wish to accompany them to avenge his maternal grandfather. Guðlaug replied that he expected there were enough of them that they hardly needed his support and he had seldom involved himself in slayings up to now. His father could decide, he said, but for his part he would rather remain at home'.

²⁹ T. Hill, 'Guðlaugr Snorrason: the Red-Faced Saint and the Refusal of Violence', *JS* 67 (1995), 145–52, at pp. 149–50; W. Sayers, 'The Honour of Guðlaugr Snorrason and Einarr þambarskelfir: a Reply', *JS* 67 (1995), 536–44, at p. 539.

³⁰ *Heiðarvíga saga*, ch. 12, p. 247; trans. Kunz, p. 88: 'Snorri himself said that he had never seen anyone with a look on his face to match that of his son Guðlaug when he met him in the church. His face was red as blood and he had felt a kind of awe for him'.

This passage purports to give us a unique insight into Snorri's feelings, portrayed as his own account and removed from the context of violence or politics as well as the neutral voice of the saga narrative. It does not appear to imply the anger or disappointment in his son that Sayers sees in the scene.³¹ Although a reddening of the face is strongly associated with the emotion of anger in other sagas it is often accompanied by a reference to a swelling of the person and a blotchy alternation of ruddy and pallid complexions in the person affected.³² This type of anger has been seen as a reaction to an offence against a person's autonomy, which Snorri explicitly claims not to want to offend in the scene, reiterating his son's independence:

Ek hefí eigi kallat at þér um verk þín hingat til, ok skaltu þeim sjálf ráða upp frá þessu, ok er mér vel um gefit, þú hvergi farir ok rækir siðu þína.³³

Additionally Larrington has observed that 'narrative...lies at the heart of the way in which we engage with emotion',³⁴ and this reddening of Guðlaugr is separated from the engagement of Snorri and his son in direct speech by appearing as part of a different narrative layer, that is Snorri's alleged memory of the encounter, which is itself associated in the passage with Guðlaugr's subsequent monastic career. Furthermore, owing to the fact that Snorri apparently grew up amidst the emotional drama recounted by *Gísla saga*, the idea that he could claim to 'hafi aldri slíka manns ásjónu sét sem Guðlaugs' if we are referring simply to violent anger is somewhat

³¹ Sayers, 'Honour', p. 538.

³² C. Larrington, 'The Psychology of Emotion and Study of the Medieval Period', *EME* 10 (2001), 251–6, at p. 255.

³³ *Heiðarvíga saga*, ch. 12, pp. 246–7; trans. Kunz, p. 88: 'I have made no demands of your services up to now, and from now on you shall decide your labours for yourself. I am pleased at your remaining at home to devote yourself to your faith'.

³⁴ Larrington, 'Psychology of Emotion', p. 256.

far-fetched.³⁵ Sayers' argument also strikes me as flawed in light of the heavy weight of familial expectation in the scene—would a medieval saga audience have believed that a man destined to become a monk could express violent anger towards his father in church whilst discussing his grandfather's death? It does not seem likely. Guðlaugr's passive attitude towards his father's request echoes the tone of the refrain 'thy will be done' in The Lord's Prayer, and it does not sound like the tone of a man roused to violent protest.³⁶

Thus I agree largely with Hill's interpretation of the scene, although where Sayers and Hill agree—on the interpretation of the word which describes Snorri's reaction to his son's face, 'ógn'—I feel that even Hill takes his interpretation a little far. 'Ógn' can mean 'terror', as Hill and Sayers interpret it, but it also hints at awe within the fear, which I believe indicates Snorri's awe at Guðlaugr's religious devotion rather than Snorri's physical fear of his son's passion.³⁷ This scene is followed by exceptional acts of pre-meditated violence by Snorri who does not seem to have taken the terrifying vision of his son as a warning against such actions; had he been so in terror of Guðlaugr's rejection of the murder of Þortseinn Gíslason I doubt that the saga would have shown Snorri making such casual instructions as will be discussed below. Hence I interpret Snorri's 'ógn' as a milder form of 'fearful awe' expressed by a father entrenched in Icelandic power politics upon witnessing the deep religious fervour of his son, whose ambitions extended far beyond the neighbouring farmsteads.

³⁵ *Heiðarvíga saga*, ch. 12, p. 247; trans. Kunz, p. 88: He 'had never seen anyone with a look on his face to match that of ... Gudlaug'.

³⁶ My thanks to Carolyne Larrington for pointing out this similarity.

³⁷ R. Cleasby and Guðbrandur Vigfússon, *Icelandic-English Dictionary, Based on the MS. Collections of the Late Richard Cleasby* (Oxford, 1874), s.v.: ógn; ógnan.

Heiðarvíga saga presents Snorri's caution towards Guðlaugr as stemming from the difference between the two men; Snorri is proud of Guðlaugr and he allows him to make his own decisions, states that he is pleased by his faith and he eventually funds Guðlaugr's emigration to an English monastery.³⁸ Yet Snorri appears unable to comprehend Guðlaugr's clerical ambitions, just as Guðlaugr clearly does not condone Snorri's readiness to violence, and both put their opinions aside for the sake of familial peace. The expectation is not wholly that Guðlaugr will join his father in battle, but perhaps that he might sanction the mission; or from the saga's representation of events, we may be seeing the expectation of a thirteenth-century audience used to high levels of both brutality and piety, in which a deeply religious man such as Guðlaugr ought not condone his father's violent actions but equally ought not attempt to prevent the progression of vengeance.

Following this sparse scene between father and son is the slaughter of Þorsteinn Gíslason, whereby Þorsteinn and at least one of his sons are massacred unarmed in their night-linen by Snorri and his men. Following this, the nine-year-old Sveinn Þorsteinsson emerged from the building to find his father and older brother dead and according to the saga Snorri then urged his own nine-year-old, Þórðr kausi to act: 'sér kotttrinn músina? Ungr skal at ungunum vega'.³⁹ The playful yet sinister use of Þórðr's nickname describes the boy's privileged position as the more powerful side in the encounter with the backing of his father, and encourages him to be ambitious like his father in eliminating rivals within his own generation. This displays clearly Snorri's own aspirations for his sons, and perhaps shows Snorri searching for a son whose bloodlust can compensate for

³⁸ *Heiðarvíga saga*, ch. 12, p. 247.

³⁹ *Ibid.* p. 249; trans. Kunz, p. 89: "Do you see the mouse, little cat? Let one youngster slay another".

Guðlaugr's disinterest in family feuds. The explicit desire for 'youth to slay youth' may also allude to lingering shame that Gestr Þorhallsson managed to kill the great Víga-Styrr at such a young age. Alternatively given Snorri's misguided fear of reprisal—'sá sveinn muni einhvers staðar hoggva í ætt sína'⁴⁰—one wonders whether the illegitimate Þórðr could be used as a buffer between his father and future acts of vengeance if he were explicitly the one who carried out the murder of Sveinn.⁴¹ Luckily for Sveinn, however, Snorri's foster-son Þórðr kotttr is more ready than Guðlaugr to stand up to the chieftain directly, and the description in *Heiðarvíga saga* of Þórðr kotttr's successful intervention on account of Sveinn's age instantly calls to mind a similar scene involving the same Þórðr kotttr in *Laxdæla saga*. During the attack on Helgi Harðbeinsson in *Laxdæla saga*, the young Þórðr kotttr is said to have attempted to kill twelve-year-old Harðbeinn Helgason, but was dissuaded by Bolli Bollason.⁴² Whilst it may be tempting to draw a connection between Þórðr's actions in both sagas I would not like to speculate which saga might have influenced which here, merely to observe that the 'youth on youth' violence advocated in *Heiðarvíga saga* by Snorri is disapproved of elsewhere.

Snorri's 'does the cat see the mouse' comment in *Heiðarvíga saga* also brings to mind his ill-received remark on Kjartan Þuríðarson's parentage in *Eyrbyggja saga*, in another scene that demonstrates Snorri's misunderstanding of his youngest relatives.⁴³ In *Eyrbyggja saga*

⁴⁰ *Heiðarvíga saga*, ch. 12, p. 249; trans. Kunz, p. 89: 'This lad would eventually cut a slice out of his own family'.

⁴¹ This would recall the way in which Snorri uses his uncle Már as a scapegoat throughout *Eyrbyggja saga*, who provides him with cattle when he begins to farm but ends up suffering outlawry and injury in Snorri's cause throughout that saga.

⁴² *Laxdæla saga*, ch. 64, p. 193.

⁴³ *Eyrbyggja saga*, ch. 56, p. 155.

his nephew Kjartan's parentage is doubtful as he is thought by many to be the son of Björn Breiðvíkingakappi rather than his mother's husband; Snorri provokes tension between them when he jests about Kjartan's parentage, calling him 'Breiðvíkingr' after the boy has staunchly defended Snorri in battle.⁴⁴ Kjartan bitterly rebukes Snorri for his light-heartedness, showing more testy emotion than Snorri does over his own father and highlighting Snorri's blunt attitude towards emotive familial ties.⁴⁵ Snorri's ready use of his youngest relatives for self-protection is naturally not presented as being popular with said relatives in either *Heiðarvíga saga* nor in *Eyrbyggja saga*, although Snorri appears jovial in the face of their fear or anger in both cases and is apparently eager for their self-advancement—as long as it happens to advance him as well. Kjartan's defensiveness is shrugged off and Þórðr kǫttr's word is heeded grudgingly, although neither is a son of the chieftain.

In the context of Snorri's 'career' as we may discern it, these incidents in the two sagas between Snorri and Guðlaugr, the two Þórðar and Kjartan appear all to be set within a short space of time connected to Snorri's last years at Helgafell. A brutal reaction to the death of a brutal man, the violence surrounding Styrr's killing reflects Snorri's precarious position on his ascent to power and the ease with which this uncertainty could lead to overreaction. The narratives of both *Eyrbyggja saga* and *Heiðarvíga saga* deal similarly with this period of Snorri's life, where having lost a powerful ally the chieftain is forced to prove that he and his family are strong enough to maintain their

⁴⁴ *Eyrbyggja saga*, ch. 56, p. 155.

⁴⁵ See also Snorri's response to Skarphédinn in *Njáls saga*, ed. Einar Ol. Sveinsson, *ÍF* 12 (Reykjavík, 1954), ch. 119, p. 300.

position without Styrr.⁴⁶ This context might explain the rallying of his sons in this section of *Heiðarvíga saga*; Snorri's expectation is that in battle Þórðr will unquestioningly follow Snorri's suggestion, but the moral expectations of society trump Snorri's expectations for his young son.

Eyrbyggja saga shows a marked contrast to the scenes discussed above in Snorri's treatment of Þóroddr, the boy whom the *Ævi* names as his second child. The battle of Alptafjörðr takes place several years before the conversion of Iceland to Christianity and the saga claims that Þóroddr was only twelve years old when Steinþórr Þorkláksson af Eyri wounded him. Having broken up the altercation between his foster-brothers and Steinþórr in which Þóroddr was apparently wounded, Snorri is forced to re-ignite battle in order to avenge his son's injury. It is unclear whether Snorri acts out of concern for his son or out of a dutiful need to react swiftly and strongly to an injury on his family, but Snorri does require the prompting of his foster brother Þorleifr Kimbi to pursue Steinþórr.⁴⁷ When in battle Snorri sees his father-in-law Styrr on the opposing side and he addresses him with the news that Þóroddr's wound is mortal: 'svá hefnir þú Þórodds, dóttursonar þíns, er Steinþórr hefir særðan til ólífis'.⁴⁸ Snorri's words can perhaps be read as part manipulation of Styrr's allegiance in battle and part fear for the life of one of his eldest legitimate sons, a fear which appears absent from the scenes between Snorri and Þóroddr in *Grettis saga*, as it was absent from the killing of Þorsteinn Gíslason in *Heiðarvíga saga*.

⁴⁶ Although *Heiðarvíga saga* does not reveal any threat to Snorri's position at this stage *Eyrbyggja saga* alludes to Snorri's weakness without Styrr: *Eyrbyggja saga*, ed. Matthías Þórðarson, ch. 37, p. 90.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* ch 44, p. 121.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* p. 122: 'It is thus that you avenge Thorodd, your grandson, whom Steinthor has wounded mortally'.

Having fallen out of favour with his father for not producing 'stórvirki' (great deeds) Þóroddr is sent out to kill 'einnhvern skógarmann, ok svá varð at vera' by his father.⁴⁹ This wording in *Grettis saga*, 'svá varð at vera', is identical to young Snorri's dismissive removal of his step-father Þorkr from Helgafell at the outset of his career as described by *Eyrbyggja saga*, but the command to kill an unknown man seems ill-fitting with Snorri's usually calculating nature. Inevitably Þóroddr fights Grettir, and it is the threat of his father's vengeance that saves Þóroddr's life;⁵⁰ although Grettir is afraid of little but the dark, he admits: 'hræðumk ek hærkarlinn Snorra goða, fōður þinn, ok ráð hans; þau hafa flestum á kné komit'.⁵¹ Þóroddr's safe return elicits a sardonic smile from his father, but little sympathy. He marvels at Grettir's restraint, muses on the inconvenience he would have faced if Þóroddr had been killed, and grudgingly acknowledges his paternal affection: 'ek mynda eigi nennt hafa, at þín væri óhefnt'.⁵² This compulsion to avenge a clearly troublesome son recalls the need in *Eyrbyggja saga* for Snorri to pursue a previously avoidable battle because of Þóroddr's injury and shows Þóroddr as a son who has not managed to find an independent role for himself outside the shadow of his father.

Before drawing conclusions from Snorri's interactions with the three sons discussed above I shall briefly examine the role of Halldórr in the sources, as the most prominent of Snorri's children. Halldórr has a significantly more independent role than Snorri's other sons

⁴⁹ *Grettis saga*, ch. 68, p. 220: 'Some outlaw, and that was how it had to be' (my translation).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p. 221.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* trans. Dent, p. 216: "'I'm afraid of the old grey-locks Snorri Godi, your father, and his counsels. They have brought most men to their knees'".

⁵² *Ibid.* p. 222; trans. Dent, p. 216: 'I would not have been happy for you not to be avenged'.

through his involvement in the Norwegian court, at which he is an impressive figure in the retinue of Haraldr harðráði. Halldórr is striking in the *þættir* in which he appears for his defiance of the king: in a daring moment he claims that Haraldr's father would never have treated Snorri goði as Halldórr feels he is being treated: 'þat kann ec þo segia þer at eigi mundi Sigvrþr syr fa nauþgat SnoRa G. til'.⁵³ The fact that Halldórr got away with this behaviour demonstrates his standing in the retinue, and his characterisation is remarkably similar to that of his father.⁵⁴ Additionally, both *Heimskringla* and *Íslendinga þáttur sögufróða* recognise Halldórr's important role in bringing tales of Haraldr's life to the attention of Icelanders.⁵⁵

Halldórr's family constitutes one of the two routes of descent from Snorri to the Sturlungar and it seems likely that this gave Halldórr added importance in the collective memory of Sturlung Age chieftains and saga-writers; both *Eyrbyggja saga* and *Laxdæla saga* make a point of recording Halldórr's inheritance of Snorri's powerful chieftaincy.⁵⁶ The accounts differ only in that *Laxdæla saga* leaves the *Snorrungagoðorð* in Bolli Bollason's hands until Halldórr can claim it—Bolli is married to a daughter of Snorri's, but Snorri has many sons older than both Bolli and Halldórr who one might assume could have watched over the *goðorð* after Snorri's death. Whilst this may imply a lack of trust in or respect for his other children, it is probably more likely in this case that Bolli is fulfilling *Laxdæla saga's* desire to make Guðrún's family foremost in its tale of events. Tunga is Guðrún's

⁵³ *Halldórs þáttur Snorrasonar inn síðari*, in *Morkinskinna*, ed. Finnur Jónsson, p. 149; trans. T. Gunnell, 'The Tale of Halldor Snorrason II', *Complete Sagas of Icelanders* V (Reykjavik, 1997), pp. 223–30, at p. 227: 'I can tell you that Sigurd Sow wouldn't have managed to force Snorri the Godi to do so'.

⁵⁴ Compare *Heimskringla: Haralds saga Sigurðarson*, ed. Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, ÍF 28 (Reykjavik, 1945), ch. 39, pp. 119–20; with *Eyrbyggja saga*, ch. 15, p. 26.

⁵⁵ *Heimskringla: Haralds saga Sigurðarson*, ch. 9, p. 79; *Morkinskinna*, p. 200.

⁵⁶ *Eyrbyggja saga*, ch. 65, p. 183; *Laxdæla saga*, ch. 78, p. 226.

original home and after her deference towards Snorri's advice throughout the saga, *Laxdæla saga* uses this gesture to acknowledge Snorri's respect for Guðrún and her family. Halldórr's presence in the narrative alongside his father is thus confined to a time when Snorri is already dying. He has reached the apex of his career and has a stable enough *godðorð*, family and network of alliances to dictate his wishes in confidence. There is a security in Snorri's knowledge that his most successful son, who has made progress in the Norwegian courts—and beyond—will nevertheless return to Iceland to maintain the *godðorð*. Additionally, as the son of Snorri's third wife, (Hallfríðr Einarsdóttir Þværings, niece of Guðmundr ríki), Halldórr's other family was still active and powerful in Iceland at the time of Snorri's death, providing the new chieftain with a theoretical ready-made base of support.

CONCLUSIONS

The picture of Snorri's relationship with his children emerges as surprisingly consistent even through the priorities of individual sagas. He admires ambition and independence of spirit, which Guðlaugr displays in his own way, as does Þórðr kotttr, but Þóroddr's meek attempts to do his father's bidding are met with a wry contempt. Riding Snorri's rise to power as one of his eldest sons, Þóroddr appears not to have found the motivation to make a name for himself in his own right, yet Halldórr, a much younger son, and Kjartan the young nephew have their own ambitions and power-struggles to go through. Guðlaugr, although a child at around the same time as Þóroddr, removes himself from this Icelandic rat-race by setting his goals in a very different arena, thus avoiding the clash of ambitions that seem to define Snorri's relationships with Þóroddr, Þórðr and Kjartan.

As far as we are able to discern any opinion in the texts discussed concerning the position of a powerful chieftain's sons it is apparent that there were two routes by which the sons of Snorri could find a role for themselves in society. Halldórr and Guðlaugr strike out on their own, forging identities separate from that of their powerful father, whereas Þórðr and Þóroddr perform 'stórvirki' largely on their father's behalf, maintaining his status and thus, to a lesser extent, their own.⁵⁷ The lives of Þórðr, Þóroddr and Snorri's other little-mentioned sons appear to have been considered by the thirteenth-century compilers of stories to have been much less remarkable than that of the prestigious Halldórr. Their farms are important in terms of the land owned by Snorrungar—descendants of Snorri—in the list given at the close of *Eyrbyggja saga*,⁵⁸ but by and large I see these sons as having been disassociated from the famous 'Saga Age' in much the same way that Barði Guðmundarson's less impressive brothers are set aside by the narrative of *Heiðarvíga saga*: they were 'nýtir menn ok eigi jafnmiklir sem ættin þeira'.⁵⁹ The implication is thus that Halldórr managed to attain a status equal to that of his father and consequently he bridges to some extent the gap between the Saga Age and the *Sturlungaöld* by appearing in *þættir* set after his father's death. This is significant because it is through Halldórr that the Sturlungar of the

⁵⁷ It is a 'stórvirki' that Snorri falls out with Þóroddr over in *Grettis saga* as noted above. Later in *Heiðarvíga saga* Snorri's attack on Þorsteinn Gíslason is referred to as a 'stórvirki' by Þórarinn á Lækjamóti: ch. 24, p. 283.

⁵⁸ *Eyrbyggja saga*, ch. 65, p. 180. As mentioned above, Guðlaugr does not appear in this list. A clear reason for this is that the list is concerned only with the Icelandic land farmed by Snorri's sons and the men married by his daughters—as Guðlaugr neither farmed nor married, nor even remained in Iceland, it is safe to assume that he was not uppermost in the mind of the compiler of this section of the saga.

⁵⁹ *Heiðarvíga saga*, ch. 41, p. 326; trans. Kunz, p. 128: 'Trusty men, though not as prominent as their families had been'.

thirteenth century could trace their relationship to Snorri goði and further back to Gísli Súrsson—whose memory was clearly still strong by the time of the battle of Örlygsstaðir in 1238, when Sighvatr Sturluson carried Gísli's spear Grásiða into battle.⁶⁰ In conclusion, the expectation for Snorri's sons to succeed can be said in part to be a back-projection of later knowledge of the successes his sons did in fact gain; the son most closely connected to those writing the sagas down achieved the most, in accordance with his descendants' expectation that he would have achieved the most. Snorri's other sons act as vehicles to reveal the chieftain's wily grasp of society as in *Grettis saga*, and help to explain developments that might otherwise have been difficult to justify; leaving a male relative to seek revenge in *Heiðarvíga saga* and pursuing a confrontation with a powerful chieftain whom Snorri had previously been on good terms with in *Eyrbyggja saga*. Thus only Halldórr and Guðlaugr are represented as independent characters, whereas the other sons are largely an extension of Snorri himself and his scheming.

⁶⁰ *Íslendinga saga*, in *Sturlunga saga*, II: *Íslendinga saga*, ed. Guðni Jónsson (Reykjavik, 1963), ch. 138, p. 347. Hvamm-Sturla, the eponymous ancestor of the Sturlungar, was Halldórr's great, great grandson; he was also the great, great grandson of Snorri goði's daughter Hallbera, but I have chosen not to discuss Snorri's daughters here for reasons of space.

Roger of Howden and the Unknown Royalty of Twelfth-Century Norway

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During the Viking Age, Norway's relationship with the British Isles (and particularly England) was crucial for its development. Both Óláfr Tryggvason and Óláfr Haraldsson appear to have made their military reputations there and may well have secured backing for their attempts to unify Norway from the English crown, whilst Anglo-Saxon priests played a crucial role in converting Norway and establishing ecclesiastical structures there.¹

Less notice has been paid to the continuation of such relationships after the death of Haraldr harðráði and the conventional end of the Viking Age, but they nevertheless persisted. Norway continued to demand the loyalty of Man and the Western Isles until 1266 and its theoretical overlordship of the Northern Isles extended into the fifteenth century. Whilst Norwegian suzerainty over these territories was sometimes more theoretical than actual, on other occasions, most notably during the reign of Magnús berfœttr, there

¹ T. M. Andersson, 'The Viking Policy of Ethelred the Unready', *SS* 59 (1987), 284–95; P. H. Sawyer, 'The English Influence on the Development of the Norwegian Kingdom', in *Kongemøte på Stiklestad: foredrag fra seminar om kongedømmet i vikingtid og tidlig middelalder*, ed. O. Skevik (Verdal, 1999), pp. 97–104; K. Helle, 'Anglo-Norwegian relations in the reign of Hákon Hákonsson (1217–63)', *MScand* 1 (1968), 101–14; A. O. Johnsen 'Kong Sverre og England 1199–1202', *Det Norske Videnskaps Akademi II. Hist.-filos. klasse. Avhandlinger* 13 (1970), 1–24.

was a direct and sustained Norwegian royal intervention in the British Isles.²

Despite this, Norway does not appear prominently in Insular sources from the twelfth century onwards.³ Whereas the activities of Scandinavian warlords had played a crucial role in prompting the composition of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, later English writers tended to mention Norwegians only in the sections of their work which were ultimately dependent upon the writings of their predecessors. The kings of twelfth-century Norway and their frequent and confusing civil wars did not interest their English and Norman contemporaries sufficiently for them to record the details in their histories.

This may partly relate to the environment in which the authors of these sources grew up. Whereas William of Malmesbury and Ordericus Vitalis were alive when both Knútr IV of Denmark and Magnús berfœttr had threatened England and the attacks of Haraldr harðráði and Sveinn Ástríðarson were within or only just beyond living memory, the nearest thing to a Viking invasion that later authors had been alive for was a minor Norwegian raid down the east coast in 1152 or 1153 which no Insular source even bothers to record.⁴ Hence William and Ordericus recorded some information

² I. Beuermann, *Masters of the Narrow Sea: Forgotten Challenges to Norwegian Rule in Man and the Isles, 1079–1266*, Series Acta Humaniora 286 (Oslo: Univ. of Oslo, 2007), pp. 29–36, 245–7, 285–294 and 299–303; R. Power, ‘Magnus Barelegs’ Expeditions to the West’, *Scottish Hist. Rev.* 65 (1986), 107–32; E. Carlsson Browne, ‘The Insular Expeditions of Magnús berfœttr’ (unpubl. MA dissertation, Univ. College London, 2009).

³ For such references as there are and what is still the most detailed analysis of connections across the North Sea in this period, see H. G. Leach, *Angevin Britain and Scandinavia* (Cambridge, MA, 1921).

⁴ The raid in question was led by King Eysteinn Haraldsson and proceeded from Orkney to Aberdeen and from there down the coast as far as north

(not necessarily accurate) about Norway, whereas Ralph Diceto spares two sentences for the Stamford Bridge campaign and otherwise ignores Norway and Norwegians utterly, whilst Gervase of Canterbury does not mention them at all.⁵

An exception is found, however, in the person of Roger of Howden, the author of two related works of the later twelfth century.⁶ Roger took his name from the parsonage in the East Riding

Lincolnshire. It is mentioned in *Haraldssona saga*, in *Heimskringla*, ed. Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, Íslenzk fornrit 26–8, 3 vols. (Reykjavik, 1941–51), III, ch. 20, 328–9; and some of the locations mentioned within that text are identified by R. G. Poole, ‘In Search of the *Partar*’, *SS* 52 (1980), 264–77. Professor Michael Gelting has brought to my attention a passage in the *Continuatio Gemblacensis*, MGH SS 6 (Hanover, 1844), p. 385 under the year 1138 which appears to record an attack on England by Erik III of Denmark. Whilst it does not appear to be an obvious transposition, this event is recorded in no other source, Danish or English, and it is therefore difficult to know how much this account can be relied upon.

⁵ *Historia Ecclesiastica: the Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. M. Chibnall, Oxford Med. Texts, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1969–80), V.xiv, X.vi, XI.viii, pp. III, 148–9, V, 218–24, VI, 48–51; *William of Malmesbury: Gesta Regum Anglorum; the History of the English Kings*, ed. R. A. B. Mynors, Oxford Med. Texts (Oxford, 1998–9), III. 260, IV.329, pp. 478–480, 568–70; *Radulfi de Diceto Decani Landoniensis Opera Historica*, ed. W. Stubbs, RS 68, 2 vols. (London, 1876), pp. 194–5; *Gervasii Cantuariensis Opera Historica*, ed. W. Stubbs, RS 73, 2 vols. (London, 1879–80). For a summary of Ordericus’ errors relating to Norway, see Carlsson Browne, ‘Insular Expeditions’, p. 36, n. 102. William confuses himself as to the order of Norwegian succession, suggesting Magnús góði was succeeded by ‘Suanus quidam, Herdhand cognominatus’, III.260, p. 478 (‘a certain Sveinn, nicknamed Hardhand’), whereas in reality Sveinn Álfifason preceded Magnús. He further suggested that this Sveinn was succeeded by St Óláfr, who he calls Magnús’ uncle. He then compounds this mistake by conflating Magnús Haraldsson and Magnús berfœttr (*ibid.* p. 480).

⁶ William of Newburgh also refers to Norway but can be discounted here, as it has been convincingly demonstrated that William used Roger as a source for

which he held as a jurisdictional particular of the bishop of Durham. By 1174, however, he was installed at Henry II's court as a clerk and he remained in royal service until the early 1190s. During these years he was sent as an envoy to Scotland and Rome, served as a justice of the forest on several occasions, organised elections to a number of vacant abbacies and accompanied Richard I to Palestine, where he witnessed a grant of land made by other residents of the East Riding.⁷

In this article I intend to summarise Roger's historical works and their critical reputation; to demonstrate that he is a very knowledgeable recorder of events in twelfth century Norway who likely had access to eyewitness accounts of the happenings he described; to analyse one particular segment of his account of Norwegian events and use it to illuminate the distinctly patchy state of our knowledge of the participants in these events; and to suggest that, contrary to the opinion of John Gillingham, Roger wrote on Norway contemporaneously rather than relying upon information gathered at some point in the 1190s.

ROGER'S HISTORICAL WORKS

From around 1170 Roger intermittently kept records of contemporary events. He combined these records with a copy of the *Historia post Bedam* (for the period up to 1148) and information derived from a number of other sources, most prominently the *Chronicle of Melrose* (for the period 1148–69). The resulting text is generally known as the *Gesta Henrici II* after the title given on a manuscript of it which also includes Ailred of Rievaulx's *Genealogia*. The *Gesta* was not, however, assigned to Roger's authorship until

these passages: see J. Gillingham, 'Two Yorkshire Historians Compared', *Haskins Soc. Jnl* 12 (2003), 15–37, at pp. 19–24.

⁷ D. Corner, 'Roger of Howden', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: from the Earliest Times to the Year 2000*, 60 vols. (Oxford, 2004) XXVIII, 463–4, at p. 463.

comparatively recently, as the manuscript gave the full title as 'Gesta Henrici II Benedicti abbatis'.⁸ William Stubbs recognised that the manuscript was the same one which Robert of Swaffham records that Benedict had copied, but rejected Roger's authorship of it. Stubbs argued that whereas Roger of Howden is named within the *Gesta*, he is not in the *Chronica Regis*, which he was certainly the author of and therefore the two texts were the work of different authors.⁹ Instead Stubbs argued that the author was Richard Fitz Neal, an official in the royal treasury who wrote the *Dialogus de Scaccario*. Not until 1953 did D. M. Stenton demonstrate Roger's authorship of the *Gesta*.¹⁰

Roger's other historical work, the *Chronica Regis*, is to all intents and purposes merely a new and revised edition of the *Gesta*. From 1192 it is an original composition but prior to this it is merely a copy of the *Gesta* which Roger has gone through abridging, paraphrasing, making corrections, emending certain remarks he no longer felt it politic to include and inserting documentary sources which chiefly pertain to the north.

Roger has generally been praised for his thoroughness and reliability. Southern called him 'the best historian of the English crown in the twelfth century' and this high reputation has been upheld by scholars such as David Corner and John Gillingham.¹¹ On the other hand, his work is sometimes perceived to lack literary merit.

⁸ *Gesta Regis Henrici Secundi Benedicti Abbatis. The Chronicle of the Reigns of Henry II and Richard I, 1169-1192, Known Commonly under the Name of Benedict of Peterborough*, ed. W. Stubbs, RS 49, 2 vols. (London, 1867), I, xxii–xxiii.

⁹ *Ibid.* I, liii–lxiii.

¹⁰ D. M. Stenton, 'Roger of Howden and *Benedict*', *EHR* 68 (1953), 574–82, at p. 576–9.

¹¹ R. W. Southern, 'England's First Entry into Europe', in his *Medieval Humanism and Other Studies* (Oxford, 1970), p. 150; J. Gillingham, 'The Travels of Roger of Howden and his Views of the Irish, Scots and Welsh', *ANS* 20 (1998), 151–69, at p. 153.

Barlow criticised him on the basis that he had lacked 'the personality to give his work a value much greater than that of inflated annals' and Robert Bartlett's description of Roger as the first civil service historian is not entirely complimentary.¹² Certainly he has no pretensions to literary style. Nevertheless, this civil service background pays dividends in some ways. During his career as a royal clerk he was frequently employed as a diplomat, particularly to Scotland, and Gillingham argues he acquired 'considerable expertise in the field of Anglo-Scottish relations.'¹³ His Scottish connections may have been partly responsible for his impressive knowledge of the history of its northern neighbour.

ROGER'S NORWEGIAN NARRATIVE

Roger's summation of twelfth-century Norwegian politics begins with a reference to the civil war between Magnús Erlingsson and Sverrir Sigurðarson and appears to be intended to provide some kind of historical context to this. In seventeen sentences (reproduced in the appendix) he relates the major events occurring in Norway between around 1100 and 1177.

These years were far from peaceful and indeed in Norwegian historiography are referred to as the *borgerkrigstiden*.¹⁴ There were, by my count, seventeen kings or serious pretenders to the throne during

¹² F. Barlow, 'Roger of Howden', *EHR* 65 (1950), 352–60, at p. 360; R. Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings, 1075–1225* (Oxford, 2000), p. 631.

¹³ J. Gillingham, 'Writing the Biography of Roger of Howden, King's Clerk and Chronicler', in *Writing Medieval Biography 750–1250: Essays in Honour of Professor Frank Barlow*, ed. D. Bates, J. Crick and S. Hamilton (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 207–220, at p. 219.

¹⁴ 'The civil war era'. For this term, and the alternative title *innbyrdesstrid*, see A. Holmsen, *Norges historie* (Oslo, 1971), p. 191.

this time, few of whom lived to see their thirtieth birthdays.¹⁵ Sverrir Sigurðarson seems to have been the first Norwegian king since Haraldr harðráði, nearly a century and a half earlier, to reach fifty and even his case is questionable due to the persistent doubts surrounding the true date of his birth.¹⁶ The political situation could change absolutely within the space of a few months as supporters of rival claimants switched and re-switched sides. It is highly unlikely that a chronicler paying little attention could have narrated what had happened and in what order without numerous mistakes.

Indeed, of the Norwegian synoptic histories and Icelandic *konungasögur*, only *Heimskringla* manages to name every claimant to the throne in these years. This does not, of course, mean that the other sources did not know of these individuals. Sometimes, as is the case with *Ágrip af Noregskonungasögum* and *Morkinskinna*, the works are incomplete whilst in other cases the claimants were sufficiently obscure that the composer of a saga may have felt no need to mention them.

¹⁵ For these rulers and pretenders, see the accompanying family tree. Whilst the dates of birth of some of these kings are not known, it is clear that Óláfr Magnússon, Magnús blindi, Magnús Haraldsson gilla, Sigurðr munnr, Ingi krókhrygg, Hákon herðibreiðr, Sigurðr Markúsfóstri, Eysteinn meyla and Magnús Erlingsson were all below thirty when they met their deaths. In addition, Magnús berfœttr would have been around thirty when he died, whilst we cannot securely establish the ages of Eystein Haraldsson and Óláfr ógæfa at their deaths. Of the longer-lived rulers, Eysteinn Magnússon, Haraldr gilli and Sigurðr slembidjárn would have been in their mid-thirties, whilst Sigurðr Jórsalafari would have been around forty.

¹⁶ At the root of this controversy is Sverrir's age at time of his ordination. For a representative sample of opinions on the topic, see G. M. Gathorne-Hardy, *A Royal Impostor* (London, 1956), pp. 83–4; H. Koht, 'Kortleis vart kong Sverre son til Sigurd Munn?', *Norske Historiske Tidsskrift* 41 (1961–2), 293–302, at p. 293–4; A. O. Johnsen, 'The Age of Ordination to the Priesthood in the North Atlantic Islands in the Twelfth Century', *SBVS* 20 (1978–9), 24–30.

Nevertheless, measuring Roger's understanding of Norwegian history against Norwegian and Icelandic sources is a distinctly unfair benchmark. It is enough to ask whether he does manage to grasp the broad sweep of the history of these years and whether he is able to put the various kings and pretenders into something resembling their chronological order.

Here Roger excels. Although he is weak on the early twelfth century in that he fails to mention Eysteinn and Óláfr Magnússon and mistakenly believes Sigurðr Jórslafari to have been the brother rather than the son of Magnús berfœttr, his knowledge of the period after 1130 is impressive.¹⁷ From this date onwards, the only claimant he fails to mention is Óláfr ógæfa. Given that Óláfr, a grandson of Eysteinn Magnússon, had little success outside his base of support in the interior of eastern Norway and seems to have been notable primarily for a small cult which grew up around him after his death in Aarhus, it would be unsurprising if Roger were not aware of him even if he had been aware of Eysteinn.¹⁸

In fact Roger does not compare unfavourably to *Fagrskinna*. That *konungasaga* names fifteen of the seventeen claimants, only one more than Roger. Moreover it draws this advantage largely from its greater knowledge regarding the early twelfth century, whereas Roger names two claimants (Magnús Haraldsson and Sverrir Sigurðarson) who do not feature in *Fagrskinna*.

Magnús, who is mentioned only by *Heimskringla* and by Roger, was a son of Haraldr gilli.¹⁹ He died whilst still a young child,

¹⁷ *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Houedene*, ed. W. Stubbs, RS 51, 4 vols. (London, 1868–71) II, 212–3.

¹⁸ For Óláfr, see *Magnúss saga Erlingssonar*, in *Heimskringla*, III, chs. 31–4, 407–410 and Haki Antonsson, *St Magnús of Orkney: a Scandinavian Martyr-Cult in Context* (Leiden, 2007), p. 172.

¹⁹ *Haraldssona saga*, ch. 14, pp. 321–2; *Chronica Magistri Rogeri*, ed. Stubbs, II, 213.

apparently because of a disease affecting the legs. Notable for almost nothing, it seems likely he is only mentioned in *Heimskringla* because it gave Snorri Sturluson the opportunity to recite the following stanza of Einar Skúlason:

Auð gefr Eysteinn lýðum,
Eykr hjaldr Sigurðr skjaldar
Lætr Ingi sløg syngva,
Semr Magnús frið bragna;
Fjoldýrs, hafa fjórir,
Folktjald, komit aldri,
Rýðr bragnings kyn blóði,
Bræðr und sól in æðri.²⁰

That Roger knew of Magnús Haraldsson's existence is impressive, and suggests an informant with knowledge of Norwegian affairs going back to the early 1140s. His understanding of Scandinavian history went beyond names of kings, however. His framework of events also compares well to the native sources. He knew that Magnús Sigurðarson blindi was blinded and made a monk, he was aware that Sigurðr slembidjárn had previously been in clerical orders and he knew that Magnús Erlingsson sought refuge in Denmark prior to being elevated to kingship.²¹ He even localised Hákon herðibreiðr's death to Veøy, something which only *Heimskringla* is otherwise able to do.²²

This is not to say that Roger's information is always exactly accurate. Whilst he did record Haraldr gilli's execution of the English bishop Reginald, he incorrectly believed Reginald was bishop of

²⁰ *Haraldssonakvæði I, Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 2: from c. 1035 to c. 1300*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 2, 2 vols. (Turnhout, 2009), II, 549.

²¹ *Chronica Magistri Rogeri*, ed. Stubbs, II, 213.

²² *Chronica Magistri Rogeri*, ed. Stubbs, II, 214, *Magnúss saga Erlingssonar*, ch. 7, pp. 381–3.

Bergen.²³ In fact he was the bishop of Stavanger, although given that he was hanged in Bergen, this confusion is pardonable.²⁴ He knew that Eystein meyla was killed in Vestfold at Christmas, but believed that he attacked Magnús Erlingsson whereas according to the more detailed account in *Heimskringla* the reverse was true.²⁵ He knew the name of the legate at Magnús' coronation, but dated it at least two years too early and made Magnús himself around seven years too old.²⁶

Taking into account all these errors and bearing in mind his almost total lack of knowledge concerning the events and personalities of the earlier twelfth century, Roger nevertheless emerges as a very credible recorder of more recent events in Norway. This is particularly notable in his account of the death of Erlingr skakki at the battle of Kalvskinnet. Not only does he (unlike *Sverris saga*) provide the exact date of the battle (St. Botolph's day, 17 June 1179), but his recounting of the casualty list demonstrates reliance upon a native source.²⁷

Roger tells us that:

²³ *Chronica Magistri Rogeri*, ed. Stubbs, II, 213.

²⁴ *Magnúss saga blinda ok Haralds gilla*, in *Heimskringla*, III, ch. 8, 287–8.

²⁵ *Chronica Magistri Rogeri*, ed. Stubbs, II, 214, *Magnúss saga Erlingssonar*, ch. 42, pp. 415–6.

²⁶ *Chronica Magistri Rogeri*, ed. Stubbs, II, 214. The current consensus for the date of Magnús' coronation is 1163 but arguments have also been made for 1164. For a summary of the debate, see A. J. Duggan, 'The English Exile of Archbishop Øystein of Nidaros (1180–3)', in *Exile in the Middle Ages*, ed. L. Napran and E. van Houts (Turnhout, 2004), pp. 109–30, at p. 119, n. 50. The fourth year of Alexander III and second of Magnús' reign would be 1162, whilst according to *Magnúss saga Erlingssonar*, ch. 1, p. 374, Magnús was born in 1156. These dates cannot be made to square with Roger's claim that Magnús' coronation occurred 'quinto decimo anno ætatis suæ'.

²⁷ *Chronica Magistri Rogeri*, ed. Stubbs, II, 214.

Interfecti sunt itaque ibidem Herlingus comes pater regis, et Johannes de Randeberghe, qui duxerat sororem regis in uxorem, et Siwardus filius Nicolai, et alii multi.²⁸

This is not very far away from the account of *Sverris saga*:

Þar fell á akrinum Sigurðr Nikolásson, Jón af Randabergi, Ívarr horti, Einarr litli, lendr maðr, Bótúlfr ór Fjörðum ok tveir synir hans.²⁹

Whilst these two excerpts are not similar enough to one another for us to postulate a textual dependence (and it would be hard to visualise any circumstance in which either Roger or the author of *Sverris saga* could have had access to the work of the other), the clear similarities between the two accounts are visible for all to see. Both very likely derived from eyewitnesses of the battle or those in their social circle and it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that each of them relied upon the same original oral source for their accounts of Kalvskinnet and its aftermath.

Although Roger is less prolix than the *Sverris saga* author, there are very good reasons why he might have decided to keep his account brief. Ívarr horti, Einarr litli, Bótúlfr and his offspring are not figures who are likely to have been familiar to an English audience. For that matter, it is far from certain that they would have been familiar to a Norwegian audience. While Ívarr horti is mentioned sporadically in *Sverris saga* as a prominent partisan of Magnús Erlingsson amongst the inhabitants of the Trøndelag and as a *frændi* (relative) to Erlingr skakki, he does not seem to have been a figure of national, let alone international, significance.³⁰ For Einarr litli, Bótúlfr ór Fjörðum and

²⁸ *Chronica Magistri Rogeri*, ed. Stubbs, II, 214: 'Jarl Erlingr, the king's father, was killed there, together with Jón af Randabergi, who married the king's sister, and with Sigurðr Nikolásson and many others.'

²⁹ *Sverris saga*, ed. Þorleifur Hauksson, Íslensk fornrit 30 (Reykjavík, 2007), ch. 37, pp. 60–1: 'On that field died Sigurðr Nikolásson, Jón af Randabergi, Ívarr horti, Einarr litli the baron, Bótúlfr ór Fjörðum and his two sons.'

³⁰ *Sverris saga*, chs. 14, 15, 33, 36–7, pp. 23, 25–6, 54–55, 58–60.

Bótúlfr's sons, on the other hand, the passage from *Sverris saga* given above is their only appearance in Norse literature. Even if he had not been primarily writing for an English audience, Roger could safely have summarised these figures and the other minor nobility who perished alongside them as 'multi alii'.

Jón af Randabergi would likely have been little less obscure than such provincial notables to most of Roger's readers (and indeed his appearances in the *konungasögur* are limited to one perfunctory mention in *Heimskringla*, a walk-on role in *Sverris saga* criticising Erlingr skakki for paying more attention to carousing than military strategy and the record of his death quoted above).³¹ Nevertheless, his marriage into royalty makes him sufficiently more important than those Roger elides for his inclusion in the account to be relatively unsurprising. I have not been able to determine with certainty who exactly Sigurðr Nikolásson was, as neither his Christian name nor his patronymic was unusual in this period. I would suggest that the most likely answer is that he was a great-nephew of Magnús berfœttr and therefore distantly akin to the royal dynasty, but *Sverris saga* never gives us enough context about him for it to be possible to make a clear assessment of his background.³²

Whether Sigurðr did belong to a distaff branch of the royal house is, of course, not the key issue here. If he was, Roger is to be

³¹ *Magnúss saga Erlingssonar*, ch. 30, p. 407; *Sverris saga*, chs. 34 and 37, pp. 56 and 59–60.

³² Sigurðr appears in *Sverris saga*, chs. 14, 34 and 37, pp. 23, 56 and 59–60. In one manuscript he is referred to as Sigurðr stikulags. There is no certain way of telling which Nikolás he was the son of, as the name is not uncommon in twelfth-century Norway. Given his connections to the Trøndelag however, it may well be that he was the son of Nikolás Sigurðarson, also known as Nikolás Skjaldvararson, who is mentioned in *Magnúss saga Erlingssonar*, ch. 1, p. 373 as a nephew of Magnús berfœttr and whose possessions in north Norway are noted in ch. 38, pp. 412–3.

congratulated for being aware of his significance. If he was not, Roger's knowledge of the political situation can be shown to extend beyond the royal family and their circle to include other prominent magnates. Certainly it is easy to construe Roger of Howden as a figure with a commanding knowledge of Norwegian affairs, relying for his information on sources of the same calibre as those made use of by the *konungasögur*. Given that he was frequently employed as a diplomat and trouble-shooter on missions to the Scottish crown, we can perceive many different circumstances under which it might have made sense for him to pay close attention to and gather accounts of events in Scotland's northern neighbour.

UNKNOWN ROYALTY

Roger's impressive knowledge of Norwegian affairs appears particularly significant in the light of one section of his summary of Norwegian history in the *Chronica Regis*. In the Rolls Series edition of the text it reads as follows:

Siwardus autem genuit Haconem et Siwardum et Swerum, qui omnes spurii erant et de diversis matribus geniti. Augustinus genuit Augustinum legitime natum: Hingo genuit Siwardum et Augustinum.³³

Most of these individuals are readily identifiable. The first Siwardus is evidently Sigurðr munnr. The three sons assigned to him are Hákon herðibreiðr, Sigurðr Markúsfóstri and Sverrir Sigurðarson. The first Augustinus is Sigurðr munnr's brother Eysteinn Haraldsson, and his eponymous son is Eysteinn meyla. It is interesting that Roger believes Eysteinn meyla to have been legitimate, as no other source makes this claim, or indeed even names a wife of Eysteinn Haraldsson. Whether

³³ *Chronica Magistri Rogeri*, ed. Stubbs, II, 213: 'And Sigurðr begat Hákon and Sigurðr and Sverrir, who were all illegitimate and born of different mothers. Eysteinn begat the legitimately born Eysteinn. Ingi begat Sigurðr and Eysteinn'.

this betokens good sources or whether Roger erred is, of course, impossible to determine.

Hingo can only be Ingi krókhryggr, the brother of Sigurðr munnr and Eysteinn. His byname translates as 'hunchback' and he is also said to have had one leg shorter than the other, to have walked with a limp and to have been in poor health.³⁴ This was allegedly the result of a childhood injury, although whereas Saxo Grammaticus puts it down to Ingi being dropped by his nurse, *Heimskringla* believes it occurred when he was taken into battle on Þjóstólfr Álason's back and Þjóstólfr was beset by enemies.³⁵

Ingi's portrayal in the sagas is somewhat unusual. Whereas his brothers are portrayed as normal, if avaricious, kings, Ingi does not in many ways progress on from his situation when he is first introduced as a small child and ward of great chieftains. As the guardians of himself and his brother Sigurðr die off, Ingi does not begin to wield power himself. Instead his previous guardians are replaced by such chieftains as Grégóriús Dagsson and Erlingr skakki.³⁶ Holding a position of great moral authority but little real power, Ingi is not portrayed as the progenitor of offspring, nor are we told of any wife or mistress he might have had.

SONS OF INGI KRÓKHRYGGR

For all that, however, Ingi was evidently not so infirm as to be unable to beget children, since three men claimed to be his sons, a situation which would be unlikely if he was considered to be incapable of siring an heir. The first of these is a certain Haraldr Ingason konungs, who is mentioned along with Magnús Erlingsson at three points in *Sverris*

³⁴ *Ágrip af Nóregskonungasögum*, ed. M. J. Driscoll (London, 1995), ch. 60, p. 78.

³⁵ *Saxonis Gesta Danorum*, ed. J. Olrik and H. Raeder (Copenhagen, 1931), pp. 446–7; *Haraldssona saga*, ch. 2, p. 305.

³⁶ *Haraldssona saga*, ch. 21, p. 330.

saga. Haraldr died alongside Magnús at the Battle of Fimreite and we receive little insight as to his background, aims or importance, but the evidence of lists suggests that he held a position of special importance amongst the *Heklungar* and may even have had a status approaching that of an heir-apparent.

Haraldr first appears amongst Magnús' retinue at Konungahella in April 1184. Magnús is said to have stayed at the residence of a woman named Ragnhildr together with 'margir lendir menn, Ormr konungsbróðir, Munán Gautsson, Hallkell Jónsson, Ásbjörn Jónsson'.³⁷ Ormr konungsbróðir, the half-brother of Ingi krókhryggr and son of Queen Ingiríðr, was a key ally of Magnús and after the death of Erlingr skakki was unquestionably the most powerful *Heklungr* aside from the king. Munán Gautsson and Ásbjörn Jónsson were hardly of the same eminence, but are mentioned on several occasions as the commanders of ships within Magnús' fleet, whilst Hallkell Jónsson had a king for a maternal grandfather and had married Magnús' sister (and Jón af Randaberg's widow) Ragnhildr.³⁸

This list therefore can be said to contain some of Magnús' most prominent supporters, several of whom were of quasi-royal status. This must surely colour our interpretation of the next sentence: 'Þar var þá ok með honum Haraldr, son Inga konungs ok margir aðrir ríkismenn.'³⁹ Haraldr's royal parentage is unambiguously stated and he is presented as a powerful potentate, fit to be mentioned amongst the most significant Norwegian aristocrats.

³⁷ *Sverris saga*, ch. 83, p. 128: 'many barons, such as Ormr konungsbróðir, Munán Gautsson, Hallkell Jónsson and Ásbjörn Jónsson.'

³⁸ For Munán and Ásbjörn, see *Sverris saga*, chs. 53, 56, 86, 89–91, 93 and 96, pp. 85, 88, 132, 139–40, 142, 145 and 148. For Hallkell's royal ancestry and marriage, see *Haraldssona saga*, ch. 22, p. 332 and *Sverris saga*, ch. 118, p. 179.

³⁹ *Sverris saga*, ch. 83, p. 128: 'Also there with him then were Haraldr, son of King Ingi, and many other powerful men.'

It is difficult to obtain further evidence of Haraldr's exact status, however, since when he is next mentioned it is to record his death alongside his king.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, he is the first casualty to be listed after Magnús. Whilst such a list does not necessarily denote a rigid order of precedence, we would nevertheless expect to find the most eminent names first and the least eminent last, if at all. That it was considered worthwhile to mention Haraldr before Magnús Eiríksson mangi (a grandson of jarl Rognvaldr Kali of Orkney), Ormr konungsbróðir, Asbjörn Jónsson and a brother of Hallkell Jónsson is surely indicative of a place at the very head of the Heklungar's hierarchy. Similarly, when the saga records Sverrir's nephew Svína-Pétr announcing the events at Fimreite to the burghers of Bergen, Haraldr is the second name given after Magnús, preceding Ormr and Ásbjörn.⁴¹

It would therefore appear to be abundantly clear that Haraldr held a position of particular prominence. Indeed, given that Magnús' sons would have been small children or infants when he died and he possessed no full brothers, Haraldr would very likely have been his successor as leader of the opposition to Sverrir had he survived, particularly since Magnús' initial supporters had previously been firm partisans of Ingi.⁴²

Of course, *Sverris saga's* uncritical note of his parentage does not necessarily mean that it was universally accepted. Haraldr's sudden death meant that there was no need to question his paternity. In the two other cases of men claiming to be the sons of Ingi which also appear in the saga, however, a much more sceptical line is taken.

⁴⁰ *Sverris saga*, ch. 93, pp. 144–5.

⁴¹ *Sverris saga*, ch. 96, p. 148.

⁴² The first (unnamed) son of Magnús Erlingsson to appear in *Sverris saga* arrives at ch. 114, p. 174 (i.e. in 1189) and is clearly even then a young child.

This may be because of the inherent difficulty in proving royal paternity in a society of peripatetic kings with no interest in monogamy, especially when illegitimacy was no bar to kingship.⁴³ On the other hand, it may be a deliberate move to discredit opposition to the *birkibeinar*. It should not be forgotten that *Sverris saga* was the output of circles favourable to Sverrir and the *birkibeinar* and hostile to their opponents. Whilst Bagge has argued that the ideological elements of the saga have tended to be over-emphasised, it is nevertheless impossible to deny that the biases of the saga's authors influenced their editorial perspective to some degree.⁴⁴ Given that Sverrir's claim that he was the son of Sigurðr munnr was distinctly dubious and far from universally accepted, there must have been a temptation to retaliate by suggesting that it was his opponents who were not of royal blood.⁴⁵

Jón kuflungr, who claimed the throne in 1185 on the grounds that Ingi was his father, is said by *Sverris saga* to have been revealed as a fraud after his death with the revelation that he was really a commoner named Ormr Pétrsson.⁴⁶ Whilst this may very well have been true, such a 'discovery' would have opened his followers up to ridicule and retroactively delegitimised his claim, so the motive for foul play would have been strong.

⁴³ J. M. Jochens, 'The Politics of Reproduction: Medieval Norwegian Kingship', *Amer. Hist. Rev.* 92 (1987), 327–49, at pp. 333–4 and 340–1.

⁴⁴ S. Bagge, 'Ideology and Propaganda in *Sverris saga*', *Arkiv för norsk filologi* 108 (1993), 1–18, at p. 11.

⁴⁵ Bagge, 'Ideology and Propaganda', p. 3; Magnús Stefánsson, 'Kong Sverre – prest og sønn av Sigurd munn?', in *Festskrift til Ludvig Holm-Olsen* (Bergen, 1984), pp. 287–307.

⁴⁶ *Sverris saga*, ch. 109, pp. 168–9.

SIGURÐR BRENNIR

Whether or not Jón or Haraldr were truly sons of Ingi is for our purposes somewhat irrelevant, however, as neither of them could plausibly be the 'Siwardum et Augustinum' mentioned by Roger as sons of Ingi. This is not the case with Sigurðr brennir, the third man said to have claimed descent from Ingi.

According to *Sverris saga*, Sigurðr brennir was initially a follower of Jón kuflungr, who apparently acknowledged kinship to him. Sigurðr was unimpressed by the *kuflungar*, however, and soon decided to strike out on his own.⁴⁷

He assembled a band of three hundred men, who seem to have largely occupied themselves with some fairly small-scale looting of the populace. The local farmers, being less than enthusiastic about Sigurðr's chosen career path, promptly marched on the house in which he was staying and killed him along with his henchmen. As he died, Sigurðr allegedly declared that:

Nú er þat líkast at þér munið hafa þat ørendi hingat sem þér vilið, ok þér munuð segja Sverri konungi frá þessum sigri er hafið hér unnit ok fellt höfðingja þessa flokks, Sigurð brenni, son Inga konungs. En þetta er miklu minni frásagnar vert en þér ætlið þó at þér fellið mik, fyrir því at þat er it sanna at segja yðr at ek heiti Heðinn, ok em ek son Þorgríms hrossa. Em ek íslenzkr at allri ætt.⁴⁸

This is a fascinating passage, but it is not one we can place any great trust in. There is no record of any Icelanders named either Heðinn Þorgrímsson or Þorgrímr hrossi, nor would making this disclosure

⁴⁷ *Sverris saga*, ch. 110, p. 169.

⁴⁸ *Sverris saga*, pp. 169–70: 'Now it is most probable that you will have the result that you desired, and you will tell King Svierrir about the victory you have won here and how you killed the chief of this band, Sigurðr brennir, the son of King Ingi. But this story is worth much less than you think that you have killed me, because I tell you than in truth I am called Heðinn, and I am the son of Þorgrímr hrossi. I am an Icelander on all sides of my family.'

have been likely to help 'Heðinn's' cause.⁴⁹ Someone claiming the throne on self-admittedly false pretences might face greater difficulty in collecting support, but would nevertheless surely have to be considered too dangerous to be allowed to live. Moreover, the narration of events suggests that it was Sigurðr's violence rather than his assumed identity which was the primary spur for his attackers, since the saga refers meaningfully to the 'menn ófriðsamir' he associated with.⁵⁰ It seems exceedingly implausible that this declaration could have been made in the manner the saga suggests. On the other hand, *Sverris saga*, which shows a strong partisan leaning towards Sverrir, would have had ample motive to invent the story.

None of this is to say that Sigurðr was not an impostor or that he was definitely a son of Ingi krókhrygg. These are obviously questions which we simply cannot answer with confidence. It would, however, add weight to Roger's claim that Ingi had sons named Sigurðr and Eysteinn. On the other hand, there appears to be no other trace of any Eysteinn Ingason. Moreover, a careful examination of the manuscript evidence suggests that Roger's 'claim' was in fact nothing more than a mechanical scribal error.

GENUIT OR INTERFECIT?

In the opinion of William Stubbs, 'the *Chronica* is sometimes a copy, sometimes a paraphrase of his predecessor's [work, referring to the *Gesta Regis*], but, except by the insertion of different letter or documents he does not increase our knowledge of the period in any

⁴⁹ The versions of *Sverris saga* preserved in *Eirspennill* (Copenhagen, Den arnamagnæanske samling 47 fol., Iceland, s. xiii¹); *Flateyjarbók* (Reykjavik, Den gamle kongelige samling 1005 fol., Víðidalstunga, 1387–1394); and *Skálholtsbók yngsta* (Copenhagen, Den arnamagnæanske samling 81 a fol., northern Iceland, s. xiv³) refer to Þorgrímr hrossi as Þorgrímr hrossaprestr. No Icelander of this name is recorded either.

⁵⁰ *Sverris saga*, ch. 110, p. 169: 'threatening men'.

important particular.⁵¹ For the most part, this is true. But this does not mean that Roger made few changes to the *Gesta* when creating the *Chronica*. It is a mark of the extent to which Roger edited that Stubbs did not realise the two texts were the product of the same man.

Had he done so, it is unlikely that he would have maintained the reading, 'Hingo genuit Siwardum et Augustinum.' Although this reading is found in all texts of the *Chronica*, in the *Gesta Regis* the use of a different verb changes the meaning of the sentence entirely. Here we read that 'Hincgo vero interfecit Sivardum et Augustinum fratres suos.'⁵²

Such a reading is less morally laudatory but does fit rather well with the established historical narrative: although it was controversial as to whether or not Ingi ordered the killing of his brothers, it was certainly forces loyal to him who were responsible for their deaths.⁵³ *Genuit* and *interfecit* are by far the most common verbs found in this passage, which is after all a genealogically-based historical narrative describing a period of civil war. Given the predominance of these verbs and their frequent occurrence in close proximity to one another, there can surely be little doubt that Roger's eye merely skipped when transferring the narrative of the *Gesta* into the *Chronica*, leading to this confusion of birth and death.

THE DATE OF COMPOSITION

Had Sigurðr brennir been identical with the Siwardus son of Hingo found in the *Chronica Regis*, this would have provided a *terminus post quem* for that particular portion of Roger's text of 1189. This would

⁵¹ *Chronica Magistri Rogeri*, ed. Stubbs, I, li.

⁵² *Gesta Regis Henrici*, ed. Stubbs, I, 267: 'Ingi indeed killed Sigurðr and Eysteinn his brothers.'

⁵³ *Haraldssona saga*, ch. 32, pp. 345–6.

support the arguments of John Gillingham, who suggested that William of Newburgh had used Roger of Howden as a source, based on the fact that both of them have a passage on Norway and its history intruded into the text under the year 1180, followed by passages doing the same for Byzantium and Cyprus.⁵⁴ He argued that all three passages were written no earlier than 1191 based on the year in which the Cypriot entry concluded.⁵⁵

Since Siwardus son of Hingo is not Sigurðr brennir but a scribal error, however, the latest information in the Norwegian account concerns the flight of Archbishop Eysteinn Erlendsson to England in 1180. The Byzantine episode, on the other hand, continues the history of that state up to the death of the Emperor Andronicus in 1185, whilst the Cyprus episode, as already mentioned, appears to reference events that happened as late as 1191.

Whilst Gillingham treats all three episodes as a unit, the Norwegian one is hence qualitatively different. This is not simply because of a lack of knowledge on Roger's part. He most certainly knew more and indeed later in the *Chronica* he records the death of Magnús Erlingsson, as well as noting fifteen kings whose deaths Sverrir was responsible for.⁵⁶

Had his initial section on Norway, like his summaries of Byzantine and Cypriot events, been written down in 1191, he would surely have folded this information into it and therefore condensed his information into one digression. What is more, he would very likely have prolonged his narrative beyond 1184. It is notable that he does not mention Jón kuflungr, for example, even though Roger possessed a wide knowledge of Scottish affairs and Claus Krag has shown that Jón was recognised in Scotland as the legitimate king of

⁵⁴ Gillingham, 'Yorkshire Historians', pp. 19–20.

⁵⁵ Gillingham, 'Yorkshire Historians', p. 20 n. 28.

⁵⁶ *Chronica Magistri Rogeri*, ed. Stubbs, III, 270–2.

Norway.⁵⁷ Given Roger's familiarity with Scottish politics, one would expect this fact to have been included in a summary written at such a late date.

Indeed, the section shows no sign that it was written with any knowledge of events beyond the departure of Archbishop Eysteinn. This in itself would tend to suggest a date of original composition very close to 1180 and in addition that when Roger revised the *Gesta* into the *Chronica* he did not have Norwegian sources of sufficient quality to add very much more information.

Whilst we have very little evidence from which to speculate upon Roger's sources with confidence, I hope I have established certain facts upon which one can begin to base an argument. Roger knew of Magnús Haraldsson gilla, an exceedingly obscure Norwegian king who died in the early 1140s, suggesting that his informant had a long connection with the highest levels of Norwegian politics. Moreover, in his main section on Norwegian events, Roger gives no information on events happening after 1180. Given that Archbishop Eysteinn Erlendsson's political career extended back at least as far as the early 1150s, that he had previously served as the steward of Magnús' brother Ingi and that he had strong connections with a number of monasteries in Yorkshire and north Lincolnshire, the argument that Roger gathered much of his information on Norway from Eysteinn or other exiles in his circle appears to be stronger than ever.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ C. Krag, *Sverre, Norges største middelalderkonge* (Oslo, 2005), p. 131.

⁵⁸ Duggan, 'English Exile', pp. 110–7 provides a comprehensive summary of Eysteinn's likely movements and advances the suggestions that the tone of the accounts found in the work of Roger and of William of Newburgh indicate a reliance upon the account of Eysteinn or one of his adherents and that these accounts were delivered at a time prior to the archbishop's rapprochement with Sverrir in 1183.

Constructing kin(g)ship: Eyvindr Skáldaspillir as Spokesman for the Earls of Hlaðir

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Skáldaspillir is the nickname given to the poet Eyvindr Finnsson in the Old Norse sagas of the kings; it comes from the words *skáld*, 'poet', and *spillir*, 'spoiler or destroyer' and for this reason it is usually translated as 'plagiarist'—Eyvindr the 'skald-destroyer'.¹ Perhaps for this reason Eyvindr's originality has suffered a poor reputation among some modern scholars; *Háleygjatal*, his genealogical poem composed for Earl Hákon of Hlaðir, has received the bulk of the criticism directed towards him. Folke Ström is representative of this approach:

At the time of his composition of *Háleygjatal*, Eyvindr is an elderly man, and the poem's artistic qualities cannot be rated high [...] Above all, one is struck by the poem's heavy dependence upon *Ynglingatal* [...] When we note that the number of ancestors in the jatl's family is identical with that in the model's, it becomes clear that the overall correspondences are intentional and deliberately contrived.²

Háleygjatal, dated to around 985, does indeed bear a striking resemblance to *Ynglingatal*, a poem dated nearer the beginning of that

¹ As in G. Turville-Petre's *Scaldic Poetry* (Oxford, 1976), p. 43. This attribution is given to Eyvindr in *Ágrip af Noregskonunga sögum; Fagrskinna; Noregs konunga tal*, ed. Bjarni Einarsson, Íslenzk fornrit 29 (Reykjavik, 1985), 65 (hereafter *Fsk*). The author of *Fsk* also notes that Eyvindr composed *Hákonarmál* in imitation of the earlier poem *Eiríksmál*, p. 86.

² F. Ström, 'Poetry as an Instrument of Propaganda: Jarl Hakon and His Poets', in *Speculum Norroenum: Norse Studies in Memory of Gabriel Turville-Petre*, ed. U. Dronke et al. (Odense, 1981), pp. 440–58, at p. 446.

century and composed by the skald Þjóðólfr ór Hvini.³ They are both composed in the *kvíðubáttr* metre, and both trace the lines of descent of two noble families, *Háleygjatal* of the Hlaðjarlar of north-western Norway, and *Ynglingatal* of the Norwegian royal house of Haraldr hárfagri and his relations, a family who ruled over much of south and central Norway. The Resen manuscript⁴ records twenty-seven generations of the earls of Hálogaland, and it is possible that *Háleygjatal* at one time comprised twenty-seven stanzas, also following the model of *Ynglingatal*.⁵ The poem that is extant today, however, is far less structurally coherent than is *Ynglingatal*, a sequence recorded only in the first saga of Snorri Sturluson's thirteenth-century compendium of Norwegian kings' lives, *Heimskringla*. Stanzas from *Háleygjatal* are preserved in diverse sources: five verses recorded in Snorri's poetic treatise *Skáldskaparmál* give little information about the reigns of the earls, demonstrating instead a number of unusual kennings; three stanzas are interspersed with *Ynglingatal* in *Ynglinga saga*; and six are scattered through the chronicle *Fagrskinna* and the later sagas of Snorri's *Heimskringla*.⁶

³ Finnur Jónsson assigns this date to the poem in *Den norske-islandske skjaldedigtning*, 4 vols. (Copenhagen, 1912–1915), AI, 68–71 and BI, 60–2 (hereafter *Skj*). His dating and edition of *Ynglingatal* can be found at *Skj*, AI, 7–15 and BI, 7–14. All citations in the original are taken from *Skj*, BI; translations are my own.

⁴ Copenhagen, Arnarnagnæan Collection 1 e β II fol., 85v–91r.

⁵ On the manuscript, see A. Faulkes, 'The Earliest Icelandic Genealogies and Regnal Lists', *SBVS* 29 (2005), 115–19, at p. 117. For a list of the twenty-seven earls and their counterparts in the poem, see R. Poole, 'Myth and Ritual in the Háleygjatal of Eyvindr skáldaspillir', in *Learning and Understanding in the Old Norse World: Essays in Honour of Margaret Clunies Ross*, ed. J. Quinn et al., Med. Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe 18 (Turnhout, 2007), 153–76, at pp. 154–5.

⁶ *Haralds saga hárfagri*, sts. 7 and 8; *Haralds saga gráfeldar*, sts. 9 and 10; and *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, st. 11. See *Skj*, AI, 7–15 for a complete list of the manuscript

Snorri grants genealogy pride of place in *Heimskringla*, and the sequences *Ynglingatal* and *Háleygjatal* receive a special introduction in his *Prologue* to the compendium:⁷

Þjóðólfr inn fróði ór Hvini var skáld Haralds konung ins hárfagra. Hann orti kvæði um Rognvald konung heiðumhæra, þat er kallað Ynglingatal. Rognvaldr var sonr Óláfs Geirstaðaálfs, bróður Hálfðanar svartar. Í því kvæði eru nefndir þrír tigur langfeðga hans ok sagt frá dauða hvers þeira ok legstað....Eyvindr skáldaspillir talði ok langfeðga Hákonar jarls ins ríka í kvæði því, er Háleygjatal heitir, er ort var um Hákon. Sæmingr er þar nefndr sonr Yngvifreys. Sagt er þar ok frá dauða hvers þeira ok haugstað.⁸

Þjóðólfr's *Ynglingatal*, as Snorri observes, fulfils three main functions: to name the kings of the Yngling dynasty, to report the manner of their deaths, and to record the locations of their burials. Although fewer stanzas of Eyvindr's *Háleygjatal* have survived, it is clear that the poet's focus on commemorating the deaths, rather than the lives, of his subjects is analogous. *Heimskringla* is thus a declaration of the

context of each stanza. All references to *Hkr* refer to Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, ed. Bjarni Aðalbarnarson, Íslenzk fornrit 26–8, 3 vols. (Reykjavík, 1941–51).

⁷ The question of Snorri's authorship is too large to treat fully here. Sverre Bagge has discussed the exact extent to which Snorri was the author or compiler of *Heimskringla*, as well as the many different voices in that debate and he concludes that we may safely consider Snorri to be the main authorial influence behind the text. See S. Bagge, *Society and Politics in Snorri Sturluson's Heimskringla* (Berkeley, 1991), pp. 23–5.

⁸ *Hkr*, I, 4: 'Þjóðólfr the wise from Hvini was a skald for King Haraldr hárfagri. He made a poem about King Rognvaldr heiðumhár which is called *Ynglingatal*. Rognvaldr was the son of Óláfr the elf of Geirstaðir, the brother of Hálfðanar svartar. In the poem are named thirty of his ancestors, and the deaths and burial-places of each one are related [...] Eyvindr skáldaspillir also enumerated the ancestors of Earl Hákon the mighty in the poem called *Háleygjatal*, which was composed about Hákon. Sæmingr is there called the son of Yngvi-freyr. The deaths and the burial-mounds of each are also related there'.

exalted lineage of the noble houses of Norway, a narrative in which Snorri employs *Ynglingatal* and *Háleygjatal* to trace the families' distant ancestors all the way to the Norse gods.

The poems at the heart of Snorri's narrative, however, do not provide a homogeneous portrayal of the origins and status of Norway's ruling class. Rather, the two sequences function in opposition as Þjóðólfr in *Ynglingatal* asserts the claims of Haraldr hárfagri's family to the Norwegian royal throne, while in *Háleygjatal* Eyvindr promotes the rival claims of the earls of Hlaðir. Despite the obvious similarities between the two poems, Eyvindr is no mere plagiarist. Rather, he is a poet who engages directly with the works of other poets, crafting his stanzas in response to theirs. I would argue that *Háleygjatal* is not a plagiarism of *Ynglingatal* but a deliberate challenge to the earlier poem. This poetic challenge mirrors the political environment of the late tenth century and the struggle for power between the royal family of Rognvaldr heiðumhár and Haraldr hárfagri, patrons of Þjóðólfr ór Hvini, and the semi-autonomous earls of Hlaðir, served by Eyvindr. Earl Hákon's grandfather, Hákon Grjótagarðsson, had been appointed earl under King Haraldr hárfagri, but his power was in reality that of an independent ruler of northern Norway.⁹ Hålogaland, along with such territories as Trøndelag, Møre and Hordaland, had its own identity and a population which resisted fiercely the centralizing efforts of Haraldr and his descendants.¹⁰ Ström has shown that as Haraldr and his descendants increasingly aligned themselves with Christianity to consolidate their political position, Earl Hákon ostentatiously promoted his adherence to the

⁹ Ström, 'Poetry as Propaganda', p. 442. D. Davidson also gives an excellent summary of these events in her doctoral thesis, 'Earl Hákon and His Poets', (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of Oxford, 1983), pp. 25–9.

¹⁰ C. Krag, 'The Creation of Norway', in *The Viking World*, ed. S. Brink and N. Price, Routledge Worlds (London, 2008), pp. 645–51, at p. 645.

pagan religion and asserted his allegiance to that religion by sponsoring many skaldic poems.¹¹ *Háleygjatal* stems from these propagandizing efforts. Russell Poole has described *Háleygjatal* as a 'spin-off' from *Ynglingatal*,¹² and it is possible to take this even further: in *Háleygjatal* Eyvindr crafts a political statement that deliberately confronts and exceeds the genealogical claims of the ruling family as made in the earlier poem by Þjóðólfr. Moreover, this argumentative skald demonstrates far more vigorously than his rival the power of poetry to confer political prestige, asserting the mutual dependence of poet and earl. The two ruling houses are in conflict, and their poetic spokesmen rise to the challenge.

Although it is not possible to give a full discussion of *Ynglingatal* here, some information about the earlier poem is necessary to situate *Háleygjatal* within the dialogue between these two poets. Composed by Þjóðólfr for a petty king of Vestfold, Rognvaldr Ólafsson, cousin to King Haraldr hárfagri, the poem consists of a series of stanzas in which the poet describes the odd and often shocking deaths of Rognvaldr's ancestors. One drowns in a giant vat of mead; one is speared by a bull; several fall prey to the enchantments of Finnish sorceresses.¹³ These are not glorious deaths, and the eulogistic function of the poem is not to praise these ancient kings for their accomplishments but to establish a suitably long and memorable line of descent for Rognvaldr. To this end, the poet uses complex, striking metaphors to describe the various modes of death; such periphrasis has a mnemonic function, ensuring that the genealogy will be preserved and transmitted to future generations.¹⁴ The poem also

¹¹ Ström, 'Poetry as Propaganda', p. 445.

¹² Poole, 'Myth and Ritual', p. 156.

¹³ Stanzas 1, 17–8, 3 and 21 respectively.

¹⁴ For example, the vat of mead in which the king drowns in stanza 1 is described as the 'svigðis geira / vágr vindlauss' ('windless sea of the spear of an

contains a wealth of place-names commemorating where the kings died and were buried, their grave-mounds standing as visual reminders of the king's impressive genealogy.¹⁵ In contrast to their memorable deaths and places of burial, the kings themselves are anonymous figures, the majority of whom are described only by such generic skaldic *heiti* for 'king' as *siklingr*, *jofurr*, and *hilmir*, such epithets emphasize their common political role but not their personal differences. The kings themselves rarely function as the grammatical subjects of the verses; they are, rather, the passive objects upon which their killers act, and the repetition of the auxiliary verb *skulu* in conjunction with verbs for killing or dying lends connotations of inevitability to these actions.¹⁶ Although Snorri at the beginning of

ox [HORN]), while the bull that gores the king in stanza 17 carries a mythological resonance in the kenning 'jotuns eykr' ('giant's draught-beast'). From a perspective of cognitive linguistics, Bergsveinn Birgisson has argued that a highly mnemonic system of aesthetics governs the poem and that such unusual images and kennings are characteristic of pre-Christian oral poetry. See his doctoral thesis, 'Inn í skaldens sinn: Kognitive, estetiske og historiske skatter í den norrøne skaldediktingen' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of Bergen, 2008), pp. 131–47, or his article on 'The Old Norse Kenning as a Mnemonic Figure', in *The Making of Memory in the Middle Ages*, ed. L. Doležalová (Leiden, 2010), pp. 199–213.

¹⁵ The poet notes in stanza 32 that King Halfdan is buried at Borre, while in stanza 36 he says that King Óláfr lies in a mound at Geirstaðir. King Guðrøðr, according to stanza 34, died on the bank of the Stíflusund. This attention to place-name detail may well reflect a historical reality: it is thought that the ninth-century ship-burial at Gokstad is the site of Óláfr's grave and that the multiple ship-burials at Vík and Oseberg commemorate members of the same family: see J. Turville-Petre, 'On *Ynglingatal*', *M.Scand* 11 (1978–79), 48–66, at p. 51.

¹⁶ *Skulu* is used thirteen times in the poem in conjunction with a verb describing the king's death. In line 8 of the first stanza, for example, a meat-vat 'of viðá skyldi' ('was to destroy') the king. On the use of *skulu* to connote necessity or

Heimskringla says that the royal family was descended from Óðinn, the poet himself does not do so explicitly;¹⁷ in the extant text at least, Þjóðólfr begins his genealogy with the family's most distant ancestors, the semi-mythical kings of Sweden, and then traces their migration to the Oslo-fjord area of Norway.

This is the poem that Eyvindr has been accused of plagiarising. However, from the very first stanza of *Háleygjatal*, Hákon's poet throws down the gauntlet, taking his genealogy one step further by boldly proclaiming Óðinn himself to be the progenitor of the earls of Hlaðir:¹⁸

inevitability in this way, see E. V. Gordon and A. R. Taylor, *An Introduction to Old Norse*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1957), p. 313.

¹⁷ *Hkr*, I, 22–4. Attempts have been made to show that *Ynglingatal* contains a pre-Christian record of divine kingship but Walter Baetke in particular has presented strong arguments against it in *Yngvi und die Ynglinge: eine quellenkritische Untersuchung über das nordische 'Sakralkönigtum'*, *Sitzungsberichte der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Philologisch-Historische Klasse*, Bd. 109, Ht. 3 (Berlin, 1964), esp. 39–68. A review of the scholarship on this subject may be found in R. W. McTurk, 'Sacral Kingship in Ancient Scandinavia: a Review of Some Recent Writings', *SBVS* 19 (1975–6), 139–69 and in his follow-up article, 'Scandinavian Sacral Kingship Revisited', *SBVS* 24 (1994), 19–32.

¹⁸ While we cannot be entirely certain that this stanza was indeed first in the original sequence, the formal call for hearing in the first line does support such an order and is accepted by Finnur as such in *Skj*. Snorri may have interpreted the stanza in a similar way, as he cites it as one of thirteen verses demonstrating the 'mead of poetry' kennings in *Skáldskaparmál*; the majority of these verses have been identified as the opening stanzas of their respective poems. They include the introductory stanzas to Glúmr Geirason's *Gráfeldardrápa*, Úlfr Uggason's *Húsdrápa*, the first two stanzas from Ormr Steinþórsson's 'Digt om en Kvinde', and the first four stanzas from Einarr skálaglamm's *Vellekla*: see Snorri Sturluson, *Edda. Skáldskaparmál*, ed. A. Faulkes, 2 vols. (London, 1998), I, 12–14.

Viljak hljóð
at Hóars líði,
meðan Gillings
gjöldum yppik,
meðan hans ætt
í hverlegi
galga farms
til goða teljum.¹⁹

This is a bold statement, and one which clearly asserts the superiority of the earl's family over other Scandinavian rivals. Modern audiences may be used to hearing kings of this period claim divine descent—there are instances of this in the Anglo-Saxon, Irish, Welsh and continental traditions²⁰—but Eyvindr's poem is one of the earliest to use the idea in Old Norse.²¹ Indeed, it was only by the end of the

¹⁹ st. 1, ll. 1–8: 'I wish for silence for the ale of Hár <= Óðinn's> [POETRY] while I lift up Gillings's payments [POETRY], as we trace his family to the gods in the pot-liquid of the cargo of gallows [= Óðinn > POETRY]'.
²⁰ On this, see D. N. Dumville, 'Kingship, Genealogies and Regnal Lists', in *Early Medieval Kingship*, ed. P. H. Sawyer and I. N. Wood (Leeds, 1977), pp. 72–105; C. R. Davis, 'Cultural Assimilation in the Anglo-Saxon Royal Genealogies', *ASE* 21 (1992), 23–36; D. E. Thornton, 'Orality, Literacy and Genealogy in Early Medieval Ireland and Wales', in *Literacy in Medieval Celtic Societies*, ed. H. Pryce, Cambridge Stud. in Med. Lit. 33 (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 83–98; D. Ó Corráin, 'Creating the Past: the Early Irish Genealogical Tradition', *Peritia* 12 (1998), 77–208; and C. Ireland, 'Aldfrith of Northumbria and the Irish Genealogies', *Celtica* 22 (1991), 64–78.

²¹ Anthony Faulkes has discussed extensively the issue of divine progeniture in Old Norse texts and the unreliability of early sources that attribute this convention to pagan Germanic tribes in 'Descent from the Gods', pp. 92–4. Margaret Clunies Ross has shown that euhemerism was far more widespread in the later sagas than in pre-Christian poetry; in a move contemporaneous with the increasing importance of primogeniture in the laws of inheritance among French and German aristocratic families, medieval Icelanders established genealogies based on Anglo-Saxon models and the stories of Troy. See M.

twelfth century that each of the main ruling houses in Scandinavia could trace their families back to the Norse gods.²² Craig Davis has located such texts firmly within the conversion process, noting that the demotion of the pagan gods to heroic human ancestors allowed their incorporation into the Christian history of the world:

Kings could now gaze down the length of their pedigree to God's creation of the cosmic order in the world. They could contemplate there the direct source of their own political authority. And as importantly, their genetic, blood-lineal descent from divinity, which had been obscured for centuries after the conversion, was neatly and triumphantly restored.²³

It is clear, therefore, that a Christian context was well established for divine progeniture in the early medieval period and that the genealogical model advocated by Eyvindr is not an indigenous, pagan tradition, but one that came directly from a Latin, Christian literary context. Indeed, it has been suggested that Eyvindr may have access to Anglo-Saxon and Irish traditions because he lived in the northwest of Norway, rather than in the Oslo-fjord area where, presumably, *Ynglingatal* was composed.²⁴ Thus, with his claim of divine descent, Eyvindr positions *Háleygjatal* within a much wider European context than the poet of *Ynglingatal*. Claiming Óðinn as the earl's ancestor, Eyvindr embraces the traditions of the learned, Christian world, but provocatively sets Earl Hákon against the royal sponsors of the new religion by placing his poem firmly within the pagan context with a powerful pagan forefather. His rival genealogy is a statement both of genealogical and of cultural superiority, a signal that Hákon's poet

Clunies Ross, 'The Development of Old Norse Textual Worlds: Genealogical Structure as a Principle of Literary Organisation in Early Iceland', *JEGP* 92 (1993), 373–4.

²² Faulkes, 'Descent from the Gods', p. 95.

²³ Davis, 'Cultural Assimilation', p. 36.

²⁴ Turville-Petre, 'On *Ynglingatal*', p. 63.

knew of artistic developments outside his home territory and could adapt them to promote a dissenting political message.

In the introductory stanza cited above, therefore, the poet's focus is firmly on Óðinn and his mythological progeny rather than on the earl and his human ancestors. Indeed, Eyvindr does not explicitly name any member of the human family in his introductory stanzas. In this, he differs significantly from Þjóðólfr and his long list of kingly names in *Ynglingatal*. In the first stanza of *Háleygjatal* the phrase *hans att* is the only reference to the human descendants of Óðinn. However, through the ambiguity of this pronoun the poet boldly places the race of poets, rather than that of the earls, first in the line of Óðinn's family by telling the story of how the god acquired the mead of poetry. *Háleygjatal*, Eyvindr declares in the opening stanza, is not a poem about one family descended from Óðinn, but two: the noble earls and the race of poets. *Hans att* may refer to either or both of these progeny.²⁵ In further contrast to *Ynglingatal*, Óðinn is a dynamic individual, far removed from the passive kings whose deaths were earlier celebrated by Þjóðólfr. Stanza 2, which completes the opening verse, is dominated by verbs of action and movement as the god returns triumphant from his travels:

Hinn es Surts
ór sǫkkdǫlum
farmǫgnuðr
fljúgandi bar.²⁶

²⁵ It is of course possible that part or all of a strophe is lost, along with a more specific antecedent for *hans*, but this is impossible to determine from the extant text.

²⁶ st. 2, ll. 1–4: 'Which the one strong in the journey [Óðinn] carried, flying from the pit-dales of Surtr [deep abyss]'.²⁶

This quatrain shows the acquisition and creation of poetry to be an energetic, proactive process, and one that requires considerable physical strength. Moreover, it is notable that Óðinn's gift of poetry to the world takes pride of place in the introductory stanzas, while the act of procreation, which results in the earl's family, does not appear until the third stanza.

Mythological characters also dominate the second stanza, in which there is a clear focus on reproduction and inter-generational links that is not found in *Ynglingatal*. As discussed above, *Ynglingatal* is a lengthy catalogue of shocking and unusual forms of death; in contrast, this stanza in *Háleygjatal* is a celebration of birth. The very structure of the stanza highlights the importance of Óðinn and the giantess Skaði's union as the middle four lines identify the location of their sexual activity, while the first and last four lines are mirror images of each other that reiterate the same procreative action. Thus, in the first section, Óðinn begets the next generation with Skaði:

Þann skjaldblætr
skattfæri gat
ása niðr
við jarnviðju.²⁷

In the last section object and subject are inverted as Skaði begets the next generation with Óðinn:

Sævar beins,
ok sunu marga

²⁷ st. 3, ll. 1–4: 'Then the shield-worshipper [WARRIOR], the son of the gods [= Óðinn], begot the tribute-bringer [KING] with the giantess'. *Járnviðja* seems to have been coined by Eyvindr through a combination of 'íviðjur' ('ogress') and 'Járnviðr' ('iron-wood'), both terms found only in *Völuspá*. Davidson notes that the border-land *Járnviðja* is associated with fertility in the *Poetic Edda*, as it is here ('Earl Hákon and His Poets', pp. 87–8).

Öndurdís
við Óðni gat.²⁸

The middle lines record the location, Manheimar, which Snorri interprets in the prose as Sweden, although many other interpretations have been suggested.²⁹ In this stanza Skaði's fertility sits in direct opposition to the many deaths enumerated in *Ynglingatal*. She is the *öndurdís sævar beins*, a phrase that echoes but cleverly inverts similar descriptions in *Ynglingatal*. In the earlier poem one king is killed in a landslide: he 'foldar beinum [...] of horfínn vas'.³⁰ Another drowned king lies 'und lagar beinum'.³¹ In both instances, a similar phrase is used to describe the mode of death and the subsequent resting-place of the king; the focus is on the end of his life and the commemorative potential of knowing where his body lies. However, in Skaði's case a similar phrase describes the mother of a mighty dynasty and is associated with life and beginnings, rather than with death and endings.³²

²⁸ st. 4, ll. 1–4: 'The ski-goddess of the bones of the sea [STONES > WILD LANDSCAPE] begot many sons with Óðinn?'

²⁹ *Hkr*, I, 22. For a summary of the various possibilities, see Poole, 'Myth and Ritual', pp. 161–6.

³⁰ st. 26, ll. 10–12: 'Was covered by the bones of the earth [STONES]'.

³¹ st. 31, l. 6: 'Under the bones of the sea [STONES]'.

³² Gro Steinsland has suggested that the genealogical poems in general and that this stanza in particular demonstrate the existence of a myth of *hieros gamos*, a holy wedding, in the origins of ruling families in pre-Christian Scandinavia. She argues that the marriage of a god and giantess gave their offspring the powers of both groups and that it may also have been related to the concept of sacral kingship, with the goddess functioning as a personification of the female land conquered by the male ruler. See G. Steinsland, *Det hellige bryllup og Norron kongedeologi: en analyse av hierogami-myten i Skírnismál, Ynglingatal, Háleygjatal og Hyndluljóð* (Oslo, 1991), pp. 214–26. The union of the king and the goddess Jörð is a common image in the poetry composed for Earl Hákon, appearing

Eyvindr focuses on the many offspring of this fruitful union, emphasising the continuity between generations in a manner wholly absent from *Ynglingatal*. The human progeny, *sunu marga*, are described but not named in this second stanza; their plurality further enhances the success and generative ability of this, the first generation, although the phrase also de-emphasises, as in stanza 1, the person to whom the poem is ostensibly addressed, that is, Earl Hákon. The poet reminds his audience that his is a story about the many offspring of Óðinn and Skaði, not merely of one dominant branch. It may be no more than a tantalising coincidence, but Joan Turville-Petre has pointed out that Eyvindr himself was likely a near relation of the earl; *Landnámabók* states that he was a descendant of Hákon's great-grandfather.³³ Ström also notes that:

We must not overlook the significance of Eyvindr's own pedigree: he was himself of very high birth, with deep family roots in Hålogaland, the hereditary territory of the Hlaðir jarls. He might well have been familiar with the genealogical traditions of his native area.³⁴

As a member of the earl's family, Eyvindr was in a unique position reciting this genealogy: the poet's enumeration of the many descendants of Óðinn, *sunu marga*, becomes not only a list of the earl's

again in stanza 12 of this poem and in Einarr skálaglamm's *Vellekla* (*Skj*, AI, 122–31 and BI, 117–24) and Hallfreðr Óttarsson's *Hákonardrápa* (*Skj*, AI, 155–6 and BI, 147–8).

³³ According to *Landnámabók*, 'Sighvatr hinn rauði hét gofugr maðr á Hålogalandi; hann átti Rannveigu dóttur Eyvindar lamba, foður-systur Eyvindar skáldaspillis; hennar móðir var Ingibjörg Hávarsdóttir, Grjótgarðssonar Háleygjajarls', *Íslendingabók; Landnámabók*, ed. Jakob Benediktsson, Íslenzk fornrit 1, 2 vols. (Reykjavík, 1968), II, 349, *Hauksbók* ch. 304 ('Sigvatr the red was a noble man from Hålogaland. He married Rannveig, daughter of Eyvindr Lamb, aunt of Eyvindr skáldaspillir; her mother was Ingibjörg daughter of Hávar, son of Grjótgarðr the Jarl of Hlaðir').

³⁴ Ström, 'Poetry as Propaganda', p. 447.

family but of his own, based in the traditions of his home territory. Óðinn's role as the father of poetry and of the earl's family is further blurred through the person of Eyvindr himself, both a poet and a member of the family whose descent he recounts.

Time, too, is a dynamic presence in *Háleygjatal*, and one all but absent from the episodic verses of *Ynglingatal*. Eyvindr locates the action of the second stanza in a causal relationship with the first through the opening word *þann*. Stanzas in *Ynglingatal*, in contrast, begin with the words *ok*, *en*, *þar* or *þat*; episodic and cyclical, the earlier poem contains no sense of the progression of time and the order of the stanzas could easily be rearranged without disrupting its meaning. The number, not the exact order, of the generations is important. Eyvindr's portrayal of time in the genealogy of the Hlaðajarlar, however, has much in common with Richard Schrader's understanding of time in *Beowulf*. Discussing the conflation of mythic, legendary and human or historical time in the poem, Schrader observes that a strict chronology pervades all these various dimensions of time:

One event begets another and was itself begotten; any event can be looked at as a beginning, middle or end. History is generated [...] The "parentage" of any event may have several "generations"; that is, its arrival now is the result of a complex history that gets more complicated and arguable, and less factual, the farther one takes it back.³⁵

In *Háleygjatal*, history and time follow a similarly strict progression; time is generated just as poetry and the race of earls is generated. Strikingly, however, the first stanza shows Óðinn's acquisition of poetry to exist outside the generational time-scheme that governs the procreation of the earl's family in the rest of the sequence. The

³⁵ R. J. Schrader, *Old English Poetry and the Genealogy of Events*, Med. Texts and Stud. 12 (Woodbridge, 1993), p. 80.

acquisition of poetry is the first act and it generates—literally—the rest of the stanzas that follow. Genealogy and poetry evolve together as the poem is composed.

This interest in generation in the early stanzas of *Háleygjatal* dissipates somewhat in subsequent stanzas, which take their cue even more closely from *Ynglingatal*. Space does not allow a stanza-by-stanza comparison of each, but it is possible to illustrate Eyvindr's technique by looking closely at two stanzas that are representative of the whole. These stanzas, numbers 6 and 7 in Finnur Jónsson's ordering of the poem, are only preserved in *Heimskringla* next to stanza 14 of *Ynglingatal*.³⁶ It is impossible not to compare the rival accounts the two poems portray; the stanzas are juxtaposed by the prose context, and the two sets of verses are so similar that it is difficult not to assume that one was composed with the other in mind, and as a deliberate answer to it. They demonstrate further Eyvindr's admirable skill at copying and undermining the earlier verses.

Stanza 14, then, is typical of *Ynglingatal* as a whole. Jörundr is a powerless king who is described simply to give his descendant one more memorable link in the chain of genealogy:

Varð Jörundr,
hinn 's endr of dó,
lífs of latr
í Limafirði,
þás hábrjóstr
hörva Sleipnir
bana Goðlaugs
of bera skyldi;
ok Hagbarðs

³⁶ It should be noted, however, that no division of stanzas 6 and 7 exists in the manuscripts; one follows directly on from the other without any prose interruption.

hersa valdi
 hǫðnu leif
 at halsi gekk.³⁷

This stanza is typical of *Ynglingatal*: the king is a powerless and almost anonymous figure, while the mode of death takes centre stage. Death is the subject of the verbs and the gallows are described by two relatively complex kennings based on mythological referents: *hábrjóstr hǫrva Sleipnir* and *Hagbarðs hǫðnu leif*. The animal imagery of a rope used to tie a horse, in the first case, and a goat, in the second, reinforces the powerlessness of a king trussed up by the hangman's noose, and there is an emphasis on his physical vulnerability as the rope winds around his neck. This is a king thoroughly defeated. The poet's emphasis is not on the victim but on the complex, riddle-like kennings describing his death; such kennings have a mnemonic force and aid in the memorisation of twenty-seven generations of royal ancestors.

In stanza 6 of *Háleygjatal*, the poet describes a similar scene, the death of Guðlaugr, an ancestor of Earl Hákon killed by King Jǫrundr. Eyvindr says:

En Guðlaugr
 grimman tamði
 við ofrkapp
 austrkonunga
 Sigars jó,
 es synir Yngva

³⁷ st. 14, ll. 1–12: Jǫrundr was taken from life; he died in the end in Limafjördr. The high-breasted hemp-Sleipnir [hemp-horse, i.e. gallows] was to carry Guðlaugr's killer. And Hagbarðr's goat's trappings [HALTER > NOOSE] went around the neck of the ruler of warriors [KING].

menglötuð
 við meið reiddu.³⁸

The earl is a far more dynamic character than King Jǫrundr. In contrast to the passive kings of *Ynglingatal*, Guðlaugr is the active subject of the initial verb: he *tamði* the gallows. Compare this to King Agni in *Ynglingatal* who 'temja skyldi' his own gallows.³⁹ Lacking the auxiliary verb *skulu* found in *Ynglingatal*, the active use of the verb *temja* in *Háleygjatal* reveals the earl's energetic acceptance of his fate. Guðlaugr is a warrior who does not go gentle into that good night; strangely, this ancestor of the pagan Earl Hákon has much in common poetically with the heroic figure of Christ in the Old English tradition who hurries to climb onto his own gallows in the *Dream of the Rood*, for one well-known example.⁴⁰ However, the kenning used to describe the gallows in *Háleygjatal* places it firmly within the Old Norse tradition, echoing the two kennings in *Ynglingatal*: not only is the phrase *Sigars jór* structurally similar to the gallows-kennings in *Ynglingatal*, but the character Sigarr comes from the same tragic story as Hagbarðr and Signý; both names are used as modifiers in the earlier poem's gallows-kennings.⁴¹ Invoking his predecessor's

³⁸ st. 6, l. 1–8: 'And Guðlaugr tamed the stallion of Sigarr [GALLOWS] because of the grim fierceness of the eastern kings. Those sons of Yngvi made the necklace-destroyer [KING] ride the tree [GALLOWS].'

³⁹ st. 10, l. 10: 'Was to tame'.

⁴⁰ The verb used in this poem is *gestígan* (ll. 34 and 40). See *Dream of the Rood*, in *The Vercelli Book*, ed. G. P. Krapp, ASPR 2 (New York, 1932), pp. 61–5.

⁴¹ That is, 'Hagbarðs [...] hǫðnu leif' ('Hagbarð's goat's trappings') from stanza 14, lines 9 and 11, and 'svalan hest / Signýjar vers' ('the chill horse of Signý's husband') in stanza 10, lines 11–12. For the full story, see Saxo Grammaticus, *History of the Danes*, ed. and trans. P. Fisher and H. E. Davidson, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1979–80), I, 210–18. Birgisson offers a detailed cognitive analysis of the metaphor that compares riding a horse with hanging on a gallows. See 'Inn i skaldens sinn', pp. 296–343.

periphrastic language for the gallows, Eyvindr invites a comparison between the two hanged rulers; however, the similarity between their killers only emphasises the contrast between their actions, between Jorundr's passive death in *Ynglingatal* and Guðlaugr's active, heroic death in *Háleygjatal*.

The death of Guðlaugr lacks the shame and animal-like disgrace found in the hanging verses of *Ynglingatal* because hanging itself carries very different connotations in this poem. For a family descended from Óðinn, hanging carries perhaps not positive, but certainly not wholly negative connotations; in the first stanza of *Háleygjatal* the hanging episode in the god's life is alluded to in the kenning 'galga farmr'⁴² in the highly positive context of the god acquiring the mead of poetry. The earls' affinity with the hanged god is reiterated in kennings for battle later in the poem: one earl dies in 'Hóars veðri' while his descendant falls in the

stóran gny
vinar Lóðurs.⁴³

The martial ability of Earl Sigurðr is attested when he

svonum veitti
hróka bjór
[...] Farmatýs.⁴⁴

Identifying the gallows as a *meiðr* in stanza 6 and especially as a *vingameiðr* in stanza 7, the poet aligns the death of the earl with Óðinn's sacrifice of himself to himself on the *vingameiðr* Yggdrasil in

⁴² st. 1, l. 7: 'Gallows' cargo'.

⁴³ st. 8, l. 2: 'Óðinn's weather [BATTLE]'; and st. 10, ll. 6–7: 'great din of the friend of Lóðurr [= Óðinn > BATTLE]'.

⁴⁴ st. 11, ll. 2–5: 'Gave the beer of crows [blood] to the swans of Hanged-Týr <=Óðinn> [RAVENS]'.

the eddic poems.⁴⁵ Richard North has suggested that the compound *Ygg-drasill* or 'Terror-steed' indicates a close analogy between hanging and horse-riding, and that Óðinn's horse Sleipnir may have been developed from the image of the world tree.⁴⁶ Eyvindr's verse exploits this association of riding and hanging to show that hanging is a triumph for the Hlaðjarl family, just as Christ's crucifixion in *The Dream of the Rood* is, paradoxically, a battle won. Hanging is thus a reiteration of the family's divine progeniture, not another instance of grotesque death that it represents in *Ynglingatal*.

Stanza 7 of *Háleygjatal* reveals further the relationship between the two poems as Eyvindr describes the burial-place of another earl of Hlaðir:

Ok náreiðr
á nesi drúpir
vingameiðr,
þars víkr deilir,
þar 's, fjolkunt
of fylkis hrør,
steini merkt
Straumeyjarnes.⁴⁷

The imagery of the gallows drooping over the headland is a near-echo of *Ynglingatal* stanza 30:

⁴⁵ *Meiðr* denotes 'tree' or 'pole' and *vingameiðr* may be translated 'windy tree', as in *Hávamál* (st. 138). There is also an echo of that sacrifice in the hanging of Randvér in *Hamðismál* (st. 17). See *Edda: Die Lieder des Codex regius nebst verwandten Denkmälern*, ed. G. Neckel, rev. H. Kuhn, Germanische Bibliothek 4, 2 vols. 4th ed. (Heidelberg, 1962–8), I, 40 and 271.

⁴⁶ R. North, *Heathen Gods in Old English Literature*, CSASE 22 (Cambridge, 1997), p. 300.

⁴⁷ st. 7, ll. 1–8: 'And the corpse-bearer, the windy tree [GALLOWS], droops on the headland where the inlet divides. The corpse of the renowned man is marked there with a stone in the district of Straumeyjarnes'.

ok Skereið
 í Skíringssal
 of brynjalfs
 beinum drúpir.⁴⁸

The many grave-sites in *Ynglingatal* are described retrospectively by Þjóðólfr, that is, from the point of view of the poet at the moment of composition. At that moment, they are simply geographical locations where only grave-mounds remain to remind the audience of the person commemorated in the poem. In *Háleygjatal*, however, the poet combines his grisly picture of the earl's death by hanging in stanza 6 with a detailed description of the location of his grave. Time moves rapidly forward through the two stanzas as the man who once swung on the gallows in stanza 6 is replaced by a *vingameiðr* on the headland in the subsequent verse. The brave rider who once tamed the gallows is replaced after death by the similarly equine *náreiðr*. Such imagery invites a comparison between the two riders, just as the dead earl tossing in the wind and the windy tree are like images. The gallows, rather than the earl, has become the visual focal point of the stanza, and the moment of death blurs into the moment after death to a time when the earl's body is lifeless or perhaps even absent. All that can be seen, though the poet's eyes, is the gallows. Eyvindr then rushes further forward in time, describing the headland long after the death when even the gallows has disappeared and the place is marked simply by a stone. This is the only mention of a grave marker in *Háleygjatal*, in contrast with the mighty pyres and burial mounds described in *Ynglingatal*, but it functions in a far more affective and powerful way. The location described remains static, but time accelerates through the moment of death to the years that follow,

⁴⁸ st. 30, ll. 9–12: 'And Skereið in Skíringssal [a cemetery] droops over the bones of the armoured elf [WARRIOR]'.

juxtaposing the heroic death of the person killed with the mute objects of his death and commemoration. Only the poet, Eyvindr demonstrates, can evoke through his story-telling the full force of what that stone marker represents.

Háleygjatal as we have it is structured in pairs of such stanzas, each answering and opposing the version of events promoted in *Ynglingatal*, praising the ancestors of Earl Hákon in their struggles against the Norwegian ruling family. In the concluding stanza of *Háleygjatal*, Eyvindr moves from the third-person voice he has used to describe the lives of past kings into the first-person plural with which he called for attention in the opening stanza:

Jólna sumbl
 enn vér gótum,
 stillis lof,
 sem steinabré.⁴⁹

The poet refers again to Óðinn's acquisition of the mead of poetry in the kenning *Jólna sumbl*, but he also portrays poetry as something in the realm of humans, a *steinabré*. This image differs considerably from those that precede it. In *Háleygjatal* poetry is almost exclusively referred to in its 'mead-kenning' form: the kenning appears twice in the first stanza, while later a kenning for blood, 'hróka bjór'⁵⁰ also suggests the intoxication of both battle and poetry. Distinctions between these liquids continually collapse throughout the sequence: the blood that men shed in battle becomes the beer that crows drink; beer becomes poetry when Óðinn drinks it and carries it to the human world. The multifaceted and interwoven nature of these liquids is an excellent metaphor for Eyvindr's portrayal of the many

⁴⁹ st. 16, ll. 1–4: 'We have produced the banquet of feasters [POETRY], the praise of a king, like a stone bridge'.

⁵⁰ st. 11, l. 3: 'Crows' beer [POETRY]'.

forms of *att* in this poem, as blood and race merge with the mead of poetry.

Thus, the image of a stone bridge is a surprising finale to the sequence. The solidity and everyday aspects of this image mark a break with the images of divine liquid that have so far been used to describe poetry. *Háleygjatal* has been transformed from a tale of Óðinn's family to that of the Hlaðajarlar; poetry has also changed form as Eyvindr describes it not as divine intoxication but as a constructed monument raised by skilled human craftsmen. Poetry in this stanza is likened to the bridges built to commemorate both the pagan and Christian dead at the time.⁵¹ Such bridges were, like the burial-mounds of the Ynglingar, visible modes of commemoration, metaphorically bridging the gap between the dead and those who remembered them. The bridge is also an apt comparison for a poem that traces the familial links between the gods and men, suggesting the most famous *brú* in the Norse cosmos, the rainbow Bifrost.⁵² Þjóðólfr himself had sardonically invoked the image of poetry as a bridge in the opening line of *Haustlong*, asking with apparent doubt,

⁵¹ Julie Lund argues that ritualistic deposits of weaponry and animal bones near bridges and fords demonstrate the importance of such sites in the Norse landscape. Of particular note are those deposits found near the many bridges linking settlements and cemeteries. Examples can be found in all areas of Viking settlement including Scandinavia, the British Isles and the Continent, and are dated from the late pagan to the early Christian periods. See her 'Thresholds and Passages: the Meaning of Bridges and Crossings in the Viking Age and Early Middle Ages', *VMS* 1 (2005), 109–136. For a complete catalogue of such sites, see also B. Sawyer, *The Viking-Age Rune-Stones: Custom and Commemoration in Early Medieval Scandinavia* (Oxford, 2000), esp. pp. 134–5.

⁵² In *Gylfaginning*, Bifrost is called the bridge to heaven: see Snorri Sturluson, *Edda: Prologue and Gylfaginning*, ed. A. Faulkes (Oxford, 1982), pp. 15–16. It is also explicitly referred to as a bridge in the Eddic poems *Grimnismál* (sts. 29 and 44) and *Fáfnismál* (st. 15). See *Edda*, ed. Neckel, rev. Kuhn, I, 63, 66 and 183.

[h]vé skalk góðs at gjöldum
gunnveggjar brú leggja.⁵³

Eyvindr's poem is another such bridge, spanning the gap between the gods and their human descendants, between the world of the living and that of the dead. He demonstrates how poets have the power to construct kin-ship and to legitimise (or de-legitimise) kingship, and he does so not by plagiarising poets who have gone before him, but by challenging them and the political masters they represent.

⁵³ *Skej* BI, p. 14, st. 1, ll. 1–2: 'How shall I build a bridge [POEM] in payment for a good battle-wall [SHIELD]?'.

Family Matters? Attitudes towards the Care of Kith and Kin in the Tenth-century Miracles of St Swithun

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Hagiography used to be a genre that scholars strenuously mined for historical, narrative-driven information and often caused much frustration with its scant regard for dates, chronology, even facts, and its penchant for the miraculous. However, in more recent times, its value as a barometer of social attitudes has been recognised.¹ One particular field in which hagiography has begun to pay dividends is in the study of the history of medicine from a sociological point of view.² Hagiography, though, remains a self-referential genre in that

¹ See especially P. Geary, 'Saints, Scholars and Society: the Elusive Goal', in *Saints: Studies in Hagiography*, ed. S. Sticca, *Med. and Renaissance Texts and Stud.* 141 (Binghampton, NY, 1996), 1–22.

² Scholars of medieval Western Europe bemoan the fact that their field lags behind the progress made in the equivalent Byzantine area (on which, see H. J. Magoulias, 'The Lives of the Saints as Sources of Data for the History of Byzantine Medicine in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, 57 (1964), 127–50) but see V. J. Flint, 'The Early Medieval "Medicus", the Saint—and the Enchanter', *Social History of Medicine* 2 (1989), 127–45 at p. 127: 'The *Vitae* and *Miracula* of early saints and martyrs [...] are important to the history in general of the development of scientific subjects within their social contexts; and they are especially important to the social history of medicine'. Such an approach has already been used to investigate attitudes towards mental illness in (predominantly) Insular Latin literature: J. Kroll and B. Bachrach, 'Sin and Mental Illness in the Middle Ages', *Psychological Medicine* 14 (1984), 507–14. Clare Pilsworth and Christina Lee, however, have pointed out the need for an interdisciplinary approach when one is trying to evaluate the historical aspects of medical practice: C. Pilsworth, 'Medicine and Hagiography in Italy c. 800–c.

authority and precedent were found in earlier texts (and ultimately, of course, in Biblical models), and to understand one text fully its place within the genre must be acknowledged. With this in mind, I intend to turn my attention towards the tenth-century miracle-collections of St Swithun written by Lantfred of Fleury and Wulfstan Cantor of Winchester.

Little is—and was—known about the historical Swithun beyond the fact that he was a ninth-century bishop of Winchester. Even when he started to perform miracles, people did not immediately think to accredit him, assuming that they were probably due to St Martin, on whose feast day the first-revealed miracle happened.³ At any rate, Bishop Æthelwold of Winchester decided to make something of him and so, with King Edgar's permission, had Swithun translated, amidst great ceremony, from outside the west door of the Old Minster's church into its chancel on 15 July 971. To celebrate the occasion and help promote the cult, Æthelwold asked Lantfred, a

1000', *Social History of Medicine* 13 (2000), 253–64 and C. Lee, 'Body and Soul: Disease and Impairment in Anglo-Saxon Society', in *The Material Culture of Daily Living in the Anglo-Saxon World*, ed. M. Clegg-Hyer and G. R. Owen-Crocker (Exeter, forthcoming), chap. 15 (I am very grateful to Dr Lee for allowing me to see her chapter in this book in advance of its publication).

³ Lantfred, *Translatio et miracula Sancti Swithuni* (henceforth *TMSS*), II, ed. M. Lapidge, *The Cult of St Swithun*, Winchester Stud. IV: the Anglo-Saxon Minsters of Winchester ii (Oxford, 2003), pp. 252–332, at p. 272, ll. 93–5: 'Verum quoniam eodem die celebrabatur a monachis eiusdem loci ordinatio sancti Martini et translatio eiusdem sacratissimi corporis, coeperunt fratres inibi commorantes hesitare per cuius meritum aegrotus ille curationem meruisset recipere' ('However, since on this same day the ordination of St Martin the translation of his most sacred body was celebrated by the monks of the Old Minster, the monks living there were in some perplexity about which saint it was through whose merit the sick man had deserved to receive his cure'). Unless otherwise stated, all quotations and translations to each text follow the format 'Lantfred, *TMSS*, II, ed. Lapidge, p. 272' after the initial full reference.

visiting scholar from Fleury, to record the events for posterity.⁴ Lantfred probably wrote his prose *TMSS* between 972 and 974.⁵ A quarter of a century later, one Wulfstan Cantor,⁶ the precentor of the Old Minster, Winchester, wrote a verse rendition of Lantfred's work that followed in the long tradition of supplying a verse counterpart to a prose composition (or vice versa), creating, in effect, a literary diptych.⁷ This genre is commonly known as *opus geminatum*, or 'twinned work'.⁸ Although ostensibly merely converting Lantfred's text into verse, Wulfstan did not slavishly follow his text and so a comparison may prove informative.

Wulfstan's metrical rendition of the invention, translation and subsequent miracles of Swithun can be dated fairly precisely. We can assume that its *epistola specialis*⁹ was written by 28 October 994 as the latest as its dedicatee, Sigeric, Archbishop of Canterbury since 990, died upon that day. The *epistola specialis* also mentions that the late Bishop Æthelwold currently rests in the church itself and alludes to two miracles, which Wulfstan would also use in his *Vita S. Æthelwoldi*,

⁴ Lapidge has summarised the little that is known of this scholar's career and literary activity in *Swithun*, pp. 218–24, esp. pp. 223–4.

⁵ Lapidge, *Swithun*, pp. 236–7.

⁶ Wulfstan himself tells us in his *Narratio metrica de Sancto Swithuno* (henceforth *NMSS*) that he was just a mere child oblate when Swithun was translated in 971 and while we know that he died on 22 July we do not know in which year, although it must have been in the early eleventh century. For his career, see M. Lapidge and M. Winterbottom, ed., *Wulfstan of Winchester: the Life of St Æthelwold* (Oxford, 1991), pp. xiii–xxxix.

⁷ Wulfstan, *NMSS*, ed. Lapidge, *Swithun*, pp. 372–550.

⁸ See P. Godman, 'The Anglo-Latin *Opus Geminatum*: From Aldhelm to Alcuin', *Medium Aevum* 50 (1981), 215–29 and G. Wieland, 'Geminus Stylus: Studies in Anglo-Latin Hagiography', in *Insular Latin Studies: Papers on Latin Texts and Manuscripts of the British Isles 550–1066*, ed. M. W. Herren (Toronto, 1981), pp. 113–33.

⁹ 'Special [dedicatory] letter'.

suggesting that the letter at least had been revised or finished late in 996, at some point after Æthelwold's translation on 10 September that year. Indeed, one of the most important witnesses to the cult of Swithun, a *libellus* of Swithunalia containing both works,¹⁰ has emended a line in chapter 3 of Lantfred's *translatio* to say that twenty five years have passed since, thereby putting us in 996.¹¹

It seems that neither Lantfred nor Wulfstan knew any more about the historical Swithun than we do now. So, faced with the task of writing about him, and lacking Byrhtferth of Ramsey's bravado,¹² Lantfred decided to pen a collection of posthumous miracles. Obviously it is extremely unlikely that the decision to propagate such a collection was made simply on the basis of a lack of facts. It is much more realistic to think that the Old Minster realised the need to provide a convincing display of this all-but-forgotten bishop's powers in order to attract visitors to the shrine. The minster clearly wished to attract pilgrims from far and wide with the potential for financial gain firmly in mind. One story illustrates this particularly well, where a lady has her cure revoked when she fails to make a donation that she had promised to Swithun in return for a remedy. She is only healed once and for all upon the fulfilment of her original vow.¹³ Lantfred—and his patrons presumably—still did have to decide upon what sort of saint they wished to portray. Lantfred could have chosen to

¹⁰ London, British Library, Royal 15. C. VII. The *TMSS* is at 2r–49v and the *NMSS* at 51r–124v.

¹¹ Lapidge, *Swithun*, pp. 239–40, where he argues that even if the text is not an autograph or idiograph, the manuscript itself can be dated on palaeographical grounds to s. x/xi, c. 1000, and attributed to the school of Winchester.

¹² Byrhtferth knew very little about St Ecgvine but a lack of facts did not stop him from writing his *uita*. See M. Lapidge, ed., *The Lives of St Oswald and St Ecgvine: Byrhtferth of Ramsey* (Oxford, 2009), pp. lxxxii–lxxxv.

¹³ Lantfred, *TMSS*, IX and Wulfstan, *NMSS*, i.XII, ed. Lapidge, pp. 290–2 and 470–4.

propagate an image of Swithun as, say, a vengeful guardian of the Old Minster and its possessions but instead Swithun is depicted as a healer-saint. The vast majority of the miracle stories are tales of thaumaturgical healings but there is a small group of miracles in which Swithun aids those who have found themselves, rightly or wrongly, at the mercy of some secular authority and therefore helps to foster a comparison between Swithun and SS Peter and Paul and their power of binding and loosing.¹⁴

There are many miracles which reveal something of how the sick, needy and disabled were treated by kith, kin and those with no familial ties. Given that one of the major purposes of hagiography was to provide the reader with edifying models to emulate, one might have expected simply to find tales of how helpful people were to those in need. Surprisingly, this is not the case. One episode in particular is worthy of attention in this respect. While Swithun was busy performing miracles in Winchester, two women who had been blind for the last nine years and one who had been blind from birth—all living on the Isle of Wight—heard rumour of the phenomena performed through his merits. Accordingly, Lantfred continues:

Rogauerunt cognatos et affines quatinus extra predictam eas ducerent insulam [...] unde facilius quiuissent peruenire ad locum in quo quiescebat somate Christi presul. Cumque extra insulam essent expositae et fluitarent absque ductore, et penitus ignorarent quid agere possent, clemens conditor creaturarum, misertus inopiae earum, contulit eis quendam uirum ductorem mutum aetate circiter uiginti annorum. Qui dum ad eundem deuenisset locum, coeperunt eum uiragines flagitare unanimes uoce ut eas ad Wintoniensem duceret urbem, ubi sanctus pollebat episcopus signis mirabilibus. Qui mirabili

¹⁴ For more on this other group, see my forthcoming 'The Anglo-Latin Hagiography of the Reign of King Æthelred II' (unpubl. PhD thesis, Univ. of Cambridge, 2011).

dispositione Dei precibus earum allubescens, in reflexo calle caecas pefatum perduxit ad locum.¹⁵

Quid plura? All four are cured overnight and thanks are given to God.

Lapidge translated the word *affines* as 'neighbours' but I think that it is worth bearing in mind that *affines* could actually refer to 'relatives' and we can see such a use in Aldhelm's *De uirginitate*,¹⁶ Aldhelm being a core part of the Winchester school's curriculum, Wulfstan would

¹⁵ Lantfred, *TMSS*, V, ed. Lapidge, p. 288: '[T]hey asked their kinsmen and neighbours to take them off the aforementioned island [...] whence they could more easily get to the place in which the bishop of Christ lay in the body. And when they had been set ashore on the mainland, and were wandering about without a guide, and had no idea of what to do, the merciful creator of all creatures, taking pity on their helplessness, provided them with a certain mute for a guide, a man of about twenty years of age. When he arrived at the same place as they were, the women began to implore him in one voice to lead them to the city of Winchester, where the holy bishop was prevailing with his marvellous miracles. Through the wondrous management of God, he gave in to their prayers and led the blind women by a winding road to the place in question'. Cf. Wulfstan, *NMSS*, i.VIII, ed. Lapidge, p. 466, ll. 1135–1152.

¹⁶ Aldhelm, *Prosa de uirginitate*, XXXV, ed. R. Ehwald, *Opera Omnia Aldhelmi*, MGH SS Auct. antiq. 15 (Berlin, 1919), 277: 'Quod genitor *affinium* et *contubernalium* relatione <cum> comperit, eundem filium contra iura naturae latibulis carceralibus artandum et famis inedia macerandum includit' ('When his father learns of this through the reports of *relatives and friends*, he imprisons his own son—against [all] laws of nature—restricted to the confines of a cellar, to be wasted away by the deprivation of hunger', trans. M. Lapidge and M. W. Herren, *Aldhelm: the Prose Works* (Cambridge, 1979), p. 96 (my emphasis in both)). The story is that of Chrysanthus, who learns about holy Scripture and starts preaching God's Word rather than studying the liberal arts as his father had wished. The entry in C. T. Lewis and C. Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford, 1879), s.v. *affinis*, p. 67, states that it does mean 'neighbouring' or 'bordering on' but when referring to people it takes on the meaning of 'related to' (by marriage) and as a substantive means 'relative'.

surely have come across this.¹⁷ Indeed, if we turn to *NMSS* i.XII and its correlate in *TMSS* IX, we can see that Wulfstan has turned Lantfred's *uicini, affines et famuli* into *uicini [...] et famuli cunctique propinqui*, suggesting that he saw *affinis* and *propinquus* as being synonyms.¹⁸ Of course, this hypothesis stumbles if we cannot be sure that either author understood that when *propinquus*, *-a, -um*, meaning 'neighbouring' or 'near', was used as a substantive it meant a 'relative' or 'kinsman'; the scope for confusion and mistranslation is easy to see. But a look at some of the glosses written by Ælfric, who also studied at the Winchester school, shows that *affinis* was considered synonymic with *consanguineus* and the Old English *siblinge*, while *propinquus* was equated with *mæg*, and both *siblinge* and *mæg* mean 'relative' or 'kinsman'.¹⁹

¹⁷ Bishop Æthelwold was an avid student of Aldhelm and made him a core part of the curriculum in the houses under his control. See Lapidge, 'Schools, Learning and Literature in Tenth-Century England', in *Anglo-Latin Literature* (henceforth *ALL*), 2 vols. (London, 1993–6), II, 1–48, at pp. 22 and 28, 'The Hermeneutic Style', *ALL*, II, 105–49, at pp. 111–15 and 123–8, 'Æthelwold as Scholar and Teacher', *ALL*, II, 183–211, at pp. 186, 191, 193, 197 and 206; Lapidge and Herren, *The Prose Works*, pp. 1–3; M. Lapidge and J. L. Rosier, trans., *Aldhelm: the Poetic Works* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 1–4; M. Gretsch, *The Intellectual Foundations of the English Benedictine Reform*, CSASE 25 (Cambridge, 1999), 125–225, 332–83 and 426. Many manuscripts of Aldhelm's *De uirginitate* from this period can be found; see H. Gneuss, ed., *Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: a List of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100* (Tempe, AZ, 2001), nos. 93, 458, 464, 509, 584, 613 and 707; only Gneuss nos. 473 and 542, however, might actually come from Winchester (and indeed contain only the *Carmen de uirginitate*).

¹⁸ Lantfred, *TMSS*, IX and Wulfstan, *NMSS*, i.XII, ed. Lapidge, pp. 290–292, at p. 290, l. 3 and 470–4, at p. 470, l. 1245.

¹⁹ This information was gathered using the online Toronto *Dictionary of Old English's* 'Word Wheel' research tool, which can be found at

Regardless, this is still no way to treat three blind and essentially helpless women, yet neither Lantfred nor Wulfstan bats an eye at the relatives' behaviour. I would now like to investigate both whether or not this episode might be representative of Lantfred and Wulfstan's works on Swithun and also where such an attitude might have come from. Out of the thirty-nine miracle stories that Lantfred wrote, thirty involve healings.²⁰ Just over a third of these are about blind people and within these miracles we see all the episodes where those responsible for looking after sick persons apparently refuse to or deliberately mislead them. In addition to the women from the Isle of Wight, we have two tales about a *contumaci [...] ductore* and a *ductor [...] improbus*.²¹ In the first of these, a man is abandoned by his guide in the middle of a field and in the second, an old man is nearly tricked into breaking his fast before he reaches Swithun's tomb by his young guide, who appears to be his son.²² The first *miraculum* alludes to the

<http://tapor.library.utoronto.ca/doecorpus/wordwheel.html> (accessed 10 February 2010).

²⁰ Lantfred, *TMSS*, II–V, VII–IX, XI–XIX, XXI–XXIII, XVI, XXVIII–XXXIII, XXXV–XXXVII, ed. Lapidge, pp. 266–88, 290–2, 296–302, 304–6, 310–314, 316–22 and 324–30. The majority of the rest involve people who have ended up being punished by some secular power. I discuss the significance of these miracle stories in my doctoral thesis (see n. 12 above). By way of comparison, in the first book of his *NMSS*, Wulfstan has twenty stories of cures out of twenty-two chapters (and of these twenty, two are original: i.V and i.VI): i.I–III, i.V–VIII, i.X–XII, i.XIV–XXII whilst in the second book, fifteen of its twenty-two chapters are tales of cures, of which two are new (ii.I and ii.VI): ii.I, ii.III–VI, ii.IX, ii.XI–XVI, ii.XVIII–XX, ed. Lapidge, pp. 412–48, 454–68, 468–74, 480–90, 492–6, 502–6, 514–518, 526–36 and 538–48.

²¹ Lantfred, *TMSS*, XVIII and XXIX, ed. Lapidge, pp. 300 and 316–18: an 'insolent guide' and a 'naughty guide'. Cf. Wulfstan, *NMSS*, i.XXI and ii.XII, ed. Lapidge, pp. 486–8, ll. 1554–1595 and 528–30, ll. 706–773.

²² While in the *TMSS* the protagonists refer to each other as father and son, in the *NMSS* the boy's use of *pater* seems more of a term of respect than kinship.

fact that all those who were sightless had guides—as one might have expected—and the explicit lack of a guide is clearly noteworthy.²³ Both Lantfred and Wulfstan set the scene quickly and neither pays much attention to the guide, who, for some unknown reason gets angry and storms off, though Wulfstan does suggest that such behaviour was out of character, for the guide usually conducted himself with *pietate [...] amica*.²⁴ We hear no more of the guide. The crux of the story is the man's reaction. He humbly prays to the Lord and His bishop, Swithun, requesting that he is not abandoned any further, with either his soul being taken to heaven or his eyesight being restored. The man confesses his faith, saying, 'Credo nempe quoniam impetrabis ilico quicquid petieris a Domino'.²⁵ Such is his faith that he is cured immediately. Comparable faith is shown in the later episode, where the young boy is hungry and wants to eat. The old man, using language borrowed from the *Regula S. Benedicti (RSB)*,²⁶ refuses to as he is on a pilgrimage to Winchester hoping to regain his sight. The boy tries to take advantage of the man's disability,

In the other miracle, the man returns to his *vicinis et parentibus* ('neighbours and kinsmen') so it would seem that his guide was not one of their number.

²³ Lantfred, *TMSS*, XVIII, ed. and Lapidge, p. 300, l. 3: 'haberet [...] ductorem (sicut oculis priuati habere solent)' ('he had a guide [...] (as people deprived of eyesight are accustomed to have)'). Additionally, Wulfstan includes a miracle in his *Epistola specialis* (that has no parallel in the *TMSS*) where a blind nobleman, Ælfhelm, comes to Winchester, is cured and then 'nullo ducente redit' ('went back without a guide'); Wulfstan, *NMSS*, 'Epistola specialis', ed. Lapidge, p. 394, l. 295. Presumably he travelled with one on the outward journey. This miracle was actually performed by the late Bishop Æthelwold so it is easy to understand why Lantfred did not include it!

²⁴ Wulfstan, *NMSS*, i.XXI, ed. Lapidge, pp. 486, l. 1558, 'with friendly devotion'.

²⁵ Lantfred, *TMSS*, XVIII, ed. Lapidge, p. 300, l. 16: 'For I will believe that you will obtain straightaway whatever you seek from the Lord'.

²⁶ *Ibid.* XXIX, ed. Lapidge, pp. 318, l. 24 and 319, n. 265, *frango ieiunium*.

misinforming him as to what time of day it is. When the old man finds out that they are stood by a stone cross, he takes the opportunity to pray that he might regain his sight so that he might not break the vow he had made. Again, due to his faith, he is cured.²⁷

In all three instances where sightless people are abandoned (whether literally or metaphorically), they find a way out of trouble when they turn to spiritual considerations. Lantfred plays upon the theme of blindness, which often denoted spiritual blindness,²⁸ by curing the blind when they turn their attention to God, seeing, as it were, the light.

What about the other cases involving people deprived of sight? In some cases, there are just records of how many people were cured at various points and here the focus is on the exponential number of people coming from further and further away to be cured at Winchester rather than on their circumstances.²⁹ Many others

²⁷ It is important to note that Lantfred's emphasis on the idea of *plena fides* ('complete faith') crops up time and time again and is clearly a central theme.

²⁸ Anon., *De sancti Eugenii Toletani episcopi uirtutibus magnificis* (henceforth *De uirtutibus*; BHL 2689–90), XXX, ed. D. Missone, 'Les Miracles de Saint Eugène à Brogne: Étude Littéraire et Historique, Nouvelle Édition', RB 76 (1966), 231–91, at pp. 258–79, quotation from p. 277: 'recepit namque lucem non tantum corporis quam et mentis' ('for he received not only the body's light but also the soul's'). The translation is my own. Missone noticed the didactic nature of the work as a whole and noted, 'les jeunes lecteurs [...] pouvaient lire aussi, dégagée de chaque miracle, une leçon de morale et même de théologie rudimentaire', 'Les Miracles', p. 240. Christina Lee has also noted the perceived links between sin and disease in texts such as Alfred's translation of Gregory the Great's *Pastoral Care* and Bede's account of Æthelthryth of Ely's tumour, which he says she believed to be the result of her fondness for wearing necklaces: 'Body and Soul'.

²⁹ There are countless remedial miracles, including of blindness, at *TMSS*, IV and *NMSS*, i.VII, ed. Lapidge, pp. 286 and 462; sixteen blind people are cured at *TMSS*, XII and *NMSS*, i.XV, ed. Lapidge, pp. 296 and 480; twenty five sick

explicitly contain references to guides, some family members, some not; sometimes we see people with one disability teaming up with those who have a different one—for example, a mute woman and a blind woman,³⁰ or blind men and crippled women.³¹ Clearly then, there is a suggestion that the handicapped could not always rely on others to help them out. It should be noted that in the case of *TMSS* XXI/*NMSS* ii.III, Wulfstan has changed Lantfred's *mulieres* into *uiduae*,³² perhaps in order to explain why they had to join forces.

Following on from this is the fact that one's social standing appears to have had some degree of influence with regards to whether or not you could expect aid: if you were wealthy you could presumably afford a guide or already had a retinue. There are several instances where the wealth of the individual—or their family—is mentioned. In Wulfstan's dedicatory letter, Ælfhelm (mentioned above) is said to be a nobleman and parted ways with his guide once he was cured, suggesting that he had hired his guide. In the *TMSS* we learn of a *praepotens matrona* whose retainers took her to Winchester and the subsequent story has *alia* [...] *materfamilias* taken to Winchester

people, including some suffering from blindness, at *TMSS*, XIV and *NMSS*, i.XVII, ed. Lapidge, pp. 298 and 482; thirty six are then cured at *TMSS*, XXII and *NMSS*, ii.IV, ed. Lapidge, pp. 306 and 502; and finally one hundred and twenty four sick people from all over England are cured at *TMSS*, XXIII and *NMSS*, ii.V, ed. Lapidge, pp. 306 and 504. Wulfstan, *NMSS*, i.V, ed. Lapidge, pp. 454–60, which is not found in Lantfred, is nominally about a blind woman but her cure is little more than a backdrop to—and a reason for—the elaborate ceremony at Swithun's translation.

³⁰ Lantfred, *TMSS*, XXI, ed. Lapidge, p. 304; cf. Wulfstan, *NMSS*, ii.III, ed. Lapidge, p. 502, esp. l. 205.

³¹ Lantfred, *TMSS*, XIX, ed. Lapidge, pp. 300–2; cf. Wulfstan, *NMSS*, i.XXII, ed. Lapidge, pp. 488–90.

³² 'Women' and 'widows'.

by her retainers.³³ A boy, the son of a rich caldorman, is also taken to Winchester by his mother and *plurima clientum multitudine*.³⁴ It also seems improbable that the rich nobleman who went to the shrines of Rome would not have had a retinue with him.³⁵ One Byrhtferth, prior of Abingdon, probably had his rank—and vocation—to thank for the guide provided to him for his journey to Winchester.³⁶

There are, however, a few stories where visually-impaired people of an unspecified social status have guides, but in two out of three instances the invalid's kin take responsibility for them, suggesting that the onus fell upon the family in cases where hired-help was not so much an option. Indeed, the burden that some families must have felt is implied in the story of the man who was mutilated and blinded for a crime that he did not commit.³⁷ After he has been served his 'punishment', Lantfred tells us:

Ad quem amici et parentes nimium mesti accedentes, ad propriam domum tristes deduxerant hominem caesum. Vnus autem oculus erat obrutus, uerum alter pendeat super eius faciem; quem accipiens, quaedam muliercula reduxit in orbem et sic permansit a Theophania Domini usque ad Letaniam Maiorem. Qui annuens plurimis amicorum

³³ Lantfred, *TMSS*, VIII and IX, ed. Lapidge, pp. 290 and 290–2: 'powerful lady' and 'another land-owning lady'; cf. Wulfstan, *NMSS*, i.XI–XII, ed. Lapidge, pp. 470–2.

³⁴ Lantfred, *TMSS*, XV, ed. Lapidge, p. 298: 'a large crowd of retainers'; cf. Wulfstan, *NMSS*, i.XVIII, ed. Lapidge, p. 482.

³⁵ Lantfred, *TMSS*, XVI, ed. Lapidge, p. 298; cf. Wulfstan, *NMSS*, i.XIX, ed. Lapidge, pp. 484–6.

³⁶ Wulfstan, *NMSS*, ii.XI, ed. Lapidge, p. 526, esp. l. 700; cf. Lantfred, *TMSS*, XXVIII, ed. Lapidge, p. 316, which does not mention a guide.

³⁷ Lantfred, *TMSS*, XXVI and Wulfstan, *NMSS*, ii.IX, ed. Lapidge, pp. 310–14 and 514–18.

suasionibus, deductus est ad sancti reliquias in illis diebus, quatinus ualeret recipere auditum per beati pontificis meritum [...]³⁸

It seems to me that his family are sad not only for his suffering but that they will now have to look after him as they do not show any further part in Lantfred's story; rather, the unfortunate man's *friends* are the ones who encourage him to go to Winchester. It is as if the family do not care and have given up on him. Wulfstan, on the other hand, removes this subtext, as he states that the man's own *propinqui* urge him *fraterna uoce* to go to Winchester.³⁹ The tables are turned, however, when we find Wulfstan—not Lantfred—making the most of the idea that kith and kin could find the invalidated onerous in *NMSS* i.XIV.⁴⁰ In this short episode, Lantfred tells us that a paralytic from London 'audiens miraculorum opinionem quae per cosmi saluatoris pietatem patrabantur ad uatis mausoleum, ab agnatis delatus est Wintoniam eius desiderium',⁴¹ where he is healed after a couple of days' vigil. Wulfstan, however, states that '[c]rescebatque dolor numerosa clade iacentis, adficiens miseros longo merore parentes'

³⁸ Lantfred, *TMSS*, XXVI, ed. Lapidge, p. 312, ll. 10–15: 'His friends and kinsmen, exceedingly dejected by this, went up to him, and sadly led the mutilated man back to his own house. One of his eyes had been entirely torn out, but the other one hung down on his face; a certain woman took it and replaced it in its socket, and it remained that way from Epiphany [6 Jan.] until Litaniam Maior [25 Apr.]. Giving in to the repeated encouragements of his friends, the man was led at that time to the relics of the saint so that he might regain his hearing through the merit of the blessed bishop'.

³⁹ Wulfstan, *NMSS*, ii.XI, ed. Lapidge, p. 516, l. 484: 'with brotherly persuasion the kinsmen [urge the wretched man to go to Winchester]'

⁴⁰ Compare Wulfstan, *NMSS*, i.XIV, with Lantfred, *TMSS*, XI, ed. Lapidge, pp. 480 and 296.

⁴¹ Lantfred, *TMSS*, XI, ed. Lapidge, p. 296, ll. 3–4: 'hearing of the reputation of the miracles which, through the love of the Saviour of the world, were being performed at the saint's tomb, was taken—in accordance with his wishes—by his kinsmen to Winchester'.

and that when report of the Swithun's miracles reach London 'extimplo [...] Wentanam baiolis defertur ad urbem' where he is cured and '[g]audia confestim rapiunt uotiuā parentes dumque suum cernunt sanum diuinitus aegrum'.⁴² The grief mentioned in l. 1423 is surely the parents'—the sandwiched word order reinforces the fact that *afficio* tends to mean (in a bad sense) 'to inflict upon' when employed with the accusative (for the object) and the ablative (for the instrument) and that, therefore, it links the grief to the parents.⁴³ Then it seems as if they make the decision to send the poor man to Winchester rather than it being of his own accord, as in Lantfred's report. There are two ways of interpreting this evidence. Either his kin find his disability burdensome and are therefore willing to try anything to have him cured, or, as would be more consistent with Wulfstan's alteration mentioned above, his kin are moved by sympathy for the paralytic and their ready faith in Swithun's intercession is happily rewarded. I would be inclined to think the latter.

In this respect I am persuaded not only by the fact that it usually seems as if Wulfstan is tempering Lantfred's account, but also by how positive affinal care is depicted. In the majority of the miracles in both the *TMSS* and the *NMSS* the kinsmen of those in need are willing to help and there is a common trend throughout. The sick protagonist always finds their cure when they, sometimes at the

⁴² Wulfstan, *NMSS*, i.XIV, ed. Lapidge, p. 480, ll. 1423–1424, 1426–1427 and 1434–1435: 'The man's pain increased with many an onslaught as he lay there and afflicted his poor kinsmen with continual grief [...] immediately he is carried by bearers [...] to the town of Winchester [...] Straightaway his kinsmen grasp the joyous result of their prayers as they gaze upon the sick man divinely healed'.

⁴³ Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, s.v. *afficio*, p. 66.

instigation of their kin,⁴⁴ turn from seeking worldly relief to spiritual considerations,⁴⁵ although there are instances when the protagonist has to turn away from the shrines of purportedly less-effective saints to Swithun.⁴⁶

There is, within the Swithun dossier, one subset of people always dependent upon their kith and kin: children. Wulfstan seems to have

⁴⁴ In Lantfred, *TMSS*, IX and Wulfstan, *NMSS*, i.XII, ed. Lapidge, pp. 290–2 and 470–4, the lady's family, neighbours and servants all implore her to settle her worldly affairs and compose a will, but when she (eventually) turns to God for help she is cured. This instance is the sole one where family members who offer help do not think of seeking divine aid. There are many more instances where kith and kin *do* consider spiritual help: *TMSS*, III, VII, XI, XXX, XXXII, XXXIII, XXXV and XXXVI and *NMSS*, i.III, i.X, i.XIV, ii.XIII, ii.XV, ii.XVI, ii.XVIII and ii.XIX, ed. Lapidge, pp. 274–86, 290, 296, 318, 320–2, 322, 324–8, 328–30, 434–48, 468–70, 480, 530, 532–4, 534, 538–44 and 544–6. In *TMSS*, XXXVII and *NMSS*, ii.XX, ed. Lapidge, pp. 330 and 546–8, a crippled young man is told to seek a spiritual path by a young boy—an oblate from the Old Minster, not a family member.

⁴⁵ Lantfred, *TMSS*, XXVIII and Wulfstan, *NMSS*, ii.XI, ed. Lapidge, pp. 316 and 526. Here, a prior, interestingly, is shown to have undergone a rather horrific-sounding twelve-stage cauterization in order to try to regain his sight before hearing of the miracles worked at Swithun's tomb. Lapidge, *Swithun*, p. 317, n. 257, suggests that cautery was quite common in Anglo-Saxon England. In *TMSS*, XXXVII and *NMSS*, ii.XX, ed. Lapidge, pp. 330 and 546–8.

⁴⁶ This includes all the saints of Rome (*TMSS*, XVI and *NMSS*, i.XIX, ed. Lapidge, pp. 298 and 484–6)! At one very calculated point in the *TMSS* the invalid is the one, as the result of a dream-vision, who decides that he must visit Swithun, not Iudoc (*TMSS*, III, ed. Lapidge, pp. 274–86, and in this episode the man is only cured when his family leave him to a solitary vigil; cf. *NMSS*, i.III, ed. Lapidge, pp. 434–48). However, this is balanced by the story of a blind man who intends to visit St Ælfgifu at Shaftesbury and ignores his wife's advice when she recommends he goes to Swithun instead; for this he ends up with a painful lump above his eye to go with his blindness. He changes his mind and heads off to Winchester and is cured before he even reaches Swithun's tomb: *TMSS*, XXXVI and *NMSS*, ii.XIX, ed. Lapidge, pp. 328–30 and 544–6.

been quite enthusiastic about this particular demographic and two of his original additions to Lantfred's prose report stories of mothers taking their children to Swithun's tomb where they are subsequently healed.⁴⁷ The *TMSS*, on the other hand, has just two: the episode mentioned above (where the mother brings the ealdorman's son to Winchester and, spending the night in vigil, prays successfully for him) and another where an ealdorman (there is no indication as to whether it is the same one as before) is riding with his retinue when a boy *indolis eximiae* is badly injured falling from a horse.⁴⁸ The ealdorman, sensing that the boy's life was in peril, prays to Swithun, promising that 'omnibus uitae diebus meae me habebit fideliozem'.⁴⁹ In the *TMSS* the ealdorman also promises to take the boy to Swithun's shrine so that he may be fully healed there but, according to Lapidge's translation, Wulfstan's ealdorman promises to donate the boy as an oblate to the Old Minster.⁵⁰ If indeed the boy was given to the Minster as an oblate—which rather presupposes that the ealdorman was the boy's legal guardian—then we should not consider the child abandoned by his family. Janet Nelson's work on child

⁴⁷ Wulfstan, *NMSS*, 'Epistola specialis', ll. 297–300 and i.VI, ed. Lapidge, pp. 394–6 and 462. The first of these is the second (and final) miracle performed by Æthelwold; cf. n. 21 above.

⁴⁸ Lantfred, *TMSS*, XXXI, ed. Lapidge, pp. 318–20; cf. Wulfstan, *NMSS*, ii.XIV, ed. Lapidge, pp. 530–2, at p. 532, l. 790: 'of outstanding ability'; see also p. 533, n. on l. 787, where Lapidge speculates on the ealdorman's identity. Lantfred merely states that the boy is of noble stock.

⁴⁹ Lantfred, *TMSS*, XXXI, ed. Lapidge, p. 320, ll. 11–12: 'He shall have me as a more faithful follower all the days of my life'. Wulfstan echoes this sentiment.

⁵⁰ In the *TMSS* the ealdorman says *deducam* and in the *NMSS* he says *presentabo*, which can simply mean '[will] show', 'place before', 'exhibit', 'present' or 'hold out' (see Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, s.v. *praesento*, pp. 1428–9); in the passive, however, it can mean 'handed or presented to'. The translation is disputable either way.

oblation has shown how oblation nurtured relationships between churches and families and that the parents would not necessarily be cut out of the picture.⁵¹ Furthermore, her work reveals the ealdorman's motivation—the oblation is a reciprocal gift for that of the cure.⁵² Oblation rested upon the parents' authority to act on behalf of their child; indeed oblation eventually became unacceptable in the twelfth century as it infringed upon personal choice.⁵³ The other miraculous cures of children performed by Swithun also rest upon parental authority—they are the ones actively seeking divine aid. It would appear that neither Lantfred nor Wulfstan deemed children capable of understanding their situation or offering prayers to God

⁵¹ J. L. Nelson, 'Parents, Children and the Church in the Earlier Middle Ages', in *The Church and Childhood: Papers read at the 1993 Summer Meeting and the 1994 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*, ed. D. Wood (Oxford, 1994), pp. 81–114, at pp. 109–11.

⁵² *Ibid.* p. 108. I am not entirely convinced by her example from Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, ii.9, ed. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors, *Bede: Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, (Oxford, 1969), p. 166, as it seems that Edwin is consenting to her conversion rather than oblation. Better comparisons can be found in Sulpicius Severus, *Vita Sancti Martini episcopi* (henceforth *VSMrt*), XIX.1–2, ed. J. Fontaine, *Sulpice Sévère: Vie de Saint Martin*, Sources Chrétiennes 133 (Paris, 1967), 292 and Abbot John of St Arnulf, Metz, *Translatio S. Glodesindis* (henceforth *TSG*), XXXVII, ed. J. P. Migne, PL, CXXXVII.217–40 at col. 236, which John explicitly includes as a warning to those who do not keep their vows—here a father takes his daughter out of a monastery he had given her to in order to marry her off.

⁵³ Nelson, 'Parents, Children and the Church', pp. 109 and 112. See also J. Doran, 'Oblation or Obligation? A Canonical Ambiguity', in *The Church and Childhood*, pp. 127–41, which details the confusion over the potentially coercive nature of oblation, especially in the Carolingian era. For more on medieval oblation, see M. de Jong, *In Samuel's Image: Child Oblation in the Early Medieval West*, esp. pp. 23–30, which deals with how quick and irrevocable oblation was in the Rule of St Benedict. The rest of the book deals with how later medieval minds approached oblation in light of works such as the Rule.

and Wulfstan especially was keen to remind parents of their obligation.⁵⁴ It may also be significant that this is seen as the mother's responsibility—in *NMSS* i.XVIII we are told that the boy was *predulcis et unicus* to the father, yet after we are told how much he loved his son the father plays no further part in the story.⁵⁵

Lantfred, however, seems keen to portray Swithun as a saint particularly interested in helping those with no kith or kin to fall back on. One means by which he achieves this is the inclusion of several stories about slaves whom Swithun rescues from various situations.⁵⁶ He also expresses Swithun's role as a ward for social outcasts in a rather puzzling way: the bishop apparently has no qualms in helping people (often rightly) found guilty of crimes.⁵⁷ That Lantfred's Swithun goes so far as to abet a man guilty of parricide must be significant. How could Lantfred countenance this behaviour if he truly advocated the value of familial ties?⁵⁸ If Swithun is seen to be

⁵⁴ Indeed, an oblate was often not made to take full vows until he had reached majority, when, one supposes, he was thought to be capable of making the decision on his own. See Doran, 'Oblation or Obligation?', esp. pp. 128–9.

⁵⁵ Wulfstan, *NMSS*, i.XVIII, ed. Lapidge, p. 482, l. 1481, 'a delight and uniquely dear'.

⁵⁶ Lantfred, *TMSS*, VI, XX, XXXVIII and XXXIX and Wulfstan, *NMSS*, i.IX, ii.II, ii.XXI and ii.XXII, ed. Lapidge, pp. 288–90, 302–4, 330–2, 332, 468, 496–502, 548 and 548–50.

⁵⁷ Remember that it was possible for tenth-century Anglo-Saxons to forsake relatives who were persistent criminals or who became embroiled in feud; see II Edmund 1.1–3, ed. F. Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, 3 vols. (Halle, 1903–16), I, 187–91, at p. 187, trans. A. J. Robertson, *The Laws of the Kings of England from Edmund to Henry I* (Cambridge, 1925), p. 9 and II Edward 6, ed. Liebermann, I, 145, trans. Attenborough, *Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, p. 121.

⁵⁸ Lantfred, *TMSS*, XXIV, ed. Lapidge, p. 306; cf. Wulfstan, *NMSS*, ii.VII, ed. Lapidge, p. 506, ll. 266–298. The man in question—who hailed from somewhere on the Continent—had been punished according to custom by

take especial care of the lowest tiers of society, on the other hand Lantfred and Wulfstan seem to be aware that there was a burgeoning social strata that needed less help, that of the 'merchant' class.⁵⁹ A lame man is shown using his wealth to hire physicians, and presumably to manage his travel arrangements, rather than relying on his relatives to organize his affairs;⁶⁰ there is nothing to suggest that he has been particularly inconvenienced, unlike the women from the Isle of Wight who evidently cannot throw money at their problem.

SOURCES FOR THE AUTHORS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS KITH AND KIN

The Anglo-Saxon Hagiographical Tradition

We ought to turn our attention next towards what influenced Lantfred's attitude towards kith and kin. The differences between Lantfred and Wulfstan, however, might well come down to personal differences and given that Wulfstan tweaks—rather than completely

being bound in iron rings and sent on pilgrimage (see *Swithun*, p. 306, n. 221). Such a man would be thus punished until the rings either rusted off or were miraculously removed. The episode is therefore somewhat ambiguous. Throughout the *TMSS* Lantfred is concerned to highlight Swithun's superior efficacy over all other saints (and his far-reaching fame), so the parricide may be healed by Swithun in a display of power rather than unusual magnanimity. Even then, if Swithun's power is unusual we have to contemplate the possibility that the man would not yet have otherwise merited his relief.

⁵⁹ See M. R. Godden, 'Money, Power and Morality in late Anglo-Saxon England', *ASE* 19 (1990), 41–65, for the increased awareness of this class at the end of the tenth-century.

⁶⁰ Lantfred, *TMSS*, XIII and Wulfstan, *NMSS*, i.XVI, ed. Lapidge, pp. 296–8 and 480–2. I think we can count this man's situation as being unique in the Swithun dossier: the blind man who goes to Rome (*TMSS*, XVI and *NMSS*, i.XIX, ed. Lapidge, pp. 298 and 484–6) is said to have been of noble stock, the only other person apparently able to look after himself, probably would indeed have had a retinue.

reworks—Lantfred's source, such small changes may prohibit us from discerning any source particular to Wulfstan himself. As Lantfred spent time in England and wrote for English patrons, it is not unreasonable to wonder whether he looked towards the native hagiographical tradition for inspiration. Little hagiography had been written in tenth-century England and that which was had been composed by another visiting scholar, Frithegod.⁶¹ He, however, did write about an Englishman: Wilfrid, the seventh-century bishop who customarily courted controversy.⁶² It seems that many tenth-century churchmen looked back towards the apparently golden age of Bede and as there was little hagiography written after that period anyway, I shall now gauge the possible influence of the *uitae* of that period. We can skip over the anonymous *Life of Gregory* straight to the two prose *Lives* of Cuthbert.⁶³ The anonymous *Life of Cuthbert* has fourteen remedial miracles, of which only three are posthumous—as, one should remember, all of the Swithun ones are.⁶⁴ In this set of

⁶¹ For an introduction to Frithegod's (hypothetical) career, see M. Lapidge, 'A Frankish Scholar in Tenth-Century England: Frithegod of Canterbury/Fredgaud of Brioude', *ALL* II, 157–81.

⁶² Frithegod, *Breviloquium uitae beati Wilfridi*, ed. A. Campbell, *Frithegodi Monachi Breviloquium Vitae Beati Wilfredi et Wulfstani Cantoris Narratio Metrica de Sancto Swithuno* (Verona, 1950), pp. 1–62.

⁶³ There is only one healing miracle in this *uita* and it happens during Gregory's lifetime. Furthermore, it is not especially thaumaturgic: Gregory simply advises a king 'quem puto [scilicet the anonymous] Langobardorum fuisse' to return to the food that he used to eat as a child in order to cure himself of an illness. See the Anon., *Vita Sancti Gregorii magni*, XXIII, ed. B. Colgrave, *The Earliest Life of Gregory the Great by an Anonymous Monk of Whitby: Text, Translation and Notes* (Lawrence, KS, 1968), pp. 114–16.

⁶⁴ Anon., *Vita Sancti Cuthberti* (henceforth *VSC*), i.IV, i.VII, ii.III, ii.VIII, iv.III, iv.IV, iv.V, iv.VI, iv.VII, iv.XII, iv.XV, iv.XVI, iv.XVII and iv.XVIII, ed. B. Colgrave, *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert: a Life by an Anonymous Monk of Lindisfarne and Bede's Prose Life. Text, Translation and Notes* (Cambridge, 1940), pp. 60–139, at

miracles, we see five where sick people are helped by others, whether related by marriage, blood, lordship or unstated ties.⁶⁵ There are no instances here of people being ignored or abandoned. While Bede might have made some alterations to the anonymous account, the picture is much the same: there are fifteen healing miracles, of which four are posthumous.⁶⁶ Ten explicitly show invalids receiving help

pp. 66–8, 70, 78–82, 90–2, 114, 116, 116–18, 118–20, 120–2, 128, 132–4, 134–6, 136–8 and 138; iv.XV–XVII are the posthumous miracles where a father cures his son by giving him some water to drink that had previously been used to wash Cuthbert's body, a monk is cured by praying at Cuthbert's relics and a paralysed boy is brought from another monastery and cured when he wears Cuthbert's shoes.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* ii.VIII, iv.III–V and iv.XV, ed. Colgrave, pp. 90–2, 114–18 and 132–4. Here we find a man who tries to get help for his wife (though tries to hide the fact that she is possessed by a demon); a *gesith* warmly receives Cuthbert in his home as he is on his rounds and asks him to cure his sick wife (the anonymous author compares this to the episode about Peter's wife's mother in Matt. VIII.14–16); a priest—the relative of a sick nun and himself a member of Cuthbert's retinue—asks Cuthbert to cure her: he does so by anointing her; some women of 'unwavering faith' carry a sick young man to Cuthbert on a litter and beg that he prays for the youth's cure; finally, a father cures his son—who was possessed by a demon—by giving him water to drink that had once been used to wash Cuthbert's body.

⁶⁶ Bede, *Prosa uita de Sancto Cuthberto* (henceforth *PVSC*) II, VIII, X, XV, XXIII, XXV, XXIX, XXX, XXXI, XXXII, XXXVII, XLI, XLIV, XLV and XLVI, ed. Colgrave, *Two Lives*, pp. 142–306, at pp. 158–60, 180–4, 188–90, 202–6, 230–4, 238–40, 252–4, 254, 254–6, 256–8, 270–80, 288–90, 296–8, 298–300 and 300–6, of which the last four are posthumous (iv.XVI from the anonymous account is replaced and Bede's XLIV and XLVI are added). In the posthumous miracles we learn of a servant who, 'non paruo cum labore', takes his master—one of Willibrord's clergy—to Cuthbert's relics to pray for a cure. XLI and XLV are based upon iv.XV and iv.XVII respectively. The last posthumous miracle is more directly linked to a relic belonging to the second inhabitant of Cuthbert's cell, Æthelwald, rather than Cuthbert himself.

from family and friends, and again none depicts vulnerable people being left unaided.⁶⁷

Stephen of Ripon had certainly read the anonymous *Life of Cuthbert*: he quotes a passage from iv.I verbatim and also employs a comparison with the story of Peter's wife's mother in Matt. VIII.14–16 that the anonymous used in iv.III.⁶⁸ So, evidently wishing his protagonist to match Cuthbert, it is not surprising that we see Wilfrid bringing about miracles, some of which cast him as a divinely-inspired physician. There is, however, only one posthumous miracle but five of the miracles do depict people getting help from others and, importantly, there are still none involving people not being helped. Unlike these great pastors, Felix's *Life of Guthlac* presents a biography of a hermit, and as such he spurns his parents, homeland and his childhood friends in order to lead a life of solitude;⁶⁹ perhaps

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* VIII, XV, XXV, XXIX, XXX, XXXI, XXXII, XLI, XLIV and XLV, ed. Colgrave, pp. 180–4, 202–6, 238–40, 252–4, 254, 254–6, 256–8, 288–90, 296–8 and 298–300. XV, XXIX, XXX, XXXII, XLI and XLV are all based upon the same stories in the anonymous account. VIII is, ironically, about how the monks of Cuthbert's monastery help cure *him* with *their* prayers. In the other tales, we hear of a certain *gesith's* servant, who is either paralysed or at the very least wasting away, cured overnight after Cuthbert sends some holy water to be administered to him; Hildmer, the *gesith* from XV (and therefore iv.III in the anonymous), falls gravely ill and when 'multi [sui] amicorum' try to console him, one remembers that Hildmer has some bread that Cuthbert has blessed and he is cured as soon as he eats it; the last three miracles are detailed in the footnote about the posthumous miracles above.

⁶⁸ Stephen of Ripon, *Vita Sancti Wilfridi*, XI and XXXVII, ed. B. Colgrave, *The Life of Bishop Wilfrid by Eddius Stephanus: Text, Translation and Notes* (Cambridge, 1927), pp. 24 and 74–6. Cf. Anon., *VSC*, iv.I and iv.III, ed. Colgrave, pp. 112 and 114.

⁶⁹ Felix, *Vita Sancti Guthlaci* (henceforth *VSG*), XIX, ed. B. Colgrave, *Felix's Life of Guthlac: Introduction, Text, Translation and Notes* (Cambridge, 1956), p. 82: 'et parentes et patriam comitesque adolescentiae suae contempsit'.

this *uita* would therefore present a different take on the value of kith and kin? Well, it does not. Of the four miracles that involve cures, one of which is effected posthumously, three show how family and friends rallied around those in need to help them get a cure. The other is one of those rather vague chapters that states that the saint performed many miracles, of which some were curative.⁷⁰ In the remaining three, Hwætred, an East Anglian nobleman—possessed by a demon—is taken by his parents to see Guthlac, but only after other saints have failed to do the job, where he is eventually cured.⁷¹ We also read of Ecga, a *gesith* of the exiled king Æthelbald, who also becomes possessed. His relatives (*propinqui sui*), fearing that he may be left permanently insane, take him to visit Guthlac, who wraps him in his girdle, instantly curing him.⁷² While we cannot be sure that Lantfred knew of the Fenland saint, the last relevant miracle, a posthumous one, makes for a fascinating comparison. The father of a family in the Wissa has gone blind (most probably from cataracts). The next section is worth quoting:

Tandem inuento salubri consilio, ad corpus sacratissimum uiri Dei Guthlaci se duci rogauit. Amici autem illius ut ipse rogauerat fecerunt; duxerunt quidem illum ad portum insulae Crugland et illic ascensa

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* XLV, ed. Colgrave, pp. 138–40.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* XLI, ed. Colgrave, pp. 126–130 at p. 128; the parents take him ‘ad sacratas sedes sanctorum’. Note this same motif spotted above in the Swithun dossier and in some of the Continental texts discussed below, for example in the Anon. *Miracula S. Eugenii Diogili Facta* (henceforth *MSED*; *BHL* 2687), III, in ‘Translatio S. Eugenii Toletani ad monasterium Broniense’, ed. Bollandists, *AB* 3 (1884), 29–64, at pp. 58–64 and see esp. pp. 59–60. Indeed, another motif—that of *fama uolans*—is used here too (as well as in Lantfred, for example at *TMS*, XXIV, ed. Lapidge, p. 306, l. 4) and in some of the tenth-century Continental material. For the original motif, see R. R. Dyer, ‘Vergil’s *Fama*: a New Interpretation of *Aenied* 4.173ff, *Greece and Rome* 36 (1989), 28–32.

⁷² Felix, *VSG*, XLII, ed. Colgrave, pp. 130–2.

nauis, deuenientes insulam, adpetierunt colloquium uenerabilis Christi uirginis Pegae [...]’⁷³

Pega dissolves salt blessed by Guthlac in water and drips it onto his eyes, healing them. Here we have a situation at the same time very similar yet completely different to that of the three women of the Isle of Wight that prompted this investigation.

These early saints’ *Lives* were themselves influenced by works such as Sulpicius Severus’s *Vita Sancti Martini episcopi*, Evagrius’s translation of Athanasius’s *Vita Sancti Antonii* and Jerome’s *Vita Sancti Pauli eremitaie*.⁷⁴ The *Life of Antony* is hardly replete with miracles and where we do find miracles, Athanasius is often keen to attribute the wonders to the power of God rather than to Antony’s intercession.⁷⁵ There are, however, still a number of healing miracles and some of these relate how family members sought remedies for their sick relatives and were rewarded for their faith.⁷⁶ The *Life* of the renowned

⁷³ Felix, *VSG*, LIII, ed. Colgrave, pp. 166–70, at p. 168: ‘At length he hit upon a wholesome plan and asked to be taken to the most sacred body of Guthlac, the man of God. So his friends did as he asked and, boarding a boat, they came to the island and bringing him to the landing-place of that island of Crowland, there sought out Pega, the reverend virgin of Christ’.

⁷⁴ Sulpicius Severus, *VSMrt*, ed. Fontaine, pp. 248–316; Evagrius’ translation of Athanasius’s *Vita Sancti Antonii* (henceforth *VSA*), ed. Migne, PL, LXXIII.125–70; Jerome, *Vita Sancti Pauli eremitaie* (henceforth *VSP*), ed. Migne, PL, XXIII.17–28. For evidence of the knowledge of these texts in early Anglo-Saxon England, see, for instance, K. E. Haney, ‘The Christ and the Beasts Panel on the Ruthwell Cross’, *ASE* 14 (1985), 215–31, at p. 221.

⁷⁵ For example, see Athanasius/Evagrius, *VSA*, V, ed. Migne, col. 130: ‘Haec autem Antonii contra diabolam fuit prima uictoria, imo uirtus in Antonio Saluatoris’ (‘This was Antony’s first victory over the devil or rather of the Saviour’s power in Antony’).

⁷⁶ Athanasius/Evagrius, *VSA*, XXIV and XXX, ed. Migne, cols. 147–8 and 152 (in the latter, however—in trying to get their daughter seen to by Antony—the girl’s family display the sort of faith that the woman in Luke VIII.40–8 had and

bishop and solitary Martin has more wondrous elements. Indeed, Sulpicius declares that, '[c]urationum uero tam potens in eo gratia erat, ut nullus fere ad eum aegrotus accesserit, qui non continuo receperit sanitatem'.⁷⁷ There are ten references in all to healings and of these, two describe how fathers obtained cures for their daughters due to their faith in Martin, whilst another shows a master seeking help for his slaves, even going so far as to convert to Christianity so that Martin would come and help.⁷⁸ The second of the two stories about fathers and their daughters calls to mind the miracle of the boy whose leg was broken falling off a horse in that the father is so moved by the cure that 'statim puellam Deo uouerit et perpetuae uirginitati dicarit. Profectusque ad Martinum, puellam ei, praesens uirtutum eius testimonium'.⁷⁹

One of the few anomalies to the trope of family members looking out for each other comes in Jerome's *Life of Paul*. Jerome writes, '[et] cum persecutionis procella detonaret, [Paulus] in uillam remotiorem et secretiorem secessit. Verum quid pectora humana non cogit auri sacra fames? Sororis maritus coepit prodere uelle, quem

Antony declares that 'the girl [...] has been released as a result of her own prayers'. *VSA*, XXXIII, XXXVI and XLIII, ed. Migne, cols. 154, 154–5 and 157–8, are the other healing miracles, which do not include family members getting involved.

⁷⁷ Sulpicius Severus, *VSMrt*, XVI.1, ed. Fontaine, p. 286: 'He also possessed such a powerful gift of healing that there was hardly a sick person who came to him who was not restored to health on the spot'.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* XVI.1, XVI.2–8, XVII.1–4, XVII.5–7, XVIII.1–2, XVIII.3–4, XVIII.4–5, XIX.1–2, XIX.3 and XIX.4, ed. Fontaine, pp. 286, 286–8, 288–290, 290, 292, 292–4 and 294. XVI.2–8 and XIX.1–2 are the stories about the fathers. XVII.1–4 is about the proconsul who converts to Christianity for the sake of his possessed slave.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.* XIX.2, ed. Fontaine, p. 292. Cf. Lantfred, *TMSS*, XXXI and Wulfstan ii.XIV, ed. Lapidge, pp. 318–20 and 530–2.

cellare debuerat. Non illum uxoris lacrymae, ut assolet, non communitio sanguinis, non spectans cuncta ex alto Deus, ab scelere reuocauit'.⁸⁰ But here Jerome's disgust is aimed at the sin of avarice and he affirms the notion that kith and kin are important in the surprise he shows when the family's pleas are ignored.

It is worth looking at a couple of the eighth-century *Lives* of the Anglo-Saxon missionaries who went to the Continent. Two such texts offer interesting examples of children entering monasteries under similar circumstances. In Willibald's *Vita Sancti Bonifatii*,⁸¹ Boniface's father is very fond of his son and lavishes more attention on him than his other brothers, but when he discovers that his favourite son intends to join the Church he is most unhappy. He, however, promptly falls ill, which causes him to reconsider his position on the matter. Having called together the whole family, he resolves to allow Boniface to enter the ecclesiastical ranks and so sends him off to the monastery of Eximchester.⁸² In Huneburc's

⁸⁰ Jerome, *VSP*, IV, ed. Migne, col. 20: 'As the storm of persecution rumbled on, he [Paul] withdrew to a more distant and isolated spot. But to what does the accursed greed for gold not drive the hearts of men? His sister's husband conceived a desire to betray the person he ought to have concealed; neither his wife's tears (as is usually the case), nor family ties, nor God who watches everything from on high, could dissuade him from the crime', trans. C. White, *Early Christian Lives* (London, 1998), p. 77.

⁸¹ Willibald, *Vita Sancti Bonifatii Archiepiscopi Moguntini* (henceforth *VSB*), ed. W. Levison, MGH SS rer. Germ. 57 (Hannover, 1905), 1–57; trans. C. H. Talbot, 'The Life of Saint Boniface by Willibald', in *Soldiers of Christ: Saints and Saints' Lives from Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. T. F. X. Noble and T. Head (London, 1995), pp. 107–40.

⁸² Willibald, *VSB*, I, ed. Levison, pp. 4–6; trans. Talbot, pp. 111–12. 'Eximchester' is most probably Exeter as it is thought that that is where he was an oblate: at Ad-Escancastre, otherwise known as Exeter; see I. N. Wood, 'Boniface, archbishop of Mainz, missionary (672x5?–754)', in *The Oxford*

Hodoeporicon of Saint Willibald,⁸³ however, it is the saint himself who has fallen ill when he is only three years old. His parents are gravely concerned and take him to the foot of the cross where they pray for his salvation and promise to have him tonsured once he reaches a suitable age; needless to say, Willibald recovered and two years later his parents take counsel with their kinsfolk and entrust him to a monastery. Neither of these works contain much miraculous material. They are, as one might expect, more focused on their protagonists' preaching and conversions. Alcuin's *Life of St Willibrord* does, however, contain a few healing miracles.⁸⁴ Although one of these miracles was performed by Willibrord while he was alive,⁸⁵ the remainder—the four of them—are posthumous. One simply details that many remedial miracles are constantly performed by his relics

Dictionary of National Biography, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and B. Harrison 60 vols. (Oxford, 2004), VI, 540–5, at p. 541.

⁸³ Huneburc, *Hodoeporicon*, ed. O. Holder-Egger, MGH SS 15.1 (Hanover, 1887), 80–117; trans. C. H. Talbot, 'Huneburc of Heidenheim: the Hodoeporicon of Saint Willibald', in *Soldiers of Christ*, pp. 141–64. See further, W. Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford, 1946), pp. 39–43 and 294 (and n. 3 on that same page) and R. McKitterick, 'England and the Continent', *The New Cambridge Medieval History II*, ed. R. McKitterick (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 64–84, at pp. 78–9.

⁸⁴ Alcuin, *Vita Willibrordi archiepiscopi Traiectensis* (henceforth *VSW*), ed. W. Levison, MGH SS rer. Merov. 7 (Hannover, 1920), 81–141; trans. C. H. Talbot, 'Alcuin: the Life of Saint Willibrord', in *Soldiers of Christ*, pp. 189–211. After all, acts of healing were likely to be just as useful—if not more so—in securing peoples' conversion to Christianity as those demonstrating the power of the Christian God over pagan ones

⁸⁵ Alcuin, *VSW*, XXI, ed. Levison, p. 132; trans. Talbot, p. 205. A plague has killed or laid low many nuns from a convent near Trier and so they appeal to Willibrord for aid. He comes, performs Mass and sprinkles holy water around the buildings, which he also offers to the nuns to drink. The sick nuns all recover and there are also no subsequent casualties.

and another that invalids were cured after being anointed with the oil from the lamps that burnt above his relics.⁸⁶ The other two are more interesting from the perspective of our current investigation. Both narrate stories where paralysed people—the first a woman, in the second a man—are brought, respectively by *propinquis* and *manibus* [...] *amicorum* ('relatives' and 'the hands of friends') to Willibrord's shrine where they regain their health.⁸⁷

In short, while we can catch a glimpse of the type of miracles that dominate the Swithun dossier, early Anglo-Latin hagiography was not overly concerned with curative miracles and where it was, it was predominantly influenced by the major hagiographical works that came from the Continent,⁸⁸ and throughout the sense that kith and kin are important and the thought that a family group might turn its back on one of its members is entirely remote.

The Contemporary Continental Hagiographical Tradition

Tenth-century Europe saw the rise in popularity of *translationes*,⁸⁹ and given the efforts of Archbishops Oda, Dunstan and Oswald—not to mention Bishop Æthelwold—to bring the English Church in line

⁸⁶ Alcuin, *VSW*, XXIV and XXVII, ed. Levison, pp. 134–5 and 136; trans. Talbot, pp. 207 and 208. Interestingly, the second also details how penitential bonds were broken at his shrine and that these rings now hang in the church, testifying to the saint's power.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.* XXVIII and XXIX, ed. Levison, p. 136; trans. Talbot, pp. 208–9.

⁸⁸ It is worth noting, however, that the Anglo-Latin *uitae* seem unaware of, or at least uninterested in, the contemporary Continental trend of the sixth to eighth centuries where writers such as Gregory of Tours and the authors of the *Life of Caesarius of Arles* sought to prove the superiority of the saints over lay physicians (and indeed pagan 'witch-doctors'); see Flint, 'The Early Medieval "Medicus"', pp. 127–45.

⁸⁹ Lapidge, 'Schools, Learning and Literature', p. 37 and M. Heinzelmann, *Translationsberichte und andere Quellen des Reliquienkultes*, Typologie des sources du Moyen Âge occidental 33 (Turnhout, 1979), esp. 94–9.

with continental practice,⁹⁰ it is worth looking for influences from across the channel that might be reflected in the *TMSS*. In his edition of the Swithun dossier, Lapidge suggests some *translationes* that may have acted as models for Lantfred. Due to the Fleury connection, it is not unreasonable to suggest that Adrevald's *Historia translationis Sancti Benedicti* and subsequent collection of miracles may have been major influences.⁹¹ Lapidge also points to the *translationes* of SS Eugenius,

⁹⁰ There is a great deal of scholarship on this matter, but see Lapidge, 'Schools, Learning and Literature', pp. 31–5; Gretsche, *Intellectual Foundations*, pp. 422–4 (although note her point that the late Anglo-Saxon curriculum was heavily indebted to Aldhelm and may have seemed antiquated and out-of-touch to post-conquest Continental scholars; pp. 425–7); V. Ortenberg, *The Church and the Continent in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries: Cultural, Spiritual and Artistic Changes* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 32 (on chant), 82–3 (for attitudes towards the patronage of the arts), 85–6 (for attitudes towards rulership) and 153 (which details the Papal backing Æthelwold sought and obtained to expel the secular canons); P. Wormald, 'Æthelwold and his Continental Counterparts: Contact, Comparison, Contrast', in *Bishop Æthelwold: His Career and Influence*, ed. B. Yorke (Woodbridge, 1988), pp. 13–42; A. Prescott, 'The Text of the Benedictional of St Æthelwold', in *Bishop Æthelwold: His Career and Influence*, pp. 119–47. Wulfstan too tells us of Æthelwold's reverence for Continental practice when he describes how Æthelwold sent one of his pupils, Osgar, to Fleury to learn their customs when he was prevented from going himself by royal intervention: Wulfstan Cantor, *VSAE*, XIV, ed. Lapidge and Winterbottom, pp. 24–8, at p. 26. The *Regularis Concordia* also reveals that the reformers, following the precedent set by SS Gregory the Great and Augustine, looked towards the Continent: *Regularis Concordia*, 'Prooemium', V, ed. and trans. T. Symons, *Regularis concordia anglicae nationis monachorum sanctimonialiumque: the Monastic Agreement of the Monks and Nuns of the English Nation* (London, 1953), p. 3.

⁹¹ Adrevald, *Historia translationis S. Benedicti* and *Liber miraculorum S. Benedicti* (henceforth *HTB* and *LMSB*; *BHL* 1117 and 1123 respectively), ed. E. de Certain, 'Historia Translationis S. Benedicti auctore Adrevaldo Monacho Floriacensi' and 'Miraculorum Sancti Benedicti Liber Primus auctore Adrevaldo Monacho Floriacensi', in *Les Miracles de Saint Benoît: Écrits par*

Glodesindis, Gorgonius, Hunegundis and Maximinus,⁹² but does little to justify why he has picked those over others instead saying that Lantfred 'possibly knew some (if not all) of the aforementioned hagiographical texts'.⁹³

Despite the clear interest in St Benedict during the tenth century, I am not convinced that Adrevald's works,⁹⁴ both of which were known in England,⁹⁵ were a significant model for Lantfred. Lapidge believes that tracking sources for Lantfred is difficult given his tendency not to quote verbatim,⁹⁶ potentially making it hard to argue either way but the two texts have different approaches to their subjects as I shall show. It has been demonstrated how Lantfred closely mimicked the account of the vision which inspired the *inuentio* of Stephen the protomartyr,⁹⁷ and Adrevald's *inuentio et translatio*

Adrevald, Aimoin, André, Raoul Tortaire et Hugues de Sainte Marie, Moines de Fleury (Paris, 1858), pp. 1–14 and 15–89.

⁹² *BHL* 2687 and 2689–91, 3563, 3621, 4047–9 and 5826 respectively.

⁹³ Lapidge, *Swithun*, pp. 11–12 and 233–4 at p. 234, working from a list compiled by H. Fros, 'Liste des translations et inventions de l'époque carolingienne', *AB* 104 (1986), 427–9. Lapidge does, however, note some miracle stories and vocabulary that the *TMSS* shares with the *De uirtutibus*, at *Swithun*, p. 233, n. 114.

⁹⁴ On Adrevald's works, see T. Head, *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints: the Diocese of Orléans, 800–1200*, Cambridge Stud. in Med. Life and Thought 4th ser. 14 (Cambridge, 1990), 138–52.

⁹⁵ Gneuss, *Handlist*, no. 153, Cambridge, St John's College 164 (F 27).

⁹⁶ Lapidge, *Swithun*, p. 232: 'direct quotations [...] are exceptional in Lantfred [...] and] although Lantfred was undoubtedly widely read, the list of literary sources on which he drew might appear to be a meagre one'.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* See the Latin translation by Avitus of the *Epistola Luciani ad omnem ecclesiam de reuelatione corporis Stephani martyris primi* (*BHL* 7851), ed. Migne, PL, XLI.805–16, which claims to be based on a manuscript from Fleury. Mostert, however, did not seem to be aware of this: M. Mostert, *The Library of Fleury: a Provisional List of Manuscripts* (Hilversum, 1989).

Benedicti sororisque Scholasticae has very little in common with them.⁹⁸ As for the miracle collections, Adrevald was concerned to portray Benedict as a powerful protector of Fleury's properties and rights first and a healing saint second.⁹⁹ It does not appear that Lantfred took his cue from Adrevald for any of Swithun's healing miracles.¹⁰⁰ Unlike in

⁹⁸ Adrevald, *HTB*, ed. de Certain, pp. 1–14. The *historia* includes a couple of miracles (IX–X, p. 9) where a blind man and a man who had to drag himself along the ground, bereft of the use of any of his limbs, are cured. There is nothing especial about these episodes. XI (p. 10) is somewhat ambiguous as a monk suddenly finds himself blinded and grabs the casket containing Benedict's relics. He refuses to let go until he is cured, such is his faith that Benedict will cure him; Adrevald does not give us the outcome. See also P. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*, rev. ed. (Princeton, NJ, 1990), pp. 120–2 and 150, which suggests that the story of Benedict's translation belongs to the relic-theft genre. Looked at from this angle, it is not surprising that the *TMS* might appear to follow a different model.

⁹⁹ The episodes that display Benedict's power just outnumber those that show his healing powers. The 'powerful patron' miracles, which occasionally show Benedict striking down someone and curing them upon their repentance, are: *LMSB*, XVIII, XIX, XX–XXI, XXIV, XXV, XXVI, XXVII, XXXII, XXXVII, XXXVIII and XLI, ed. de Certain, pp. 45, 46, 47–50, 55–6, 56–7, 58–60, 60–3, 69–70, 79–80, 80–2 and 86–9. Benedict, however, cannot prevent the Normans ravaging Fleury on numerous occasions: *LMSB*, XXXIV, ed. de Certain, pp. 75–6. The healing episodes are *LMSB*, XXIII (which claims that many happened but details only one), XXVIII (the healing miracles performed by the martyrs Denis, Sebastian, Rusticus and Eleutherius, *not* Benedict), XXIX (where Adrevald wants to show that Benedict was not inferior to the martyrs), XXX, XXXI, XXXV and XXXVI, ed. de Certain, pp. 53–4, 63–5, 66, 66–8, 68–9, 77–8 and 78–9. Head, *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints*, pp. 139–40, esp. n. 20, suggests that this lack of interest in miraculous cures actually sets Adrevald apart from other Carolingian hagiographers.

¹⁰⁰ There is one place where Benedict, appearing in a vision, is described as *ueneranda decorus canitie*: *LMSB*, XVIII, ed. de Certain, p. 45—as Swithun is occasionally (for example, *ninea canitie uenerandus*, *TMS*, III, ed. Lapidge, p. 280, l. 67)—but Lantfred could have taken the motif from elsewhere.

the Swithun dossier, all those who have not made ill by Benedict—and even one or two of those who have—receive help from either kith or kin: no one is left abandoned. Furthermore, Adrevald included miracles depicting cures administered to the insane (that is, those possessed by demons) whereas Lantfred—and Wulfstan—include none.

So what, then, of the tenth-century works picked out by Lapidge? There are good grounds to believe that Lantfred might have been familiar with any of them given the links between the houses: Fleury itself reformed Homblières (whose abbot, Berner, wrote the *Translatio Hunegundis*), while it fostered relations with the reforming monasteries of Trier, Gorze, Brogne and Metz, where the other texts were written.¹⁰¹ Books and scholars travelled between these houses during the tenth century, and given the reputation that Fleury's library enjoyed we can be fairly confident that Lantfred would have been able to read any hagiographical works published around that time.¹⁰² The anonymous *De uirtutibus*,¹⁰³ the account of Eugenius's translation to

¹⁰¹ Mostert, *Library of Fleury*, p. 19, n. 2. For more on the Gorze reform, see J. Nightingale, *Monasteries and Patrons in the Gorze Reform: Lotharingia c. 850–1000* (Oxford, 2001).

¹⁰² Mostert, *Library of Fleury*, pp. 24 and 27.

¹⁰³ Missone also prints the anonymous *Miracula S. Eugenii Broniensis* (BHL 2691; henceforth *MSEB*) at 'Les Miracles', pp. 280–5. Lapidge's reference in *Swithun*, p. 233, n. 144, to the Eugenius dossier requires clarification. BHL 2689 is the *De uirtutibus*, ed. Missone, pp. 258–78 (cf. Bollandists, pp. 29–54). BHL 2690 is the *Additamentum*, ed. Missone, p. 279, which he printed as ch. XXXIV of the *De uirtutibus* (cf. Bollandists, pp. 54–5). Lapidge seems to view the Bollandist edition of the *MSED* as part of BHL 2689–2690 when it is in fact it is a separate text (BHL 2687). The Bollandists, however, include an incomplete version of the *MSEB* (at *AB* 3, 55–6) seemingly as part of the *De uirtutibus*. This—the Bollandists's *De uirtutibus*, XXXVI and XXXVII—corresponds to *MSEB*, 'prologus', I and II, ed. Missone, pp. 280–2 (up to l. 49).

Brogne,¹⁰⁴ looks the best place to start as Lapidge has noted that:

The text has some unusual vocabulary in common with Lantfred—*didasculus*, *flocipendo*, *opipare*—and occasionally breaks out into rhyming prose; furthermore, there are similarities in a number of miracles recounted: a cripple who was cured left the church so quickly that he abandoned his crutches . . . a blind woman, who promised to make a donation, was cured, but then forgot her promise, was struck blind again, and subsequently cured [... and] a *miles* was injured falling from a horse but subsequently cured.¹⁰⁵

Most of the miracles in the *De uirtutibus* depict Eugenius protecting his monastery,¹⁰⁶ but there are quite a few miracles where Eugenius heals people.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, a considerable proportion of them fail to mention the protagonist having anyone to help them.¹⁰⁸ In the case of the woman with a withered arm—and perhaps even the deaf man and the man who had to use crutches—this is not very surprising,¹⁰⁹ but what to make of the other episodes? Are we to suppose that the blind people had guides? One of them even managed to travel from the Alps, having roamed from shrine to shrine in search of a cure;¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴ Missone, 'Les Miracles', p. 239, believes that the text was written after Gerard of Brogne's death in 959. Lapidge, *Swithun*, p. 233, dates it to 935–7. These dates are perhaps more applicable to the *Sermo de aduentu S. Eugenii* (BHL 2692) that Missone, p. 231, says is contemporaneous with Gerard.

¹⁰⁵ Lapidge, *Swithun*, p. 233, n. 114.

¹⁰⁶ Missone, 'Les Miracles', p. 233.

¹⁰⁷ Anon., *De uirtutibus*, XVII, XIX, XXIV, XXVIII, XXIX, XXX, XXXI and XXXII, ed. Missone, pp. 268–9, 269, 272, 275, 275–6, 276–7, 277, 277–8.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* XXIV, XXVIII, XXIX, XXX, XXXI and XXXII, ed. Missone, pp. 272, 275, 275–6, 276–7, 277 and 277–8.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* XXVIII, XXIX and XXXII respectively, ed. Missone, pp. 275, 275–6 and 277–8. In XXXII we find the rare word *opipare*, also used by Lantfred, and the similar tale of a man foolishly running off without giving thanks and leaving his crutches behind (cf. Lantfred, *TMSS*, XXX, ed. Lapidge, p. 318).

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.* XXX, ed. Missone, pp. 276–7.

surely this presupposes that he had a guide or travelled in a group of pilgrims? As for the miracle texts, of the ones performed at Brogne, three are healing miracles, but none seem to have influenced Lantfred.¹¹¹ When we turn to the miracles performed at Deuil, however, the focus is on healing miracles: all but one, the introduction, are thaumaturgic cures.¹¹² All of these, however, seem to highlight the importance of kith and kin in assisting those in need of medical help so while Lantfred does seem to have borrowed the premises of chapters VI and IX,¹¹³ his apparent indifference to human aid cannot have come from here even though the *MSED* does extol the superiority of heavenly medicine over the worldly.¹¹⁴

What of the other texts? The *Life of Glodesindis*, abbess of Metz,¹¹⁵ does not look like a source for the *TMSS*, but the *Historia translationis*

¹¹¹ Anon., *MSEB*, I, II and IV, ed. Missone, pp. 280–2, 282–3 and 284–5.

¹¹² Anon., *MSED*, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, IX and X, ed. Bollandists, pp. 58–9, 59–60, 60 (for both III and IV), 60–1, 61, 61–2, 62 and 63–4.

¹¹³ In VI a blind woman promises to enter the monastery's service if she is cured, but, upon receiving her cure, forgets this promise and is struck down again, only to be cured later (cf. Lantfred, *TMSS*, IX, ed. Lapidge, pp. 290–2). In IX a *miles* falls off his horse. Unlike in the *TMSS*, XXXI, ed. Lapidge, pp. 318–20, he is taken to the monastery and is eventually cured there.

¹¹⁴ Anon., *MSED*, II, ed. Bollandists, pp. 58–9.

¹¹⁵ Abbot John of St Arnulf, Metz, *Vita S. Glodesindis abbatis Metensis* (BHL 3563, henceforth *VSGI*), ed. Migne, PL, CXXXVII.211–18. Glodesindis does, however, shun her family when they pressure her to marry (*VSGI*, IV, ed. Migne, 251) but this belongs to an older, different trope from the early centuries of Christianity where both men and women fled from their parents who wanted them to marry and enter the secular life in order to dedicate themselves to Christ. We see the motif repeated in Abbot Berner's *Translatio S. Hunegundis* (henceforth *TSH*), II, ed. Migne, PL, CXXXVII.61–72, at col. 63; here the woman is not actually the saint herself but a woman especially devoted to the protection of her relics.

S. Glodesindis abbatissae Metensis might well have been.¹¹⁶ Like Swithun, Glodesindis reveals herself through a divine revelation to be buried just outside the church and is subsequently translated to a new location inside the church.¹¹⁷ John is quick to tell us about the *multa infirmantium curatio* that takes place following the translation and,¹¹⁸ having compared her integrity to that of Bede's Cuthbert (!), almost every miracle story is curative. There are some similarities to be found in the details too.¹¹⁹ There is even one miracle where an unfortunate man with rather extreme halitosis is shunned by all those around him, but this is the only time when a sick person receives no help and it is made clear that his breath was simply too unpleasant to go near.¹²⁰ Given that the condition is hardly life-threatening or excessively debilitating it still cannot be compared to the way in which the blind women of the Isle of Wight are treated.

Both Abbot Berner's *Translatio et miracula S. Hunegundis* and the anonymous *Miracula S. Gorgonii* provide us with further examples of works that were written within the tradition that Lantfred may have

¹¹⁶ Abbot John of St Arnulf, Metz, *Historia translationis S. Glodesindis abbatissae Metensis* (BHL 3564, henceforth *TSGI*), ed. Migne, PL, CXXXVII.217–40.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.* IV–V, ed. Migne, cols. 221–2.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* VI, ed. Migne, col. 222: 'the great healing of those who were ill'.

¹¹⁹ For instance, the man who, having been carried in on a litter, leaves it there (though he goes and gives thanks—as the writer of the *De uirtutibus* and Lantfred think is right): *TSGI*, XXXIV, ed. Migne, col. 235; the two instances of people being cured having commissioned candles to be made to be burnt in honour of the saint (*TSGI*, XXXVI, ed. Migne, col. 236; cf. Lantfred, *TMSS*, XXXII, ed. Lapidge, pp. 320–2) and a man who does not hold the promise he made in return for his daughter's cure and she falls ill again until she fulfils the vow (*TSGI*, XXXVII, ed. Migne, col. 236; cf. Lantfred, *TMSS*, IX, ed. Lapidge, pp. 290–2).

¹²⁰ John, *TSGI*, XVI, ed. Migne, cols. 228–9. Abbot John also reminds his readers that Jesus never spurned anyone because He found their condition too revolting.

turned to when composing his *TMSS*, but neither shows any convincing signs that Lantfred may have had the very text in mind when he was writing.¹²¹ Sigehard's *De miraculis S. Maximini* does not appear to have been an influence on the Swithun dossier's approach to kith and kin either as it mainly focuses on the saint's efforts to prevent noblemen despoiling the monastery's property.¹²²

So what does this all tell us? The Swithun dossier was definitely a product of the tenth century's renewed focus on the translations of saints and the miracles needed to promote them successfully in what must have been a very crowded milieu. Lantfred did not, however, simply make a heap of all that he found. There is a discernable shift in his attitude towards the value of kith and kin for the infirm and it clearly warrants attention as well as in his decision to focus almost exclusively on just one thaumaturgical power.

The Anglo-Saxon Legal and Social Tradition

The importance of kith and kin to the Anglo-Saxons has often been noted in Old English poetry—such as *Beowulf*, *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer* and *Wulf and Eadwacer*.¹²³ Most evidence for how the ties of kith

¹²¹ Berner, *De translatione et miracula corporis S. Hunegundis uirginis apud Viromanduos* (BHL 4047–9), ed. Migne, PL, CXXXVII.61–7 (for the *translatio*) and 67–72 (for the *miracula*); Anon., *Miracula S. Gorgonii*, ed. G. H. Pertz, MGH SS 4 (Hannover, 1841), 238–47.

¹²² Sigehard, *De miraculis S. Maximini* (henceforth *MSMax*), ed. Migne, PL, CXXXIII.967–78. It does, however, use the trope of seeking celestial help once all mundane avenues had been shut off: e.g. in Sigehard, *MSMax*, XV, ed. Migne, col. 974: 'omnique humano prosus desperato auxilio, Maximini opem expetere statuunt'. Furthermore, the text—in the same chapter even—displays a great deal of sympathy for the common man, especially when they come into conflict with secular authorities. For more on this text, see Nightingale, *Monasteries and Patrons*, pp. 174–84.

¹²³ See for example, H. Magennis, *Images of Community in Old English Poetry*, CSASE 18 (Cambridge, 1996).

and kin bound people together is drawn from legal material, primarily law-codes and wills. Here, however, there are still obstacles between the scholar and a true understanding of the operations of kinship. Our sources do not surrender as much information as one would like, for, as Loyn put it, 'society is not articulate on its routine commonplaces. What is known by all is explained by none'.¹²⁴ This problem has not prevented scholars—Loyn included—attempting to evaluate what evidence we do have; necessarily, the focus is often on feud and other transgressional acts and situations where the status quo has been disturbed requiring the law to intervene.¹²⁵ A further problem has been the fact that we have no concrete evidence for who could actually be counted as Ego's kith and kin. There does, however, now seem to be a general agreement that one's kindred, even in legal jurisdiction, was 'variable according to many factors, including biological chance, patterns of residence, ease of communication and possibly personal preference [...] We can set no precise limits to the *mægd*'.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ H. R. Loyn, 'Kinship in Anglo-Saxon England', *ASE* 3 (1974), 197–209, at p. 198.

¹²⁵ See, for example, L. Lancaster, 'Kinship in Anglo-Saxon Society', *Brit. Jnl of Sociology* 9 (1958), 230–50 and 359–77 and the work that prompted her study: Radcliffe-Brown's introduction in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, ed. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and D. Forde (London, 1950), esp. p. 15 where Radcliffe-Brown puts forward his understanding of Anglo-Saxon kinship; C. Fell, 'Family and Kinship', in *Women in Anglo-Saxon England: and the Impact of 1066*, C. Fell with C. Clark and E. Williams (London, 1984), pp. 74–88; P. R. Hyams, *Rancor and Reconciliation in Medieval England* (Ithaca, NY, 2003).

¹²⁶ Lancaster, 'Kinship in Anglo-Saxon Society', pp. 233 and 239. Lancaster also argued for the importance of 'friends' in Ego's social network on pp. 243 (referring to friends standing surety at a betrothal (see D. Whitlock, ed., *English Historical Documents*, I, 2nd ed. (London, 1979), no. 50, pp. 467–8 for the text in question) and 375. See also Radcliffe-Brown, *African Systems of Kinship*, p. 15; Loyn, 'Kinship in Anglo-Saxon England', p. 198; Fell, *Women*, p. 88 (though

Despite early commentators' reservations on the continuing importance of kinship in the face of the perceived growth of royal power and guilds,¹²⁷ it seems that kith and kin were extremely important throughout the Anglo-Saxon period.¹²⁸ It is possible to discern its significance in several areas of law. There is evidence for the use of expulsion from a sib-group as a punishment and at least one king tried to protect people from being drawn into feuds, which highlights both the value of family to someone involved in a feud and the close-knit ties of a kin group where people could apparently be sucked into a feud against their will.¹²⁹

beware an apparent overestimation of the significance of formulaic salutations in letters) and Hyams, *Rancor*, pp. 22, n. 67 and 23 (where he writes, 'prudence appears to have dictated the preparation of alliances extending beyond the bonds of "blood" kinship') and 26–31.

¹²⁷ Lancaster, 'Kinship in Anglo-Saxon Society', p. 375 and Loyn, 'Kinship in Anglo-Saxon England', pp. 199 and 209: '[i]t is [...] generally accepted that the dominant trend in late Old English society is one by which the authority of the secular lord increases at the expense of the kindred' and 'the formal institutional life of the kin was atrophied, if not stifled at birth, by the strength of territorial lordship and Christian kingship'.

¹²⁸ See Hyams, *Rancor*, pp. 71–110, where he argues for the continued importance of kith and kin in late Anglo-Saxon society. Similarly, Patrick Wormald suggests that there was a synthesis of the two, rather than one ousting the other: 'Where Edgar had stressed the role of community sureties, and previous kings had dwelt on kindreds or lords, Æthelred now sought to integrate the activity of lord and neighbourhood', *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century, I: Legislation and its Limits* (Oxford, 1999), p. 328. Their potency can be discerned in the laws of Athelstan where he attempts to legislate against kindreds which have become so powerful that they can resist the authority of the royal representatives: III Athelstan 6, ed. Liebermann, I, 170, trans. Attenborough, p. 145 and IV Athelstan 3, ed. Liebermann, I, 171, trans. Attenborough, p. 147.

¹²⁹ Hyams, *Rancor*, pp. 23 and 28, where, referring to II Edward, VIII Æthelred and I Cnut, he states that 'public expulsion from a friendship group was

For the purposes of the current investigation, however, the provisions made for the more vulnerable members of society—widows and orphans, the disabled and foreigners who had left their family groups behind—is of great interest. While we can of course never be sure about how closely the laws were followed, they do manifest a genuine concern for their well-being and there is sufficient evidence to show that being bereft of kin was a serious handicap in itself.¹³⁰ So what sorts of measures were put in place? Widows could expect the aid of their late husband's kin as well as a compensation package (including a cow, and ox and money!) and exemption from certain taxes.¹³¹ As for children, Fell was relatively downbeat on the

amongst the harshest of sanctions, which even the king reserved for the most serious offenses such as breach of one's oath and pledge'; see also Loyn, 'Kinship in Anglo-Saxon England', pp. 200–2 and Lancaster, 'Kinship in Anglo-Saxon Society', pp. 234 and 373–7 on the importance of belonging to a kindred. On opting out of feud, see Hyams, *Rancor*, p. 82 where he describes II Edmund as a 'pioneering effort to minimize bloodshed and the spread of feud'; Loyn, 'Kinship in Anglo-Saxon England', p. 203 and Lancaster, 'Kinship in Anglo-Saxon Society', p. 371. It is worth pointing out, however, that the Laws of Alfred had already taken a step in this direction, whereby a man could fight for his lord in a feud without becoming liable and embroiled in it himself: Alfred 42.3, ed. Liebermann, I, 76–7, trans. Attenborough, p. 85.

¹³⁰ Lancaster, 'Kinship in Anglo-Saxon Society', p. 374 and Loyn, 'Kinship in Anglo-Saxon England', p. 102, where both scholars detail how efforts were made to ensure that everyone had a legal guarantor, which could even be the king if no one else was available. Athelstan also decreed that his reeves had an obligation to help the destitute and needy; see his 'Ordinance relating to Charities', ed. Liebermann, I, 148, trans. Attenborough, p. 127.

¹³¹ Lancaster, 'Kinship in Anglo-Saxon Society', pp. 241–3 and 360; VI Athelstan 2, ed. Liebermann, I, 174–5, trans. Attenborough, p. 159, announces that widows were to be exempt from an annual tax raised to provide compensation for stolen property and so forth 'ad nostrum commune commodum': 'omnis homo denarium suum, qui habet pecus XXX denarios

prospects of orphaned, illegitimate and step-children, but did offer a glimmer of hope that suggests the Anglo-Saxons felt a measure of responsibility towards children that were not directly their own.¹³² The Anglo-Saxons also owed duties towards members of their kin who were insane, deaf or dumb.¹³³ Indeed, Alfred's laws stipulated that the fathers of those who were born (nothing is mentioned of those who have since become that way) deaf and dumb, and therefore unable to confess their sins, had to pay a compensation for their sins on their behalf.¹³⁴

In light of the legal focus on the importance of kinship, some of the stories in Lantfred's *TMSS* make for uneasy reading, not least that episode concerning the abandoned blind women.¹³⁵ The legal

ualens, exceptis pauperibus uiduis que nullum in eo forisfactum (nullam in eo culpam) habent nec terram aliquam'.

¹³² Fell, *Women*, pp. 83–4. She cites one mid-eleventh-century will of one Ketel, who evidently regarded his stepdaughter as important as his sisters. Wormald pointed out that laws at either end of the Anglo-Saxon era—from the reigns of Hlothhere and Eadric at one end and Edward the Confessor at the other—sought to make arrangements for orphans (but noted the odd context in which the Kentish clause is found: in between pronouncements on theft), *Making of English Law*, pp. 102 and 408.

¹³³ Lancaster, 'Kinship in Anglo-Saxon Society', p. 369 and Loyn, 'Kinship in Anglo-Saxon England', p. 205.

¹³⁴ Alfred 14, ed. Liebermann, I, 59: 'Si quis surdus sit aut mutus natus, ut non possit peccata sua negare uel confiteri, emendet pater eius forisfacta sua'; trans. Attenborough, p. 71.

¹³⁵ There is another episode in which someone, this time a demoniac woman, is abandoned by her family: Lantfred, *TMSS*, XXXIII and Wulfstan, *NMSS*, ii.XVI, ed. Lapidge, pp. 332, 534–6, where, at p. 536, l. 874, Wulfstan uses a verb, *exponunt*, from the same root as Lantfred had done in *TMSS*, V, ed. Lapidge, p. 288, l. 7, *essent expositae*. In Wulfstan's corresponding passage to *TMSS*, V—*NMSS*, i.VIII, ed. Lapidge, pp. 466–8, at p. 466, l. 1138—he used *ponunt*.

perspective offers further insight to another aspect of the care of kith and kin, this time by its notable absence. Kindred were obliged—when permitted—to provide victuals for prisoners,¹³⁶ yet every episode but one that deals with prisoners in Lantfred's work fails to mention any intercession by the kin.¹³⁷ We should not, however, forget that many of the episodes portray textbook examples of how to care for one's kith and kin. The legal comparanda make it look as if Lantfred might have been offering both examples to emulate and to shun, prompting readers to wonder what was odd about the behaviour of the characters in his work and ponder whether they were conducting themselves as they ought to.

How do Lantfred and Wulfstan's text compare to the perceived picture of practical Anglo-Saxon health care? Due to a paucity of source material, most studies have focused on monastic 'hospitals' from the twelfth century onwards, only referring back to Anglo-Saxon precedents in passing.¹³⁸ These later records do, however,

¹³⁶ Lancaster, 'Kinship in Anglo-Saxon Society', p. 369 and Loyn, 'Kinship in Anglo-Saxon England', p. 205.

¹³⁷ Lantfred, *TMSS*, XXVII and XXXIV, ed. Lapidge, pp. 314–16 and 322–4. Cf. Wulfstan, *NMSS*, ii.X and ii.XVII, ed. Lapidge, pp. 518–26 and 536–8, who follows Lantfred in this. This holds in all episodes where slaves are shackled (*TMSS*, VI, XX, XXXVIII and XXXIX and *NMSS*, i.IX, ii.II, ii.XXI and ii.XXII, ed. Lapidge, pp. 288–90, 302–4, 330–2, 332, 468, 496–502, 548 and 548–50. The one exception is *TMSS*, XXV and *NMSS*, ii.VIII, ed. Lapidge, pp. 308–10 and 508–14, where a certain nobleman, Flodoald, tries to save his slave from certain death—as do the slave's kinsmen when Flodoald alerts them to the crisis.

¹³⁸ P. Fleming, 'The Medical Aspects of the Mediaeval Monastery in England', *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine* 22 (1929), 771–82, an article which clearly influenced the Rt Hon. Lord Amulree's own 'Monastic Infirmaries', in *The Evolution of Hospitals in Britain*, ed. F. N. L. Poynter (London, 1964), pp. 11–26; N. Orme, 'Sufferings of the Clergy: Illness and Old Age in Exeter Diocese, 1300–1540', in *Life, Death and the Elderly: Historical Perspectives*, Stud. in the Social

suggest that blindness was one of, if not the, major medical concern in medieval England; Exeter's clerical infirmary recorded that blindness accounted for 23% of all identified conditions.¹³⁹ If we can extrapolate a little and assume that it must have similarly blighted Anglo-Saxon England, it is little wonder that Lantfred played upon prevailing fears surrounding it.¹⁴⁰ In recent years, Anglo-Saxon medicine has received more attention, and what is more, scholars are increasingly willing to examine medieval medicine as a whole on its own level without deriding its 'magical' elements.¹⁴¹ It has been

Hist. of Medicine, ed. M. Pelling and R. M. Smith (London, 1991), pp. 62–73 and B. Herve, *Living and Dying in England 1100–1540: the Monastic Experience* (Oxford, 1993).

¹³⁹ Orme, 'Sufferings of the Clergy', p. 71. One of the next biggest problems appears to have been something noted as 'tibia', which is thought to be something such as varicose veins from lots of standing or housemaid's knee from lots of kneeling.

¹⁴⁰ On the other hand, at least one Anglo-Saxon medical text (the *Lacnunga*), has more remedies for skin conditions and coughs/lung diseases than blindness; A. Meaney, 'The Practice of Medicine in England about the Year 1000', *Social History of Medicine* 13 (2000), 221–37, at p. 230. More remedies does not, however, necessarily indicate that there were indeed more people suffering from more ailments related to those conditions. Plus, see M. L. Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, CSASE 7 (Cambridge, 1993), 11: 'it is clear from the space given in the *Leechbooks* to ailments of the eyes that these were common and serious'.

¹⁴¹ For example, see Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, esp. pp. 24 and 186, where he writes: 'Poor as Anglo-Saxon medical treatment may have been by our standards, it was probably as good as the best found elsewhere in the Western world [...] Never suppose your ancestors to be less intelligent than yourself. There were great men before Agamemnon and we may not look very intelligent to our progeny a millennium hence'. Lord Amulree, who wrote in 'Monastic Infirmaries', p. 13: 'there is rarely any mention [in the infirmary records of Westminster, 1297–1536] of the disease itself, so we learn nothing of what the monks suffered: not that any medical records, if they existed, would help a great

necessary to take an inter-disciplinary approach, for instance looking at burial grounds in order to determine where people were buried and consequently whether Anglo-Saxon monasteries cared for the laity.¹⁴² There appears to be a consensus that medicine was not a profession necessarily confined to monks (there are not thought to have been many female doctors),¹⁴³ but does seem to have been a trade that required training and expertise.¹⁴⁴ Monasteries did indeed, though, provide care not only for their own sick but for the laity too.¹⁴⁵ The precise extent of health care administered at home is thought to comprise the greatest part but is, at the same time, the hardest to measure; it is assumed, though, that the 'investment of time and effort [in looking after the sick] seems to be nothing unusual, and we

deal, so empirical and magical was much of late medieval medicine', would have done well to heed this.

¹⁴² Lee, 'Body and Soul' and 'Changing Faces: Leprosy in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Conversion and Colonization in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. C. E. Karkov and N. Howe (Tempe, AZ, 2006), pp. 59–81.

¹⁴³ Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, pp. 19–24 (at p. 22, he discusses that while there is no evidence for female Anglo-Saxon doctors, they surely existed); Lee, 'Body and Soul', p. 5; Meaney, 'Practice of Medicine', pp. 221–4 (at p. 224, n. 27, she briefly discusses the lack of female medics; there do seem to have been female medics a century or two later as has been noted in the Westminster records: Harvey, *Living and Dying, passim*). The desire to show the saints' superiority over lay physicians in Merovingian hagiography, noted above in Flint, 'The Early Medieval "Medicus"', presupposes their existence on the Continent at least.

¹⁴⁴ D.I.Y. trepanning, for instance, would not be advisable, one assumes. Lee, 'Body and Soul', p. 8 and Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, pp. 169–73.

¹⁴⁵ Lee, 'Body and Soul'; Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, 25–9; Meaney, 'Practice of Medicine', p. 224–7; Fleming, 'Medical Aspects', p. 772. It was deemed part of a monastery's charitable work: Harvey, *Living and Dying*, esp. pp. 12 and 16; Harvey shows how twelfth-century monks of Abingdon continued to observe Æthelwold's stipulations.

should assume that the sick were cared for by their Anglo-Saxon peers'.¹⁴⁶

CONCLUSION

So what does all this tell us? Lantfred and Wulfstan himself seemed to put little stock in the bonds of family, showing how God would forgive even the worst crimes against family members if the perpetrator was truly repentant in situations where mere mortals might never be able to forgive. Their indifference is also visible in the distribution of the miracles: the numbers of miracles where people are helped by family members, friends, both family and friends or by no one are distributed fairly evenly. There are, however, only two instances where the disabled are helped by complete strangers.¹⁴⁷ These are *TMSS* II and XXXVII, where a moneyer takes a hunchback into his home for a good six months and a young boy guides a crippled man to Swithun's tomb.¹⁴⁸ Both of these are in contrast to *TMSS* III,¹⁴⁹ where the man who has been struck down by the Furies is left on the side of the road by some strangers wandering past on their way into town. In that miracle story, the fact that they do not stop to help is not a point for criticism; like the relatives in the story of the women on the Isle of Wight, this is quite acceptable to Lantfred and Wulfstan. After all, while they do not carry the man into

¹⁴⁶ Lee, 'Body and Soul'. See also Harvey, *Living and Dying*, p. 72: 'sickness in the Middle Ages normally ran its course at home, where it altogether eludes our analytical probes'. See also, Meaney, 'Practice of Medicine', p. 224.

¹⁴⁷ I do not include cases where people are aided by other people in equivalent predicaments, such as the dumb man who guides the blind women from the Isle of Wight.

¹⁴⁸ Cf. Wulfstan, *NMSS*, i.II and ii.XX, ed. and Lapidge, pp. 266–74, 330, 420–34 and 546–8.

¹⁴⁹ Lantfred, *TMSS*, III and Wulfstan, *NMSS*, i.III, ed. Lapidge, pp. 274–86 and 434–48.

town themselves, they do—at the partially-paralysed man's request—go and tell his kin that he needs help. Over the course of the two works, help was obviously not expected to be forthcoming from strangers and these two miracles, which sit at each end of the miracle collections have elements in them which a reader should note. *TMSS* II attempts to demonstrate the value of helping those in need by showing how the moneyer is rewarded for his efforts. He had previously lost a scabbard, studded with gems, and feared that he would never find it again, but Lantfred reminds us that the 'conditore Deo qui renumerat omnibus propter nomen suum bona facientibus',¹⁵⁰ and because of the love and care he showed in taking the hunchback in as if he were Christ Himself,¹⁵¹ he finds it again. The rest of the *TMSS* offers example after example of how God repays those who humbly seek help from Him and reciprocate with the appropriate thanks, but this is the only place where helping out one's fellow man is shown to bring about not only their cure but one's own tangible reward. It seems as if neither Lantfred nor Wulfstan thought that such behaviour was particularly likely, reinforcing Christina Lee's idea that most caring for the sick was undertaken by peers,¹⁵² but at the same time both wished to show its value.

¹⁵⁰ Lantfred, *TMSS*, III, ed. Lapidge, *Swithun*, p. 270, ll. 58–9: 'God the Creator, Who repays all those who perform good deeds on behalf of His name'.

¹⁵¹ Wulfstan, *NMSS*, i.II, ed. Lapidge, p. 422, ll. 220–224: 'Qui tanto curuum dilexit amore misellum, / pro Christi hunc pietate fouens, ut nulla sine illo / sumeret ore libens allata alimenta nec illo / uult absente meri dulcem potare liquorem' ('The moneyer loved the wretched hunchback with such great affection, cherishing him for the love of Christ, that without him he would not willingly partake of any food served to him nor, in his absence, did he wish to drink the sweet liquor of wine').

¹⁵² Lee, 'Body and Soul'.

TMSS XXXVII presents an episode that contrasts with a specific miracle, namely *TMSS* XXIX. In the latter miracle, which of course precedes XXXVII in the text, we saw a young boy attempt to mislead a blind man because he wished to have something to eat. In XXXVII, however, the situation is virtually the same but sufficiently different. Here a crippled man is trying to make his way to Winchester and is looking for alms whereupon he bumps into one of the Old Minster's oblates, called Pippin, who recommends that he seek spiritual rather than worldly sustenance. Wulfstan saw yet further potential to underline the parallels. In his metrical version the man states that he is specifically looking for some food, to which Pippin says he can find two-fold sustenance (which has the added bonus of showing the reader that the monastery could be relied on for alms too) at Swithun's tomb. So here, then, we have two boys of similar age acting in completely opposite ways; the boy in *TMSS* XXIX may not be punished, but—as noted above—the Winchester authors do pass judgement on his character.

Both of these miracles—*TMSS* II and XXXVII—have something in common: a distinctly Benedictine element. In XXXVII it is obvious, the boy is an oblate of the reformed Minster and the cure is to be found at Swithun's tomb. In II, however, we are helped when we turn to the *RSB* and the *Regularis Concordia*, which detail how strangers are to be received 'like Christ, for He is going to say "I was a stranger and you welcomed Me"'.¹⁵³ To Lantfred, a Benedictine

¹⁵³ Benedict of Nursia, *RSB*, LIII.1, ed. R. Hanslik, *Benedicti Regula*, CSEL 75 (Vienna, 1960), 123: 'Omnes superuenientes hospites tamquam Christus suscipiantur, quia ipse dicturus est: "Hospis fui et suscepistis me"'; the Rule quotes Matt. XXV.35. The same chapter also states: 'Pauperum et peregrinorum maxime susceptioni cura sollicitate exhibeatur, quia in ipsis magis Christus suscipitur; nam diuitum terror ipse sibi exigit honorem', *RSB*, LIII.15, ed. Hanslik, pp. 124–5. See also, *Regularis Concordia*, X.63, ed. Symons, p. 62.

monk's relation to someone was of no consequence to what he ought to do when faced with someone in need. This ties in with the unambiguous message that salvation always lies in turning from worldly to spiritual considerations, another plainly monastic point-of-view. As a result, in the *TMSS* there is little bias as to the number of stories concerning helpful kinsmen as opposed to, say, helpful friends. Lantfred wished to focus on the plaintiff's relationship with God—evident by the fact that many cures are earned through solitary vigils at the side of His intercessor's tomb. His desire to concentrate on this direct relationship may have influenced his choice of miraculous events. In picking, predominantly, examples of blind, deaf, dumb and paralysed people, he reflected some of the major health concerns that the Anglo-Saxons faced.¹⁵⁴ But he practically ignored one of hagiography's staple healing miracles, that of the

'When poor strangers arrive, the abbot and such of the brethren as he shall choose shall render to them the service of the Maundy in accordance with the ordinance of the Rule. Wherefore whenever he can, the father himself, no less than each of the brethren, shall be the most zealous in providing every kind service in the guesthouse [...] All other duties [...] the abbot shall fulfil most faithfully and with gladness of heart; nor let him who is the vicar of the eternal Christ be slow and cold in the guesthouse of the monastery nor delay or neglect his ministrations to the poor while in management of transitory affairs he shows himself swift and fervent in his desire to serve the rich. For the rest, wayfarers shall on their departure be provided with a supply of victuals according to the means of the house'. On the reception of guests in the Rule, see J. Kerr, *Monastic Hospitality: the Benedictines in England, c. 1070–c. 1250*, Stud. in the Hist. of Med. Religion 32 (Woodbridge, 2007), 24–6, 29–32, 94–7 and 199–201.

¹⁵⁴ Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, pp. 11–14, 134–5 and 157–8; at p. 13, however, I am not entirely convinced by his interpretation of people whose 'feet contract to his hams', for he thinks this refers to people with broken thighs but it seems to echo descriptions of paralysis or contraction in the legs seen in the *TMSS*, *NMSS* and other miracle collections.

demoniac. I think that the best explanation for this is that it detracts from the closeness of the aforementioned relationship. The demoniac's cure—as demonstrated in my survey of the hagiographical comparanda—rests upon the intervention of others (whether friends or family) to take the possessed person to the shrine and ask for help. The demoniac cannot do this himself as he is not in his right mind and is unable to control his thoughts. The need to be conscious might stem from the fact that Lantfred equated sin and disease, and he makes this clear very early in the *TMSS*:

Commonetur ut medicam requirat, quatinus se infirmum prius peccatis confiteatur et intelligat; et sic demum sanitatem animae percipiat, quoniam omnipotens angelorum creator et hominum non desiderat mortem delinquentium sed expectat nefandarum in melius conuersionem mentium, ne cogatur districtum exercere iudicium quod impiis supplicium confert sempiternum.¹⁵⁵

In order to admit his sin, the diseased person would have to have control over his mind.

Lantfred, however, was coming from one of Western Europe's most devout centres of Benedictine monasticism and his approach does not seem to have quite suited the Winchester Minster's tastes as Wulfstan's reworking suggests. Wulfstan appears to cater significantly more to 'traditional' Anglo-Saxon attitudes towards the high value of kith and kin in some of the subtle changes he makes. The contrast between *TMSS* XXX and *NMSS* ii.XIII exemplifies this point well. In Lantfred's account, which appears modelled on a similar story in

¹⁵⁵ Lantfred, *TMSS*, III, ed. Lapidge, pp. 282–4, ll. 125–9: 'He is warned that he would require medicine, so that he might first admit and realise that he was diseased through sin; and thus at length he could obtain the health of his soul, since the omnipotent creator of angels and men does not desire the death of sinners but anticipates the conversion of wicked hearts for the better, so that He will not be compelled to exercise that severe judgement which confers eternal punishment on the wicked'.

the *Miracles* attributed to St Eugenius (mentioned above), a crippled man makes his own way to Winchester but when he is cured he runs away without rendering due thanks but in Wulfstan's he is taken to Swithun's tomb by his friends and after receiving his cure takes care to give thanks to Swithun and God: perhaps Wulfstan wants us to understand that this was due to his friends' good influence. Ultimately, kith and kin were not important in the eyes of either Lantfred or Wulfstan, but the Anglo-Saxon monk was prepared to accept that their authority could still appeal to those whom this work was designed to bring to Swithun's tomb: the ordinary man, the poor and the destitute.¹⁵⁶ Obviously, though, the Old Minster's coffers would not be filled by such people alone and both Lantfred and Swithun display a business-minded pragmatism that reaches out to show the rich that, while their retinues might carry them here and there and their wealth might hire scores of doctors, Swithun's powers were second to none.

¹⁵⁶ The one group of people that neither author mentions, perhaps surprisingly, is lepers. Given that one would expect that lepers might have had less recourse to help from family, surely they would have made perfect subject material for the two authors? Furthermore, lepers, as C. Lee points out (see n. 137), were a well-known hagiographical trope. Indeed, a twelfth-century hagiographer found the text lacking in this respect and when he came to update the dossier (and turn the *NMSS* back into prose), he added the story of a leper, 'who through St Swithun's aid, was cured of his leprosy to the extent that his leprous skin fell to his feet like a cloak, revealing a pristine body', Lapidge, *Swithun*, p. 70.

'The Matter of Hrafnista'¹

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I. INTRODUCTION

Ketils saga hængs, *Grims saga loðinkinna*, *Örvar-Odds saga* and *Áns saga bogsveigis* are four sagas related by their focus on the men of Hrafnista and are likely to be orally derived narratives. This paper presents evidence that there was a tradition surrounding the men of Hrafnista external in some way to that preserved in the written sagas. Vésteinn Ólason appeals to the scholarly consensus that 'The oldest among these sagas must be based on oral tradition,'² and goes on to comment that although the stories surrounding Ketill hængr and Grímr loðinkinni are undoubtedly literary works:

¹ The title is borrowed from S. Mitchell, *Heroic Sagas and Ballads*, Myth and Poetics (Ithaca, 1991), p. 107, where he points out that the *formaldarsögur* have a habit of forming themselves into cycles based on a location; another example he gives is 'The Matter of Gautland', formed of *Gautreks saga*, *Hrólf's saga Gautrekssonar* and *Bósa saga*. The title is derived from Henry Goddard Leach's comment in *Angevin Britain and Scandinavia*, Harvard Stud. in Comparative Lit. 6 (Cambridge, MA, 1921), 162, that the *formaldarsögur* 'correspond in Scandinavia to the Arthurian cycle in Britain, and the Carolingian in France, and may be said to constitute the Matter of the North'. T. H. Tulinius's book, *The Matter of the North: The Rise of Literary Fiction in Thirteenth-Century Iceland*, The Viking Collection 13 (Odense, 2002), is similarly named, although he says himself that he uses the term more broadly than Leach (see p. 12, n. 1).

² 'The Marvellous North and Authorial Presence in the Icelandic *formaldarsaga*', in *Contexts of Pre-Novel Narrative: the European Tradition*, ed. R. Eriksen, Approaches to Semiotics 114 (Berlin, 1994), 101–34, at p. 101.

It is nevertheless overwhelmingly likely that the stories about the main figures are based on an oral narrative tradition. According to the *Landnámabók* [The Book of Settlements], preserved in 13th century versions but based on older records, many prominent families in Iceland claimed descent from the men of Hrafnista. In the genealogies there presented we find our protagonists mentioned and also the use of nick-names such as “half-troll” and “hairy-cheek”. This supports the theory that our heroes have a background in an oral tradition, and even though their sagas may include fictional material from the time they were written down, they must be seen as products of the traditional culture of Viking-Age society.³

Simply using the evidence of *Landnámabók* and the reoccurrence of nicknames is not however sufficient basis on which to claim that the stories come from oral tradition. Following Vésteinn’s suggestion that *Ketils saga hængs* and *Gríms saga loðinkinna* are rooted in oral tradition, here I have expanded the investigation to include the remaining sagas of the *Hrafnistumenn* in order to build up a broader picture of oral tradition in the sagas.

The methodology employed to reach this conclusion looks at how the written sources handle two groups of components: firstly I consider narratives about the characters, their descendants and the objects they are associated with in order to try and determine whether they show any evidence of the existence of an overall tradition about the Hrafnista men. The second way I approach the material is to look at whether the sagas might preserve a memory of things that may have actually happened. In the *Hrafnistumenn* sagas, this is mainly in the description of places and travel routes, and also of the food supply of Hálogaland, since these are the most consistently described elements across the sagas. Thus, rather than focusing on the overall

³ Vésteinn Ólason, ‘Marvellous North’, p. 107.

structure of the sagas,⁴ I instead gather related elements and episodes.⁵

My comparison of these individual episodes across the four sagas shows that attributes and episodes seem to have been drawn by these sagas and others from a common source unlikely to be a written one. The possibility of textual borrowing rather than oral tradition is also duly considered, particularly in relation to *Áns saga bogsveigis*, which, as I will discuss, has sometimes been seen as not properly belonging to the *Hrafnistumannasögur*. The presupposition of this kind of analysis is similar to the theory proposed by Carol Clover of an ‘immanent whole’ of a saga. Clover argues that existing sagas functioned in their oral form as parts of larger stories, which, although theoretically existent, were never told from beginning to end.⁶ It follows that such an immanent saga must be composed of a large body of material from which the teller of the tale was free to select. Necessarily, as the material circulated in as many versions as there were tellings, this tradition was never static. This must be borne in mind when

⁴ For discussion about the structure of the *fornaldarsögur* see R. Righter-Gould, ‘The *Fornaldar sögur Norðurlanda*: a Structural Analysis’, *JS* 52 (1980), 423–41. Joaquín Martínez Pizarro has written about the structure of the sagas of the men of Hrafnista and their use of the Bear’s son folktale structure more specifically in ‘Transformations of the Bear’s son Tale in the Sagas of the Hrafnistumenn’, *Arv* 32–3 (1976–7), 263–81, and Hans Jacob Orning investigates the structure of the sagas in relation to the opportunity for recovering something of Old Norse culture in the Late Middle Ages from their contents in ‘The Magical Reality of the Late Middle Ages: Exploring the World of the *fornaldarsögur*’, *Scandinavian Jnl of Hist.* 35 (2010), 3–20.

⁵ For more about this approach and methods to handle orality in Old Norse-Icelandic sources more generally, see Gísli Sigurðsson, ‘Methodologies for the Study of the Oral in Medieval Iceland’, in *Medieval Insular Literature between the Oral and the Written II: Continuity of Transmission*, ed. H. L. C. Tristram, *Script Oralia* 97 (Tübingen, 1997), 177–92, esp. pp. 187–8.

⁶ ‘The Long Prose Form’, *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* 101 (1986), 10–39.

attempting to investigate any overall tradition of the *Hrafnistumenn*: by its nature, the tradition will maintain fluidity rather than conformity.

As Gísli Sigurðsson has demonstrated in his study of oral tradition in the *Vínland sagas*, it is inappropriate to reject *Íslendingasögur* as potential carriers of accurate information about the past simply because they contain fabulous episodes.⁷ This is not to say that all saga narrative presented in a realistic mode should be considered as historical, but rather that there is a latent possibility that the fictive elements of the text may be constructed around a kernel of truth; in the case of the *Vínland sagas*, Gísli establishes that the travel directions presented in the sagas reconstruct a viable and geographically correct map of areas of Greenland and Canada where the saga protagonists likely went.⁸ Likewise in the *fornaldarsögur*, folkloric motifs and plainly fictive and legendary material abounds: Örvar-Oddr cannot possibly have lived for three hundred years, for example. In the following analysis the structures of the sagas are of less interest than elements that might indicate the sagas served some function as repositories of knowledge concerning things like places, sailing routes, and what conditions travellers might expect to encounter on arrival at their destination.⁹ Information of this kind must be passed on in a saga in such a way that listeners can visualise the lands and routes mentioned, but the stories, if based on some sort of historical truth, must first have been told by people already familiar

⁷ *The Medieval Icelandic Saga and Oral Tradition: a Discourse on Method*, trans. N. Jones, Milman Parry Collection of Oral Lit. 2 (Cambridge, MA, 2004), 253–302, esp. p. 254.

⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 284–301.

⁹ Compare with Margaret Clunies Ross's comment that '[a]s interesting as the surface genealogical links between these sagas is the fact that they regularly show thematic and structural similarities', in 'The Development of Old Norse Textual Worlds: Genealogical Structure as a Principle of Literary Organisation in Early Iceland', *JEGP* 92 (1993), 372–85, at p. 384.

with the places and regions mentioned. Repeated by others without this firsthand knowledge, the places and routes yet still maintain enough meaning for both the later tellers and listeners of the stories to be able to construct mental images of the configuration of the lands,¹⁰ and this would be reinforced as Norse men, including Icelanders, continued to travel to the North in later times. This approach is of especial interest to *Örvar-Odds saga*, which has the most detailed descriptions of voyages of all the sagas of the *Hrafnistumenn*. Other elements probably present in a common tradition of the *Hrafnistumenn* can also be traced.¹¹

II. CONTINUUM OF TRADITION: FOREKNOWLEDGE IN THE HRAFNISTUMANNASÖGUR

Ketils saga hængs and *Gríms saga loðinkinna* share a similar gritty style and bear more resemblance to each other than *Örvar-Odds saga* and *Ans saga bogsveigis*, whose narratives are rather different: *Örvar-Odds saga* is packed with fantastical episodes, people and places, and the outlaw narrative, *Ans saga bogsveigis*, is, according to Shaun Hughes, dissimilar to the other three sagas.¹² However, all four sagas are structured around their various protagonists departing from Hrafnista and eventually returning, with a series of travels in between. There are several indications that the stories (not necessarily the written sagas), of especially Ketill, Grímr and Örvar-Oddr were held to form some sort of continuum and the sagas have reasonably consistent internal

¹⁰ Clunies Ross, 'Development of Old Norse Textual Worlds', p. 284.

¹¹ R. C. Boer in 'Über die Örvar-Odds saga', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* 8 (1892), 99–100, has a short list of nine motifs which crop up in one or more of the sagas of the *Hrafnistumenn*, but my approach is wider ranging.

¹² 'The Literary Antecedents of Ans saga bogsveigis', *MScand* 9 (1976), 196–235, at p. 215.

chronology. In *Ketils saga hængs*,¹³ the line of descent as traced in most of the sagas is made explicit: 'Ketill réð fyrir Hrafnistu, meðan hann lifði, en Grímr loðinkinni eptir hann. Örvar-Oddr var sonr Gríms'.¹⁴ Here, it sounds as if people are expected to be able to recognise the figure of Örvar-Oddr. Clearly in the first chapter of *Áns saga bogsveigis* there is recognition of some sort of chronology: 'Óláfr konungur var þá gamall, er hér var komit sögunni'.¹⁵ This need not be connected with any chronology external to the world of the saga (such as historical reality), but indicates a recognition that this saga falls at a particular point in 'time'. *Örvar-Odds saga* begins by recapitulating (and adding to) the story of the union of Grímr's parents and by mentioning the marriage of Grímr and Lofthæna, even though both anecdotes have already been adequately narrated in *Gríms saga loðinkinna*. This indicates continuum in the tradition of the story tradition as a whole, rather than of written texts forming something like a modern series.

Next, the link in the fictive world of the Hrafnista story between Hallbjörn, Ketill, Örvar-Oddr and Án must be examined. There was an established tradition that Hallbjörn hálftröll was the son of Úlfr hinn óarga and that they came from Hrafnista. Right at the beginning of *Egils saga*, Hallbjörn í Hrafnistu is mentioned as the son of Úlfr and

¹³ All quotations from *Ketils saga hængs*, *Gríms saga loðinkinna*, *Örvar-Odds saga* and *Áns saga bogsveigis* are taken from *Fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda*, ed. Guðni Jónsson and Bjarni Vilhjálmsson, 3 vols. (Reykjavík, 1943–4), I: *Ketils saga hængs*, pp. 245–66; *Gríms saga loðinkinna*, pp. 269–80; *Örvar-Odds saga*, pp. 283–399; and *Áns saga bogsveigis*, pp. 403–32. References to these sagas in the text which give a chapter and page number are to this edition. All translations are my own unless marked otherwise; I have sacrificed elegance for a more literal rendering of the Old Norse into English.

¹⁴ ch. 5, p. 266: 'Ketill ruled over Hrafnista while he lived, and Grímr loðinkinni after him. Örvar-Oddr was the son of Grímr'.

¹⁵ p. 403: 'King Óláfr was old at the point at which the story takes up'.

said to have a sister Hallbera and be the father of Ketill hængr.¹⁶ This information is used to provide the genealogical context for Úlfr, Hallbera's son. It is likely not a coincidence that Úlfr hinn óarga, Hallbjörn hálftröll, Ketill hængr and Hrafnista are mentioned to provide perspective at the beginning of a saga so great (and so old) as *Egils saga*,¹⁷ clearly these characters, their lineage and place of origin were expected to be known and respected. The same information about Hallbjörn hálftröll son of Úlfr hinn óarga is provided in the first chapter of *Ketils saga hængs*, likewise it is mentioned that Ketill, like his forbearers, 'bjó í eyjunni Hrafnistu'¹⁸ and that the island 'liggr fyrir Raumsdal',¹⁹ to place the island more specifically in a region for those not immediately familiar with its exact location.²⁰ In accordance

¹⁶ Gunnhild Røthe in *I Odins Tid: Norron Religion I Fornaldersagaene* (Hafnsfjord, 2010), p. 143, n. 612 comments that it is Egill's kinship with the trollish members of the Hrafnista family (his paternal grandfather was the son of the sister of Hallbjörn hálftröll), that is used to explain Egill's 'mørke, demoniske berserksnatur' ('dark, demonic, berserker nature'). In the sagas of Hrafnista though, Hallbjörn hálftröll's descendants seem to have escaped inheriting this nasty side, even Grímr, whose mother is also said to be some kind of *tröll*, albeit a friendly one. Marlene Ciklamini comments that Ketill's strength and his occasionally petulant behaviour towards his father are evidence of his giant heritage in 'Grettir and Ketill Hængr, the Giant-Killers', *Arv* 22 (1966), 136–55, at p. 139.

¹⁷ The oldest written evidence that remains for *Egils saga* is fragment θ from the middle of the thirteenth century. See the introduction to Sigurður Nordal's edition of *Egils Saga*, Íslenzk fornrit 2 (Reykjavík, 1933) for a general discussion on the dating of the saga. Ólafur Halldórsson, 'Nema skyld nauðsyn banni', in *Lýgisögur sagðar Sverri Tómassyni fimmtugum 5. apríl 1991* (Reykjavík, 1991), pp. 73–7, challenges the dating of the fragment.

¹⁸ p. 245: 'lived on the island of Hrafnista'.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*: 'lies off Raumsdal'.

²⁰ In fact this is a confusion of Norwegian geography; the island of Hrafnista (now Ramsta), is not this far north, and rather is off the coast of Namdalen slightly north of Trondheim. See Røthe, *I Odins Tid*, p. 143.

with custom, Ketill uses his father's name and provenance to identify himself, even in verse:

Hængr ek heiti,
kominn ór Hrafnistu,
hefnir Hallbjarnar.²¹

Characters further down the line of descent no longer need to provide that much information, the assumption being that people are expected to be familiar with the figures and deeds of their forefathers without much further explanation: Oddr simply identifies himself as 'sonr Gríms loðinkinna',²² adding 'norðan ór Noregi'²³ when outside Scandinavia and is immediately recognised as 'sá Oddr, er fór til Bjarmalands fyrir löngu'.²⁴ It is interesting to note that Örvar-Oddr is absent from mention in *Landnámabók*, especially when his father Grímr is a much-cited forbearer. This is possibly because, whereas in *Gríms saga loðinkinna* it is explicitly mentioned in passages correlative (although not word for word) to *Landnámabók* that Grímr's descendants went to Iceland and amongst them 'Hrafn, inn fyrsti lögmaðr á Íslandi',²⁵ it is stated that Ragnhildr's (Örvar-Oddr's daughter) 'ættbogi hefir þar upp vaxit'²⁶ in Hrafnista even though 'hefir margt manna frá henni komit'.²⁷ In *Gísla saga Súrssonar* (the short version)²⁸ the genealogy is not like that of the *fornaldarsögur*: Bjartmar

²¹ *Ketils saga hængs*, ch. 3, p. 253: 'I am called Hængr, / come from Hrafnista, / Hallbjörn's avenger'.

²² *Örvar-Odds saga*, ch. 14, p. 326: 'Grímr loðinkinni's son'.

²³ *Ibid.* ch. 27, p. 377: 'from the north from Norway'.

²⁴ *Ibid.*: 'that Oddr, who went to Bjarmaland long ago'.

²⁵ ch. 4, p. 279: 'Hrafn, the first lawspeaker in Iceland'.

²⁶ *Örvar-Odds saga*, ch. 32, p. 399: 'lineage have grown up there'.

²⁷ *Ibid.*: 'many people have descended from her'.

²⁸ *Gísla saga Súrssonar* (styttri gerð), in *Íslendinga Sögur og Þættir*, ed. Bragi Halldórsson *et al.*, 3 vols. (Reykjavík, 1987), II, 852–98.

var son Áns rauðfelds Grímssonar loðinkinna, bróður Örvar-Odds, Ketilssonar hængs sonar Hallbjarnar hálftrólls. Móðir Áns rauðfelds var Helga dóttir Áns bogsveigis'.²⁹ Here, Örvar-Oddr is the brother of Grímr rather than his son. This might suggest some instability in the tradition surrounding Oddr. Although brought up, residing and travelling in far-flung places, Oddr always maintains his island and *ættmenn* are on Hrafnista.³⁰ Likewise, Án simply says his name and that he 'ættaðr ór Hrafnistu'³¹ in order to place himself amongst strangers, and such is his simpleton behaviour in comparison to the other men of Hrafnista he is not believed.³² Clearly then, amongst the four sagas there are strong ties in the story world of the *Hrafnistumenn* between Hrafnista and the line Hallbjörn, Ketill, Grímr, Örvar-Oddr and Án.

Another indicator of an oral continuum of tradition, shared with mythology, is that nicknames are used of characters in a saga before they have earned them in the narrative.³³ In *Áns saga bogsveigis*, the king

²⁹ ch. 4, p. 855: 'Bjartmar was the son of Ánn rauðfeldr, son of Grímr loðinkinni the brother of Örvar-Oddr, the son of Ketill hængr, the son of Hallbjörn hálftróll. Ánn rauðfeldr's mother was Helga, daughter of Án bogsveigis'.

³⁰ *Örvar-Odds saga*, ch. 31, p. 389: 'descendants'.

³¹ *Áns saga bogsveigis*, ch. 2, p. 406: 'is originally from Hrafnista'.

³² That is, he is not like the mature men of Hrafnista. Ketill in his youth is a *kolbitr*, a 'coal-biter', a wholly unpromising youth that simply sits by the fire and acts like he is stupid; see Ciklamini, 'Grettir and Ketill Hængr', pp. 142–3. For the place of these indolent youths in Old Norse literature and the processes by which they successfully come to maturity, see Ásdís Egilsdóttir, 'En verden skabes—en mand bliver til', in *Fornaldarsagaerne. Myter og virkelighed: Studier i de oldislandske fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda*, ed. A. Ney, Ármann Jakobsson and A. Lassen (Copenhagen, 2009), pp. 245–54, and by the same author 'Kolbitr verður karlmaður', in *Miðaldabörn*, ed. Ármann Jakobsson and T. H. Tulinius (Reykjavík, 2005), pp. 87–100.

³³ For example, in poetic locutions Óðinn being referred to as one-eyed or Baldr as 'the bloody god' before or in a different context to the stories that

comments that 'heyrð höfum vér getit Áns, ok er hann undramaðr í mörgum greinum'.³⁴ Unless the king is to be accused of sarcasm, it seems that stories surrounding Án's great deeds were well-known; however, by this point in the saga he has not yet accomplished them. Likewise, Örvar-Oddr has a reputation for his protective shirt that precedes him sufficiently to have reached the ears of Angantýr the berserk: 'þú hefir skyrtu þá, ...at þik skuli engi járn bíta'.³⁵ A condition of the battle is that 'skal Oddr hafa skyrtu sína ok skeyti'³⁶ with him in his grave should he be killed. Although the reader of the saga will be aware of these items through the narrative, there is no reason, and no reason given, why they should be generally well known at this point in the story. Evidently, in the tradition of the men of Hrafnista, the shirt and arrows were synonymous with the character of Oddr, and thus the character Angantýr can make this passing comment without the reader of the saga realising anything is amiss.

There are several objects consistently associated with the men of Hrafnista. First are the Gusisnautar, the arrows Ketill takes off Gusir: 'Ketill tók ... af Gusi dauðum ... örvarnar Flaug, Hremsu ok Fífu'.³⁷ The arrows are associated strongly enough with the men of Hrafnista that Angantýr mentions them as an identifying accoutrement of Örvar-Oddr, as previously discussed. Later, Forað the *tröllkona* is

actually narrate why they are called thus. We can suppose the audience already knew the story well enough via other means than the story in hand for no explanation to be needed.

³⁴ ch. 3, p. 407: 'we have heard of Án, and he is a wonderful man in many ways'.

³⁵ *Örvar-Odds saga*, ch. 14, p. 326: 'you have that shirt...that [means that] you should not be bitten by iron'.

³⁶ *Ibid.* p. 327: 'Oddr shall have his shirt and arrows'.

³⁷ *Ketils saga hængs*, ch. 3, p. 255: 'Ketill took...from the dead Gusir...the arrows Flaug, Hremsa and Fífa'.

warned by Ketill in verse that 'örum trúi ek mínum';³⁸ these arrows are well-known enough in the *Hrafnistumenn* tradition that she can name them:

Flaug ok Fífu
hugða ek fjarri vera,
ok hræðumst ek eigi
Hremsu bit.³⁹

The arrows are evidently held to be hereditary; Grímr uses them to kill the *tröll* child Keima in *Gríms saga loðinkinna*,⁴⁰ where they are named as *Gusisnautar*, and then presents Örvar-Oddr with them in chapter four of *Örvar-Odds saga*. The story continues with the arrows across the sagas: in *Örvar-Odds saga* it is said that 'Þat eru þrjár örvar, en þær eigu nafn ok eru kallaðar Gusisnautar ... þessar örvar tók Ketill hængur af Gusi Finna konungi',⁴¹ and extra details are added, including the secret of how the family manages to keep the three arrows: 'Þær váru gulli fiðraðar, ok þær flugu sjálfar af streng ok á, ok þurfti aldri at leita þeira. ... Þær bíta allt þat, þeim er til vísat, því at þær eru dvergsmíði'.⁴² As arrows are lost when shot, it is quite natural to include the supernatural detail that the arrows are self-returning if it is well known that they were inherited through a family.

The inheritance of a sword poses fewer logical problems to the narratives, and the sword Drangvendill is associated with the men of Hrafnista. Taken along with the Gusisnautar from the dead Gusir in

³⁸ *Ibid.* ch. 5, p. 260: 'I trust my arrows'.

³⁹ *Ketils saga hængs*, ch. 5, pp. 260–1: 'Flaug and Fífa I barely think about, and I am not afraid of Hremsa's bite'.

⁴⁰ ch. 1, p. 272.

⁴¹ ch. 4, p. 293: 'They are three arrows, and they have a name and are called Gusisnautar ... Ketill hængur took these arrows from Gusir, king of the Finns'.

⁴² ch. 4, p. 293: 'They were gold-feathered and they flew by themselves off and back onto the bowstring, and one never needed to search for them'.

Ketils saga hængs chapter three, Drangvendill is 'allra sverða bezt'.⁴³ In *Gríms saga loðinkinna*, Grímr specifically wields the sword (here called Drangvendil) 'er faðir hans hafði átt'.⁴⁴ The sword, however, does not continue to feature in the continuum of the *Hrafnistumenn* story as presented in the four *fornaldarsögur* as neither Örvar-Oddr nor Án are said to have it. However, the story of fate of the sword was preserved in the entire tradition surrounding the men of Hrafnista and recorded in *Egils saga*:

...Arinbjörn gaf sverð þat er Drangvandill hét. Þat hafði gefit Arinbirni Þórólfr Skalla-Grímsson, en áðr hafði Skalla-Grímr þegit af Þórólfi bróður sínum, en Þórólfi gaf sverðit Grímr loðinkinni, sons Ketils hoengs. Þat sverð átt Ketill hoengr ok haft í hólmgöngum, ok var þat allra sverða bitrast.⁴⁵

The *hólmanga* mentioned in *Egils Saga* is likely the one in which Ketill kills Framarr in *Ketils saga hængs*; Framarr's dying verse includes the line 'hvass er Drangvendill'.⁴⁶ This further supports the idea of there being an immanent saga of the *Hrafnistumenn* as proposed by Clover's theory, because it seems that those who knew of the stories surrounding Egill Skallagrímsson were also aware of the traditions surrounding the men of Hrafnista and their connection with the sword Drangvendill.

III. CONTINUUM OF TRADITION: *ÁNS SAGA BOGSVEIGIS* AND THE *HRAFNISTUMANNASÖGUR*

⁴³ p. 255: 'the best of all swords'.

⁴⁴ ch. 3, p. 277: 'which his father had owned'.

⁴⁵ ch. 63, p. 114: 'Arinbjörn gave that sword which was called Drangvendill. It had been given to Arinbjörn by Þórólfr Skalla-Grímsson, and previously Skalla-Grímr had received it from Þórólfr his brother, and Grímr loðinkinni, the son of Ketill hængr, had given the sword to Þórólfr. Ketill hængr owned that sword and had it in a *hólmanga*, and it was the most biting of all swords'.

⁴⁶ ch. 5, p. 266: 'sharp is Drangvendill'.

There is one rather curious incident involving the protagonist obtaining then presenting his mother with a chair that occurs in both the first chapters of *Ketils saga hængs* and *Áns saga bogsveigis* that Shaun Hughes uses to demonstrate that *Áns saga bogsveigis* is one of the *Hrafnistumannasögur* purely by virtue of borrowings from *Ketils saga hængs*.⁴⁷ The episode is substantially longer in *Áns saga bogsveigis* than *Ketils saga hængs*, and Hughes has argued both that the longer episode in *Áns saga bogsveigis* is lifted from *Ketils saga hængs* and also that the borrowing between sagas could have gone either way.⁴⁸ Hughes' argument rests on there being a degree of motivation in *Ketils saga hængs* for Ketill to get the chair after Hallbjörn says his behaviour must improve.⁴⁹ Án's behaviour is no more promising, but he absents himself without parental admonishment. A verbal comparison between relevant parts of the two sagas runs thus:

<i>Ketils saga hængs</i> (ch. 1, p. 245)	<i>Áns saga bogsveigis</i> (ch. 1, pp. 404–405)
Hann hvarf í burtu nokkuru síðar og var í burtu þrjár nætr. ⁵⁰	En er hann var tólf vetra, hvarf hann á burtu þrjár nætr, svá at engi vissi, hvat af honum varð. ⁵¹
Þá kom hann heim og hafði stól á baki sér. Hann var vel gerr. ⁵²	Síðan fór hann heim ok bar stólinn á baki sér. Hlógu menn þá mjök at honum. ⁵³

⁴⁷ Hughes, 'Literary Antecedents', esp. pp. 215–20.

⁴⁸ For *Áns saga* borrowing from *Ketils saga* see 'Literary Antecedents', p. 218 and for borrowing either way round, see S. F. D. Hughes, 'The Saga of Án Bow-Bender', in *Medieval Outlaws: Twelve Tales in Modern English Translation*, ed. T. H. Ohlgren, rev. ed (West Lafayette, IN, 2005), pp. 290–337, at p. 334.

⁴⁹ ch. 1, p. 245.

⁵⁰ 'He disappeared off for some time and was away for three nights'.

⁵¹ 'And when he was twelve winters old, he disappeared off away for three nights, so that no one knew what had become of him'.

⁵² 'Then he came home and had a chair on his back. He had done well'.

⁵³ 'Afterwards he went home and carried the chair on his back. Then men laughed a lot at him'.

Hann gaf hann móður sinni og
kveðst henni meiri ást eiga at launa
en föður sínum.⁵⁴

Án gaf móður sinni stólinn ok
kveðst henni eiga bezt at launa.⁵⁵

If one of the accounts were copied from the other, firstly it is strange that so much extra material appears in *Áns saga bogsveigis* about his experience with the dwarf in chapter one when he obtains the chair and his characteristic bow:

En er hann var tólf vetra, hvarf hann á burtu þrjár nætr, svá at engi vissi, hvat af honum varð. Án gekk í eitt skógarjór. Hann sá þar stein einn standa mikinn ok mann hjá einum læk. Hann hafði heyrtr nefnda dverga ok þat með, at þeir væri hagari en aðrir menn. Án komst þá á millum steinsins ok dvergsins ok vígir hann utan steins ok sagði hann aldri skulu sínu inni ná, nema hann smíðaði honum boga svá stóran ok sterkan sem við hans hæfi væri ok þar með fimm örvar. Þat skyldi þeim fylgja, at hann skyldi um sinn hæfa með hverri, þat er hann skyti til eptir sínum vilja. Innan þriggja náttu skyldi þetta gert vera, ok beið Án þar meðan. Svá gerði dvergrinn sem fyrir var skilit ok með engum álögum, en dvergrinn hét Littr. Án gaf honum skotsilfr nokkut, er móðir hans hafði gefit honum. Stól vænan gaf dvergrinn Án. Síðan fór hann heim ok bar stólinn á baki sér.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ 'He gave it to his mother and said he had rewarded her greater love rather than his father'.

⁵⁵ 'Án gave his mother the chair and said she was best to reward'.

⁵⁶ ch. 1, pp. 404–5: 'And when he was twelve winters old, he disappeared off away for three nights, so that no one knew what had become of him. Án went into a forest clearing. He saw a great stone standing there and a man next to a stream. He had heard dwarves mentioned, and this too, that they could be more skilful than other men. Then Án placed himself between the stone and the dwarf and declared that he must stay outside the stone and said he should never be allowed back inside unless he made him a bow so big and strong as might be suitable for him, and there with it five arrows. It should be in their nature than he should hit with each in one shot that which he shot at according to his desire. This should be done within three nights, and Án waited there meanwhile. So the dwarf did that which was agreed and with no curses on the

In *Áns rímur*, the story is slightly different again,

Austri gaf þa Ani stol
er aller smider lærde.
þar eru aa myndud meistara tol.⁵⁷

This seems to indicate there is extra material to the story that made it into neither *Ketils saga hængs* nor *Áns saga bogsveigis*, which is interesting given Stephen Mitchell's observation that 'nowhere is the tradition represented in the sagas reflected fully in any individual ballad, even in the case of short sagas. Rather the ballads take up only brief episodes, scenes that naturally fit the scope of the ballad more readily'.⁵⁸ The reactions to their exploits are also totally different. Although the accounts are not exactly similar word for word, the only exact correspondence being 'burtu þrjár nætur', they display too much verbal similarity to rule out the possibility of a written correspondence between the two. The point is that although the small account present in *Ketils saga hængs* is unlikely to represent all that was known about that particular story, it does seem likely that two variations of a similar episode have become associated in the stories surrounding Ketill hængr and Án without the need to insist on textual borrowing from one to the other, although it is a possibility.

Hughes argues that the episode related above concerning the dwarf and the chair is inserted into *Áns saga bogsveigis* in order to bring it 'more securely into the narrative orbit of the *Hrafnistumannasögur* where otherwise the tale would be very much out of place'.⁵⁹ The tale

weapons, and the dwarf was called Littr. Án gave him some loose silver which his mother had given to him. The dwarf gave Án a handsome chair. Afterwards he went home and carried the chair on his back'.

⁵⁷ Cited by Hughes in 'Literary Antecedents', p. 219.

⁵⁸ Mitchell, *Heroic Sagas*, pp. 145–6.

⁵⁹ Hughes, 'Literary Antecedents', p. 219.

may be out of place in as much as it does not talk as extensively about Grímr as *Örvar-Odds saga* does, but certainly the strong relationship is acknowledged with Ketill hængur a number of times and Án is directly compared to his Hrafnista relatives: 'Ekki þótti mönnum hann vera líkr um neitt inum fyrrum frændum sínum, sem var Ketill hængur ok aðrir Hrafnistumenn, nema á vöxt'.⁶⁰ Like Ketill, Án is also mocked by those around him, although these differences could be said to be 'of emphasis and not substance',⁶¹ and it has been argued by Hughes that these traits in *Áns saga* have been deliberately introduced by an authorial hand with the express intention of making Án one of the *Hrafnistumenn*,⁶² rather than the relationship of Án to the family being part of oral tradition. Authorial linkage between Án and the Hrafnista men implies that it is only the tradition of this particular saga which links Án with the men of Hrafnista:

...the inclusion of material that might otherwise seem extraneous to the saga serves to act as a counterbalance to those difficulties in the story which otherwise make [*Áns saga bogsveigis*] the odd one out in this group of tales. The link that is provided to familiar situations, personalities and events is sufficiently strong to make Án, whatever his ultimate origins might have been, a bona fide descendent of Ketill hængur.⁶³

However, the wider genealogical saga tradition mentioning the Hrafnista men would seem to indicate that Án was an entrenched member of the clan without the need for links to be posited for borrowings from *Ketils saga hængs*. At the end of *Áns saga bogsveigis* it is said that upon Án's return to Hrafnista he had a daughter called

⁶⁰ *Áns saga bogsveigis*, ch. 1, p. 404: 'It didn't seem to people that he was anything like his relatives who had gone before, who were Ketill hængur and other men of Hrafnista, except in size'.

⁶¹ Hughes, 'Literary Antecedents', p. 219.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.* pp. 219–20.

Mjöll, and *Landnámabók* names 'Mjöll, dóttur Ánar bogsveigis'⁶⁴ as Ketill raumr's wife,⁶⁵ and the same marriage is mentioned in the first chapter of *Vatnsdala saga*: 'Hann átti Mjöll dóttur Ánar bogsveigis. Ketill átti son með henni'.⁶⁶ In *Gísla saga Súrssonar* (the short version), Bjartmar is shown to be related to the Hrafnista men on both sides: 'Bjartmar var son Áns rauðfelds Grímssonar loðinkinna, bróður Örvar-Odds, Ketilssonar hængs sonar Hallbjarnar hálftrólls. Móðir Áns rauðfelds var Helga dóttir Áns bogsveigis'.⁶⁷

Neither Ánn rauðfeldr as the son of Grímr loðinkinni nor Helga as daughter of Án bogsveigir are attested in the *fornaldarsögur*, but are both mentioned in *Landnámabók*: 'Ánn rauðfeldr, son Gríms loðinkinna ór Hrafnistu ok son Helgu dóttur Ánar bogsveigis'.⁶⁸ The various traditions external to the *fornaldarsögur* about Án's daughters make it likely that there was a lively tradition about Án's descendants. As none of these written accounts of Án's daughters appear to have direct verbal borrowings from each other, I consider it reasonable to conclude that Án bogsveigir is part of the tradition concerning the men of Hrafnista without having to make textual borrowings (like the incident of the chair) from *Ketils saga hængs*.

⁶⁴ *Íslendingabók; Landnámabók*, ed. Jakob Benediktsson, Íslenskt fornrit 1, 2 vols. (Reykjavík, 1968), II, p. 217 (*Sturlubók*, ch. 179 and *Hauksbók*, ch. 145): 'Mjöll, daughter of Án bogsveigir'.

⁶⁵ In *Hauksbók* her name is Moldu, but it is Mjöll in *Áns saga bogsveigis* and also in chapter two of *Bárðar saga*.

⁶⁶ *Vatnsdala saga*, in *Íslendinga Sögur og Þættir* (1987), III, 1843–905, at p. 1843: 'He married Mjöll, daughter of Án bogsveigir. Ketill had a son with her'.

⁶⁷ *Gísla saga Súrssonar*, ch. 4, p. 855: 'Bjartmar was the son of Ánn rauðfeldr, the son of Grímr loðinkinni, brother of Örvar-Oddr, the son of Ketill hængur, son of Hallbjörn hálftróll. The mother of Ánn rauðfeldr was Helga, daughter of Án bogsveigir'.

⁶⁸ *S* 135 and very similar in *H* 107, pp. 176–7: 'Ánn rauðfeldr, son of Grímr loðinkinni from Hrafnista and also son of Helga, daughter of Án bogsveigir'.

IV. CONTINUUM OF TRADITION: THE DAUGHTERS OF KETILL
HÆNGR HALLBJARNARSON

As seen above, other sources apart from the Hrafnista sagas themselves are usually available for comparison when looking at Hrafnista saga characters and their descendants, and these are particularly interesting in the case of Ketill hængr's daughters. In *Egils saga* another daughter of Ketill hængr is mentioned, Helga, who marries Brynjólfr and has a son Bárðr.⁶⁹ Hrafnhildr, the daughter of Ketill hængr and Sigríðr is mentioned more frequently, in *Ketils saga hængs*, *Gríms saga loðinkinna*, *Áns saga bogsveigis*, *Egils saga* and *Landnámabók*, and the genealogies diverge somewhat. In *Ketils saga hængs* it is simply stated that 'Hann gifti Hrafnhildi Böðmóði'.⁷⁰ In *Gríms saga loðinkinna* their daughter is said to be Þórný, mother of Þorbjörn tálkni, father of Ketill breiðr, father of Þórný who marries Hergill hnappass.⁷¹ After the death of Böðmóðr, Hrafnhildr marries Þorkell and has a son also called Ketill hængr Þorkelsson, a *landnámsmaðr*, and his descendants too are named in *Gríms saga loðinkinna*.⁷²

The parentage of Ketill hængr Þorkelsson is in agreement with *Gríms saga loðinkinna* in *Egils saga* ('Ketill hængr hét maðr, son Þorkels Naumdæljarls ok Hrafnhildar dóttur Ketils hængs ór Hrafnistu'),⁷³ and *Landnámabók* ('Ketill hængr hét ágætr maðr í Naumdælafylki, son Þorkels Naumdæljarls ok Hrafnhildar dóttur Ketils hængs ór

⁶⁹ ch. 7, p. 7.

⁷⁰ ch. 5, p. 266: 'he married Hrafnhildr to Böðmóðr'.

⁷¹ ch. 4, p. 278.

⁷² ch. 4, p. 279.

⁷³ ch. 23, p. 29: 'A man was called Ketill hængr, son of Þorkell jarl of Naumdæla and of Hrafnhildr, daughter of Ketill hængr from Hrafnista'.

Hrafnistu').⁷⁴ In *Áns saga bogsveigis*, the genealogy given is rather different: Hrafnhildr (daughter of Ketill hængr and Sigríðr) and Böðmóðr are here the parents of Þorgerðr, married to Björn í Hrafnistu. Þorgerðr and Björn are the parents of Þórdís, Þórir þegn and Án, the protagonist of *Áns saga bogsveigis*. The genealogies do not match up entirely, and thus it cannot be that *Gríms saga loðinkinna* borrows from *Áns saga bogsveigis* or vice versa in terms of a relationship through written borrowing, and overall the *fornaldarsögur* seem to preserve various accounts that are integrated in various measures in the four sagas. Such 'inconsistencies' and lack of exact correlation between sagas, for example mentioning different children, highlights the obvious difficulty of attempting to use such material as an historical source, but probably points to a rich tradition of the descendants of the *Hrafnistumenn*, from whom it was a privilege to descend beyond the Middle Ages: 'Ero nu enn nockrer menn a Islande anno eitt þusund sexhundred attarygie og þriu, sem telia sinar ætter til Hrafnisto manna'.⁷⁵

V. CONTINUUM OF TRADITION: THE TRAITS OF THE
HRAFNISTUMENN AND GRÍMR LOÐINKINNI

It is noticeable that the men of Hrafnista share some salient characteristics: they are all marked out by their monster-slaying capabilities, they all have the ability to raise wind as if by magic and they are all remarkably big. Other, more individual, character traits (personalities) are not really discussed across the four sagas, with the

⁷⁴ S 344, and similar in H 303, p. 346: 'A famous man in the Naumdæla region was called Ketill hængr, son of Þorkell jarl of Naumdæla and Hrafnhildr, daughter of Ketill hængr from Hrafnista'.

⁷⁵ Hughes, 'Literary Antecedents', p. 219. This is recorded in a recension of *Áns saga* edited by E. J. Björner in *Nordiska Kämpa Dater* (Stockholm, 1737). See S. F. D. Hughes, 'Áns Rimur Bogsveigis: Two Nineteenth Century Metrical Romances' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. Washington, 1972), pp. 2 and 80.

exception of the personality of Grímr. Grímr loðinkinni is marked out not only by his hairy cheek but also by his emotions, which are mentioned in more than one saga. Certainly, the comparisons between the men suggests that in the world of the Hrafnista men, kinsmen were expected to be alike. Ketill at age eleven is told: 'ólíkr ertu frændum þínum'⁷⁶ although eventually the narrator claims he 'batnaði nú frændsemi þeira',⁷⁷ and about Án: 'Ekki þótti mönnum hann vera líkr um neitt inum fyrrum frændum sínum, sem var Ketill hængr ok aðrir Hrafnistumenn, nema á vöxt'.⁷⁸ In the absence of individual character traits (except those of Grímr), it is usually simply the name that is mentioned or character traits that seem to be inherent to the family. These apparently inherent major characteristics of monster slaying, summoning wind and the size of the men can be compared to see what kind of picture emerges, and such a comparison of the diction and presentation of the events may help to shed light on whether the events are written literary borrowings between sagas or whether the saga writers got their material from oral tradition. Additionally, it is valuable to consider whether the presentation of these characteristics in each saga is made in such a way as to suggest that the writer expected their audience to be familiar with character details.⁷⁹

As far as the family's penchant for monster-slaying is concerned, the events are sufficiently different across the four sagas to indicate that this is a general trait in the tradition rather than a textual borrowing between sagas. Ketill hængr earns his nickname from the

⁷⁶ *Ketils saga hængs*, ch. 1, p. 248: 'you are unlike your kinsmen'.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*: 'now bettered their kinsmen'.

⁷⁸ *Áns saga bogsveigis*, ch. 1, p. 404: 'It didn't seem to people that he was anything like his relatives who had gone before, who were Ketill hængr and other men of Hrafnista, except in size'.

⁷⁹ Gísli Sigurðsson, *Medieval Icelandic Saga*, p. 202.

slaying of a dragon in islands north of Hrafnista, and in the recension of *Áns saga bogsveigis* edited by Erik Julius Björner in 1737 and quoted by Shaun Hughes, Án also has to deal with troublesome island neighbours:

Án went to Hrafnista and dwelt there. A gang of ogresses arose on those islands which were nearby, and he was a little upset by this. And as soon as these tröls wished to provoke Án, their lot grew ever the worse.⁸⁰

It could be then that relatively close but uninhabited islands in the proximity of Hrafnista were considered haunted by some kind of creatures, manifesting themselves in *Ketils saga hængs* as a dragon and as tröls, and as ogresses in one version of *Áns saga bogsveigis*. In the first chapter of *Gríms saga loðinkinna*, Grímr and Ketill seemed to have earned quite a reputation for tröll slaying: 'Þetta hefir gert illmennit Grímr loðinkinni. Eru þeir feðgar meir lagðir til þess en aðrir menn at drepa niðr tröll og bergbúa'.⁸¹ This indicates that the reader is expected to be aware of Ketill hængr's monster-slaying feats.

Most of the Hrafnista men are reported to have the ability to raise wind by magic, as in *Gríms saga loðinkinna*:

Tók hann þá til listar þeirar, er haft hafði Ketill hængr, faðir hans, og aðrir Hrafnistumenn, at hann dró upp segl í logni, og rann þegar byrr á. Sigldi hann þá heim í Hrafnistu [...]⁸²

Although Ketill is said here to have been able to magically raise wind, *Ketils saga hængs* does not mention that Ketill has this trait nor do any

⁸⁰ As quoted in Hughes, 'Ans Rimur Bogsveigis', p. 79.

⁸¹ p. 272: 'Grímr loðinkinni, the evil man, has done this. They are, he and his father, more inclined to do this than other men, to strike down tröls and rock-dwellers'.

⁸² ch. 2, p. 276: 'Then he took to that art, which Ketill hængr had had, his father, and other men of Hrafnista, that he drew up the sail in the calm, and immediately a fair breeze began to blow. Then he sailed home to Hrafnista...'

of his actions in his own saga particularly imply that he has this gift, but *Gríms saga löðinkinna* and *Örvar-Odds saga* both state he has the ability. In *Áns saga bogsveigis* too, it is not mentioned that Án has the ability to summon wind by magic. *Örvar-Oddr*, on the other hand, makes explicit reference to the capability:⁸³

En þá er þeir váru komnir út um eyjar, tók Oddr til orða: “Erfiðlig er för okkur, ef vit skulum róa alla leið norðr til Hrafnistu; mun nú verða at vita, hvárt ek hefí nokkut af ættargifti várri. Þat er mér sagt, at Ketill hængr **drægi segl upp í logni**. Nú skal ek þat reyna ok **draga segl upp**”. En þegar þeir höfðu undit seglit, þá gaf þeim byr, til þess at þeir koma til Hrafnistu snemma dags [...]⁸⁴

Oddr's dislike of slow rowing also surfaces again when he speeds along a giant's boat:

Oddi þykkir þat seinligt at sækja með árum, því at leiðin var löng. Tekr hann þá til íþróttar þeirar, sem þeim Hrafnistumönnum var gefin; hann **dregr segl upp**, ok kom þegar byrr á, ok sigla þá fram með landinu [...]⁸⁵

The verbal similarities of the passages are highlighted above in the quotations. On the one hand, the words *dregr* or *dró segl upp* with or

⁸³ Although Oddr is clearly able to use his magic to good effect when he wants to, in *Örvar-Odds saga* there are also descriptions of him having to wait around for a good wind in order to undertake a journey.

⁸⁴ *Örvar-Odds saga*, ch. 3, p. 290: ‘And then when they had come out from amongst the islands, Oddr took to speaking: “Our journey is hard work, if we should row all the way north to Hrafnista; now we will get to know whether I might have some of our family-luck. It is said to me that Ketill hængr drew the sail up in the calm. Now I will try that and draw the sail up.” And as soon as they had unwound the sail, then a breeze was given to them so that they came to Hrafnista early in the day...’.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* ch. 18, p. 341: ‘Oddr thought it slow to carry on with oars, because the route was long. Then he takes to that art which they the *Hrafnistumenn* were given to; he drew the sail up, and immediately a breeze came, and they sail away along the coast...’.

without *í logni* are always used to describe the action and the phrasing is never varied. This, in addition to the fact that the magic is never assumed to have been used and is always carefully ascribed to the *Hrafnistumenn* rather than simply introduced, could indicate this character trait is a textual borrowing and an invention in the written sagas rather than part of an oral tradition surrounding the Hrafnista men, although it is not possible to say which saga may have borrowed from the other.⁸⁶ On the other hand, the almost word for word accounts in the sagas could also be formulaic, and thus orally derived, and the ability to summon wind is perhaps a traditional characteristic one could expect to find preserved in such a way.

Certainly all the *Hrafnistumenn* are marked out by their size and strength. As a young man, size is the only characteristic that aligns Án with his family group: ‘ekki þótti mönnum hann vera líkr um neitt inum fyrrum frændum sínum, sem var Ketill hængr ok aðrir Hrafnistumenn, nema á vöxt’,⁸⁷ and Ketill's father is doubtful that Ketill will turn out like his relatives: ‘Ólíkr ertu frændum þínum, og seint ætla ég, að afl verði í þér’.⁸⁸ Fully grown though, Ketill is ‘mikill vexti ok karlmannligr maðr’.⁸⁹ As for the rest of the family, Grímr is

⁸⁶ It is interesting to note that the ability to raise wind was often attributed to the Sami. For a discussion of the Old Norse perception of the Sami and the strange things they are portrayed as being able to do, see E. Mundal, ‘The Perception of the Saami People and their Religion in Old Norse Sources’, in *Shamanism and Northern Ecology*, ed. J. Pentikäinen, Religion and Society 36 (Berlin, 1996), 97–116.

⁸⁷ *Áns saga bogsveigis*, ch. 1, p. 404: ‘It didn't seem to people that he was anything like his relatives who had gone before, who were Ketill hængr and other men of Hrafnista, except in size’.

⁸⁸ *Ketils saga hængs*, ch. 1, p. 248: ‘you are unlike your kinsmen, and I am reluctant to suppose physical strength might befall you’.

⁸⁹ *Ketils saga hængs*, ch. 1, p. 246: ‘a tall and manly man’.

'bæði mikill og sterkr'⁹⁰ and Örvar-Oddr is reported to be twelve ells tall at the time of his death.⁹¹ No doubt the fact that the *Hrafnistumenn* were tall and strong formed part of the tradition surrounding them, and there appears to be no textual borrowing between the sagas, but it should be borne in mind that these types of comments about the men are unsurprising, since strength and height are rather generic features of very masculine male heroes of most stories, regardless of genre.

Grímr loðinkinni, like his fellow *Hrafnistumenn*, is big and strong, yet he is also the most individual of all of them, possessing a pronounced physical trait and displaying more emotion than Hallbjörn, Ketill, Oddr and Án. Both in *Gríms saga loðinkinna* and *Örvar-Odds saga*, Grímr is described in similar ways in terms of his money and power:

Grímr tók við búi í Hrafnistu eptir Ketil hæng, föður sinn. Hann gerðist ríkr at fé. Hann réð ok nálíga einn öllu um allt Hálogaland.⁹²

Grímr bjó í Hrafnistu. Hann var auðigr at fé ok mikils ráðandi um allt Hálogaland ok víðar annars staðar.⁹³

Of all the Hrafnista men, Grímr's reputation seems to have endured as him wielding the most specific local power in Hálogaland; Ketill too though 'var ríkastr manna norðr þar'⁹⁴ in his time, and although Oddr becomes a king in his saga, it is abroad. As typical for male

⁹⁰ *Gríms saga loðinkinna*, ch. 1, p. 269: 'both big and strong'.

⁹¹ *Örvar-Odds saga*, ch. 32, p. 398.

⁹² *Gríms saga loðinkinna*, ch. 1, p. 269: 'Grímr received the farm after Ketill hængr, his father. He became rich in goods. He governed, and nearly alone, everything over the whole of Hálogaland'.

⁹³ *Örvar-Odds saga*, ch. 1, p. 283: 'Grímr lived at Hrafnista. He was rich and had a great deal of power throughout Hálogaland and widely in other places'.

⁹⁴ *Ketils saga hængs*, ch. 4, p. 257: 'was the most powerful man in the north'.

protagonists of such stories, Grímr is said to be 'inn mesti garpr',⁹⁵ although in *Ketils saga hængs* this trait does not necessarily appear since Grímr is said to run away from a *tröll*: 'Grímr hræddist og hljóp heim og sagði föður sínum'.⁹⁶ It is striking that the young Grímr is described explicitly as taking fright: Ketill is none too pleased about the prospect of fighting a giant serpent and instead wishes he were battling many men, but he fights it immediately nonetheless, and Oddr is appalled by seeing his son's throat ripped out but is not afraid of any monster he encounters. Grímr's display of emotion is continued in chapter one of *Örvar-Odds saga*; it is he who wishes to visit the baby he and Lofthæna leave in Berurjóðr,⁹⁷ and throughout the saga he is repeatedly described as being very pleased to see Oddr when he returns to Hrafnista amongst his travels as an adult. It seems then, that in the body of tradition from which the *Hrafnistumannasögur* originally drew upon as orally derived narratives, the figure of Grímr is generally held to be the most emotional.

Grímr's identifying physical characteristic is his hairy cheek, a feature very much identified with him since the nickname accompanies him in the *Landnámabók* extracts and other sagas quoted above as well as in the *formaldarsögur*. Only *Örvar-Odds saga* has a full explanation of why he was born with a hairy cheek:

<i>Ketils saga hængs</i> (ch. 3, p. 255)	<i>Gríms saga loðinkinna</i> (ch. 1, p. 269)	<i>Örvar-Odds saga</i> (ch. 1, p. 283)
Hrafnhildr kvað hvárigum þeira mein mundu að henni vera,—“ok mun ek burt heðan fara, en Grímr, sonr okkarr,	Því var hann loðinkinni kallaðr, at kinn hans önnur var vaxin með dökket há, og með því var hann alinn. Ekki beit þar	Grímr hét maðr ok var kallaðr loðinkinni. Því var hann svá kallaðr, at hann var með því alinn, en þat kom svá til, at þá þau Ketill

⁹⁵ *Gríms saga loðinkinna*, ch.1, p. 269: 'the most brave'.

⁹⁶ ch. 4, p. 257: 'Grímr took fright and ran home and told his father'.

⁹⁷ p. 285.

loðinkinni skal eptir vera". Því var hann svá kallaðr, at kinn hans önnur var loðin, ok með því var hann alinn. Þar festi ekki járn á.⁹⁸

járn á.⁹⁹

hængr, faðir Gríms, ok Hrafnhildr Brúnadóttir gengu í eina sæng, sem fyrr er skrifat, at Brúni breiddi á þau húð eina, er hann hafði boðit til sín Finnum mörgum, ok um nóttina leit Hrafnhildr út undan húðinni ok sá á kinn einum Finninum, en sá var allr loðinn. Ok því hafði Grímr þetta merki síðan, at menn ætla, at hann muni á þeiri stundu getinn hafa verit.¹⁰⁰

It seems that in *Ketils saga hængs* and *Gríms saga loðinkinna* the description is worded similarly enough to suspect borrowing from one saga to another here (either way round). Although *Örvar-Odds saga* has the fullest description of why the cheek was hairy, it fails to

⁹⁸ 'Hrafnhildr said neither of them would cause her harm,—“and I will go away from here, but Grímr, our son, the shaggy-cheek, shall remain.” The reason he was so called was that one of his cheeks was hairy, and he was born with it. Iron could not cut there’.

⁹⁹ 'The reason he was called shaggy-cheek was that one of his cheeks was grown with dark hair, and he was born with it. Iron could not bite there’.

¹⁰⁰ 'A man was called Grímr and was called shaggy-cheek. The reason that he was so called was that he was born with it, and this is how it came about, that they, Ketill hængr, Grímr's father, and Hrafnhildr, daughter of Brúni, went into one bed, as was written before, and Brúni spread a hide on them when he had invited round many Finns to his, and during the night Hrafnhildr looked out from under the hide and looked at a cheek of a Finn and it was all hairy. And because Grímr had this mark afterwards, so men believe that he must have been conceived at that moment’.

mention explicitly that one cheek was hairy or growing with dark hair, merely that he was called *loðinkinni*, and it also excludes the detail that iron could not cut him there. Since these sagas habitually appear near each other in manuscripts, perhaps the saga writer of *Örvar-Odds saga* simply decided it had been emphasised enough previously, 'sem fyrr er skrifat'.¹⁰¹ In conclusion, although there does seem to be some degree of textual borrowing between written sagas regarding this detail, the appearance of the nickname associated with Grímr in other texts outside the four *foraldarsögur* supports the hypothesis of the sagas drawing on a body of oral material, of which this characteristic of Grímr's was certainly a part.

VI. CULTURAL MEMORY: FOOD, WHALES AND THE HRAFNISTUMENN

The search for food in the north is recurrent in both *Ketils saga hængs* and *Gríms saga loðinkinna*. As Ketill and Grímr are both said to have spent their time at Hrafnista rather than elsewhere like Oddr and Án, this is suggestive that their descriptions of the agricultural conditions and lack of food at Hrafnista may have some truth to them. Vésteinn Ólason treats the search for food as a folkloric motif employed in order to provide a reason for the hero to leave home, and he expresses surprise that this is the reason for the journey rather than, in Grímr's case, a search for his lost bride.¹⁰² He also describes it as remarkable that, when Grímr has killed the *tröll* children and the guardians of his abducted bride, he does not search for her but rather enters into another fight about food: 'this fight underscores the manifest cause of his departure from home, which was the search for food. There is thus a double motivation for his departure from home

¹⁰¹ ch. 1, p. 283: 'as is written previously'.

¹⁰² Vésteinn Ólason, 'Marvellous North', pp. 107–8.

and as a consequence a double conflict'.¹⁰³ Certainly the structure of the narrative does use their departures in a way reminiscent of a bridal-quest tale; indeed when Grímr has found Lofthæna on his food-finding trip there is suddenly 'nógr veiðifangi. Lá þá hvalr í hverri vík'.¹⁰⁴ The double resolution of finding Lofthæna and food appearing at the same time allows both the famine and bridal-quest motivations for a journey to be fulfilled, but it is clearly the desire to find food that drives him away from home, and Grímr's arrival in the north not only provides a classic location for supernatural encounters but also may preserve the memory of the north as a place of natural riches.

That agriculture was undertaken in Hrafnista is not surprising and it is recorded in the first and second chapters of *Ketils saga hængs*, where haymaking and the harvest are mentioned. Recurrent too in *Ketils saga hængs* and *Gríms saga loðinkinna* is the famine which seems to strike Hálogaland periodically:

<i>Ketils saga hængs</i> (ch. 2, p. 249)	<i>Ketils saga hængs</i> (ch. 5, p. 258)	<i>Gríms saga loðinkinna</i> (ch. 1, p. 270)
Þennan tíma var hallæri mikit á Hálogalandi , en bú þeira eru mjök í sjónum. Ketill kveðst þá vilja fara til fiskjar og vera eigi allr ómagi. ¹⁰⁵	Litlu síðar gerðist hallæri mikit , fyrir því at fiskrinn firrðist landit, en kornárit brást, en Ketill hafði fjölmennt, og þóttist Sigríðr þurfa fanga í búit. ¹⁰⁶	Það bar þá til sem optar, at hallæri mikit kom á Hálogaland. ¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Vésteinn Ólason, 'Marvellous North', p. 108.

¹⁰⁴ *Gríms saga loðinkinna*, ch. 2, p. 276: 'plenty of catch. A whale then lay in every bay'.

¹⁰⁵ 'At this time there was a great famine in Hálogaland, but their farms are almost by the sea. Ketill said that he wants to go to fish and not be completely helpless'.

Hallæri mikit is evidently the preferred and shared way of describing a famine situation across Hálogaland, and it could well indicate textual borrowing of the description across the sagas. Indeed, Ruth Righter-Gould deems the motif to have been lifted from *Ketils saga* and redeployed in *Gríms saga loðinkinna* in a way that is unsuitable and contradictory to Grímr's character since she argues it forces him to swing back and forth between being a fisherman and son of a *jarl*,¹⁰⁸ but it could also be argued that the search for food in *Ketils saga hængs* and *Gríms saga loðinkinna* is too much a central and integral part of each saga for one to have simply lifted the story element from the other, nor need the occupation of fisherman and of being the son of a *jarl* be mutually exclusive. The obvious antidote to hunger is to go fishing, but as *Ketils saga hængs* chapter three demonstrates, sometimes even this might not have yielded sufficient results, and the only remaining option would have been to look further afield 'í veiðiför'.¹⁰⁹

It is likely that this experience of famine and fishing is based on reality.¹¹⁰ The animal carcasses Ketill finds in the *tröll's* pit in Miðfjörðr are representative of what was available to catch in the north: 'hann fann þar í af hvölum, ok hvítajörnum, selum ok rostungum ok alls konar dýrum';¹¹¹ and human flesh is also there to lend a fantastic air—it is a *jötunn* who has done the catching, after all. In chapter five of *Ketils saga hængs*, Ketill also must go fishing in order for his family to survive. It seems here that he catches a whale,

¹⁰⁶ 'A short time afterwards a great famine happened, because the fish shunned the land and the crop failed, and Ketill had many people, and it seemed to Sigríðr that they need victuals in order to stay'.

¹⁰⁷ 'It happened as happened often, that a great famine came in Hálogaland'.

¹⁰⁸ *Fornaldar sögur Norðurlanda*, pp. 429–30.

¹⁰⁹ p. 251: 'on a hunting expedition'.

¹¹⁰ As Vésteinn Ólason, 'Marvellous North', p. 111 also notes.

¹¹¹ *Ketils saga hængs*, ch. 2, p. 249: 'he found there in among whales also polar bears, seals and walruses and all kinds of animals'.

although apparently his catch is in fact the shape-shifter *Forað*, who had 'brást í hvalslíki ok steiptist í sjóinn... . Síðan kom Ketill við fōng ok hlóð ferju sína'.¹¹² As well as providing an entertaining encounter with the monster, this episode is also probably reflective of the inherent dangers of looking for food in the north, since one could never be sure what or who would be encountered. *Grímr* too 'held norðr fyrir Finnmörk og svá austr til Gandvíkr. Ok er hann kom í víkina, sá hann, at þar var nógur veiðifangi',¹¹³ and although they in fact have no luck with fish, in chapter two, a 'reyðr mikil' has run aground.¹¹⁴ The fight that ensues against the other men who claim it is theirs demonstrates not only the competition for such food (he would rather fight 'en missa allan hvalinn'),¹¹⁵ but also again reminds the reader that *Gandvíkr* is a good place to try for food, that the bay lies north then east and that you need to take care with encounters with the locals. This might preserve a cultural memory of such fishing expeditions and the likelihood of a bad harvest for the farms along the coast of *Hálogaland*.

VII. CULTURAL MEMORY: JOURNEYS AND DIRECTIONS

As discussed above, *Gísli Sigurðsson* has shown that the *Vínland* sagas preserve directions to and descriptions of places in the sagas not only well enough to build up a detailed mental image of the relative locations of places, but one that can also be transposed onto a real map with little ill effect.¹¹⁶ It is not possible to create so detailed

¹¹² p. 261: 'changed into the shape of a whale and plunged into the sea... Afterwards Ketill came across catch and loaded his boat'.

¹¹³ *Gríms saga loðinkinna*, ch. 1, p. 270: 'held north up to Finnmark and then east to *Gandvíkr*. And when he came into the bay he saw that there was plenty of catch'.

¹¹⁴ p. 273: 'large rorqual'.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*: 'than lose a whole whale'.

¹¹⁶ *Gísli Sigurðsson*, *Medieval Icelandic Saga*, p. 253 and following.

or accurate a picture from the *Hrafnistamannasögur* when they are compared together, although there are some striking incidents in each saga which may represent a preserved memory of places, directions and landfalls of the various places that the sagas tell about. There are three incidents of note in *Ketils saga hængs*. The first is in chapter two, when *Hallbjörn* tells *Ketill* about three fjords: *Næstifjörðr*, *Miðfjörðr* and *Vitaðsgjafi*. Their proximity or known qualities are reflected in their names given in the saga, and the 'nearest' and 'middle' (or 'fishing bank') fjord may have represented well-known places to pass through to get to *Vitaðsgjafi* where they were likely to have success. *Næstifjörðr*, judging from the name, is evidently in the vicinity of *Hrafnista*, and so *Ketill* does not bother going there; in *Miðfjörðr* he finds 'þar í af hvólum ok hvítabjörnum, selum ok rostungum ok alls konar dýrum'¹¹⁷ and in *Vitaðsgjafi* 'þar skorti ekki veiðiskap. Mátti þar taka fiska með höndum sér'.¹¹⁸ Although there are no directions given to these places, there is the idea that people knew where they were likely to find fish and could communicate this to other people through the tradition that the saga drew upon.

The second incident in *Ketils saga hængs* is remarkable since it preserves geographical locations right along the coast of Norway in a verse:

Gang hóf ek upp í Angri.
Eigraðak þá til Steigar.
Skálm glamrandi skrapti.
Skarmtak þá til Karmtar.
Elda munk á Jaðri
og at Útsteini blása.

¹¹⁷ *Ketils saga hængs*, ch. 2, p. 249: 'there in among whales also polar bears, seals and walruses and all kinds of animals'.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* ch. 3, p. 250: 'there was no shortage of catch. One might take a fish with one's hand there'.

Þá munk austr við Elfi,
áðr dagr á mik skíni,
og með brúðkonum beigla
og brátt gefin jarli.¹¹⁹

This is an especially important episode because the saga prose says the verse 'sjá leið er fyrir endilangan Noreg',¹²⁰ and so points out itself what it preserves in this verse: the sailing route down the coast of Norway from the very North *í Angri* to the south of Scandinavia *við Elfi*.¹²¹ Secondly, landfall that journeying ships could use to identify where they are is not described. The exception to this is the journey to Bjarmaland in chapter four, where their journey past the Sami is described and landscape markers cited to indicate when Bjarmaland is reached:

Þeir heldu skipum sínum upp í á þá, er Vína heitir. Eyjar liggja margar í ánni. Þeir kasta akkerum under nesi einu. Þat gekk af meginlandi. Þat sjá þeir tíðenda á land upp, at menn koma af skógi fram ok safnast allir í einn stað.¹²²

¹¹⁹ ch. 5, p. 260: 'I went to a feast up in Angri, / Then I walked heavily to Steigar. / The short sword, jingling, clattered. / Then I pressed on to Karmtar. / I will take fire to Jaðri / and at Útsteinn blow. / Then I will go east with the Elfi / before day shines on me, / and quarrelled with the bridesmaids / and soon got the earl'.

¹²⁰ ch. 5, p. 260: 'is the route along the whole of Norway'.

¹²¹ In the sagas of the *Hrafnistumenn*, the verses play a crucial narrative role in providing not only a great deal of dialogue but also elements of the themes extracted in this paper, and it is likely that this prosimetric form is an indicator or residue of the textualisation of stories once circulated orally.

¹²² p. 294: 'They brought their ships up that river that is called the Vína. Many islands lie in the river. They cast anchor off a ness. It went off the mainland. They saw it happening on the land above that men came out of the forest and assembled themselves altogether in one place'.

Many islands and safe harbourage on a headland jutting off from the mainland near a forest are indicators mentioned so that sailors will know that they have arrived in Bjarmaland and will be able to find somewhere to anchor. These are examples of how an actual landscape can be written into otherwise creative material: the traveller and conveyer of the geographically accurate information in the verse above is a monster, but this makes the information no less valid here.¹²³

Thirdly, Ketill's route to Árhaug paints a detailed picture of where he needs to go and which forests he must travel through:

Litlu fyrir jól lét Ketill flytja sik á land í Naumudal. Hann var í loðkápu og stígr á skíð sín og fór upp eptir dalnum ok svá yfir skóg til Jamtlands og svá austr yfir Skálkskóg til Helsingjals og svá austr yfir Eyskógamörk,—hún skilr Gestrekaland og Helsingjaland,—mog er hann tuttugu rasta langr, en þriggja breiðr ok er illr yfirferðar.¹²⁴

It is also pointed out that the traveller will need a fur-coat and skis to have a successful journey. All the directions are given in one short block rather than spread out over the chapter—a definite picture is intended to be built up in the reader's mind's-eye.

In *Örvar-Odds saga*, the directions are given rather differently. Here they are spread throughout the saga and *Hrafnista* is clearly the centre of *Örvar-Odds saga*'s geographical world. To the north of

¹²³ See Røthe, *I Odins Tid*, pp. 143–7 for a discussion of giantesses as a personification of the landscape.

¹²⁴ *Ketils saga hængs*, ch. 5, p. 262: 'A little before Yule Ketill travelled across the country in Naumudalr. He was in a fur cape and striding on snow-shoes and went up along the valleys and so over the forest to Jamtaland and thus east over Skálkskóg to Helsingjaland and so east over Eyskógamark—it divides Gestrekaland and Helsingjaland and it is twenty miles long and three broad and is terrible to journey through'.

Hrafnista are Finnmörk and Bjarmaland,¹²⁵ to the east, Vík (which is travelled to via Berurjóðr), Gautelfi and the Baltic. One must go south round the coast of Norway in order to reach the Elfar Skerries, and in a southerly direction also lie Skíða (Skien), Sæland (Sjælland), Danmörk and Berurjóðr á Jaðri. To the west lie Skotland, Orkneyja, Írland and England. More so than the other sagas about the men of Hrafnista, *Örvar-Odds saga* details the more unusual countries that Oddr travels to, including Normandy, France (where they are wrecked on the coast of Aquitaine), Saxony, Flanders, Antioch, Greece and Russia. The relation of the countries further afield, other than the French areas being marked as south of Sweden, is clearly not intended to form any clear picture of where Oddr was travelling. No directions are given, lengths of time are not specified, and sometimes he simply wanders from unnamed country to unnamed country. This is in sharp contrast to the directive map built up of the places surrounding Hrafnista: a saga with so many supernatural encounters and a lot of fictive geography can still incorporate potentially geographically accurate and helpful information to be passed on in story form.¹²⁶

VIII. CULTURAL MEMORY: THE DANGERS OF TRAVEL AND TRADING

Having successfully imparted directions to places like Finnmörk and Bjarmaland and having detailed what sort of animals were to be caught there, the *Hrafnistumenn* sagas also include warnings about problems Scandinavian travellers heading to these areas might

¹²⁵ For a discussion of the different types of magic prevalent in the north in *Gríms saga loðinkinna*, *Ketils saga hængs* and *Örvar-Odds saga* and for how *Áns saga bogsvægis* is not connected with this area, see Orning, 'The Magical Reality of the Late Middle Ages', pp. 5–6.

¹²⁶ See C. Larrington "'Undruðusk þá sem fyrir var": Wonder, Vínland and Mediaeval Travel Narratives', *MScand* 14 (2004), 91–114, at p. 110 for the possible role of oral memory of itinerary in organising the Vínland material.

encounter. The first warning regards the terrible weather they may experience, and the second is about natives, their possible reaction to them and what they might be interested in trading.

Foul weather posed two serious hazards to food-gathering trips up past the north of Norway: the ship might be wrecked and the food stocks driven away. The accusation that *trölls* were shaking the boats in *Ketils saga hængs* and *Gríms saga loðinkinna* more than likely reflects the damage inclement weather could do to the ships: 'En hann vaknar við þat, at skipit skalf allt. Hann stóð upp ok sá, at tröllkona tók í stafninn og hristi skipit. ... Helzt ofviðrit'.¹²⁷ Here, as well as in *Örvar-Odds saga*, it is 'Finns fjölkynngi' that is blamed in a verse for the bad weather.¹²⁸ Inclement weather slows plans ('En Brúni kvað eigi þat mega fyrir vetrarríki ok illum veðrum'),¹²⁹ and the descriptions of the misery endured are quite detailed:

En er þeir voru í svefn komnir um nóttina, vöknudu þeir við það, að kominn var stormur með svartahrið. Svo mikil grimmd fylgdi veðri þessu, að allt sýldi, bæði úti og inni. Um morguninn, er þeir voru klæddir, gengu þeir út og til sjávar. Sáu þeir þá, að á burtu var allur veiðifangi, svo að hvergi sá staði. Þóttust þeir nú ekki vel staddir, en ekki gaf á burtu. Gengu þeir nú heim til skála og voru þar um daginn.¹³⁰

¹²⁷ *Ketils saga hængs*, ch. 3, p. 251: 'And he woke up with it, that the ship was all shaking. He stood up and saw that a *tröll* woman took the prow and shook the ship. ... An especially violent gale was blowing'.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* p. 252: 'the magic of the Finns'.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*: 'But Brúni said he might not due to the severe winter and bad weather'.

¹³⁰ *Gríms saga loðinkinna*, ch. 1, p. 270: 'But when they were asleep during the night, they were awakened with it: that a storm had come with a black snowstorm. Such a great grimness followed this weather that everything became stiff with cold, both outside and inside. During the morning, when they were dressed, they went out and to the sea. They saw then, that all the fish had gone away, so that a trace was nowhere. Now they didn't consider themselves to be

It is notable that after this description, *tröll* women once again appear during the night and pose a threat to the ship: 'En er han kom út, sá hann tvær tröllkonur við skip niðri, ok tók í sinn stafninn hvár þeira ok ætluðu at hrista í sundr skipit'.¹³¹ The phrase 'tók í sinn stafninn hvár þeira ok ætluðu at hrista í sundr skipit' is very much like that quoted above from *Ketils saga hængs* in describing what the *tröll* is doing to the ship, and could quite possibly be textual borrowing between the two sagas.¹³² Nevertheless, the point remains that the sagas of the *Hrafnistumenn* seem to preserve definite warnings of the weather sailors could expect up North on hunting or trading expeditions, not least because it might drive the fish away.¹³³

An important part of the knowledge needed about places in the north would be what the locals would be willing to trade or buy, particularly if the men of Hrafnista might be looking to exchange their goods for food. Only one commodity seems particularly desired by the Sami community: butter. When Ketill wakes up and is caught in a storm, a 'smjörlopa nokkura'¹³⁴ is the first thing he saves before he even tries to save his ship. Additionally, the local person he meets singles out his butter-chest as something the Sami invited particularly

well-placed, but there was no wind to leave. They went now home to the hut and were there during the day'.

¹³¹ *Gríms saga loðinkinna*, ch. 1, p. 270: 'and when he came out, he saw two *tröll* women down with the ship, and each of the two took the stem and intended to shake the ship asunder'.

¹³² Nevertheless, the motif of the *tröllkona* shaking a ship in a storm can also be found in *Helgakviða Hundingsbana I*, stanza 28, further suggesting that this is an old, oral motif. See *Edda: die Lieder des Codex Regius nebst verwandten Denkmälern*, ed. G. Neckel, rev. H. Kuhn, Germanische Bibliothek 4, 2 vols., 3rd ed. (Heidelberg, 1962–8), I, 134.

¹³³ *Gríms saga loðinkinna*, ch. 1.

¹³⁴ *Ketils saga hængs*, ch. 3, p. 251: 'certain butter-chest'.

want ('þeir skulu nú koma til smjörlopa þinna'),¹³⁵ and they seem to take great pleasure in it: 'mannfögnuðr er oss at smjöri þessu'.¹³⁶ This emphasis might suggest that what the Sami possess in the way of meat, particularly whale meat, they lack in dairy commodities such as butter, and vice versa for the *Hrafnistumenn*.

Grímr's contest with local people up north over a whale has already been discussed, and it seems that hostility with natives was a distinct possibility, though it is frequent in saga literature that the Sami are habitually presented as the cultural other and thus it could simply be a stereotypical assumption that they would attack journeying Scandinavians. Hallbjörn hálftröll, Ketill's father, calls Hrafnhildr a *tröll* and is evidently annoyed by her presence on Hrafnista in chapter three of *Ketils saga hængs*, despite the fact he is a half-*tröll* himself. Certainly the Sami are also marked out as physically different.¹³⁷ Hrafnhildr is described as 'harðla stór vexti ok þó drengilig. Svá er sagt, at hún hafði alnar breitt andlit',¹³⁸ and the other Sami visitors 'váru eigi mjóleitir'.¹³⁹ Their language too is impossible to understand: "'Skilr þú hér nokkut mál manna?" sagði Oddr. "Eigi

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*: 'they shall now come after your butter-chest'.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*: 'it is a great feast to us to have this butter'.

¹³⁷ In *Ketils saga hængs*, the representative of the Sami, Gusir, is the brother of the giant Brúni, and this conflation of the Sami with the giants is not uncommon in Norse literature. See E. Mundal, 'Coexistence of Saami and Norse Culture—Reflected in and Interpreted by Old Norse Myths', in *Old Norse Myths, Literature and Society. Proceedings from the 11th International Saga Conference 2–7 July 2000*, ed. G. Barnes and M. Clunies Ross (Sydney, 2000), pp. 346–55 and Mundal, 'Perception of the Saami People'.

¹³⁸ *Ketils saga hængs*, ch. 3, p. 252: 'very tall and brave to boot. So it is said that she had a face an ell broad'.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*: 'were not narrow-faced'.

heldr en fuglaklið”, sagði Ásmundr’,¹⁴⁰ and this of course must have been a recurrent problem for Norse men travelling outside their own linguistic area.¹⁴¹ Although geographical neighbours and trading partners, in the sagas the Sami and Scandinavian peoples interacted with varying degrees of success and peace.

IX. SOME CONCLUSIONS

In this essay, the *Hrafnistumannasögur* have been analysed as orally derived narratives in an attempt to ascertain what parts of their stories might stem from a common tradition about the men of Hrafnista, which at one point would have been entirely in oral circulation. It is most indicative of this when the same characters or events are in different sagas, and this also allows them to be compared. Close wording is likely to indicate textual borrowings of some kind, but it is not possible to distinguish which saga borrowed off another in these instances.

I have argued that there must have been a tradition surrounding the *Hrafnistumenn* external in some way to that preserved in their sagas, since the protagonists are mentioned outside the *fornaldarsögur* and different genealogies charting their relationship to one another and their descendents exist.¹⁴² Despite some discrepancies in the

¹⁴⁰ *Örvar-Odds saga*, ch. 4, p. 294: “Do you understand anything of the speech of this man?” said Oddr. “Nothing more than birdspeech”, said Ásmundr’.

¹⁴¹ See Larrington, ‘Mediaeval Travel Narratives’, p. 105 for interpreting encounters with the Skraelings and she also comments on p. 106, ‘such experiences must have been frequent in real-life Scandinavian trading behaviour’.

¹⁴² Stephen Mitchell has also suggested the audience’s prior knowledge of stories about the men of Hrafnista could account for some of the more unusual story elements and motifs in the saga: ‘It requires [...] no particular act of imagination to understand that perhaps lurking outside this, the written multiform of *Ketils saga hængs*, hover numerous unrecorded tellings (and thus

tradition—to be expected in orally derived narratives—the continuum formed is one of an entire story tradition as whole. There are strong ties in the story world of the *Hrafnistumenn* of Hrafnista and Hallbjörn, Ketill, Grímr, Örvar-Oddr and Án, and there are several objects consistently associated with the men of Hrafnista. I have also argued that *Áns saga bogsveigis* is a genuine part of the *Hrafnistumenn* tradition as opposed to suggestions that it is has been brought in as one of the *Hrafnistumannasögur* by an author using extensive textual borrowings from *Ketils saga hængs*.

Part of the argument for including *Áns saga bogsveigis* as an *Hrafnistumannasaga* is that a rich tradition of descent from the *Hrafnistumenn*, including from Án, is recorded. This tradition of descent in itself suggests why an oral culture may have remembered and built stories around the memory of happenings in the locale of Hrafnista and of its inhabitants from times gone by. Certainly important people in early Icelandic history were said to be descended from the islanders, for example, the first law speaker of Iceland. The Hrafnista men thus provide important ties to a place left behind by the first Icelanders but possessive of a culture that in its realistic aspects was probably not unlike that of early Iceland, where a farming community must always have fought to survive in less than ideal conditions. The preservers of the tales of the *Hrafnistumenn* may have had their own origins in the area of Hrafnista, and so felt ties to the place in that respect, but still send the characters off travelling to provide an entertaining tale to tell and to show off how much they know of the world.

shared cultural knowledge among the audience members) in which such elements as Ketill’s bizarre employment of his butter-chest (*smjörlaupr*) and the man-as-whale theme were more fully developed, and which the audience may have known’: ‘The Supernatural and the *fornaldarsögur*: the Case of *Ketils saga hængs*’, in *Fornaldarsagaerne. Myter og virkelighed* (2009) pp. 281–98, at p. 290.

As discussed in the introduction, it is entirely possible for fictive, orally derived material to contain a kernel of truth. In the *Hrafnistumenn* sagas the north functions as both a symbolic place of natural chaos and supernatural wonders, and as an important and realistic location for gathering food and trading opportunities. But, some areas were unchartered territory and it was important to know, if at all predictable, where one might end up, be able to harbour and land without being attacked by affronted locals. It was also useful to know, if trading, which items the folk up north would be most interested in acquiring, and if hunting, what sort of animals one could expect to encounter. As the cultural other, the people in the north of Scandinavia were prime targets to have superstitions and wild stories attached to them, particularly since they looked different and spoke a totally different language.¹⁴³ All this the *Hrafnistumannasögur* record.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ The sagas engage in what Larrington in 'Mediaeval Travel Narratives' has termed 'ethnological observation, likely preserved in oral tradition', p. 114.

¹⁴⁴ I would like to thank Gísli Sigurðsson, Else Mundal, Simon Patterson and the audience of CCASNC 2010 for their questions and comments on earlier versions of this paper.

Bede's *Castella*: Homesteads or Castles?

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In his *Ecclesiastical History*, Bede describes the missionary journeys of St Chad (d. 672), on which the saint visited *oppida rura casas vicos castella*.¹ This has been discussed by the writer, whose conclusions have been criticized by Michael Winterbottom in the previous volume. However, Professor Winterbottom (with characteristic honesty and fairness) showed him the paper before publication and invited him to reply. Before we come to that, let us see how earlier writers took Bede's passage.

Translations include the following:

- (1) In the Old English Bede, *byrig ond lond ond ceastre ond tunas ond hus*, which may be rendered 'cities, country areas, towns, villages, homesteads'.²
- (2) By Thomas Stapleton (1535–98), 'towns, country places, cottages, villages, houses'.³
- (3) By John Stevens (1723) as revised by J. A. Giles (1847), 'towns, the open country, cottages, villages, and castles'.⁴
- (4) By Shirley-Price, 'in towns or country, in cottages, villages, or strongholds'.⁵

¹Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford, 1969), p. 316.

²*Venerabilis Baedae Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. C. Plummer (Oxford, 1896), II, 199.

³*Bedae Opera Historica*, ed. J. E. King (Cambridge, MA, 1930), I, 493.

⁴*Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation* (London, 1910), p. 157.

⁵Bede, *A History of the English Church and People*, trans. L. Shirley-Price, rev. edn (Harmondsworth, 1968), p. 198.

(5) By Colgrave and Mynors, 'cities and country districts, towns, houses, and strongholds'.⁶

(6) By Dorothy Whitelock, 'towns, country places, cottages, villages, great houses'.⁷

(7) By Monat and Robin, 'les places fortes, campagnes, chaumières, villages, et châteaux'.⁸

This writer argued that every translation since the sixteenth century has been inaccurate, especially in taking the last word as 'castles' or 'strongholds'. He thus rejected a suggestion made by Dorothy Whitelock, and accepted by Colgrave and Mynors, that these *castella* were the *byrig* or defended halls of Anglo-Saxon magnates. He proposed instead that the correct translation of *castella* is 'huts, houses, homesteads', the hovels of the poor. For this he advanced four reasons: (1) lists normally go from the more important to the less, so that 'strongholds' after *vicos* 'villages' is an unnatural progression; (2) the Old English translator took *castella* as *hus* 'houses, homesteads', which is a weighty point, since his intimate knowledge of Bede's Latin is shared by no modern scholar; (3) the British Academy's dictionary of medieval Latin here takes *castella* as 'huts, houses, homesteads, buildings'; (4) the *castella* of Bede's source has the same meaning as *castellum* in the Vulgate, which renders Greek *kóme* 'village, small town' and is nothing to do with 'castles' in the medieval sense. He therefore offered a translation for the whole phrase as 'cities, country areas, towns, villages, and homesteads'.

⁶Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* ed. Colgrave and Mynors, p. 317.

⁷*English Historical Documents c. 500–1042*, ed. D. Whitelock, 2nd edn (London, 1979), p. 701.

⁸Bede, *Histoire ecclésiastique du peuple anglais* trans. P. Monat and P. Robin (Paris, 2005), II, 175.

Aspects of this, especially the interpretation of *castella*, are now objected to by Professor Winterbottom. Let us go through his main points. The writer referred to James Campbell on the passage, as quoted by the late Professor J. M. Wallace-Hadrill in his commentary on Bede. Campbell said that this 'marked clustering of words for places' was not typical of Bede's style except when he was 'following a written source', which strongly suggests that in the passage where they occur he is in fact following written sources now lost.⁹ Winterbottom accuses the writer of misrepresenting Campbell, who here wrote 'passages' (in a book not in Pamplona or anywhere near it). Yet the misrepresentation is hardly the writer's. It is Michael Wallace-Hadrill's. It shows one must take no statement on absolute trust, even that of a Chichele Professor of Modern History. More importantly, Winterbottom is less certain than Campbell or Wallace-Hadrill were that the passage is a quotation, and perhaps with reason.

Now for *castella*. Winterbottom objects to the view that the list starts with important places and goes down to minor ones. He thinks that the first two words are generalizing, and the last three are in ascending order. This is perhaps so, but is debatable. Next is the matter of the Old English Bede, which has *byrig ond lond ond ceastre ond tunas ond hus* 'cities, country areas, towns, villages, homesteads'.¹⁰ The writer argued that this text has great authority, even if its translator was not over-endowed with brains. Nevertheless, what Housman said of early scholiasts of Lucan, that 'they understood him with the marrow of their bones, which was the same stuff as his', can be said with even greater

⁹J. Campbell, 'Bede's Words for Places', in *Names, Words, and Graves* ed. P. H. Sawyer (Leeds, 1979), pp. 34–53, quoted in J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People: a Historical Commentary* (Oxford, 1988), p. 133.

¹⁰*Venerabilis Baedae Historia Ecclesiastica* ed. Plummer, II, 199.

truth of the Old English translator and Bede.¹¹ They shared a world of Latin culture that no modern scholar can possibly enter. How, then, does one get round the translation of *castella* as *hus* 'homesteads'? Professor Winterbottom believes that *hus* translates not *castella* but *casas*, the word-order having been changed in the Old English version, and that *castella* is instead represented by *ceastre*. To confirm his case, he notes that *castellum* is translated as *burh* in a reference to Rochester (IV.5) and *ceaster* in one to Utrecht (V.11).

But we doubt the implications seen here. To maintain that a translator has changed word-order needs firm evidence (Professor Winterbottom cites no other syntactic modifications in the Old English text), and there are two matters that go against it. The military aspects of Rochester and Utrecht, both famous cities, were obvious. No sane translator would there render *castellum* as *hus*. They are hence of less significance in the present context than may appear. Second, the case against *castella* as 'strongholds' is strengthened by Stapleton's towns, country places, cottages, villages, houses'. The Old English version, not printed until 1643 (at Cambridge), was hardly available to Stapleton, who would make his translation afresh. If so, it is curious that he took *castella* as 'houses', like his precursor seven centuries before. Stapleton was a loyal Catholic who suffered years of exile for his beliefs and did not flinch. Like Bede, he had profound knowledge of the Vulgate Bible. He thus naturally took *castella* in its New Testament meaning of 'villages, groups of houses, homesteads', not 'fortresses, strongholds', as later writers have had it. That the Alfredian and the Elizabethan translator agreed on this matter cannot be simply brushed aside. However, one must at once point out how, with a sense of justice that commands admiration, Professor Winterbottom mentions a circumstance that actually goes against his argument: the absence of

¹¹*M. Annaei Lucani Belli Civilis Libri Decem*, ed. A. E. Housman (Oxford, 1926), p. vi.

noblemen's forts from the Anglo-Saxon archaeological record in Bede's day. What, then, could Bede mean by *castella*?

Let us list instances from the Vulgate:

Where the Authorised Version has 'city or town ye shall enter', it has *civitatem aut castellum intraveritis*¹²

Where the Authorised Version has 'that they may go into the villages', it has *ut euntes in castella*¹³

For 'Go into the village', *Ite in castellum*.¹⁴

For 'And he went round about the villages, teaching', *et circumibat castella in circuitu docens*.¹⁵

For 'And they departed, and went through the towns', *Egressi autem circumibant per castella*.¹⁶

For 'two of them went that same day to a village', *duo ex illis ibant ipsa die in castellum*.¹⁷

For 'and out of the town of Bethlehem', *et de Bethlehem castella*.¹⁸

For 'Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha', *Bethania, de castello Mariae et Martha sororis eius*.¹⁹

To clerics of the age of Bede and King Alfred, *castellum* meant a settlement, as well as a stronghold (as shown by allusions to Rochester and Utrecht). For the New Testament meaning of *castellum*, Winterbottom gives learned citations from Augustine, Jerome, and

¹²Mt 10.11, in *The Navarre Bible: Saint Matthew's Gospel*, 2nd edn (Dublin, 1991), p. 105.

¹³Mt 14.15, in *Navarre Bible Matthew*, p. 140.

¹⁴Mt 21.2, in *Navarre Bible Matthew*, p. 179.

¹⁵Mk 6.6, in *The Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to Saint Mark* (Dublin, 1985), p. 106.

¹⁶Lk 9.6, in *The Navarre Bible: Saint Luke's Gospel* (Dublin, 1988), p. 119.

¹⁷Lk 24.13, in *Navarre Bible: Luke*, p. 253.

¹⁸Jn 7.42, in *The Navarre Bible: The Gospel of Saint John*, 2nd edn (Dublin, 1992), p. 118-19.

¹⁹Jn 11.1, in *Navarre Bible: John*, pp. 152-3.

Isidore of Seville, some of which Bede would know. He concludes that the last places visited by St Chad were not as humble as the 'homesteads' proposed by this writer, but that 'Bede arguably saw *castella* as hamlets or even small towns.'

What is the upshot of all this? There seem two conclusions. First, all those writing on Bede should refer to Michael Winterbottom's paper, which is of exemplary learning and rigour. Readers may use it and the main sources for early English and late Latin to see if further investigation resolves the present questions. Second is the feeling that little separates the Oxford scholar and the Pamplona one. The latter takes *castella* as 'homesteads', the former as 'hamlets or even small towns'. But they agree that the case for 'strongholds, fortresses', repeated in versions of Bede for nearly three centuries, is weak. It does not bear the implications for Anglo-Saxon society that Whitelock, Colgrave, and Mynors claimed for it.