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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------------|--|
| <i>Al</i> | Alfræði Íslenzk |
| <i>ASE</i> | <i>Anglo-Saxon England</i> |
| ASPR | Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records |
| BBCS | Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies |
| <i>CMCS</i> | <i>Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies</i> |
| EEMF | Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile |
| EETS | Early English Text Society |
| EWGT | Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts |
| <i>JEGP</i> | <i>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</i> |
| <i>MLR</i> | <i>Modern Language Review</i> |
| MScand | Mathematica Scandinavia |
| PLMA | <i>Zeitschrift für Deutsches Altertum und Deutsche Literatur</i> |
| RES | Review of English Studies |
| SS | Scandinavian Studies |
| <i>ZDA</i> | <i>Zeitschrift für Deutsches Altertum und Deutsche Literatur</i> |

PREFACE

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the fifteenth number of *Quaestio Insularis*, the journal of the annual Cambridge Colloquium in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic (CCASNC). Both the journal and the Colloquium, established in 1999 on the initiative of the postgraduate community of the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, have maintained an admirably high standard, driven by the enthusiasm and commitment of successive cohorts of students. The 2014 conference was a great success and well-attended, with speakers from far and wide with much to discuss, all set off in a stimulating direction by Dr Oliver Padel's keynote lecture. The print version of that lecture heads up the present volume, as usual, followed by papers which nicely exemplify the cross-cultural nature of the Colloquium. The Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic is delighted to continue its association with the CCASNC and its published proceedings. *Quaestio Insularis* 15 and all back numbers of the journal can be ordered directly from the Department's website (www.asnc.cam.ac.uk).

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COLLOQUIUM REPORT

The 2014 Colloquium in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic took place in Room GR 06/07 of the Faculty of English, 9 West Road, Cambridge on Saturday the 15th of February. The theme of the colloquium was 'Evidence of Corruption/Corruption of Evidence', and it drew speakers not only from Cambridge but from London, Cornwall, Iceland, Ireland and the United States. Keynote speaker Dr Oliver Padel set the tone for the day, raising the crucial question of the meaning of corruption. Bearing this question in mind, the remainder of the conference was spent exploring many different types of corruption: personal and societal corruption; textual corruption; authorial and editorial corruption; and literary corruption. The cohesion and comprehensiveness of the papers led to lively discussions and an audience that remained engaged throughout the day. We would like to thank all of the speakers and the attendees who contributed to such a fine conference – it is your enthusiasm that makes colloquium such an enjoyable and important event year after year. A special thanks is also due to the marvellous undergraduate helpers who kept things running smoothly on the day: Rebecca Try, Beth McKinlay, Sven Rossel, Rachel Fletcher, Alice Harvey-Fishenden, Michael Frost, Hannah Everett and Emilia Henderson.

Keynote Address (*Chairs: Eleanor Heans-Glogowska and Myriah Williams*)

Dr Oliver Padel, 'Change and Development in English Place-Names: What Counts As Corruption'

Session I (*Chairs: Chandar Lal and Maria Teresa Ramandi*)

Camilla Pedersen, 'In the Claws of One's Self: A Comparative Study of "Voluntary" Shape-Shifting in the Literary Traditions of Old Norse and Medieval Irish Narrative'

Rebecca Merkelbach, 'The Monster in Me: Social Corruption and the Perception of Monstrosity in the Sagas of the Icelanders'

Session II (*Chairs: Julia Bolotina and Myriah Williams*)

S. C. Thomson, 'Manuscript Stability and Literary Corruption: Our Failure to Understand the *Beowulf* Manuscript'

Ben Guy, 'A Second Witness to the Welsh Material in Harley 3859'

Session III (*Chairs: Eoghan Ahern and Caitlin Ellis*)

Daisy Le Helloco, "'So that no man may henceforth be deceived": Editing Gildas in the Sixteenth Century'

Rosie Bonté, 'Corrupted memories: cultural memory and manipulation in Orkneyinga saga'

Dale Kedwards, 'Any way the wind blows: the circle of winds in medieval Icelandic maps and diagrams'

Session IV (*Chairs: Eoghan Ahern and Julia Bolotina*)

Rebecca Hill, 'Filling the Gaps: Inhabiting Poetic Intent in "The Husband's Message"'

David Callander, 'The Corruption of Evidence in a Critical Tradition: Welsh and Old English Elegies'

The members of the colloquium committee for 2013–14 were:

Eleanor Heans-Glogowska, Myriah Williams, Julia Bolotina, Chandar Lal, Caitlin Ellis, Maria Teresa Ramandi and Eoghan Ahern.

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Quaestio Insularis 15 was edited by Eleanor Heans-Glogowska, Myriah Williams, Julia Bolotina, Chandar Lal, Caitlin Ellis, Maria Teresa Ramandi and Eoghan Ahern. The editors wish to acknowledge the assistance of Lauren Kennedy, Dr Rosalind Love, Professor Paul Russell, Dr Robert Gallagher and our anonymous 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.

Change and Development in English Place-Names: What Counts as Corruption?

Oliver Padel
English Place-Name Society

The choice of theme for this year's Cambridge Colloquium in ASNC, corruption, provides an opportunity to consider the ways in which that term has been used in the study of English place-names.¹ All languages change over time, mostly in fairly regular ways; so calling a change 'corruption' presumably carries the implication that one is uncomfortable with it in some way, probably because it seems irregular, or one can see no obvious motivation for it, in contrast with one which is regular or, if irregular, may have occurred for some particular reason. In order to use the term consistently, one needs a clear idea of changes which are considered regular, or what constitutes recognisable motivation for a change, in order to be clear about the opposite. So part of the aim of examining this topic is to sharpen our idea of changes which are regular or common in place-names, and hence our idea of ones which are not so.

The two basic principles of studying place-names are the need for early spellings, so as to reach behind the modern forms, which may differ considerably from the original form of a name; and the tendency of a language to form its names repeatedly in consistent ways, with the result that we can usually expect a particular name to have parallels, either exact or of general type, within the same language or closely-related ones. It is also standard to recognise that place-names tend to have conservative spellings, even more than words appearing in other texts, which themselves tend to be written in established orthographies; conversely, however, place-names can occasionally show precocious evidence of a sound-change, earlier than the appearance of that change in other written sources. It is the collective evidence provided by numbers of early spellings for individual names, and the comparison with dated changes shown by the cumulative spellings of other names, which may enable one to say whether a particular spelling reflects the expected pronunciation of its time, or is conservative or precocious.

One final preliminary point to be made is the question of what actually counts as a place-name. It is sometimes suggested that a descriptive phrase becomes a name when it

¹ I am very grateful to the Committee of CCASNC for their invitation to come and speak at the conference, and to an anonymous reviewer on behalf of *Quaestio* for their useful comments, adopted below; also to Dr Paul Cavill for making the English Place-Name Survey available to me in electronic form, and Dr Peter McClure for reading my text and providing the benefit of his usual insight into all onomastic matters.

loses its lexical meaning and comes to signify only the place itself (for instance, 'Oxford'). However, some place-names (Cambridge Airport, Huntingdon Road) do retain a functional meaning. Nevertheless, it is true that many place-names have lost all lexical meaning, even when their derivation remains transparent ('Oxford' again, or a name such as Station Road once the railway station has become only a sad memory). It may be that this loss of lexical meaning in place-names makes them liable to a greater degree of change than other words in the language,² and also more prone to the type of irregular change that we might call corruption. Do the place-names of a language simply reflect the changes that happen elsewhere in the language, or are there certain types of change, regular or not, which are particular to place-names, or which appear more frequently in place-names than elsewhere?

One type of corruption can be distinguished immediately. The written forms of place-names are frequently prone to textual corruption. We may tend to take this for granted, since it is comparable with the textual corruption which is liable to occur when any scribe copies any text, and which has been carefully studied, over the centuries, particularly by scholars examining the transmission of Classical literature. We need to be aware of textual corruption in the forms of place-names, and not be misled into using such corrupt forms for explaining the derivation of a place-name. Again it is the cumulative spellings which help us to identify textually corrupt ones, and perhaps even to trace the textual transmission of such forms.

An example is provided by the difficult Cornish place-name Godolphin, of which the earliest spellings are significantly discrepant from one another. It does not appear in Domesday Book, so its earliest and subsequent forms include the following: *Wotolta*, *Wotholca* 1166, *Gludholghan* 1186, *Wulgholgan* 1194, *Woldholgan* 1201, *Godholkan* c.1210, *Wothholcan* 1223, *Wutletheham* 1225, *Gudolgan* 1229, *Wothelgan* 1270, *Godgolwan* 1293.³ It is not until the fourteenth century that its spellings settle down, notably in the form *Godolghan* 1310, 1327, 1328, which seems consistently to indicate a pronunciation [go'dolxan]. That is not readily comprehensible as Cornish of its day, though it may contain Cornish *go-* 'sub-, little' plus an unknown word apparently of the

² As suggested by C. Clark, 'Towards a reassessment of "Anglo-Norman influence" on English place-names', in her *Words, Names and History*, ed. Peter Jackson (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 144–55 (esp. pp. 150 and 152).

³ Early forms of Cornish place-names are taken from my collections towards the Cornwall volumes of the Survey of English Place-Names; compare O. J. Padel, *Cornish Place-Name Elements*, English Place-Name Society 56–7 (Nottingham, 1985).

shape **tolghan*. Subsequent spellings, such as *Godollon* c.1480, *Goodalfyn* 1576, *Godolphin* 1608, can be explained as regular developments of the fourteenth-century form. The earlier spellings come from national sources, mainly records concerning taxation or land-tenure, which were particularly liable to be copied from earlier records. None of them is precisely convincing as a regular antecedent of fourteenth-century *Godolghan*, and they all probably show various types of textual corruption, though they may still be useful for reconstructing the earlier form of the name. Since the fourteenth-century form does not have a ready explanation in Cornish, the question arises, does that form, the earliest that we can be sure of for this name, represent its original pronunciation and thus its derivation, or was it a spoken development of a name which was already obscure to local speakers of Cornish? Here as always we try to reach behind the spellings in order to discern how the name was locally pronounced; but with this difficult name that does not immediately lead towards a derivation.

My other example of textual corruption is also from Cornwall, but much more recent. Names of coastal features are particularly difficult to trace historically, since early records are predominantly concerned with land-holding, so they tend not to mention coastal features. The tip of the Roseland peninsula in south Cornwall is called Zone Point on modern maps, and we are fortunate in having a sixteenth-century spelling, *Savenheer or the long coved point* 1597, which shows its derivation from Cornish *sawn* 'cleft, gully' (Welsh *safn* 'mouth') + *hyr* 'long'.⁴ The identification of the form is secure since it comes from an early map showing its location, and the 'long cleft' is still there, although it has partly collapsed. The next known form is *The ZONE P.* 1813 from the First Edition of the Ordnance Survey one-inch map, a plausible development of the older form, although the qualifying adjective *hyr* 'long' has been irregularly dropped. But on later Ordnance Survey maps from c.1870 to 1919 the name was misprinted as *The ZOZE P.*, with the capital N turned on its side as Z. This error (as the sixteenth-century form clearly shows it to be) was corrected in about 1930, back to Zone Point, which remains the form today. The history is therefore straightforward, but what is notable is that as late as the 1960s and 1970s some local fishermen were still calling it 'Zoze Point'. One might have supposed that Cornish fishermen in the middle of the last century would be a reliable source for oral forms of coastal place-names, but in fact these men were perpetuating a printing error which had been current on Ordnance Survey maps from about 1870 to 1920. It is striking to find a textual corruption becoming part of the oral tradition. And this raises the

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 205 and 132.

question: could a written error have become orally current in the medieval period, too? We tend to assume that in the Middle Ages written forms either reflected the contemporary pronunciation or perpetuated older written forms; and, further, that too few people had access to written forms of place-names for those to have influenced local pronunciations. However, it is theoretically conceivable that the high status of written documents, and of the people who did have access to them, might occasionally have caused a written error to have been adopted locally. Such an occurrence would doubtless have been exceptional, but the possibility should perhaps not be dismissed altogether.

Textual corruption of place-names is comparatively straightforward, since it closely resembles textual corruption elsewhere. Since written forms of place-names generally reflected local pronunciations, the changes that they show over time will be the spoken changes which the place-names underwent. In order to define 'corruption' (or irregular change) among such forms, we need to be clear what we consider to be 'regular' change. Place-names have partaken in the regular changes undergone by their respective languages, so discussions of individual place-names will often refer to the standard textbooks of the language concerned, citing the normal changes which the names have undergone. What is less clear is whether there are some changes which are characteristic of place-names but not of the language generally, or (more likely) whether there are some changes which are often seen in place-names but less frequently in other parts of a language. Curiously place-name scholars do not seem to have systematically listed the changes which place-names typically undergo, perhaps because they are often no different from those found elsewhere in a language.⁵ However, the loss of lexical meaning in place-names, mentioned earlier, may have made them more prone to certain types of change. As a very rough preliminary contribution to this area, a list (probably incomplete) is given here of some changes which are cited frequently in discussions of place-names, and therefore which are not considered to count as corruption. Many of these changes have not necessarily occurred in all the situations where they could, so we are still not able to explain precisely why particular changes have occurred or not; but these are some of the changes frequent enough to be called 'regular' or 'normal'.

⁵ Brief remarks by E. Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, 4th edition (Oxford, 1960), p. xxxiv; and a short list, with entertaining observations, in Clark, 'Reassessment of "Anglo-Norman influence"', p. 150.

PHONOLOGICAL SIMPLIFICATION

Many, though not all, of the changes undergone by place-names amount to various kinds of phonological simplification, including the reduction of unstressed vowels to the neutral vowel schwa [ə], and the loss of consonants or of whole syllables. The typical results of such changes are shown by names containing two separate elements, Old English *ford* 'a ford' and *word* (or its extended form *wordig*) 'enclosure, farm', both of which were liable to become *-ver* or *-er* when unstressed at the end of a name, especially in the south-west of England but also in other counties. Through phonological reductions these two separate elements could eventually produce the same group of sounds in different names; and this convergence meant that they sometimes became confused with one another, so a name which historically contained one of them may later have been written as if it contained the other. (These developments may also incorporate the non-simplificatory changes of reinterpretation and hypercorrection, discussed below). Three places called Dipper in Devon and Cornwall have early forms such as *Dupeford* 1306, clearly 'deep ford', with the modern forms showing reduction of *-ford* to *-er*,⁶ but others called Dipford or Diptford still show the full form of the second element, demonstrating the unpredictability even of a comparatively 'regular' change.⁷

Wallover (Devon) originally contained the other of these two elements: *Waleurda* 1086, *Walleworth* 1242 show that it was originally *Weala-wordig*, 'farm of the *Wealas* (Britons)', but later *Walliford* alias *Wallworthy* 1673, showing the interchange of *ford* and *wordig*, and its modern form Wallover demonstrate the spoken reduction of the final element to *-ver* which encouraged the interchange.⁸ Similarly Honeyford (Devon) was formerly *Honyworthi* 1330, 'honey farm', and the modern form with *-ford* shows the same exchange.⁹ The reverse change is shown in the name Ponsworthy (Devon), which was *Pauntesford* 1281, with an uncertain first element and clearly with *ford* as second element; the modern form Ponsworthy, anticipated by *Pounsford* alias *Pounsworthy* 1674, shows the same interchange as in Honeyford, but the other way round.¹⁰ Further afield, Tubworth

⁶ *PNDevon* I, pp. 109 and 200, and in Whitstone parish (Cornwall). Abbreviated references of the type *PN* + county name are explained at the end of the article; they refer to volumes of the Survey of English Place-Names, published by the English Place-Name Society (EPNS), a full list of which is found at www.nottingham.ac.uk/ins.

⁷ *PNDevon*, I, p. 299; II, pp. 394, 531.

⁸ *PNDevon*, I, p. 60.

⁹ *PNDevon*, II, p. 430.

¹⁰ *PNDevon*, II, p. 528; compare Ponsford (*Pantesfort* 1086), *ibid.* II, p. 561.

(Berkshire) was *on Tubban forda* 942 (13th), *Tubford* 1535, *Tubberd* 1553, showing the same reduction followed by replacement;¹¹ and Longworth (Herefordshire) was *Langeford* 1242.¹²

GENERAL COLLAPSE

Sometimes this reduction is so extreme as to amount to general collapse, which does not happen in regular ways but is sufficiently widespread to be considered a normal phenomenon, so it has not been considered corruption. Woolfardisworthy (Devon) was *Olfereordi* 1086, *Wlfereswrthi* 1238, *Wolfridesworthy* 1381, and is explained as 'Wulfheard's farm', with an Old English personal name in the genitive, though the earlier forms may suggest *Wulfhere* rather than *Wulfheard*. The modern map-form still reflects that derivation, but the name is locally pronounced ['wulsəri] ('Woolsery'), as reflected already in the early-modern forms *Woolsry* 17th, *Woolsery* 1686.¹³ The discrepancy between the map-form Woolfardisworthy and the pronunciation 'Woolsery' is sufficiently great to have become a nuisance, since many people these days receive local names in written rather than spoken form; so the form *Woolsery* has been adopted as an alternative written form for the name, and both forms now appear on local signposts.

General collapse is well attested in the small number of English names which survive from the Romano-British period, often with the addition of Old English *cēaster* in the sense 'Roman town, Roman fort'. The first syllable of Dorchester (Dorset) retains a memory of its Romano-British name *Durnovaria*, which had become *Dornnuarana ceaster* by 847 and *Dorecester* 1086. The ninth-century form shows reinterpretation of the obscure British *-varia* as Old English *-ware* (genitive plural *-warena* 'dwellers', and the modern form shows the five syllables of the original name reduced to the single syllable *Dor*.¹⁴ This extreme reduction of such Romano-British names as have survived at all is sufficiently well attested to count almost as a regular tendency, even though exceptions also exist; so it is not counted as corruption, even though it has happened in irregular ways and cannot be predicted. Margaret Gelling has pointed out that the reduction typically happened in the later Old English period, rather than in the early process of borrowing

¹¹ *PNBerks* II, p. 426; III, p. 723.

¹² Ekwall, *Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, p. 304.

¹³ *PNDevon*, I, p. 80.

¹⁴ *PNDorset*, I, pp. 346–8; A. L. F. Rivet and Colin Smith, *The Place-Names of Roman Britain* (London, 1979), p. 345.

from Brittonic.¹⁵

POLYSYLLABIC SHORTENING

One particular type of reduction is that known as 'polysyllabic shortening', the shortening of an original long vowel when it is incorporated into a polysyllabic word, even when stressed as first syllable. This phenomenon occurs elsewhere in the language (for example, long vowels in *goose*, *hōly* but short in their compounds *gōsling*, *hōliday*). It occurs as early as the eleventh century, and is well attested in Middle English, and more widely in the early-modern period, but is not a universal rule — hence our uncertainty whether derivative words such as *privacy* and *piracy* should have a long or short vowel in their first syllable.¹⁶ Given the loss of lexical meaning in most place-names, it is not surprising that polysyllabic shortening has occurred quite widely in them: the south-western names Dipper and Dip(t)ford, cited earlier, show it (OE *dēop* 'deep'); and Bessacarr (Yorkshire), *Besacra* 12th, is 'bent-grass plot (of land)', Old English *bēos* 'bent-grass' (stiff wiry grass) + *æcer* 'acre, plot', with shortening of the long vowel (originally a diphthong) of *bēos*.¹⁷ Luddenden (Yorkshire), *Luddingden(e)* 13th, contains an Old English stream-name **Hlūding* 'loud one' (from *hlūd* 'loud') + *denu* 'valley';¹⁸ the reduction of long to short *u* is probably indicated already by the double *dd* in the thirteenth-century spelling.

ASSIMILATION

The change of assimilation, whereby one consonant becomes adapted to another nearby, is not phonological reduction, but a different type of simplification. Upmanby (Cumberland) was *Uckemanbi* 1188, *Upmanby* 1501, and contains the Scandinavian personal name *Húkmaðr*, partially anglicised with the change of Old Norse *maðr* 'man' to give *Hukeman*, a name which is so attested in Cumberland itself in 1195 (possibly the actual man who had given his name to the place?).¹⁹ The modern form, appearing already in 1501, is due

¹⁵ Margaret Gelling, *Signposts to the Past* (London, 1978), pp. 54–5; O. J. Padel, 'Brittonic place-names in England', in *Perceptions of Place: Twenty-First-Century Interpretations of English Place-Name Studies*, edited by Jayne Carroll and David Parsons (Nottingham, 2013), pp. 1–41 (pp. 17–18).

¹⁶ R. Jordan, *Handbuch der mittelenglischen Grammatik*, 2nd edn (Heidelberg, 1934), §24; E. J. Dobson, *English Pronunciation 1500–1700*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1957), II, pp. 497–514.

¹⁷ *PNYorksWR*, I, p. 40.

¹⁸ *PNYorksWR*, III, p. 132.

¹⁹ *PNCumbs*, II, p. 260.

to assimilation of *k* to the following *m*, the group *-km-* becoming *-pm-*. It is easy to see why such phonological simplification would be liable to occur in speech. A less straightforward example is provided by the name Sandlow Moss (Cheshire), found in various forms as *Son(e)walde(s)leg()mos* from the thirteenth century onwards, and as *Son(e)ward(is)lewemos*, with *-ward-* not *-wald-*, from c.1300. It probably contains an Old English personal name **Suneward*, not attested independently but composed of known personal-name elements. If so, the forms with *-wald-*, though found slightly earlier, do not show the derivation; they can be explained as resulting from assimilation of the original *-r-* in *-ward-* to the subsequent *-l-* at the beginning of the second element (Old English *lēah* 'grove, wood-pasture').²⁰ Although such an explanation may seem slightly strained, something of the kind is necessary in order to explain the discrepant spellings in *-wald-* and *-ward-*, unless one whole group of spellings is dismissed as due to textual corruption, which does not seem likely here.

DISSIMILATION

However, alongside such cases of assimilation the reverse change, dissimilation, is also sometimes adduced in order to explain forms. Several names originally containing Old English *cēaster* have modern or medieval forms which lack the *-s-* in that element. Exeter from *Exanceaster* late 9th is an obvious example, and Wroxeter (Shropshire) another modern one; a medieval example is provided by Gloucester, which was *Gleawan ceaster* late 9th, *Gleawcestre* 11th, but *Glowcetur* c.1165, again with loss of the *-s-* immediately preceding the *-t-*.²¹ This loss of *-s-* generally occurs in names where the initial *c-* of *cēaster* had become [s], instead of remaining as [tʃ] as in names such as Manchester. The best explanation for this loss is dissimilation in the group *-sest-* (often with other consonants immediately preceding it) to *-set-*:²² phonological simplification again, even though its end result is the reverse of the assimilation just examined. The discipline does not need to be apologetic or defensive about proposing two opposite tendencies in order to explain the developments found in place-names, for both these types of change have demonstrably occurred, as shown by the cumulative forms of many names. Although the ultimate aim of the discipline (or one of them) is to provide derivations for the names, the collections of forms first have to be made; and irrespective of the derivations proposed

²⁰ *PNCheshire*, II, pp. 91–2.

²¹ *PNGloucs*, II, pp. 123–4.

²² Thus Clark, 'Reassessment of "Anglo-Norman influence"', p. 152.

from them, those spellings stand as witness to the changes that have occurred: except in the derivations proposed, we are merely documenting what has demonstrably taken place.

'CONSERVATIVE REVERSION'

Some other changes do not amount to phonological simplification, in fact the reverse of that. The later changes that have occurred in the name of Gloucester exemplify one such type of change. We have already seen that the name had become *Glowcetur* by c.1165; subsequently that form was simplified further, giving *Glowster* 1618, *Gloster* 1666, showing that the modern pronunciation of the name already existed in the seventeenth century.²³ However, the name is now spelt Gloucester: it has reverted to a considerably older form. Quite a few names can be shown to have undergone such 'conservative reversion'. Spellings showing colloquial local pronunciations tend to appear especially in the early-modern period, following the greater spread of literacy which resulted from the Reformation; subsequently an older spelling has often been reinstated. We have already seen something similar in the name Woolfardisworthy, where the form *Woolsery* 1686 shows the pronunciation but the longer form has remained the official one. Partly this is a matter of types of documents: ones written by local scribes, such as parish registers or manorial court rolls, are particularly useful in showing local pronunciations at that period, whereas more official ones, such as deeds and feudal records, are more likely to perpetuate spellings copied or modified from older documents. In Gloucester and Woolfardisworthy it is these official forms which have won.

The different processes and pressures which have resulted in these changes and reversions have been little studied. Broadly speaking, the more important a place, the more likely it is to have a conservative spelling, while minor place-names are more likely to have local spellings; but even minor ones, below the parish level, can sometimes show conservative forms, even centuries out-of-date. Local antiquaries, particularly in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, may sometimes have played a part in restoring older spellings when one showing the contemporary pronunciation had become current, and such people were in a position to exert influence upon local scribes. But, in addition, the concept of 'reversion', although that is the effect of our evidence in some cases, may be slightly misleading: in mainstream documents of the central administration, spellings such as *Gloucester* may well have remained current throughout the period, but unnoticed by

²³ *PNGloucs*, II, p. 124.

onomasts, since we do not go looking for seventeenth-century spellings of such names in mainstream documents, whereas we do search for them in local sources, because they are precisely the ones liable to provide valuable contemporary pronunciations.

HYPERCORRECTION

Various types of analogy have been a powerful force for change in place-names, as elsewhere in language, and have sometimes produced changes which can be the opposite of simplification. When people have two alternative pronunciations of a word or name, one colloquial, the other more careful (for example, English 'sparrə' and 'fello' for *sparrow*, *fellow*), the variation can produce an awareness that one sound is a 'less correct' form of another. Such awareness can sometimes cause the more careful pronunciation to be introduced even in a name where it does not belong originally. This pair of unstressed sounds in English provides an example in a Cornish place-name, of Cornish-language derivation but lying in an area which has long been English-speaking: Polperro was *Portpira* 1303, *Porthpera* 1355, *Polparra* 1699, and is Cornish *porth* 'harbour, cove' (later confused with *pol* 'pool') plus an unknown word of the shape *pira* or *pera*. The unstressed final *-a* naturally became reduced to [ə], but once that sound was present in the name it could be taken to be not a reduction of *-a*, but a reduction of *-ow*, which is a very common ending in Cornish-language place-names, and which itself was often reduced to [ə]. Hence in this name the final [ə] was hypercorrected to give *Polparrow* 1748, and the modern form Polperro, and the name is usually so pronounced today.

FOLK-ETYMOLOGY

Folk-etymology is another form of analogy; it is also called 'reinterpretation', or 'analogical reformation'. It occurs within languages generally; the reinterpretation of English 'asparagus' as 'sparrow-grass' (hence simply 'grass' among greengrocers) is a well-known example. This change can occur particularly when names cross between languages, though it is not restricted to such contexts: some purely-English examples are cited below. English versions of Irish-language place-names in Ireland provide some examples: the place-name Tairbeirt 'place of portage' (dragging ships across an isthmus) has become Turbot (Island) in Co. Galway; and the townland of Skerryravel (Co. Antrim)

is locally 'Scare-the-Devil'.²⁴ In Cornwall the generic element *tre* 'farmstead, estate' is so common in place-names, with about 1,200 examples across the county, that other words in unstressed position have sometimes been reinterpreted as *Tre-*, for example Trenarren, formerly *Tingaran* 1307 'crane's fort', containing originally **dyn* 'fort' (variant **tyn*), with reference to a nearby promontory-fort. Even English-language place-names in Cornwall can be so influenced, so place-names originally of the form *Forde* 'ford' and *Hylle* 'hill' may now be found as Treforda, Trehill, often via a personal name of the type (John) *atte Forde*, *atte Hylle* 'John (who lives) at the ford, at the hill'.²⁵

Reinterpretation or folk-etymology is not usually considered corruption, although any individual example might reasonably be considered so, since it is entirely unpredictable and each such change constitutes a one-off example on its own, not following regular patterns. It is the frequency of the phenomenon that makes it normal. And although its changes are not regular ones, the motivation is usually apparent — a desire to turn something not understood into something comprehensible, or to make an unfamiliar name conform to a more familiar pattern, even though the pattern itself may not be understood.

STRESS-SHIFT

The position of the stress in place-names is usually very stable: on the first syllable in Germanic place-names, on the qualifying (usually the second) element in the phrasal names which are characteristic of all the neo-Celtic languages. However, the more complex, and non-English, stress-pattern of these phrasal names has meant that changes of stress do sometimes occur, and frequently enough not to count as corruption. In Cornwall the stress on most phrasal names has been remarkably stable, over more than a thousand years of English-speaking in some areas. It is particularly stable when it lies on the second syllable of a trisyllabic name, a very common pattern (Trevélyan, Treláwny, and the like); even the few Brittonic names in Devon also show that stress-pattern: Clovelly and Dunchideock are both stressed on the middle one of their three syllables.²⁶ But when the stress lies etymologically on the third syllable of a name of that shape, it is liable to move to the first. Thus the Cornish parish-name Linkinhorne was originally Old Cornish *lann* 'church-site' plus the personal name **Kenhoarn*, itself of three syllables and

²⁴ K. Muhr, 'English place-names in Ireland', in *Perceptions of Place*, ed. J. Carroll and D. N. Parsons, pp. 355–97 (pp. 386–7).

²⁵ Padel, *Cornish Place-Name Elements*, pp. 228–9.

²⁶ *PNDevon*, I, p. 70; II, p. 495.

accordingly stressed *Kenhó-arn*, in which the last two syllables have coalesced, producing the pattern 'Linkinhóm', stressed on the final syllable. The name is still so pronounced locally, even though the area has been thoroughly English-speaking for at least eight centuries and the reason for that stress is long forgotten. But many people pronounce it with first-syllable stress instead, 'Linkinhorn'.

Rather to my surprise, in Wales the stress has been less stable in some names, through univibration: some phrasal names, which are really two or more separate words, have come to be treated as if they were a single word, and stressed accordingly, sometimes with other phonological changes consequent upon the stress-shift. Thus Aberffraw, the seat on Anglesey of the medieval kings of Gwynedd, is etymologically Aber-Ffráw, the mouth of the very short river Ffráw. But that two-word name is now stressed as if it were a single word, Abérffro, with consequent change of the diphthong *-aw* to the single vowel *-o* because it is now unstressed; and there is even the aphetic form *'Bérffro*, far removed from its original form. Even more remarkably the Welsh name for Knighton (Radnorshire), Tref-y-Clawdd 'the town on the (Offa's) Dyke', has undergone univibration to give 'Trefýclo', with the stress falling on the definite article and similar change of *-clawdd* to *-clo* because unstressed. Such univibration is unknown in Cornwall, conversely to what one might have expected since the names there are all opaque because of the death of the language, whereas they are still understood in Wales. Bearing in mind the suggestion mentioned earlier, that the loss of lexical meaning is often a part of the process of becoming a name, I wonder whether this univibration in some Welsh place-names may have occurred just because the names are so well understood, and in order to make them opaque, and therefore more truly names. At any rate these stress-shifts are all regular enough not to count as corruption.

In Devon the name Cullompton is etymologically 'estate (*tūn*) on the river Culm', and accordingly one would expect it to be stressed on the first syllable. That is the local pronunciation reported in the Survey volume for that part of Devon, published in 1932: [kʌlmp̄tən], which also lacks the second, epenthetic, syllable, and which nicely expresses the original sense of the name.²⁷ However, the normal pronunciation in Devon and further afield today is [kə'lamp̄tən], with the stress on the second of three written syllables. This pronunciation is both non-etymological and non-traditional, and I cannot explain how it has arisen, apparently quite recently. Analogy with the many Cornish-language place-

²⁷ *PND* Devon, II, p. 560.

names so stressed seems unlikely, since Cullompton is on the eastern side of Devon, away from Cornwall, and it does not particularly resemble such names. It may have arisen in some way from the written form of the name, although that does not seem a sufficient explanation; or perhaps from analogy with other names, for instance the recurrent Compton; or may be due to metathesis of the traditional [kʌlmp̄tən] to [kʌmp̄tən], which would have simplified the group of four consonants in a row (*-l-m-p-t-*) down to three. Whether this irregular modern stress-shift should be termed 'corruption' is a matter of personal judgement.

The Cornish village of Bolventor was a land-owner's attempt to create a farming-settlement in the middle of the Bodmin Moor in the nineteenth century, so its name is etymologically English, 'bold venture'. As such I would expect it to be stressed on the first syllable; but it is usually pronounced [bɒl'ventər] with stress on the second syllable. In this case the shift does seem likely to be due to analogy with Cornish-language place-names; but it is the only case I know where an English-language name has been altered thus. 'Corruption' would not seem an appropriate term for this analogical change, even though it is without parallel.

IRREGULAR OR UNMOTIVATED CHANGE ('CORRUPTION')

I now turn to examples of change which are certainly not regular, and which may therefore be considered 'corruption'. As one considers changes which have been so termed, the question soon arises: if a change is thought to be unparalleled and is therefore called 'corruption', if parallels are subsequently found, making the change seem 'regular' or at least less irregular, does it then cease to count as corruption? This question is particularly relevant in looking at the names studied over the 90 years of the Survey of English Place-Names, since naturally much more is understood now, and many more comparisons are available, than when the Survey began. However, there are some cases where the changes experienced by a name are seemingly so varied or random as to remain unparalleled. There follows a selection of individual names where these points arise in one way or another. In several of them, often from volumes published during the earlier years of the Survey, the word 'corruption' was used but may not seem appropriate now, partly in the light of greater knowledge accumulated since those particular volumes were published.

Pavenham (Bedfordshire) is found with very varied spellings of its first syllable (the remainder of the name being stable and unexceptional): *Pab-* 1086+, *Pap-* 1240+, *Pak-* 1276+, *Pav-* 1492+, and *Pat-* 1576+. Even its pronunciation reflects this variation, with three different consonants closing the first syllable, and different vowels preceding each of them: [pe·ətnəm], [pævənəm], and formerly [peikənəm].²⁸ These three pronunciations mean that the variable spellings are not due to scribal corruption — unless we were to suppose that textual errors had become spoken ones, the possibility that I raised earlier; but the various spellings seem too well attested for that to be likely. The editors of the Bedfordshire volume explain this name and its varied forms as starting from a personal name *Papa* (genitive *Papan*), well evidenced in other place-names, even though forms with *-p-* are not attested in this name until rather later than ones with *-b-* (but of course the name will anyway have had a considerable prehistory before its first attestation in 1086). If so, then the forms with *-b-* can be explained as due to voicing of *-p-* before *-n-*, a form of assimilation; the change of *-b-* to *-v-* intervocally can be paralleled in other place-names; the forms with *-k-* would be due to dissimilation of *Pap-* to *Pak-*; and the more recent forms with *-t-* are due to assimilation (probably of *-k-* rather than *-p-*) to the following *-n-*! All this may seem pretty desperate; but such processes are necessary to explain the variation which has demonstrably occurred in this name. Even though each individual change in this name can be paralleled elsewhere, cumulatively they amount to so much irregular variation that the word ‘corruption’ seems a legitimate one to use here, although it was not actually used by the editors of the Bedfordshire volume of the Survey.

Renhold (Bedfordshire) shows variant forms of its first syllable, *Ran-*, *Ron-*, *Ren-*, *Rund-*, *Rond-*, all in the thirteenth century, with the further form *Rounhale* appearing in 1338.²⁹ Again the second element is straightforward, *healh* ‘nook’, and there are parallels for the addition of non-original *d* after *n* and other consonants (occurring in both syllables, in this name).³⁰ For the first element the editors suggest an attested OE personal name *Hranig*, an anglicisation of Old Norse *Hrani*. An attested twelfth-century personal name *Roni* suggests that *a* could have become *o* in this name, and the forms with *u* can then be explained as due to hypercorrection (though the editors did not use that term, but ‘inverted

²⁸ *PNBeds & Hunts*, p. 36.

²⁹ *PNBeds & Hunts*, p. 62.

³⁰ Dobson, *English Pronunciation 1500–1700*, II, pp. 1002–3.

spellings’), occurring because earlier *u* was often spelt *o* in Middle English.³¹ However, the editors could not explain the forms with *e* and *ou*, describing them with restraint as ‘a degree of irrational variation which is seldom paralleled’, though again not invoking the term ‘corruption’ itself, although as with Pavenham it would not seem unreasonable here.

Bedgrove (Buckinghamshire), *Babbegrave* 1190, *Bebbebraue* 13th, *Bedgrave* 1461, contains an OE personal name *Bebba* or *Babba* (both attested), but for the change to *-d-* the editors say, it is ‘hard to say whether it is due to some form of dissimilation, *Beb-* becoming *Bed-*, or whether it is a sheer corruption’.³² Presumably here the implication is that if the change was due to the specific phonetic context, it can be paralleled and therefore is ‘regular’ in some sense; but if not then it was random, and therefore counts as ‘corruption’. Of course we cannot know which of the two was actually the case — if indeed the distinction is meaningful here.

St Twrog’s Chapel (Gloucestershire) is found as *St Tryak* 1290, *Rok Seynt Tryacle* c.1480 (a nearby rock in the Severn estuary), and *St Treacle* 1577;³³ the editor says that the name has been ‘corrupted through association with’ Middle English *tiriacle*, *triacle*, originally ‘an antidote, medicine’ (especially for snake-bites), later developing to mean ‘treacle’ because that substance was often used to sweeten medicines. ‘Corruption through association’ here seems simply to mean folk-etymology, so we might prefer not to use the disparaging term for this name. But the name itself remains unexplained, for although the modern form, *St Twrog*, is the name of a saint known in north Wales, it is hard to see how the earliest form, *Tryak*, can represent that saint’s name, so the original saint here is uncertain.³⁴

Sheepstor, Sheepsbyre (Devon). The same reservation applies here. *Sheepstor* was *Sitelestorre* 1168, *Schitelestorre* 1181, and *Sheepsbyre* was *Shitelesbere* 1242.³⁵ In both names the original first element was an obscure word **scytel* or the like, compounded with *torr* ‘rock-pile’ and *bearu* ‘grove’ respectively: it may have been OE *scyttel(s)* ‘bolt,

³¹ Jordan, *Handbuch der mittellenglischen Grammatik*, §37.

³² *PNBucks*, p. 166.

³³ *PNGloucs*, III, p.265.

³⁴ S. Baring-Gould and J. Fisher, *The Lives of the British Saints*, 4 vols. (London, 1907–13), IV, pp. 279–82.

³⁵ *PNDevon*, I, p. 238 and II, p. 378.

bar', or **scytel* 'unstable' (quite likely for a tor, less so for a wood), or, perhaps best, a personal name **Scyttel*, paralleled in Shillington (Bedfordshire). In discussing the first name the editors suggest that *p* was substituted for original *t* 'to avoid the unpleasant suggestions' of the original form; but for the second name they describe the change of consonant as 'the same euphemistic corruption'. However, folk-etymology seems to have been involved as well as euphemism, so again we might not consider the changes to count as corruption.

Spaindelf (Cambridgeshire), *Spanidelf* 1251.³⁶ Originally 'narrow dyke', *spann* 'handsbreadth' + (*ge*)*delf* 'dyke', 'with later corruption of a name no longer understood', according to the Survey volume. The comment draws a link between lexical opacity and irregular change, which is probably more frequent in place-names than other words; but the change of *Span-* to *Spain-* is not very great, and once again folk-etymology may have played a part in it, so 'corruption' may seem an unnecessarily strong term to use. Many names in England, especially (but not only) ones incorporating an Old English personal name, must long have been opaque by the time that some of them are first attested in the thirteenth century or later, but not all such names have been altered by folk-etymology. We are not able to predict the occurrence of such change, but that does not remove it from the category of changes which are frequent enough to count as normal.

Frogmore (Hertfordshire), *Fogenham* c.1270, *Fognam downe* 1597, *Fogmer field* 17th, *Frogmore* 1637, is OE **focga* (dialect *fog*) 'reeds, grass' or a personal name *Focga* + *hamm* 'enclosed (hemmed) land'.³⁷ The editors say, 'The modern form is corrupt', presumably because it looks like *frogga* 'frog' + *mōr* 'marsh'; but here again they seem to be using the term to denote irregular change caused by folk-etymology (in both parts of the name, in this case), so if we accept such change as a common occurrence, then the term seems inappropriate here. It may have been specifically the misleading nature of the modern form which led the editors to condemn it as corrupt.

Westley Waterless (Cambridgeshire) and **Willoughby Waterless** or **Waterleys** (Leicestershire) both independently contain a suffix which distinguishes them from other places called Westley or Willoughby, and composed of a word **wæter-lǣs* 'water-lease,

³⁶ *PNCambs*, p. 227.

³⁷ *PNHerts*, p. 23.

water-meadow'.³⁸ Both of these places were therefore particularly well-watered ones, but in both names the suffix has undergone a change making it misleadingly appear the opposite. In the Cambridgeshire volume the change was described as a 'corruption', but not in the more recent Leicestershire one. The change in the vowel can be ascribed to polysyllabic shortening (incomplete in the Leicestershire case, where the form *-leys* is also still current); and the second independent example now known of precisely the same change makes it seem less irregular.

Chisbridge (Buckinghamshire), *Chissebech* 1175 and later, contains an OE personal name *Cissa* (attested elsewhere) plus *bæc* 'back, hill-ridge'.³⁹ Forms down to the nineteenth century, including the earliest Ordnance Survey map, do not show the intrusive *-r-*, and even the modern pronunciation [tʃɪzbɪdʒ], recorded in 1925, omits it. On the modern form with *-r-* the editors comment, 'The OS form is corrupt and is not accepted locally', which seems a reasonable application of the term, since the consonant seems to have been introduced by the Ordnance Survey itself, presumably accidentally, though folk-etymology (perhaps unconscious) may have played a part too. If people locally now (since 1925) do pronounce the name with *-r-*, it would provide another modern instance of a textual corruption having influenced the pronunciation.

Crinacott (Devon), *Frenecoth* 1242, *Frenakote* 1244, etc., *Frenycott* 1586, *Crinecot* 1809 OS.⁴⁰ The first element is an Anglo-Scandinavian personal name *Fræna*, which actually occurs as that of a witness to a charter concerning lands in Devon, dated 930;⁴¹ the second element is OE *cot* 'cottage', particularly common in north Devon. The editors say, justifiably, 'No explanation of the later corruption can be offered'. It does not look like a scribal error, but there does not seem to be any other motivation or parallel for the change. The *C-* may have been introduced accidentally by the Ordnance Survey, and perpetuated because of the authority which that body enjoys: but it would be useful to have other spellings between 1586 and 1809, to ascertain whether the change is any older than the nineteenth century. It would also be interesting to know whether the change has

³⁸ *PNCambs*, p. 120; *PNLeics*, V, 234.

³⁹ *PNBucks*, p. 178.

⁴⁰ *PNDevon*, I, p. 163.

⁴¹ W. de G. Birch, *Cartularium Saxonicum*, 3 vols. and index (London, 1885-99), III, no. 1343; P. H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters: an Annotated List and Bibliography* (London, 1968; updated at www.esawyer.org.uk), no. 405.

been adopted in local speech. As with Chisbridge, 'corruption' seems a reasonable term to use here for a change which is completely irregular, and may be textual in origin, rather than oral.

Centry (Devon), *Centry* alias *Sentry* 1768, is described as 'a local corruption' of the common south-western field-name *Sanctuary* meaning 'glebe-land';⁴² but *sentry* is actually the standard dialectal form of that word in Devon and Cornwall,⁴³ so there is no irregularity here, nor any corruption. However, another instance of the name has the modern form *St Cherries*,⁴⁴ and 'corruption' seems a reasonable description of that misleading variation of the word, though folk-etymology may also have affected the spelling, perhaps causing the apparent shift of stress in that case. When a modern form is misleading in some way (for instance, that of *Crinacott* for anyone seeking early references to the place and not knowing its earlier forms), the term 'corruption' may indeed seem more appropriate, because of the potentially harmful nature of such a form.

Parlour, field-name (Huntingdonshire), for which the alternative spelling *Parlow* is cited, without a date.⁴⁵ (Field-names were treated much more cursorily in the early years of the Survey than they are now, and forms were sometimes received from local schools and Women's Institutes; *Parlow* may be such a form.) From the spelling *Parlow* the editors suggested the derivation *pere-low* 'peartree-hill', calling the form *Parlour* 'a good example of the senseless corruptions which field-names often undergo'. Actually, with the standard Middle English change of *-er-* to *-ar-* (as in the pronunciation of 'clerk', 'Derby', 'Berkeley'),⁴⁶ and with unstressed reduction of *-ow* to [ə] (as in 'sparrə', 'fella', mentioned earlier), there is virtually no corruption present in the form *Parlour*, unless the editors were referring to the misleading spelling with *-our* (again perhaps due to folk-etymology), making the name look like a different word. Their comment is a sign of how uncomfortable the Survey was with field-names in its earlier years, because of the difficulty in finding early spellings of them. Over time a good corpus of comparative material has been built up, so although the lack of early forms often remains a problem with such names, at least the other part of the basic method, that of parallels, can be

⁴² *PNDevon*, I, p. 305.

⁴³ *The English Dialect Dictionary*, edited by Joseph Wright, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1898–1905), s.v. *sentry-fields*.

⁴⁴ *PNDevon*, II, p. 447; the place is said to be on land belonging to the church.

⁴⁵ *PNBeds & Hunts*, p. 263.

⁴⁶ Jordan, *Mittelenglische Grammatik*, §§ 67 and 230.

applied, so the discomfort is now lessened.

Hard-to-Find (Buckinghamshire), so spelt on the Ordnance Survey, with *Harty Foine* 1797 the only earlier form cited.⁴⁷ The editors comment that it is 'difficult to say which is original and which is corrupt' of the two forms; but they point out the farm is 'remote and inaccessible', and in the light of subsequent work we can compare other similar names of cottages, smallholdings or fields, such as *Hard-to-Come-by* (four examples), *Little-in-Sight* (two), and *Least-in-Sight* (field; all in Cornwall),⁴⁸ *Seldom Seen* (Cumberland, Westmorland, and a field in Wiltshire);⁴⁹ *Come by Chance* (a field in Cumberland, and seemingly coastal in Newfoundland);⁵⁰ and other names indicating places off the beaten track. In the light of these comparisons the tentative explanation offered for *Hard-to-Find* is vindicated; and it is easy to explain the form *Harty Foine* as a dialectal pronunciation of the name, as heard by the eighteenth-century local historian who cited it, and therefore not corrupt at all.

My final example is not a single name but a type. Non-original *-s* is frequently added to both place-names and surnames, partly no doubt because of its frequency as a plural and possessive ending in English;⁵¹ possessive forms are often used in reference to places ('We're going round to Stephen's this evening'), and there has been much two-way interchange between surnames and farm-names. Early in the Survey forms showing the addition of non-original *-s* were liable to be described as 'corrupt': for example, *Woolleys* (Buckinghamshire), *Wolveleg* 1227 ('wolves' clearing'), 'The modern *s* is a corrupt form';⁵² and *Biddles* (Buckinghamshire), *Budewelle* 1208 ('spring in a hollow, **byde(n)*'), 'The genitival *-s* is corrupt'.⁵³ Many other comparable names are now known, and

⁴⁷ *PNBucks*, p. 188.

⁴⁸ *Hard-to-Come-by* in Budock, St Stephen in Brannel, and St Columb Minor parishes, and as a field in Probus parish; *Little-in-Sight* in Budock (a cottage) and St Ives (a street), and probably also *Little Inside* (cottage) in Feock parish; *Least-in-Sight*, field, in Constantine parish.

⁴⁹ *PNCumbs*, I, p. 179; D. Whaley, *A Dictionary of Lake District Place-Names* (Nottingham, 2006), p. 303; *PNWilt*, p. 501; compare *Seldomgobie* (a tin-work) 1593 in St Austell parish, Cornwall.

⁵⁰ *PNCumbs*, I, 69 (compare III, 471–2); E. R. Seary, 'A short survey of the place names of Newfoundland', in *Topothesia: Essays Presented to T. S. Ó Máille*, edited by B. S. Mac Aodha (Galway, 1982), pp. 144–57 (p. 151).

⁵¹ P. H. Reaney and R. M. Wilson, *A Dictionary of English Surnames*, 3rd edn (London, 1991), pp. xxxiii–xxxvi.

⁵² *PNBucks*, p. 180.

⁵³ *PNBucks*, p. 216; for the etymology of the name itself see *PNNorthants*, p. 222, and D. N. Parsons and T. Styles, *The Vocabulary of English Place-Names (brace-caester)* (Nottingham, 2000), pp. 109–10.

addition of non-original -s seems entirely unexceptional.⁵⁴ The frequency of this phenomenon, and its occurrence in surnames as well as place-names, mean that the term 'corrupt' would never now be used of the development, nor was it used after the very earliest volumes of the Survey, as far as I know. Once again it is the growth in knowledge of what is common in place-name developments which has made a change cease to be considered as corruption.

In conclusion, it seems that the term 'corruption' is now used more sparingly than formerly in place-name studies. Partly that is due to increased knowledge and understanding of the changes that can be expected to occur, and which therefore seem normal or at least common, and partly to changed attitudes towards dialectal forms and colloquial developments. Changes which are both irregular and potentially misleading, whether to philologists or more widely, may have been particularly liable to be stigmatised as 'corruption'. Peter McClure has suggested to me that it might be good practice to reserve use of the term 'corruption', in onomastic work, to written errors (including, for example, misprints on maps), and avoiding it for changes which are thought to have arisen through oral developments, whether regular, common, or individual as most folk-etymologies are. This policy may have much to recommend it, although some one-off changes undergone by individual names (not very many) are so wayward that one can understand the temptation to use the term, perhaps in exasperation at times. It may require a certain amount of self-discipline to avoid the term in some extreme cases such as those of Pavenham and Renhold, cited above. Individual cases such as these, and most folk-etymologies, may be particularly connected with the loss of lexical meaning in most place-names, which has made them more liable than other words to show random or irregular developments.

LIST OF ABBREVIATED REFERENCES TO COUNTY VOLUMES OF THE SURVEY OF ENGLISH PLACE-NAMES, PUBLISHED BY THE ENGLISH PLACE-NAME SOCIETY (EPNS)

- PN Beds & Hunts*: A. Mawer and F. M. Stenton, *The Place-Names of Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire*, English Place-Name Society (EPNS), 3 (1926).
PNBerks: M. Gelling, *The Place-Names of Berkshire*, 3 vols., EPNS, 49–51 (1973–6).

⁵⁴ For example, Broadall's (*PNBeds & Hunts*, p. 214); Oxley's Farm, Pophley's Farm and Copshrews (*PNBucks*, pp. 76, 194 and 214); Wadloes (Footpath), Bannolds, and Sounds Farm (*PNCambs*, pp. 143, 185 and 190).

- PNBucks*: A. Mawer and F. M. Stenton, *The Place-Names of Buckinghamshire*, EPNS, 2 (1925).
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PNYorksWR: A. H. Smith, *The Place-Names of the West Riding of Yorkshire*, 8 vols., EPNS, 30–7 (1961–3).

The Monster in Me: Social Corruption and the Perception of Monstrosity in the Sagas of Icelanders

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The study of Old Icelandic saga literature has long been dominated by structuralism and its assumption of fixed categories and binary structures. Longer than in most other fields were scholars looking for patterns of plot, character or genre,¹ and only in recent decades have some of them turned away from this pursuit. The supernatural and the monstrous, too, have been subjected to attempts of categorisation and the finding of patterns and structures underlying it.² When the paranormal finally became recognised as intrinsic to saga narratives and not just distracting flights of fancy in otherwise realistic plots, some scholars tried to put it into dichotomies of a cultured centre versus a wild periphery, or of the self versus the other.³

While this might work to some extent in other medieval literatures, as for example romances – although even here the wild can sometimes be surprisingly cultured –⁴ the Icelandic sagas present us with a problem: almost no monster or supernatural creature in the sagas can be said to be completely and utterly Other. Most characters that are perceived as monsters are or were human and just show certain traits of otherness. Berserkers have a violent, antisocial nature; witches and sorcerers possess knowledge and power that ordinary human beings have no access to; outlaws were members of society who were cast out because of a crime they committed. And even revenants, who, because

¹ The list of existing scholarship on structuralist readings of the Icelandic sagas is almost endless. A key text concerning the structure of saga plots, however, is, T. M. Andersson, *The Icelandic Family Saga: An Analytic Reading* (Cambridge, MA, 1967). Another example would be Jesse Byock's work on 'feudemes': see his *Feud in the Icelandic Saga* (Berkeley, CA, 1982).

² The supernatural has indeed been used to identify underlying structures of plot; cf. B. McCreesh, 'Structural Patterns in the *Eyrbyggja Saga* and Other Sagas of the Conversion', *MScand* 11 (1979), 271–80.

³ Most notable here is Kirsten Hastrup's work concerning the dichotomy between *Útgarðr* and *Miðgarðr*. This forms the basis of her discussion of the 'social' and the 'wild' spaces in the Icelandic sagas; cf. her *Culture and History in Medieval Iceland* (Oxford, 1985), esp. pp. 136 and 142–3. Other scholars have tried to find structures underlying certain types of supernatural creatures. This at least is the basic theme of much of the literature on the Icelandic undead: see, for example, Vésteinn Ólason, 'The Un/Grateful Dead — From Baldr to Bægifótr', in *Old Norse Myth, Literature and Society*, ed. M. Clunies Ross (Viborg, 2003), pp. 153–71, or Ármann Jakobsson, 'Vampires and Watchmen: Categorizing the Mediaeval Icelandic Undead', *JEGP* 110 (2011), 281–300.

⁴ See, for example, the description of the courtly Green Knight or the castle of Bertilak in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

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of their undead hybrid state and threatening unnaturalness are possibly the most thoroughly monstrous creatures we encounter in the sagas, were once human.

These three points just mentioned will be of importance for the following discussion. Firstly, all the characters referred to above, as well as some others like those who appear in dreams and visions, are boundary-crossers. An individual's potential to monstrosity therefore seems to be associated with their ability to access or enter a world different from and outside of that of ordinary human experience. The second point is that, unlike for example the monstrous races of learned discourse, who are humanoid, Icelandic saga monsters are most often completely human. Monstrosity is not a physical thing; it is a question of social otherness, of the corruption of an individual's interaction with society so to speak. I will return to this below.

The third point is that all the characters I mentioned are perceived as potentially monstrous by the society they are not fully part of. 'If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?' If a monster is lurking and there is no one to be threatened by it, is it a monster? For a saga character to be regarded as monstrous, the society inside the saga has to perceive him or her as such.⁵ If, however, an individual's status as monster is contingent on society's perception of said individual, this means that monstrosity is not as stable, fixed or absolute a concept as scholarship has so far made it out to be. Perceptions can change, and saga society's opinions of a saga character are just as volatile as society's opinions nowadays are of politicians or celebrities.

I therefore propose to conceive of monstrosity as a fluid scale, a sort of continuum along which we can place various types of characters and creatures that society perceives as being somehow other, figures that cross boundaries into a world that is not the world of ordinary human experience. There are varying degrees of monstrosity depending on what kind of potential monster we encounter. Revenants, for example, are more firmly at the monstrous end of the spectrum because they are almost universally perceived as threatening and unnatural, whereas berserkers, sorcerers and outlaws are closer to ordinary society and therefore more ambiguously human. Moreover, if the perception of one and the same individual in a given saga can change over time, this individual can

⁵ Most of the figures I will address in the following are male; there are no female berserkers or outlaws in the Icelandic sagas, and the few female revenants typically appear as part of a group haunting. However, we find quite a few female sorcerers and apparitions in the sagas, and it would be interesting to see to what extent the gender of a sorcerer or apparition determines society's perception of said figure and of his or her deeds.

move along the scale of monstrosity, coming sometimes closer to the monstrous, and sometimes closer to the human.

In order to investigate how the scale of monstrosity functions, and to illustrate the points just made, I will take a closer look at social corruption and socially disruptive behaviour, and at what they mean in the context of the Icelandic family sagas. I will examine the behaviour and actions of three exemplary categories of human monsters, outlaws, berserkers and revenants, in and towards society, in order to establish in what way their interaction with the world of ordinary humans is corrupt. Afterwards, I will turn to society's role as the one who perceives these potentially monstrous figures and investigate how different levels and manners of interactions influence society's perception of a potentially monstrous character. Society's perception will in turn be shown to determine an individual's place on the scale of monstrosity, and I hope to be able to prove that this place can change over time.

A fairly unambiguous example of corruption, disruptive behaviour and human monstrosity – and thus a good starting point for the present analysis – are revenants. In this case, corruption does not refer to corruption of the body, because strangely, the body of a revenant is only deformed but does not corrupt.⁶ Instead, it refers to their behaviour towards society, and that this behaviour is corrupt and therefore socially disruptive can be seen even before the future revenant's death, especially in the case of antagonistic revenants. The boundary that is then, after they die, both transgressed and blurred by these figures is quite clearly that between life and death, a boundary that is supposed to be strictly a one-way street. A good example for the antagonistic type of revenant is Þórólfr bægifótr from *Eyrbyggja saga*.⁷ A former viking, he comes to Iceland and is unable to settle down to a peaceful life of farming. Instead, he duels for land, blackmails people, cheats them, and eventually tries to play his apparently peace-loving son Arnkell off against Snorri goði, the region's most ambitious leader. Arnkell would like to avoid this conflict, and because Þórólfr does not get his way, he dies of anger and frustration; it is as if he implodes.⁸

It is not surprising that, in spite of all the precautions Arnkell takes after his father's

⁶ For a possible explanation, see W. Sayers, 'The Alien and Alienated as Unquiet Dead in the Sagas of Icelanders', in *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, ed. J. J. Cohen (Minneapolis, MN, 1996), pp. 242–63, at p. 243.

⁷ *Eyrbyggja saga* (*Eb*), ed. Einar Ót. Sveinsson and Matthías Þórðarson, Íslenzk fornrit 4 (Reykjavík, 1935).

⁸ Sayers, 'Unquiet Dead', p. 250.

death, Þórólfr returns soon afterwards to cause more trouble: 'En er á leið sumarit, urðu menn þess varir, at Þórólfr lá eigi kyrr'.⁹ This time, however, he has even more power to do evil in the community around him. Moreover, he is now able to infect other people with the corruption of his existence – everyone he kills in his revenant state becomes a revenant as well: 'svá var ok mikill gangr at aprtgongum hans, at hann deyddi suma menn, en sumir stukku undan; en allir menn, þeir er létusk, váru sérir í ferð með Þórólfi'.¹⁰ Thus, Þórólfr is now even more successful at corrupting the society he is no longer part of than he was before his death, threatening everyone in the vicinity with his hauntings and the possibility of undeath. He is, however, not the only revenant displaying this vampiric trait of infecting the people he kills and thus forcing them to join him. Glámr in *Grettis saga* – maybe because of his greater 'ófagnaðarkraptr', 'evil force' –¹¹ does not even need to kill the eponymous hero of the saga in order to corrupt him with his monstrosity. It seems that monstrosity is contagious, it is a corruption that spreads, and revenants – especially of the antagonistic variety – make this clearer than any other type of potentially monstrous saga character.

Another way in which the undead affect the living is what William Sayers refers to as the 'economic dimension of revenant activity'.¹² They kill animals and farmhands, drive people insane, empty farms, and keep those that remain in the area from going about their daily business.¹³ Thus, they make farming and contact with the rest of the country impossible. Their hauntings leave farms empty and devastated, inhibiting economic growth. When they take over an area, all human life, all social interaction between the living and thus basically everything that human society stands for, effectively comes to an end. Therefore, the undead display the absolute extreme of disruptive behaviour we see from human monsters in the *Íslendingasögur*. They make ordinary life impossible for the people in their vicinity, either by confining the living to their farms, or quite literally by ending their lives, or even by forcing those they kill to join the ranks of the undead. This, then, places the three antagonistic revenants Þórólfr, Hrapp and Glámr firmly at the monster end of the scale.

⁹ *Eb*, ch. 34, p. 93: 'But when summer passed, people became aware that Þórólfr was not lying quietly'. All translations are my own.

¹⁰ *Eb*, ch. 34, pp. 93–4: 'he was so active in his hauntings that he killed some people, and some fled; but all those who died were later seen in Þórólfr's company'.

¹¹ *Grettis saga* (*Gr*), ed. Guðni Jónsson, Íslenzk fornrit 7 (Reykjavík, 1936), ch. 35, p. 121.

¹² Sayers, 'Unquiet Dead', p. 249.

¹³ Glámr's hauntings seem to have the greatest impact of this sort: 'Þótti monnum til þess horfask, at eyðask myndi allr Vatnsdalr', *Gr*, ch. 33, p. 116 ('People thought that all Vatnsdalr would be emptied').

They are, however, not the only cases of revenancy. There are several other types of hauntings, and since the most prominent of these are performed by groups of the undead, it is worthwhile to briefly consider them here as well. The main distinction between the haunting of individual, antagonistic revenants like Þórólfr and groups of revenants, apart from the obvious one being their numbers, is the way and the extent to which they interact with the living. *Eyrbyggja saga* has instances of both types of undead activity, and the Fróðá hauntings are a good example of the way group hauntings operate.¹⁴ This specific haunting occurs in three phases of six people each, the first and third phase being constituted by people who die of a mysterious illness, and the second phase of people who drown. All three groups come back to the farm house after death and take it for themselves, driving out the living.

Unlike the antagonistic undead, however, they do not interact with the living in any way except by scaring them with their presence. They keep amongst themselves, forming a kind of parallel community of the dead around the fire that was supposed to warm the living.¹⁵ They do not, however, attack or kill the living like individual, antagonistic revenants do, and while they are disruptive to life on the farm because of their unnatural, undead existence, there still seems to be a difference in the way society perceives and later deals with them when compared with antagonistic revenants. While some people flee from them, others seem content enough to spend their evenings in the same house as them.¹⁶ This would be unthinkable in the case of someone like Glámr who actively seeks out and then kills or maddens everyone in Forsæludalr. Moreover, the Fróðá revenants are disposed of by societal mechanisms (a court is held, and an exorcism performed) rather than by violence (beheading and/or burning of the corpse). Thus, the difference in activity and interaction with the living seems to have an impact on the way the groups of revenants at Fróðá are perceived by society. This does not mean that they are not monstrous – as unnatural hybrids they certainly are –¹⁷ but there seems to be a different quality of monstrosity depending on the extent of interaction with society. This

¹⁴ They are a relatively infrequent yet memorable occurrence in the *Íslendingasögur*. Another instance is found in the Greenland episode in *Flóamanna saga*, which interestingly also depicts the undead activity as being directed against one particular house and its inhabitants.

¹⁵ *Eb*, ch. 54, p. 149. The drowned ones also 'tóku einskis manns kveðju', 'did not reply to anyone's greetings' at their funeral; ch. 54, p. 148.

¹⁶ *Eb*, ch. 54, p. 149: 'þeir Þóroddr sátu við langeld, en heimamenn við inn litla eld, ok svá fór fram um qll jólin' ('Þóroddr and his people sat at the long fire, but the inhabitants sat at the small fire, and it went like this over Christmas').

¹⁷ cf. J. J. Cohen, 'Monster Culture (Seven Theses)', in *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, ed. J. J. Cohen (Minneapolis, MN, 1996), pp. 3–25, at p. 6.

observation will have implications on the other types of (potential) human-monstrous characters discussed below.

Berserkers are slightly more complex, less unnatural monsters. They appear to cross the boundary between human and animal, and they are often compared to dogs or wolves in the way they howl when they go into their animalistic rage.¹⁸ Most of the time, they pose only one specific kind of threat to society: they threaten to abduct and rape women, and to kill every man who gets in their way.¹⁹ Because of this 'specialisation', berserkers often appear as stereotyped characters that are not much of an issue for society once a hero turns up who can deal with them. There are many instances of this type of berserker, but an example that stands out because of the comically macabre way in which he is defeated is Snækollr, one of Grettir's many supernatural opponents.²⁰ Stereotyped though these 'berserk suitors' may be, they are still a threat to stability. What makes them monstrous is something that lies in their nature,²¹ namely their ability to 'go berserk' and to therefore transcend the limitations of human weaknesses: they become impervious to iron and fire and can perform extraordinary feats of strength while in this state. These abilities should make them super-human, but their association with dogs renders them sub-human and thus threateningly monstrous instead.

Berserkerism seems to be a kind of genetic disorder that Icelanders mostly encounter in Norway or Sweden. It occurs only rarely in Icelanders themselves, and its spread among the Icelandic population has to be prevented at all costs. One example of an Icelanders with a berserk nature is Þórir Ingimundarson in *Vatnsdæla saga*: 'Á Þóri kom stundum berserksgangr; þótti þat þá með stórum meinum um þvilíkan mann, því at honum varð þat at engum frama.'²² His berserkerism seems to be an involuntary thing that simply comes over him 'þá er [hann] vilda sízt',²³ and it is a problem that has to be resolved. Therefore, his brother Þorsteinn gives him the task to foster a child that has been exposed to die. In

¹⁸ e.g. in *Gr*, ch. 19, pp. 67–8: 'kemr á þeim berserksgangr ok grenja sem hundar' ('a berserk fit came over them and they howled like dogs').

¹⁹ For a detailed discussion of this theme, see B. Blancy, 'The Berserk Suitor: The Literary Application of a Stereotyped Theme', *SS* 54 (1982), 279–94.

²⁰ *Gr*, ch. 40, pp. 135–7.

²¹ The word *edli* used both in *Eb* (ch. 25, p. 61) and *Vatnsdæla saga* (*Vatn*) ed. Einar Ól. Sveinsson, Íslenzk fornrit 8 (Reykjavík, 1939), ch. 37, p. 97 means 'nature, character'.

²² *Vatn*, ch. 30, p. 83. 'Sometimes, a berserk fit came over Þórir; it seemed like a great damage in such a man, because it did nothing for his reputation'.

²³ *Vatn*, ch. 37, p. 97: 'when he would least want it to'.

combination with an invocation of 'þann, er sólina hefir skapat',²⁴ this good deed seems to be sufficient cure for Þórir's berserk illness.

Berserkers relatively rarely come to Iceland from the outside, i.e. from Norway or Sweden, and if they do, they are mostly encountered in conversion stories where they embody pagan, or demonic, powers and beliefs that have to be overcome by Christianity.²⁵ One particularly interesting pair of berserkers, however, tries to enter Icelandic society by marriage, thus conforming to the stereotype of the berserk suitor while at the same time expanding it. These are the Swedish brothers Halli and Leiknir whom we encounter in *Eyrbyggja* and *Heiðarvíga saga*.²⁶ Especially Halli is interested in finding an Icelandic wife as soon as he arrives in the country: 'Brátt [...] vakði Halli berserkr til þess við Vermund, at hann myndi fá honum kvánfang mjök sæmiligt; en Vermundr þóttisk eigi vita ván þeirar konu af góðum ættum, er sik myndi binda við berserk'.²⁷ Problems start when Halli falls in love with Ásdís, the daughter of Víga-Styrr. Although Halli promises Styrr his full loyalty in case he is allowed to marry Ásdís, Styrr does not want to give his daughter to a man whose nature is not entirely human.²⁸ Marrying Ásdís to Halli would mean that she would have children with him, and thereby, the berserk gene would enter and potentially corrupt Icelandic society, leading to further disruptions of the peace in the next generation. Instead, Styrr asks Snorri goði for advice. Snorri, as we see from later events, comes up with a trick to kill the two brothers: Styrr offers Ásdís to Halli if they use their powers for society's benefit by building a road across a lava field. This tires them out sufficiently, so that Styrr can kill them in an especially hot bath house by first steaming them and then stabbing them to death. For his efforts, Snorri is rewarded with Ásdís's hand. Thus, a threat has been removed from the area, and Styrr has formed a political bond with the most ambitious chieftain in the area. Snorri, moreover, here proves for the first time how good he is at overcoming supernatural and monstrous threats with cunning, a skill he will prove again during the Fróðá hauntings.

²⁴ *Ibid.*: 'the one who has created the sun'.

²⁵ There are several instances, e.g. *Vatn*, ch. 46, or *Njáls saga*, ch. 103. Also cf. *Íslendingabók*, *Kristni saga*, ed. and trans. S. Grønlie (London, 2006), p. 59, n. 14.

²⁶ Since they appear in the reconstructed first part of *Heiðarvíga saga*, I will base my analysis on *Eyrbyggja saga*.

²⁷ *Eb*, ch. 25, p. 63: 'Soon [...] the berserker Halli broached the issue with Vermundr, that he wanted him to find him a suitable wife; but Vermundr did not think it likely to find a woman of good family who wanted to bind herself to a berserker'.

²⁸ *Eb*, ch. 25, p. 61: 'þeir gengu berserksgang ok váru þá eigi í mannligu eðli' ('when they went berserk, they were not human in nature').

It can thus be seen that society has to prevent the berserk gene from spreading in Iceland; this kind of corruption must not enter Icelandic society on a larger scale. Therefore, Halli and Leiknir have to be removed, and Þórir Ingimundarson has to be cured. That there is a cure for berserkerism is interesting in itself, and I will return to this below. Again, however, we can see that the corruption that is monstrosity has an infectious quality, although in a different way than it did with revenants. It appears, though, that underlying monstrosity in the sagas there is a fear of spreading social corruption, of threats that enter society and then infect it, thereby disrupting peace and stability. This underlying threat is visible in all categories of human monstrosity.

The three outlaw-heroes Grettir, Gísli and Hörðr are probably the most complex cases of potential human monstrosity depicted in the *Íslendingasögur*, and therefore the discussion here will be limited to the most ambiguously monstrous example among them, Grettir Ásmundarson, although I will occasionally draw on Hörðr for comparative purposes. Gísli Súrsson is quite different from the other two outlaws. On the one hand, he rather contributes to society through his craftsmanship than taking away from it by stealing. On the other hand, and more importantly, his saga is entirely focussed on the family and the relationships and problems inside it. Social opinion rarely plays a role, except to mock Gísli's enemies. The saga therefore seems to portray its outlaw in a different way and use him for different purposes than we can find in other outlaw sagas, and I will therefore not discuss Gísli's case in detail.

Regarding the boundaries crossed by (potentially) monstrous humans, however, all three outlaws constitute a special case – when compared with other types of potential monsters – in that they always transgress more than one borderline. First, they commit a crime so disruptive that it leads to their exclusion from society. This status as an outsider, as someone who constantly walks on the edge of society but is isolated from it, then facilitates the second boundary-crossing that leads these characters partially out of the world of ordinary human experience. This can be seen in Grettir's association with trolls, which will be discussed below, and Gísli's haunting dreams that gain more and more control over his waking life. Hörðr – who founds his own parallel society – presents a slightly different case since he does not experience the same isolation as Grettir and Gísli. It is possible, however, to argue that the magic used to eventually bring him down, and the 'war fetters' that come over him before he is killed, represent his way of crossing into the realm of the paranormal. It is interesting, though, that in both Grettir's and Hörðr's case,

the first transgression is indirectly brought about by supernatural or monstrous agency. Glámr's curse leads to Grettir's outlawry, and I will argue that Hörðr's experiences in Sóti's mound have a comparable effect.

From childhood on, Grettir is a trouble-maker and perceived as the black sheep of his family, and he is outlawed from Iceland for the first time at the age of 14 – at this point still temporarily. During his exile, Grettir becomes both famous for the strength and wit he displays in defeating supernatural threats like revenants and berserkers, and infamous for the temper he exhibits when he has to deal with human opponents, and the latter in particular will influence his fate for the rest of his life. On his return to Iceland, he insists on fighting the Swedish revenant shepherd – the epitome of marginality – Glámr, and is infected with monstrosity as he lies 'í milli heims ok heljar', 'between this world and hel(l)'.²⁹ In this liminal state, Grettir lies open to Glámr's curse of outlawry and misfortune, the effects of which will lead to his death.

Grettir leaves Iceland for a second time, and when his ship is wrecked off the coast of Norway, he performs a feat of great strength and stamina, trying to serve the social group he wants to belong to at that point. He brings them fire and thereby rescues them from the cold, but he also inadvertently turns against society. Grettir, much like Grendel in *Beowulf*,³⁰ is attracted to the hall by human voices and noise, and, unaware of his appearance, he rashly *ræðr*, 'bursts' into the house. This is the first time that he crosses the border of potential monstrosity in the eyes of society, for 'var hann furðu mikill tilsýndar, sem troll væri. Þeim, sem fyrir váru, brá mjök við þetta, ok hugðu, at óvættir myndi vera'.³¹ This change in perception leads to the tragic accident that in turn causes Grettir to be outlawed permanently from Icelandic society. Because society thinks that he has turned against them, they now turn against him and exclude him from their protection – as a troll he does not belong there any more.

Thus, it is Grettir's association with hel(l)³² and the malevolent supernatural, with trolls and evil creatures, and the actions that result from this association that decide his fate in the eyes of society. This hel(l)-connection, however, is something he shares with Hörðr:

²⁹ *Gr*, ch. 35, p. 121.

³⁰ cf. A. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the Beowulf Manuscript* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 157–8.

³¹ *Gr*, ch. 38, p. 130: 'he looked terribly huge, as if he were a troll. The people inside were very startled and thought it was an evil creature'; emphasis mine.

³² He is twice called *helfjarmadur*, 'hellish man', after his fight with Glámr; cf. *Gr*, ch.59, p. 192 and ch.78, p. 247.

after the fight with Sóti, it seems to people that 'Geir ok Hqrð ór helju heimt hafa'.³³ It could therefore be argued that especially Hörðr caught a similar disease of monstrosity as Grettir did when he was cursed by Glámr. For it is only after this fight that Hörðr turns against society in the killing and burning of Auðr – an act that appears out of character for a man so seemingly well-adapted to society as he is before. Moreover, in his last stand, Hörðr is so 'reiðr ok ógurliqr at sjá, at engi þeira þorði framan at honum at ganga'.³⁴ This is reminiscent of the way the corpse of Þórólfr bægifótr is dealt with: Arnkell has to approach him from behind and close his eyes before he can prepare the body for burial.³⁵ This shows that there is certainly something potentially monstrous about Hörðr in this instance, some kind of monstrous infection he carried away from Sóti's mound that now drags him to his grave.

We have thus seen that the potential to monstrosity, and therefore also to a place along the scale that I proposed, lies in a person's acts in and against society: revenants turn against society in undeath, berserkers have something in their nature that renders them a threat to society, and outlaws are cast out of society because they have committed crimes that disrupt stability. All of them have the potential to corrupt the community they come from and upon whose margins they move. This is where society's perception comes in: if society perceives a social outsider's deeds as threatening to stability, as potentially corrupted or disrupting, it can assign this character a place on the scale of monstrosity. Not all monsters are created equal, however, and it is quite clear that revenants, for example, are more clearly monstrous than berserkers and outlaws.

At this point, it might be interesting to briefly look at who does the perceiving. For this purpose, let us turn back to the berserker brothers Halli and Leiknir since this episode is a good example of the discrepancy between the perception of potentially monstrous characters by the society inside a saga, and the way they are described by the saga writer himself. Especially when he introduces them to the narrative, it seems as if the narrator wants to depict them as closer to human than they are later perceived to be by the people in Iceland:

³³ *Harðar saga ok Holmverja* (*Harð*), ed. Þórhallur Vilmundarson and Bjarni Vilhjálmsson, Íslenzk fornrit 13 (Reykjavík, 1991), ch. 15, p. 43; 'Geir and Hörðr had been recovered from hel(l)'; emphasis mine.

³⁴ *Harð*, ch. 36, p. 87: 'furious and terrible to look at that no one of them dared to approach him from the front'.

³⁵ *Eb*, ch. 32.

þeir gengu berserksgang ok váru þa eigi í mannligu eðli, er þeir váru reiðir, ok fóru galnir sem hundar ok óttuðusk hvárki eld né járn, en hversdagliga váru þeir eigi illir viðreignar, ef eigi var í móti þeim gort, en þegar inir mestu ørskiptamenn, er þeim tók við að horfa.³⁶

Judging from this, it sounds as if Halli and Leiknir are fairly normal and human when they are not enraged. No one likes to be opposed, and their overbearing behaviour in such situations would probably result from their own awareness of their superior strength – or this at least seems to be the assessment of the narrator. This conflicts quite strongly with the way they are perceived especially by Vermundr and Styrr once they are in Iceland. Here, in a society without a king or jarl whom the berserkers can serve appropriately, they are a problem, especially in the eyes of Styrr, whose family's honour is immediately concerned.³⁷ Thus, there seems to be a difference between who perceives and how and in what context that perception is expressed. Even if the narrator judges someone as moderately harmless, since monstrosity is a social concept, it is only society's perception that matters here. It is society that is the agent in phrases like '(þllum/mönnum/þeim) þótti', '(everyone/people/they) thought', phrases frequently used to voice a common opinion, and thus it is society who perceives and judges a character's potential for monstrosity.

The society of the *Íslendingasögur*, however, is organised hierarchically, and this can be of consequence for a character's status as potential monster, as can quite clearly be seen in the circumstances under which Grettir is declared an outlaw. Þórir í Garði perceives Grettir to be a monster for the killing of his sons, and because he is 'maðr heraðsríkr ok hqfðingi mikill, en vinsæll af mörqu stórmenni',³⁸ he prevails and has Grettir outlawed. That Skapti protests and would like to hear Grettir's own version of the events in Norway is irrelevant. Thus, it apparently depends on who is perceiving: a more high-ranking person can overrule society's judgement. It is interesting, though, that later assessments of the situation by similarly prominent chieftains as for example Snorri goði – who states that a man like Grettir would cause more trouble as an outlaw than as a

³⁶ *Eb*, ch. 25, p. 61: 'they went berserk and were then not of human nature, when they were angry, and went crazy like dogs and feared neither fire nor iron, but on a daily basis they were not difficult to deal with, if nothing was done against them, but became the most overbearing men when they were opposed'. Emphasis mine.

³⁷ cf. *Eb*, ch. 28, pp. 71–2: 'Snorri spurði, ef hann hefði nokkur vandamál að tala. "Svá þykki mér," segir Styrr' ('Snorri asked if he had a problem to talk about. "So it seems to me," said Styrr').

³⁸ *Gr*, ch. 46, p. 147: 'an influential man in the district and a great chieftain, and popular among many great men'.

member of society –³⁹ do not seem to have much of an effect against the overwhelming wrath of Þórir. The strength of one's perception, and the fervour with which its consequences are pursued, also seems to influence what happens to a potentially monstrous character.

As mentioned in the beginning, however, society's perception can change over time, and with it changes the respective person's place on the scale. Grettir again provides an excellent example because he is the one saga character who most frequently moves back and forth between the two extremes. From the moment he first turns into a troll in the eyes of society, he constantly seems to be walking on the edge of humanness, but there are times when he is more clearly associated with either end of the scale.

Sometimes he gets closer to one end of the spectrum, for example when he lives with Hallmundr, but after a while, 'fýsti Gretti apr til byggða',⁴⁰ and he leaves. Grettir's potential to monstrosity is even more fully realised when he stays with the half-trolls in Þórisdalr. Again, however, Grettir realises that, in his humanness, he does not belong there and leaves this place of stability and safety. His longing for the company of humans seems to be what always connects him to his human side and thus to society, although it also makes his life more difficult. Sometimes, however, he also moves very close to the human or social end of the scale, for example in his St Christopher-like deeds and his acts of 'landhreinsun', 'land cleansing',⁴¹ at Sandhaugar, where he is actively using his great strength for society's good. At other times perceptions of him are split. When Grettir is in the Westfjords, stealing from each farmer whatever takes his fancy, the farmers naturally perceive him as a threat, both economically as well as potentially to their lives. Þorbjörg, however, a resolute woman of high social standing, recognises Grettir as what he is, 'maðr fræg og stórættaðr, þó at hann sé eigi gæfumaðr'.⁴² It is this – correct – perception that saves Grettir's life in this situation, and it shows again that, sometimes, the judgement of certain high-ranking individuals holds more power and value than that of a group of lower members of society.

This scene shows quite plainly that it is Grettir's behaviour in and his actions towards

³⁹ *Gr*, ch. 51, p. 165: 'Snorri kvað þetta óvitrligt, at bekkjast til at hafa þann mann í sekðum, er svá miklu illu mætti orka'; 'Snorri said it was unwise to go to such lengths to keep a man outlawed who could cause so much trouble'.

⁴⁰ *Gr*, ch. 57, p. 185: 'he longed to go back to the settlements'.

⁴¹ *Gr*, ch. 67, p. 218.

⁴² *Gr*, ch. 52, p. 169: 'he is a man of renown and great family, although fortune does not favour him'.

society that influence people's perception of him. When he goes around stealing – as he often does especially in the early years of his outlawry – but also when he simply sits on other people's possessions as he will do later during his years on Drangey, the local community perceives him as economically disruptive. It is for this reason that the farmers of Vatnsfjörðr want to hang him, and that the farmers of Skagafjörðr consider him a 'vágestr', 'dangerous/woeful guest' and a 'vagr', 'wolf, thief'.⁴³ That he is economically disruptive is a trait Grettir as an outlaw shares with the antagonistic revenants discussed above who prevent people from going about their daily business, and thereby from prosperity. Thus, having a negative economic impact could be called a trait that brings a human closer to monstrosity. For this reason, Grettir is advised not to steal from people, as such behaviour makes his position on the boundaries of society even more unstable.⁴⁴ Being a thief equals being a threat, and, as it has for example been noted about the closeness of the thief and the *þyrs* in the Old English poem *Maxims II*,⁴⁵ 'the *þyrs* [...] may merely be another miserable exile, in fact. The thief may be another monster'.⁴⁶ It is actually a unifying feature of outlaws – except Gísli – that they resort to robbery at some point: Hörðr and his gang go stealing in the Hvalsfjörður area, which is what eventually leads to their downfall, and the protagonists of *Fóstbraðra saga*, Þorgeir and Þormóðr, first turn into a real issue for the people of the Westfjords when they go raiding in Strandir.

Society's perception is thus influenced by the way the potential monster – the dangerous outcast – interacts with it. Here, it is not only the manner of interaction that is important in determining society's view of a potential monster, but also the level at which it is carried out. An example for this are revenants. While their hauntings are always disruptive and frighten the local population, it depends on the level of activity they display whether they are perceived as "truly malevolent" or "just scary". Similarly, berserkers who only try to abduct women without intending to actually marry into the family seem to be perceived as less of an issue than is the case with Halli and Leiknir. And outlaws who

⁴³ *Gr*, ch. 71, pp. 228–9.

⁴⁴ *Gr*, ch. 54, p. 178: 'Nú væri allt betra um at tala, ef þú ræntir eigi' ('Now everything would be easier to consider if you did not steal').

⁴⁵ 'þeof sceal gagan þystrum wederum. Þyrs sceal on fenne gewunian, / ana innan lande'. *Maxims II*, ll. 43–4, in T. Shippey, *Poems of Wisdom and Learning in Old English* (Cambridge, 1976), p. 78. ('The thief must go in dark weather. The *þyrs* [giant] must live in the fen, alone in the land').

⁴⁶ J. Neville, 'Monsters and Criminals: Defining Humanity in Old English Poetry', in *Monsters and the Monstrous in Medieval Northwest Europe*, ed. K.E. Olsen and L.A.J.R. Houwen (Leuven, 2001), pp. 103–22, at p. 119.

steal in order to survive are more threatening and disruptive to society than those who only live in hiding and survive by fishing, as Grettir tries to do for a while. In all these cases, the interaction between potentially monstrous individuals and society is corrupt since these characters do not conform to society's rules and interact in a way that disrupts the peace. Consequently, the more interaction there is between the potential monster and the people around it, the more monstrous a person can become in the eyes of society.

Let us turn back to Grettir one last time and look at the ultimate example of a change in perception: Grettir's death and its aftermath. It has been noted by Richard Harris that Grettir dies the death of a monster: he is dismembered and beheaded with his own sword in a way reminiscent of the deaths of giants, or of Grendel and his mother.⁴⁷ As I have noted elsewhere,⁴⁸ the body of the human monster has to be destroyed in order for its threat to be removed; it has to be broken either by dismemberment and/or beheading, or by using fire or water in the destruction. Grettir's body is subjected to almost all of these things. With his sorcery-inflicted wound infected up into his intestines, Grettir is decomposing alive.⁴⁹ Þorbjörn ǫngull, however, treats his fallen enemy in such a way that Grettir's death and burial appear almost staged: after all, he dismembers and beheads a man who has died from sepsis and from wounds received in battle, just to make sure he is really dead.⁵⁰ It seems as if Þorbjörn, by trying to declare Grettir the ultimate monster in death, attempts to justify the extreme means – i.e. sorcery – he used to overcome the outlaw. But his plan does not work. Þorbjörn seemingly forgot that perceptions can change. That this is the case is stated quite clearly in the saga. Grettir's kinsmen 'tóku svá upp, at ǫngull hefði gort niðingsverk, at drepa dauðvána mann, ok í annarri grein um fjolkynngi', but what is more, 'allir Miðfirðingar snerusk til liðs með henni [Ásdís, Grettir's mother], ok jafnvel þeir, sem áðr váru óvinir Grettis.'⁵¹ It seems that now, after his death, Grettir is re-incorporated into society, and thus he finally achieves what he longed for in life. Moreover, because of society's changed perception of Grettir after his death, Þorbjörn is outlawed for the killing of Iceland's greatest hero instead of being

⁴⁷ R. Harris, 'The Deaths of Grettir and Grendel: A New Parallel', *Scripta Islandica* 24 (1974), 25–53, esp. at pp. 38–9 and 47.

⁴⁸ R. Merkelbach, 'Destroying the Monstrous Body in the *Íslendingasögur*', unpublished paper presented at the MEMSA Durham conference, 9 July 2013.

⁴⁹ *Gr*, ch. 82, p. 261: 'var lærit allt grafit upp at smáþormum' ('the thigh was infected up into the small intestine').

⁵⁰ *Gr*, ch. 82, p. 262: 'Nú veit ek víst, at Grettir er dauðr' ('Now I know for certain that Grettir is dead').

⁵¹ *Gr*, ch. 83, p. 265: 'They took the view that ǫngull had committed a malicious crime, killing a dying man, and also because of the sorcery. [...] all people from Miðfjörðr came to her help, even those who had before been Grettir's enemies'.

celebrated and rewarded for disposing of Iceland's greatest criminal. He tried to mark Grettir as the worst social monster there ever was but went too far, killing a man doomed to die, beheading and dismembering him, and waving the severed head at the man's own mother. Because of his deeds, Þorbjörn is now perceived as socially disruptive and therefore has to be cast out of society – the threat has to be removed.⁵²

Changing perceptions might also offer an explanation why there are cures for certain kinds of monstrosity – why, for example, Þórir can stop going berserk. Berserkerism, as a form of monstrosity, causes harm to society. By doing something of societal benefit – in Þórir's case rescuing and bringing up the baby Þorkell – he can counteract this harm. Because Þorsteinn also calls on the creator of the sun for help, Þórir is finally healed. Similarly, it might be that Halli and Leiknir expect to become a part of society by performing deeds to society's benefit – building a road across a lava field – but they are tricked. Furthermore, Þórir's story points towards the religious dimension of curing monstrosity, which can also be seen in the exorcism performed after the hauntings at Fróðá.⁵³ Simply joining a king's or jarl's retinue, however, can also provide a remedy for outlaws and berserkers since it presents them with a task that is supposedly in society's interest. Berserkers as part of a king's retinue are fearsome warriors, but rarely turn into a problem for ordinary society.⁵⁴ Both of the "heroes" of *Fóstbræðra saga*, Þorgeirr and Þormóðr, are healed, so to speak, from their outlawry when they join the retinue of King Óláfr. Grettir hoped for a similar opportunity, but because of his 'ógæfa', 'misfortune', which probably results from the curse of Glámr, he was rejected by the king and has to live and die an outlaw.

This article has shown that monstrosity in the *Íslendingasögur* is a social issue, a concept contingent on societal opinions of a person's actions and interactions. A person's status as monster is thus just as volatile and fluid as social opinion. Moreover, there is not just one kind of monstrosity, but several: revenants and outlaws, for example, are far removed from each other on a scale that gives room for potential human monsters to move back and forth, depending on how and to what extent they interact with society. This re-

⁵² One might even wonder if this is the result of the 'chain of malign supernatural activity' (Sayers, 'Unquiet Dead', p. 251) set in motion at Forsæludalr, and because of which Grettir was infected when Glámr cursed him. This would mean that even outlaws share the feature of contagion with other types of social monsters.

⁵³ Another form of religious remedy seems to be going on pilgrimage, as is the case with Aron Hjörleifsson, the only outlaw hero of the contemporary sagas, who travels to Jerusalem. On his return, he becomes the king's retainer and is thus re-incorporated into society.

⁵⁴ There is a strong contrast between the berserkers that are with Haraldr hárfagri in ch. 2 of *Grettis saga*, and a similar group of 12 berserkers who roam and rob in Norway in ch. 19.

assessment of how we read potentially monstrous human characters in the sagas opens up new possibilities of exploring the uses to which monstrosity has been put in medieval Icelandic literature. A more nuanced perspective enables us not only to take the monster as what it is – as something that literally points to something beyond its own existence – but also to do so in a circumspect way, depending on which type of social monster we are dealing with. The outlaw as monster is, after all, quite different from the berserker or the revenant, and might therefore point to an entirely different concern or theme. Such an approach allows for variation and fluidity, and thus for all the approaches taken by the saga writers themselves.

In the Claws of One's Self: A Comparative Study of "Voluntary" Shape-Shifting in the Literary Traditions of Old Norse and Medieval Irish Narrative

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The theme of shape-shifting has been considered in many areas of medieval studies throughout the years, and still has scholars' attention. However, often all shape-shifting is considered together without consideration of the differing causes underlying the shape-shifting, or the different circumstances within which such physical changes occur.¹ A more subtle way of interpreting the literary depictions of shape-shifting, and how this was understood by contemporaries, is to divide the act of shape-shifting into three categories: "involuntary": without the consent of the person undergoing the change, for example through a curse; "genetic": through a form of mutation inherent in a family or kin, which is passed on to another generation; and "voluntary": imposing upon oneself a state of metamorphosis. It is the latter which will be examined in this paper.

Two specific groups of literary characters have been selected, one each from early Irish and Old Norse literature, in order to discern how their respective audiences viewed them as literary shape-shifters. The *berserkir* is the example from the Old Norse tradition, and the *fianna* as a group is the example from the early Irish narrative tradition. Not all literature containing these two groups will be discussed, only the most relevant works. The Welsh material has a great amount of canine-related material, as can be found in the Arthurian material, however, the evidence of Arthurian literature is beyond the scope of the present paper. The shape-shifting imagery used to depict these characters involved a metaphorical transformation into an animalistic warrior; a literary representation of the warrior's momentary inhumanity. They are not becoming animals; the animal characteristics are a metaphor for their warrior-like behaviour. First, the paper will discuss the examples of the central medieval Irish tradition, specifically the Fenian Cycle, with a primary focus on the *fianna* and Finn mac Cumail. Then, examples of *berserkir* from the Old Norse tradition will be discussed, looking at specific examples from *Grettis saga*, *Egils saga Skállagrimsonar*, *Eyrbyggja saga*, *Ynglinga saga*, and *Víga-Glums Saga*. Lastly, comparisons will be made and contrasts highlighted, before coming to a

¹ An important exception is Caroline Walker Bynum's work *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York, 2001), where medieval categories of transformation are considered in detail, but due to the examples used here stemming from a later period than the one covered by Bynum, her work is not considered in the present paper, but is discussed in a forthcoming thesis by the author of this paper.

conclusion.

THE FÍANNA

According to Joseph Nagy, the Fenian cycle is concerned with transformation and transition, i.e. a development from one state to another,² and it is therefore only fitting to consider *fianna* in a paper concerning the aspect of "voluntary" shape-shifting. The stories are 'played out in zones beyond the civilized pale, or between the human and the supernatural pales'.³ Kuno Meyer has dated the earliest Fenian tradition to the seventh century,⁴ and with the earliest attestation of the word "*fian*" appearing in two ninth-century manuscripts; *The Book of Armagh*, more precisely fo. 14a2, and *St Paul Codex* on page 2.⁵ According to Joseph Nagy, the words *fian* and *fémidi* are derived from Indo-European, giving Latin *vēnāri* "to hunt"⁶, a statement mirrored from Meyer, who argues that the original meaning of the word was "driving, pursuing or hunting", and that even though Latin confined the meaning of *vēnāri* to "chase", in Irish it came to denote 'a band of warriors on the warpath'.⁷ Nagy also argued that the tradition of hunting and warring in the wild constituted a path for young males verging on manhood.⁸ This argument is questioned by Kim McCone, who argues that 'the pre-form **uēnā* [...] would have yielded OIr. **fin* and not *fian(n)*'.⁹ Instead, he argues, *fian* is derived from **ue* *H-neh*₂ (PIE **ue* *H-* "chase, pursue" seen in Lith. *Výti* "chase", OInd. *vij-ānti* "they pursue") and compared with OCS *vojbnā* "war" < **uo* *H-neh*₂ only if it contained weak or lenited -*n* /*n*/. In the probable event of final -*n*(*n*) /*N*/, the only plausible derivation is < **wēd-nā* with the same element as seen in OIr. *fiad* "wild, game", MW *guyd*, OBret. *guoid* "wild" < **wēd(w)-o-* (< **ue* *lā*^h-; cf. OEng. *Wād* "hunt" < **uo* *l Hd*^h-), evidently related to OIr. *fid* "wood", OW/Bret. *guid* "trees" < **wid-u-*. [...] *Fían(n)*, then, was derived, in all likelihood, from **wēd-* "wild" by means of a collective suffix *-*nā* and, as such, will have meant something like "wild bunch".¹⁰ Despite the etymological uncertainty pertaining to

² J. F. Nagy, 'Fenian Heroes and Their Rites of Passage', *Béaloideas*, 54/55 (1986/1987), 161–82, at p. 162.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁴ K. Meyer, *Fianaigeacht* Todd Lecture Series XVI (Dublin, 1910), pp. xvi–xviii.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. v.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. vi.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. vi.

⁸ Nagy, 'Fenian Heroes and Their Rites of Passage' p. 163.

⁹ K. McCone, 'The Celtic and Indo-European Origins of the *fian*', *The Gaelic Finn Tradition*, eds. S. J. Arbuthnot & G. Parsons (Dublin, 2012), pp. 14–30, at p. 20.

¹⁰ McCone, p. 21.

the origins of the word *fian*, it is clear that the word refers to some form of hunting band consisting of "wild" men, who, according to Meyer, were warriors, who made war without influence from outsiders.¹¹

When considering shape-shifting and the *fian*-tradition, the first time these young males are exposed to metamorphosis in their life, with the *fian*, is during the initiation ceremony, as described in the twelfth-century text *Áirem Muintiri Finn*. Initiation ceremonies are depicted both in ancient art, possibly on the Gundestrup Cauldron, and in literature from early times, and were, and are, a rite of passage for young men and women into adulthood, becoming a permanent member of a society. Initiation ceremonies are still in existence in modern day's practices within religious communities. In the initiation ceremony of the *fian* the new recruits are essentially transformed into animals, or more specifically, game in a "mock" hunt, and if they failed the test they were not admitted into the *fian*:

Ní gabthái fer díb so co mbo rífili dá leabar déc na filidhechta. ní gabtha fer díb fós co nderntái latharlog mór co roicheid fillidh a uathrogi. ocus no chuirthe (*sic*) ann é ocus a sciath les ocus fad láime do chroinn chuill. [ocus nó]nbar [lae]ch iar sin chuigi co ná sleuib leo ocus deich [n]imuirí atturru co ndibruigidís i nóinfecht é. ocus dá ngontai thairis sin é ní gabtai a bfianaigecht.

Ní gabtái fós fer díb so co nderntai fuiltfighi fair ocus go cuirthe trí feduib Erenn ina rith é co tigdsim uili ina diaid ar eiccill a gona. ocus ní bídh aturro acht in craeb do ega. dá rugta fair do gontai é ocus ní gabthái iar sin. da crithnaidhidís a airm ina láimh ní gabtai. dá tucad craeb isin choill ní dá fholt as a fhige ní mó no ghabtai. dá minaigedh crand crín fá a chois ní gabtái. mina lingedh tar crann bud comard r[e a] édan ocus mina cromad fó cradd bu[d coma]r[d] rena glún ní gabtai é. ocus mina tucad in dealg as a chois dá ingin gan toirm[esc] a retha uime ní gabtai a bfianaigecht é. ocus dá ndemadh sin uili fa do muir Finn é.¹²

¹¹ Meyer, *Fianaigeacht*, p. ix.

¹² *Silva Gadelica (I.-XXXI): a Collection of Tales in Irish*, ed. S. H. O'Grady (London, 1892) Vol. I, pp 92-3, 'Of all these again not a man was taken until he were a prime poet versed in the twelve books of poesy. No man was taken till in the ground a large hole had been made (such as to reach the fold of his belt) and he put into it with his shield and a forearm's length of a hazel stick. Then must nine warriors, having nine

Wounded game is easier to catch and therefore essentially dead; quivering weapons means one cannot be a good predator, and that the recruit has shown fear; and cracking sticks are a sign for the predator that prey is near. There is also another possibility for this initiation ceremony, namely that the would-be member has proved himself to not be prey, meaning, if he succeeds in his quest, he would not have been wounded and he has the ability to outrun the *fian*; only prey would not be able to do that. Not making sounds, being able to navigate possibly unfamiliar territory, and having a steady hand, are very important features in the predator. In a sense it could be argued that these young men are proving two things simultaneously: first, that they are not prey, and second that they are predator. Simply not being prey does not necessarily mean one is a predator as well.

Since the prerequisite to join the *fian* seems to be to undergo this test the young males voluntarily submit to it. They do not become game in their physical form, but their status is essentially revoked, and it is fair game to wound or even kill the new recruits. All their humanity is taken away, simply stripped down to animalistic survival skills. If they passed the test, they were welcomed into the *fian*, and would now take on the guise of the hunter, instead of the prey.

In the words of Joseph Nagy, 'the seemingly canine nature of fénnidi, especially Fenian ones, is an expression of their martial identity'.¹³ This "canine nature" is connected to their status as warriors, and the *fian* of literature has some examples of this behaviour. In *Duanaire Finn*, a seventeenth-century compilation of earlier poetry, in the poem of 'The Bathing of Oisín's Head', dated to the twelfth-century,¹⁴ Oisín speaks of his teeth in a matter much akin to wolves and hounds: 'Do cognadís colpa doimh go crúaidh ciocrach

spears, with a ten furrow's width betwixt them and him, assail him and in concert let fly at him. If past that guard of his he were hurt then, he was not received into Fianship. Not a man of them was taken till his hair had been interwoven into braids on him and he started at a run through Ireland's woods; while they, seeking to wound him, followed in his wake, there having been between him and them but one forest bough by way of interval at first. Should he be overtaken, he was wounded and not received into Fianna after. If his weapons has quivered in his hand, he was not taken. Should a branch in the wood have disturbed anything of his hair out of its braiding, neither was he taken. If he had cracked a dry stick under his foot [as he ran] he was not accepted. Unless that [at his full speed] he had both jumped a stick level with his brow, and stooped to pass under one even with his knee, he was not taken. Also, unless with slackening his pace he could with his nail extract a thorn from his foot, he was not taken into Fianship: but if he performed all this he was of Finn's people'. *Silva Gadelica (I.-XXXI): a Collection of Tales in Irish*, ed. S. H. O'Grady (London, 1892), Vol. II, p. 100.

¹³ J. F. Nagy, *The Wisdom of the Outlaw - The Boyhood Deeds of Finn in Gaelic Narrative Tradition* (Berkeley, 1985), p. 44.

¹⁴ A.T. Lucas, 'Washing and Bathing in Ancient Ireland', *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquarians of Ireland*, 95, 1/2 (1965), pp. 65-114, at p. 108.

conamail / ní fágdaois áighe nó alt dhe nach dendairs minsgamart'¹⁵. This description brings to mind images of wolves after having captured their prey, their teeth gnawing at the tough skin and flesh. In many stories the portrayal of the *fian*'s social structure much resembles that of packs of wolves; with an alpha male, here the leader of the *fian*, and a complex hierarchy of warriors and women alike. They hunt together, though the males are the primary actors in that aspect; they live together and travel together. This is evident in texts such as *Duanaire Finn* and *Acallam na Senórach*, the latter dated to the late twelfth or early thirteenth century.¹⁶ It is also a feature which is found in human life; a general family structure, with a matriarch or a patriarch. Humans have a pack mentality, just as many types of animals, such as the wolf, which may be why humans have made references to wolf-like aspects of human nature, and vice versa, both in terms of non-violent, and violent acts. Using imagery associated with the wolf of the wild, it would appear that the metaphor for the *fianna* is a more close-knit society outside of settled society, displaying both human characteristics in their association with each other, but also animalistic characteristics in their association with war, hunting and societal structure.

In the poem called 'The Naming of Dún Gaire', dated to c. 1150 by Gerard Murphy,¹⁷ from the *Duanaire Finn*, the *fian* battle a group of seemingly canine warriors, known as the Dogheads, whose leader is Clíabhach ri coinceann coir 'Clíabhach, king of the righteous Dogheads'.¹⁸ It ends with victory for the *fian*: 'ro mharbh lucht na ccenn gcon',¹⁹ meaning, 'the folk with dogs' heads were killed'.²⁰ This would imply either some form of a mask being worn by the men, or that their heads resembled that of dogs, without the wearing of a mask. In the same story we are told that 'fearrdorn a ffiacoil gach con / lán glaiçe laich na timcioll',²¹ indicating that their teeth were different to what may be considered as "normal" teeth, but also that these warriors were larger than those in the *fian*. Up until the mention of the size of the teeth, one could still be led to believe that these were simply men, wearing masks or some other form of disguise to make

¹⁵ *Duanaire Finn I: the Book of the Lays of Fionn*, ed. E. Mac Neill (London, 1908), p. 112, 'They [his teeth, ed.] could gnaw a stag's haunch, hard and hungry and houndlike: they would not leave joint or jot of it but they would make mince-meat of'.

¹⁶ *Tales of the Elders of Ireland (Acallam na Senórach)*, trans. A. Dooley and H. Roe (Oxford, 1999), p. viii.

¹⁷ *Duanaire Finn III: Introduction, Notes, Appendices, Indexes and Glossary*, eds. G. Murphy et al (London, 1953), p. cxvi.

¹⁸ *Duanaire Finn II: the Book of the Lays of Fionn*, ed. and trans. G. Murphy (London, 1933), p. 23.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

²¹ *Ibid.*, ch. xxxviii, p. 26 'each dog's tooth was equal to a man's fist, its circuit as much as a warrior could grasp'.

themselves look more menacing, or even behaving in a canine manner, but the comparison of the teeth, changes this perspective slightly. The idea of dog-heads originated in the Greek and Roman traditions, where it was believed that 'beyond the boundaries of the familiar world there lived types of humans very different from us'.²² This is most likely how they are supposed to be seen here, as an alien race encroaching on the lands of the *fian*, and not as shape-shifters, although they do pose the possible question of why this particular type of alien race had been chosen as an opponent to Finn and his *fian*, over other types of aliens believed to exist. Could it have been a "pun" of sorts by the author, to put the wolf-like, yet very human, *fianna*, up against the dog-heads, who were also, by some medieval scholars, seen as having a human nature?²³ Or are the dog-heads simply an illustration of the *fianna* of Ireland's ability to protect against any form of outside threat?

The role of women in the *fian* adds to the sense of the *fian* being portrayed as a pack. As Ní Dhonnchadha has observed, 'In reality women did not appear to have had the capacity to sustain careers as warriors, marauders, or battle-leaders',²⁴ though we do see a few examples of literary female warriors, such as Eachtach in the story 'The Daughter of Diarmaid', dated to c. 1300,²⁵ in *Duanaire Finn*.²⁶ Here she battles Finn mac Cumail in single combat and wounds him, showing that the leader of the *fian* can be challenged by someone from the outside; he is not untouchable. It is interesting to note that it is a woman, and not a man, who challenges the leader, an aspect not found in wolf-pack mentality, and something which goes against the norm in the established society. Eachtach is attacking Finn based on her grief, which was caused by Finn, adding a sense of humanity to the poem. She does not want to take over Finn's position, she simply wants some form of recompense, and in her mourning the only option, in her mind, is a violent one. This situation stands alone as an example of outside forces, working independently of the norm, influencing the *fian*. The result is however not a lessening of Finn's position; in fact there seems to be few changes to his position as alpha.

The fictional literature about the *fianna* gives a certain image of how they were

²² R. Bartlett, *The Natural and the Supernatural in the Middle Ages* (New York, 2008), p. 94.

²³ Bartlett, pp 97–101.

²⁴ M. Ní Dhonnchadha, 'Travelers and Settled Folk: Women, Honor, and Shame in Medieval Ireland', in Sarah Sheehan and Ann Dooley (eds.) *Constructing Gender in Medieval Ireland* (New York, 2013), pp 17–38, at p. 20.

²⁵ *Duanaire Finn III*, p. cxvii.

²⁶ *Duanaire Finn I*, p. 150.

perceived by the writers of the poems, but the law texts also provide a sense of how the canine imagery was used in terms of legal issues. The law texts are earlier in date than the literature, and therefore lend credence to the theory that the concept of canine imagery being used to describe certain types of human behaviour was well established early on. The Old Irish law texts mentions specifically 'violent women who go "into wolf-shape" (*i conrecht*) and who spend their time "wolfing" (*oc fáelad*) on the margins of society'.²⁷ The *Bretha Crólige*, dated to the late seventh-century,²⁸ lists, among other women, 'confæ conrechta, mer, dasachtag',²⁹ meaning: 'a werwolf in wolf's shape, an idiot, a lunatic',³⁰ as women 'not to be taken to the house of a third party for sick-maintenance'.³¹ Again, women and wolves are linked metaphorically, and it may be that the wolf was used as a metaphor for a "warrior woman", meaning someone travelling with e.g. the *fianna*, or someone not living within the norms of society. Ní Dhonnchadha has argued that women who were not confined to a social location in society could be seen as a threat to the established order, although through immorality rather than violence.³² This is not to say that these women were seen as particularly violent, but given that the wolf often moves on the borders of settled and civilised society, it may have been this aspect that was specific to these women: they were on the boundary of the settled society, but not a part of it as such. Often sexual connotations were associated with the wandering woman,³³ suggesting a form of prostitution. Just as the rest of the *fian* these women would have been viewed as outsiders in society. The role of women in the *Duanaire Finn* and *Acallam na Senórach* is generally quite modest, but the poem called 'The Women Folk of the Fían', dated to c. 1200,³⁴ in the *Duanaire Finn*,³⁵ lists mothers, sisters, daughters, and wives connected to the *fian*, and their relationships, and the sons they bore. Though it is an instrument to show the greatness of the sons born to these women, it is still of great significance that these women are mentioned: it shows the *fianna* as not simply a *Männerbund*, but more as a social entity or society, such as a pack of wolves.

On their hunting trips and in battle, *fian* members, such as Cailte, have been known to

²⁷ Ní Dhonnchadha, p. 21.

²⁸ D. A. Binchy, 'Bretha Crólige', *Ériu* 12 (1938), 1–77, at p. 1.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

³¹ Ní Dhonnchadha, p. 32.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 22.

³³ Ní Dhonnchadha, p. 22.

³⁴ *Duanaire Finn III*, pp cxvi–cxvii.

³⁵ *Duanaire Finn II*, pp 100–13.

make a cry, or shout,³⁶ also known as *dord fiansa*, before they do battle.³⁷ According to the Dictionary of the Irish Language, *dord* means 'buzzing, humming, droning, intoning',³⁸ saying specifically about *dord fiansa* that it is 'a kind of chant or refrain practised by the Fiana (accompanied sometimes by sounds produced by striking together the shafts of their spears)'.³⁹ The explanation does not really give much information regarding the actual chant or humming of the *fianna*, but by examining the other examples given under *dord* it becomes clear that *dord* denotes a non-verbal, and perhaps non-human, form of sound: it is found in the *Táin Bó Cúailnge* as the sound the Duind Cualngne makes, as the 'belling of a stag', and as 'dord na murduchann' meaning 'mermaids' chanting'.⁴⁰ The sound may not be as explicit as what can be imagined the war-cry of the *berserkir* would have been, but the collective humming could in itself be seen as a "pack" ritual. By adding the striking together of spears to the *dord*, it becomes more of a means to create sounds in general, perhaps as a tool to appear as a larger group than the number who are actually on a battlefield. To some extent parallels can be drawn to the howling or growling of wolves in packs, as a form of communication, as well as the group mentality of expressing such sounds to establish a form of identity marker. Eliade has argued that the Germanic *Wütende Heer*, and similar organisations, used the barking of dogs, which could be equated with wolves, to add to the uproar of sounds used to prepare a warrior for warrior-frenzy.⁴¹ In Eliade's argument these sounds represented the presence of ancestors and the dead, who were believed to return especially around winter solstice.⁴² There is however very little or no evidence for this statement, and it is doubtful that barking would be used, since barking by humans would have sounded much less threatening. Furthermore, barking is not what would be primarily associated with wolves. Concerning the belief that the dead ancestors were among them, the literature shows no concrete evidence for this.

'In early Irish literature, the fénnid usually appears as a figure living and functioning outside or on the margins of the tribal territory and community, i.e. the *tiath*'.⁴³ The *fianna* of Ireland are to some extent voluntary outlaws, because it is a choice the men

³⁶ *Tales of the Elders of Ireland (Acallam na Senórach)*, pp 29–30.

³⁷ M. West, 'Aspects of *díberg* in the tale *Togail Bruidne Da Derga*', ZCP 49/50 (1997), pp. 950–64, at p. 957.

³⁸ Dictionary of the Irish Language (online), letter Degrá-dúus, Column 357.

³⁹ Dictionary of the Irish Language (online), letter Degrá-dúus, Column 357.

⁴⁰ Dictionary of the Irish Language (online), letter Degrá-dúus, Column 357.

⁴¹ Eliade, p. 83.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 83.

⁴³ Nagy, *The Wisdom of the Outlaw*, p. 18.

make to join. Had it been involuntary there would have been no need for an initiation ceremony. There are still connections with the established society, and poems do tell of the *fianna* being in the service of kings and chiefs, however, their main role appears to be as outside, on the margin, mirrored in the behaviour of wild carnivorous animals. This behaviour is mirrored in the *berserkirs* of the Old Norse tradition.

THE BERSERKIR

Mary Danielli has noted that the *ber-* part of *berserkr* has often been taken to mean 'bear', while the latter part means a shirt (*-serk*), and that the leader of a group of *berserkir* is often named Björn, also meaning 'bear'.⁴⁴ Rudolph Simek agrees with the etymology of *ber-* as 'bear', suggesting that the warriors, like the quite similar *ulfheðnar*, wore animal skins, a portrayal of which is found on Vendel-Age Swedish helmets of the sixth and seventh centuries.⁴⁵ Danielli also notes that alternative origin could be 'bareshirt', based on a passage in *Ynglinga saga* chapter 6, where the men led by Óðinn is said to be 'brynja-lausier',⁴⁶ meaning 'without armour'. These men were also said to 'voru galnir sem hundar edr vargar, bitu í skiölllda sína, voru sterkir sem birnir eda gridungar'.⁴⁷ However, Simek argues that *ber-* was misunderstood by Snorri Sturluson, and also by scholars up to the nineteenth century, who mistook it for *berr*, which means 'naked', an interpretation which gained support based on the depiction of the Germanic warriors of Tacitus who fought naked.⁴⁸

The *Íslendingasögur* have many examples of *berserkir* and their behaviour. Often they appear only briefly, but the following examples will show how animalistic imagery is used by the authors of the sagas to convey the behaviour of the *berserkir*. In *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar* Kveldúlfr, grandfather of Egill, got his name because he was bad-tempered around people:

⁴⁴ M. Danielli, 'Initiation Ceremonial from Norse Literature', *Folklore* 56:2 (1945), pp. 229–45, at p. 233.

⁴⁵ R. Simek, *Dictionary of Northern Mythology* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 35.

⁴⁶ Snorri Sturluson *Ynglinga saga in Konunga-Sögur* (Elmen, 1816), ch. 6, p. 11.

⁴⁷ *Ynglinga saga*, ch. 6, p. 11, 'were as mad as dogs or wolves, bit in their shields, and were strong as bears or wild bulls', S. Laing (trans.) *The Heimskringla or the Sagas of the Norse Kings* 2nd Edition (London, 1889), p. 276.

⁴⁸ Simek, p. 35.

En dag hvern, er at kveldi leið, þá gerðist hann styggr, svá at fáir menn máttu orðum við hann koma. Var hann kveldsvæfr. Þat var mál manna, at hann væri mjök hamrammr. Hann var kallaðr Kveldúlfr.⁴⁹

Kveld- means "evening" or "night", and he therefore becomes *Night-Ulf*. In the same saga, Kveldúlfr and Skallagrím, father of Egill, take on ON *berserksgangr* as they attack a ship, and over fifty men on board the ship: 'ok svá er sagt, at þá hamaðist hann, ok fleiri voru þeir förunautar hans, er þá hömuðust'.⁵⁰

There is, however, one complication with going into berserk, for some men at least:

Svá er sagt, at þeim mönnum væri farit, er hamrammir eru, eða þeim er berserksgangr var á, at meðan þat var framt, þá voru þeir svá sterkir, at ekki helzt við þeim, enn fyrst, er af var gengit, þá voru þeir ómáttkari enn at vanda. Kveldúlfr var ok svá, at þá er af honum gekk hamremmin, þá kendi hann mæði af sókn þeiri er hann hafði veitt, ok var hann þá af ölln saman ómáttugr, svá at hann lagðist í rekkju.⁵¹

This complete exhaustion after a fight could be argued to be a response to the extent of inhumanity Kveldúlfr has been under while in his *berserksgangr*. Because he had lost so much of his humanity it was not possible for him to return fully to his human state, and the result is then ultimately death. There may be a further research point here as to differing degrees of inhumanity in *berserksgangr*, since some go in *berserksgangr* and are not affected to the same degree as Kveldúlfr, others do experience exhaustion, and others yet, as Kveldúlfr, die from the complications.

The tradition of ON *hólmganga*, as described in the family sagas, was outlawed

⁴⁹ Valdimar Ásmundarson, *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar* (Reykjavik, 1892), ch. 1, p. 2, 'Every day towards evening he would grow so bad-tempered that few people dared even address him. He always went to sleep early in the evening and woke up early in the morning. People claimed he was a shape-shifter and they called him Kveldulf', B. Scudder (trans.) *Egils Saga* (London, 2004), ch. 1, p.3.

⁵⁰ *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar* ch. 27, p. 68 'he is said to have become frenzied like a wild animal. Some other men of his went into a frenzy too', B. Scudder, *Egils Saga* (London, 2004), ch. 27, p. 47.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 69–70, 'It is said that people who could take on the character of animals, or went berserk, became so strong in this state that no one was a match for them, but also that just after it wore off they were left weaker than usual. Kveldulf was the same, so that when his frenzy wore off he felt exhausted by the effort he had made, and was rendered completely powerless and had to lie down and rest', *Egils Saga* ch. 27, p. 48.

between 1006 and 1014,⁵² but as Gerd Sieg has also pointed out, it is still a feature in *Grettis saga* and *Víga-Glúms saga*, both supposed to take place after the outlawing of *hólmganga*.⁵³ The tradition of *hólmganga* 'was a compromise between the antagonistic conceptions of private and communal law'.⁵⁴ In the sagas it is a one-on-one battle, which is fought between men, and in the context of this study only the ones involving *berserkir* and the hero will be considered. Both Gwyn Jones and Sieg have written about *hólmganga*, so this study will not go into great detail about every aspect of the duel. According to Jones *hólmganga* was 'regulated by the injunctions of a social etiquette of the duel, the *hólmgöngulög*, or Law of the Wager-of-Battle'.⁵⁵ This is evident in some sagas, such as *Brennu-Njáls saga*, and mostly in terms of *Alþingi*, but in others there is no mention of it. In most cases the sagas depict *hólmganga* between the hero of the story and a *berserkr*. In *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar*, a man named Ljót inn bleika is described thusly as he enters the field where he is about to fight: Ok er hann gekk fram á völlum at hólmsaðnum, þá kom á hann berserksgangr. Tók hann þá at grenja illiliga ok beit í skjöld sinn'.⁵⁶ It could be argued that the *hólmganga* between Egill and Atli shows a form of *berserksgangr* by Egill, when he bites the throat of Atli, since this is the only way to beat him, because Atli has used *seiðr* to protect himself from Egill's sword.⁵⁷

The *hólmganga* would be a place where the *berserkr* would parade his strength, and it is a literary tool for the authors of the sagas to depict *berserkir* in a negative light, given that they fight the hero, and lose. If they were just wounded they would have had to pay a ransom.⁵⁸ Sieg argues that the *berserkir* were stereotypically characterised: 'die übernatürlichen Kräfte, der berserksgangr, das Heulen, das Beißen in Schildränder'.⁵⁹ The following examples will be used to highlight the animalistic behaviour associated with *berserkir*.

In *Grettis saga*, Grettir fought two berserker-brothers, Þórir þömb and Ögmundur illi, by cunningly luring them in with friendship, food and drink, then taking away their weapons,

⁵² G. Jones, 'The Religious Elements of the Icelandic "Hólmganga"', *MLR* 27:3 (1932), 307–13, at p. 307.

⁵³ G. Sieg, 'Die Zweikämpfe der Isländersagas', *ZDA* 95:1 (1966), pp 1–27, at p. 4.

⁵⁴ Jones, p. 307.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 307.

⁵⁶ *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar*, ch. 64, p. 198, 'And when he entered the arena, a berserk fury came over him and he started howling menacingly and biting at his shield', *Egils Saga*, ch. 65, p. 139.

⁵⁷ *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar*, ch. 65, p. 205.

⁵⁸ Sieg, p. 3.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

and locking them in a shed.⁶⁰ Not only are the brothers named as *berserkir*, but when they are locked in the shed, they: 'Kemr á þá berserksgangr ok grenja sem hundar'.⁶¹ Grettir kills both of the brothers with just one thrust of his spear. The *berserkir* at this stage do not have any weapons, but the danger is still very real, since their frenzy and their power is very real. On another occasion, Grettir kills the *berserkr* Snækollur, after he demands the daughter of the farmer Grettir is staying with.⁶² In this instance, it is one of the main features of the *berserkr* that ends up being the cause of death for Snækollur:

Tók hann þá að grenja hátt og beit í skjaldarröndina ok setti skjöldinn upp í munn sér og gein yfir hornit skjaldarins ok lét allómliga. Grettir varpaði sér um völlum, ok er hann kemr jafnfram hesti berserksins, slær hann fæti sínum neðan undir skjaldarsporðinn svá hart, at skjöldurinn gekk upp í munninn, svá at rifnaði kjaþrinn, en kjálkarnir hlupu ofan á bringuna.⁶³

Berserkir are not invincible; it is possible to kill them. It is also seen in names, such as *Gunnsteinssonar berserkjabana*. The hero of the saga will often come upon a *berserkr* in his youth, when he still has to prove himself to his family, and he will defeat the *berserkr*. Glúmr, from *Víga-Glúms saga*, went to Norway to see his grandfather, but his grandfather did not immediately accept him. While he was there the *berserkr* Björn járnhaus came to the feast of Glúmr's grandfather, Vigfúss, and challenged every man to *hólmganga*, but everyone had an excuse not to accept.⁶⁴ Glúmr, however, fought the *berserkr* in his grandfather's hall, but spared his life by not killing him, but felling him to the ground outside of the hall, removing him from the space he had tried to disturb.⁶⁵ After this, Glúmr was recognised by his grandfather.

In *Eyrbyggja saga*, Earl Hákon in Norway has two Swedish *berserkir*, Halli and Leiknir, who were given to him by the Swedish king,⁶⁶ indicating, as with the *fianna*, that

⁶⁰ J. Byock, *Grettir's Saga* (Oxford, 2009), ch. 19, pp. 55–62.

⁶¹ R.C. Boer, *Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar* (Germany, 1900), ch. 19, p. 76 'Then the berserker fury came upon them, and they started howling like dogs', *Grettir's Saga*, ch. 19, p. 60.

⁶² *Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar*, ch. 40, pp. 151–53.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 152–3, 'He began to bellow loudly and to bite the edge of his shield, putting the shield in his mouth and grinning over the rim and getting enraged. Grettir dashed out into the field, and when he came right up to the berserker's horse he kicked the bottom of the shield so hard to the shield went right up into the man's mouth so that the jaw fell down on his chest', *Grettir's Saga*, ch. 40, p. 114.

⁶⁴ Guðmundur Pjetursson, *Víga-Glums saga – Sive Vita Víga-Glumi* (Havniæ, 1786), ch. 6, p. 32.

⁶⁵ *Víga-Glums saga*, ch. 6, p. 34.

⁶⁶ Hermann Pálsson & P. Edwards (eds. & trans.) *Eyrbyggja Saga* (London, 1989), ch. 25.

these men were in the service of kings. Such is the description of their *berserksgangr*: Þeir gengu berserksgang, ok vóru þá eigi í mannligu eðli er þeir vóru reiðir, ok fóru galnir sem hundar ok óttuðust hvárki eld né járn.⁶⁷ The Earl gives the two *berserkir* to a man named Vermundr, who takes them back to Iceland with him, where he then gives them to his brother, Styr.⁶⁸ The literature shows that these two men are moved around like cattle, and could indicate a view of *berserkir* in the service of kings and chiefs as simply a form of weapon, which can be used or discarded at the owner's leisure. They are seen more as property and status symbols of the owner than men in their own right. *Berserkir* were part of a king or chief's retinue, as seen in the above example. However, this was not a guarantee that they would solely use their strength against the king or chief's enemies, and both Halli and Leiknir cause trouble in Iceland.

Ralph O'Connor puts forward the argument that the portrayal of *berserksgangr* in the Icelandic sagas gives an impression that it is not a voluntary action, but an involuntary one.⁶⁹ He uses the example of Halli and Leiknir in *Eyrbyggja saga*, saying that the slightest offence would set them off. As will be shown later, being short-tempered is in fact a common feature among *berserkir*. In order to be the best warriors they need to be able to connect with what gave them the strength to fight and win, i.e. their rage. In their battle-frenzy they act like animals and fight, and usually win, unless they encounter the heroes of the sagas. This paper argues that *berserksgangr* is a voluntary act, because in most examples the *berserkr* will bite his shield and maybe howl before going into *berserksgangr*, indicating an intent to purposely bring on the rage through minor rituals, such as the biting of the shield. It therefore appears that rage that can be called upon by the individual when it is needed. O'Connor also uses an example from *Vatnsdæla saga*, where Þórir Ingimundarson explains to his brother Þorsteinn that he feels as if he is less of a man compared to his brother, due to his ability to go into *berserksgangr*,⁷⁰ saying that the *á mik kemr berserksgangr jafnan þá er ek vilda sízt, ok vilda ek, bróðir, at þú gerðir at*.⁷¹ Þórir's brother then heals him by praying, and Þórir never undergoes *berserksgangr*

⁶⁷ Guðrandur Vigfússon, *Eyrbyggja saga* (Leipzig, 1864), ch. 25, p. 38, 'They used to go berserk, and once they had worked themselves up into a frenzy, they were wholly unlike human beings, storming about like mad dogs and afraid of neither fire nor weapons', *Eyrbyggja Saga*, ch. 25, pp. 68-9.

⁶⁸ *Eyrbyggja saga*, ch. 25, p. 39.

⁶⁹ R. O'Connor, 'Why Does Cú Chulainn Go Berserk? Warriors at the Edge of Humanity in Irish and Icelandic Sagas', in Jan Erik Rekdal & Charles Doherty (eds.) *King and Warrior in Early North-West Europe* (forthcoming). I am very grateful to Ralph O'Connor for allowing me to use a copy of his article in advance of publication.

⁷⁰ O'Connor, (forthcoming).

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 'berserksgangr always comes over me when I want it least, and I wish you would do something

again. It is important to here note the very Christian element of praying for a person to no longer be a *berserkr*. This would not have been a common interpretation, since mostly the only way of completely ending ever going into *berserksgangr* again seems to be through death. This particular episode is so unusual that we cannot take it as evidence of a widely held idea that, through a Christian action such as prayer, one can be cured from *berserkir* behaviour, or that this type of shape-shifting was generally seen as involuntary. It is also noteworthy that there seems to be no specific prayer to "save" one from *berserksgangr*. After Scandinavia became Christian c. 1000 AD, there would have been changes to society, and according to Gwyn Jones the practice of *hólmanga* was outlawed between 1006 and 1014.⁷² There may have been condemnation from the church against behaviour associated with *berserksgangr* and *hólmanga*, and this example may be a result of this. We find the same unusual portrayal in the Irish material.

Richard Sharpe has examined the connection between *fianna* and "evil men" or "Devil's men", and how the Old Irish word *láech* and the Hiberno-Latin word *laicus* are related to this notion of brigands or roving bands as evil. According to Sharpe, the Christian Latin *laicus* 'applies to the generality of Christian distinct from the clergy',⁷³ where the Hiberno-Latin *laicus* has many more meanings, such as "layman" in juxtaposition to "clergy", which occurs in early texts, and refers to 'a member of the community in neither orders nor vows, the lay tenant', which has also led to the meaning "pagan".⁷⁴ *Laicus* in the sense of "warrior" has a 'more specific meaning usually referring to someone outside the Christian fold and hateful to it, practising a more or less organised form of brigandage'.⁷⁵ Sharpe argue that the *fianna*, a band of roving warriors living outside of settled society, had 'nothing to distinguish them from the *latrunculi* ["robbers"] or *laici* [...] except that we do not hear of *fianna* wearing *signia diabolica* [wearing of a fillet to 'indicate that one was bound by his vow'⁷⁶] or the like'.⁷⁷ The *fianna* is thus, indirectly, linked with the practices of "evil men", in the eyes of the church, just as the one unusual example from *Vatnsdæla saga*.

When considering the similarities between the two strands of literary characters, the

about it, brother'.

⁷² Jones, p. 307.

⁷³ R. Sharpe, 'Hiberno-Latin Laicus, Irish Láech and the Devil's Men', *Ériu* 30 (1979), 75-92, at p. 75.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

main comparisons lie in their association with animal-like behaviour in relation to their warrior status, especially the wolf and the bear. Shape-shifting into a wild animal has symbolic significance, either for the person involved, or the events in the story. Eliade argued that the *berserkir* would wear wolf's skin as part of their initiation, and so has Simel, but the literary evidence depict them more as bears. There may have been ceremonies where these men would wear wolf-skins, but it may have been symbolic of a general idea about wild animals and rage, than specifically a man-to-wolf metamorphosis. In any case, the two carnivores are used as examples to portray men giving over to animalistic behaviour in order to either assert their status or to fight. Both the *berserkir* and the *fianna*-members take on certain characteristics of wolves, such as travelling in packs. The *fianna* live almost like a pack, with emphasis on the group, while the *berserkir* are more a form of a lone hunter and fighter, although they do at times appear in groups of twelve. The metaphorical bear-imagery used by the authors, and the etymology of the word *berserkr*, then lend evidence to the argument presented in this paper. Also, Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir makes the case that the term *vargr*, meaning, "wolf" was also used for outlaws by the Germanic peoples of Europe, and referred to 'those who has forfeited their rights to participate in human society',⁷⁸ meaning someone who had, to an extent, shed their social humanity, and become something almost non-human. This may have been applicable to the *berserkir*, but they are also found in the service of kings and chiefs, which goes against this argument. Both the *fianna* and those who practise *berserksgangr* as a means to achieve a status based on fear, may have had the same status as outlaws, and essentially *vargas*, or wolves.

As a preliminary conclusion it can be argued that both the *fianna* of the Irish tradition and the *berserkir* of the Old Norse tradition are depicted metaphorically as wolves or bears, and that a connection arises between animal-like behaviour and warrior culture in both of the medieval literary cultures. Both, to some extent, adhere to the ways of the outlaw, or *vargr* in the Old Norse tradition. However, when we look more closely at the two traditions, we can see subtle, but important, differences in the deployment by the authors of the metaphor. The difference lies in that the Irish tradition shows the *fianna* more as a pack, exhibiting a concern for their social behaviour, while the *berserkir* are portrayed as travelling alone or in groups of twelve, and fighting with very little focus on the concern of well-being of the group. If it is not the hero or the hero's kin in *berserksgangr*, the *berserkir* are usually portrayed as villains, a figure that challenges the

⁷⁸ Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir, p. 282.

hero, and once defeated the hero is celebrated.⁷⁹ There are examples of the *berserkir* in the service of kings and chiefs, but this is no guarantee of them not misbehaving. The examples discussed show that the *berserkir* were much more overtly characterised as possessing animalistic attributes, obviously exhibiting themselves by howling, growling, and biting shields, and acting like wild animals. In the context of this paper, they primarily ascribe to the metaphorical bear. The depiction of the *fianna* as animalistic is more subtle, and it seems more a part of everyday life, becoming clearest during their initiation ceremony in *Airem Muintiri Finn*, where the young males are degraded to prey before they can become predators, and once they are predator, they are part of the pack. In the Irish narrative tradition the wolf metaphor is deployed as a social metaphor, whereas in the Old Norse tradition it is deployed as a psychological (personal) metaphor, dependent on the character it is linked to. Considering the apparent wolf-metaphor in the law texts concerning women, it appears that even outside of the tradition of story-telling these metaphors were employed, perhaps to better explain what type of behaviour the laws are concerned with. It is however, still a metaphor: a metaphor for the unhinged warrior-fury of the *berserkir*; and a metaphor for men (and women) living a life on the borders of society.

The research here is preliminary, and part of a larger research project, which will look at the three distinctions set out in the beginning of this paper, namely "involuntary", "genetic", and "voluntary" shape-shifting, which I argue is necessary in order to understand fully the deployment of the metaphor of shape-shifting in the Old Norse and medieval Irish narrative traditions. As can be seen from this paper, the ways in which the metaphorical corruption of the body into an animal form was deployed by authors varied significantly, even when we restrict ourselves to the two groups discussed here. Further research will show if this difference is mirrored elsewhere in the literature.

⁷⁹ Danielli, p. 231.

Manuscript Stability and Literary Corruption: Our Failure to Understand the *Beowulf* Manuscript

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THE CORRUPTION OF THE *BEOWULF* MANUSCRIPT

There can be no doubt that the *Beowulf*-manuscript is corrupted. Even its name is unclear: it now bears the shelfmark 'British Library Manuscript Cotton Vitellius A. xv (Second half)',¹ is more commonly known as 'the *Beowulf*-manuscript' (after its most famous text),² and is perhaps most usefully known as the 'Nowell codex' (after its first known owner).³ None of these names attempt to describe the manuscript as it was first produced. As it now stands, the first text misses its opening: so too does the last.⁴ The final text was probably originally before what is now the first;⁵ at least one text is missing before it and others may also have been lost.⁶ The leaves are disordered, with the third and fourth gatherings swapped around. Many pages were damaged in the 1731 Ashburnham House fire. Before, and possibly after, that date letters, lines, and pages were damaged from

¹ The first half of the volume is widely known as the Southwick codex; the volumes were bound together c. 1620 by Richard James working with the Cotton collection. The most comprehensive account of the production of the manuscript is that in K. Kiernan, *'Beowulf' and the 'Beowulf' Manuscript* (Michigan, 1996), pp. 66–169. For a briefer account see also A. Orchard, *A Critical Companion to 'Beowulf'* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 12–23.

² The *Beowulf*-manuscript has also been used for just those gatherings which contain *Beowulf*, most notably by Kevin Kiernan.

³ Nowell signed 91(93) (BL94)r with the date 1563. Kevin Kiernan discusses Nowell, clarifying the identification as probably the Dean of Lichfield rather than the antiquary of the same name, in 'The Reformed Nowell Codex and the *Beowulf* Manuscript' (unpublished). I am grateful to Prof. Kiernan for sharing an unpublished draft of this piece with me.

⁴ At least some of this interference may have taken place in c. 1563; see Kiernan, 'Reformed Codex'. Approximately two thirds of *St Christopher* has been lost, judging by broadly similar accounts of the narrative, amounting to about one gathering of five leaves: *The Nowell Codex (British Museum Cotton Vitellius A. xv, Second MS)*, ed. K. Malone, EEMF XII (Copenhagen, 1963), p. 12. The extent of loss from *Judith* is unclear, and cases have been made for both very considerable and minimal loss. Mark Griffith gives a full discussion in his edition *Judith*, ed. M. Griffith, Exeter Med. Texts and Stud. (Exeter, 2001), pp. 3–4, following P. Lucas, 'The Place of *Judith* in the *Beowulf* Manuscript', *RES* 41 (1990), 463–78.

⁵ See Lucas, 'The Place of *Judith*' for a full discussion. See also Kiernan *'Beowulf' Manuscript* pp. 150–67 for an argument that *Judith* was not a part of the original codex.

⁶ As it stands, *Judith* begins towards the end of the ninth fitt. If it was not a long text (on which opinions differ; see n. 4 above), it must have been preceded by at least one other piece now completely lost.

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weathering, bookworms, and more intentional human alterations. Protective paper frames have ensured a long life for the manuscript, but have also concealed some marginal readings left visible after fire damage.⁷

This history of damage and reconstruction is perhaps best (though most confusingly) represented by the multiple foliations the manuscript has been subject to. Kevin Kiernan has identified six:⁸

- c.1630, under the Cotton librarian, Richard James;
- 1703, by Matthew Hutton during Humphrey Wanley's corrective committee's work;
- 1793–1801, perhaps by Joseph Planta – this is the foliation Kiernan follows, written on the folios themselves;
- before 1845, pencil numbers in the upper right corners of the paper frames, before Henry Gough rebound the MS in that year;
- 1845–1884, on the lower right hand corners of recto frames, perhaps intended to supplement that of 1845;
- 1884, the final attempt, intended to clarify confusion between the fourth and fifth foliations: this is followed by the British Library.

As a result of this sequence of remaking, virtually every recto page bears a baffling set of numbers, many crossed out or written over. Kiernan's proposed foliation system is sometimes cumbersome, but makes sense: it identifies the 'manuscript foliation' number (Planta's work from between 1793 and 1801), with the British Library's 'official' figure (from 1884) in brackets.⁹ More significant difficulties come with the third and fourth gatherings, where the current order of pages is certainly incorrect. For these instances, Kiernan's system puts the current location in brackets, with where they 'should' be as their main folio number. So folio 107(115) (BL118) is currently the 115th in Cotton Vitellius A. xv; if the gatherings were reordered according to their content it would be 107th; in the British Library system it is 118th. Yet more confusingly, two folios were misplaced when Planta foliated the manuscript. This means that Kiernan's general rule of following the number written on the pages cannot be absolutely followed: under his

⁷ *Electronic 'Beowulf'*, ed. K. Kiernan, 3rd ed. (London, 2011) identifies letters hidden by the protective frames using UV photography.

⁸ I follow Kiernan's detailed account here, *'Beowulf' Manuscript* pp. 91–110.

⁹ It remains essential to include the British Library's foliation because the most widely available and high quality facsimile (used for all images in this paper) is *Cotton MS Vitellius A. xv*, Digitised Manuscripts (London: British Library, online from February 2013, last visited 21/5/14) which uses only these numbers. All images are © The British Library Board, Cotton Vitellius A.xv

system these anomalies are folio 147A(131) (BL149) and 189A(197) (BL192) respectively; there is no folio 131 or 197.¹⁰

So much for the manuscript as it currently stands: neither unreadable nor clear, it could easily be presented as 'corrupt'. However, I want to suggest that despite this evident corruption the manuscript can still tell us a good deal about its texts, their eleventh century meaning, and the kind of readerly engagement its scribes anticipated. The two scribes were careful and sought to communicate with their readers, sometimes in ways that we now struggle to understand and never attempt to represent in our editions of the texts. Ultimately, the corruption of the *Beowulf*-manuscript does not lie in its material fragility but – as evidenced by our failure to find a simple approach to counting its pages – in a kind of intellectual decline: a falling away in scholarly capacity to decode eleventh century signs and what they tell us about the texts we read.

THE SCRIBES' SENSITIVITY TO THEIR TEXTS

According to Neil Ker, the *Beowulf* manuscript was copied sometime between 975 and 1025 at an unknown location. This span can be tightened to somewhere between 1000 and 1025.¹¹ As it now stands, the codex contains five texts, the first three prose and the last two in verse, which are now commonly known as: *The Passion of St Christopher*, *The Wonders of the East*, *Alexander's Letter to Aristotle*, *Beowulf*, and *Judith*.¹² The codex

¹⁰ Kiernan discusses the foliation in full in *Beowulf Manuscript*, pp. 85–109 with a succinct explanation of this numbering system pp. 103–4; Orchard provides a concordance of sorts to the foliation of *Beowulf* alone, see *Companion*, Appendix 1: pp. 268–73. For an overview of foliations of *Wonders of the East* see A., Mittman and S. Kim, *Inconceivable Beasts: The 'Wonders of the East' in the 'Beowulf' Manuscript*, *Med. and Renaissance Texts and Stud.* 433 (Tempe, 2013), p. 38. Where editors do not discuss foliation, they generally follow the 1884 system; I follow Kiernan in labeling this 'BL' rather than 'traditional'.

¹¹ On Ker and the debate over his dates, see F. Leneghan, 'Making Sense of Ker's Dates: The Origins of *Beowulf* and the Palaeographers', *The Proceedings of the Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies Postgraduate Conference 1* (2005), 2–13. It is not useful here to enter into the intense palaeographical controversy over the precise dating of the codex. It is worth noting that David Dumville has compressed this fifty-year span to a shorter period, from approximately 1000–1016 in 'Beowulf come lately: Some Notes on the Palaeography of the Nowell Codex', in *Archiv für das Studium der Neueren Sprachen 225* (1988), 49–63; Kiernan, recently supported by Elaine Treharne, would date it later in Ker's span.

¹² The standard edition of 'St Christopher' is *The Passion of Saint Christopher* ed. P. Pulsiano, in *Early Medieval English Texts and Interpretations: Studies Present to Donald G. Scragg*, ed. E. Treharne and S. Rosser, *Med. and Renaissance Texts and Stud.* 252 (Tempe, 2002). *The Wonders of the East* has been most recently edited by Asa Mittman and Susan Kim in *Inconceivable Beasts*. Elaine Treharne is the only other editor to focus on the Nowell codex version; the latter in her *Old and Middle English c.890-c.1450: An Anthology* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 172–81. For the standard edition of the text, and of *Alexander's Letter*, see A. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the 'Beowulf'-Manuscript* (London, 2003).

was copied by two scribes: Scribe A and Scribe B. The handover between them takes place abruptly and is visually startling, but far from exceptional for the period.¹³ Scribe B writes in the older hand: a form of Square Minuscule influenced by some Caroline forms; Scribe A uses a form of English Vernacular minuscule.¹⁴ Scribe A's hand is more aesthetically admired: Ker sees his writing as 'pointed and delicate' compared with Dumville's assessment of Scribe B's 'crude' formations.¹⁵ However, Scribe B has the older hand, and he appears to 'take over' from Scribe A. On that basis, the general assumption is that Scribe B acted in a senior, possibly supervisory capacity. That he also intervenes in Scribe A's work on *Beowulf* on twelve occasions renders this hypothesis more likely.¹⁶

That these two men both corrected their own work, and that Scribe B corrected his colleague's, suggests that they intended to produce an accurate copy.¹⁷ Modern editors are generally agreed that, however well the scribes reproduced what they saw, their version of *Beowulf* is highly corrupted.¹⁸ It seems likely that at least some of the errors that have been detected resulted from faulty copying into the extant manuscript;¹⁹ on the other hand, where one or other of the scribes has consciously interfered with the text, it seems

Stanley Rypins edited the prose texts together, mostly as a line by line transcription of the manuscript, in *Three Old English Prose Texts in MS Cotton Vitellius A. xv: 'Letter of Alexander the Great' 'Wonders of the East', 'Life of St Christopher'*, ed. S. Rypins, EETS (London, 1924). The standard edition of *Beowulf* is Klaeber's *Beowulf: Fourth Edition*, eds. R. D. Fulk, R. E. Bjork and J. D. Niles (Toronto, 2008).

Kiernan's edition included in *Electronic 'Beowulf'* has a different line numbering system and is a useful, highly conservative reinterpretation. *Judith* has been most recently edited by Mark Griffith (Exeter, 2001). The poetic texts are edited together as *'Beowulf' and 'Judith'*, ed. E. V. K. Dobbie, ASPR IV (New York, 1953). To my knowledge, the texts of the manuscript have only been edited together once, by Robert Fulk for the *Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library* series in a readers' (rather than scholarly) edition: *The 'Beowulf' Manuscript*, ed. & trans. R. D. Fulk, *Dumbarton Oaks Med. Lib.* 3 (London, 2010). Like Rypins' and Orchard's, Fulk's edition prefers the version of *Wonders* in London BL MS Tiberius B. v.

¹³ Orchard, *Companion*, pp. 21–2.

¹⁴ Dumville, 'Some Notes' remains the prime palaeographical comment on the manuscript, though the rigid certainties of his dating system are being called into question.

¹⁵ N. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford, 1957) §216; Dumville, 'Some Notes', p. 50. Compare Malone *Nowell Codex* p. 17.

¹⁶ Fulk *et al*, *Beowulf*, accept eleven of these, not noting 167v.10 (BL170v); I follow Orchard on all twelve; he lists corrections he sees as an appendix to A. Orchard, 'Reading *Beowulf* Now and Then', *Selima* 12 (2003–04), 49–81.

¹⁷ Contrast Orchard who notes that a large number of uncorrected errors remain, *Companion* p.141, n. 120. Kiernan argues that *Beowulf* received special corrective attention, *'Beowulf' Manuscript*, throughout see e.g. pp. 141–2, but the statistics do not fully bear this out.

¹⁸ Orchard gives a useful discussion of editorial emendations *Companion* pp. 42–4.

¹⁹ Michael Lapidge argues that a number of the errors were produced by eleventh century scribes struggling to read an eighth century exemplar, 'The Archetype of *Beowulf*', *ASE* 29 (2000), 5–41.

probable that they are reproducing what they saw (or thought they saw) in their exemplar.²⁰ Nick Doane has argued that scribes are producers in their own right, and that their versions of poetic texts should be respected, if not celebrated.²¹ Similarly, Kiernan argues the principle that 'conservatism... enlarges the field of possibilities within a text'.²² That is, trusting the 'edition' presented by scribes can produce a richer text than flattening out all apparent corruptions.

However, even in Kiernan's 'ultra-conservative' edition, some clear scribal decisions are ignored in favour of traditional emendations. For instance, Scribe B carefully and clearly inserts the word *side* ('broad') on 173v.4 (BL176v), poetic line 1981a, as shown in Figure 1, below. The difficulty is that this gives a rare unalliterating line: *geond hæc side reced hæreðes dohtor*.²³



Figure 1: Scribe B's insertion of *side*, 173v.4

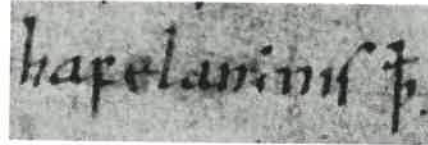


Figure 2: Scribe B's insertion mark after *hafelan*, 160r.17

²⁰ So Kiernan *Beowulf Manuscript* p. 211, but see the discussion below on some difficult instances.

²¹ See for instance on this poem A. Doane, 'Beowulf and Scribal Performance', in *Unlocking the Wordhoard: Studies in Memory of Edward B. Irving Jr.*, eds. M. C. Amodio and K. O'Brien O'Keefe (London, 2003), 62–75.

²² Kiernan, *Beowulf Manuscript*, p. 185.

²³ Citations from *Beowulf* are my transcription from MS Cotton Vitellius A. xv unless otherwise noted; here 173v.3–4 (BL176v): 'through that broad hall, Hæreth's daughter...'. Translations from Old English are my own.

A number of alliterating words are available and used by editors.²⁴ So, that Scribe B returned to this point at a later date in order to make a correction makes it clear that he saw this as the correct reading, and suggests that it is unlikely that he felt able to insert an alliterative word of his own choosing. At another point, this time within Scribe A's stint, at manuscript 160r.17 (BL163r), poetic line 1372a, Scribe B makes an insertion mark without writing the necessary word, as shown in Figure 2, above. This suggests that he was not prepared to make insertions on his own authority,²⁵ showing that he was content to make an unlikely emendation when the exemplar supported it, but not on his own authority. It is extremely likely that the exemplar for *Beowulf* had (or seemed to Scribe B to have) *side* in the first position.²⁶ Following Kiernan's (and Doane's) argument, the scribal emendation should be retained. This would be a rare use of a non-alliterating line;²⁷ it is highly unlikely to have been an 'original' reading, and perhaps entered the manuscript version during a copying by someone less aware of how unusual it is than Scribe B seems to have been.

Scribe B's alterations, then, provide information about the exemplar and the scribes' desire to faithfully reproduce it, even if they do not give acceptable readings. Sometimes, however, the flattening effect of modern editions is much clearer. Scribe A uses \mathfrak{a} , the *ethel* rune, in place of the word *ethel* on three occasions. Damian Fleming has compared the occasions on which he writes the word in full with those on which he uses the rune. In a convincing argument, he has found that the rune is used in those parts of the narrative concerned with Germanic history; perhaps Fleming's most compelling example is when Hrothgar examines the hilt brought from Grendel's Mother's cave. In an argument conceptually parallel to Kiernan's, Fleming suggests that the rune makes 'the manuscript more alive, more real and exciting for those who would read it'.²⁸ This implies that Scribe A was aware of those who would be visually reading his production and valued their engagement with it at least as much as those to whom it would be read aloud.

²⁴ For instance, *heal* is used by Dobbie, *Beowulf*, and by Fulk et al, *Beowulf*; Kiernan, *Electronic Beowulf* uses *here*.

²⁵ Running against Kiernan's suggestion that he had some authorial control over the text *Beowulf Manuscript* pp. 243–70.

²⁶ Doane, 'Scribal Performance' p. 68 argues both that Scribe B was 'attuned to the verse' and that this insertion is not from the exemplar and is wrong; I do not follow his logic.

²⁷ Non-alliterating lines are possible in Old English poetry but are extremely unusual. I am grateful to Richard Dance and Richard North for discussing this point with me.

²⁸ D. Fleming, 'Ethel-weard: The First Scribe of the *Beowulf* MS', *NM* 105 (2004), 177–86, p. 181.

Seeing Scribe A as sensitive to the visual impact of his work does not necessitate an oblivious Scribe B.²⁹ A simple instance is the range of macrons used by the latter. As has been widely noted, Scribe B uses more abbreviations than his colleague.³⁰ With some exceptions, Scribe A uses abbreviations for only *ond* (7), *þæt* (þ), and terminal *m*, mostly after *u* (as *ū*). Scribe B uses a wider range, including a macron above the preceding letter to show both *m* and *e*, usually when the latter follows *g*. What matters here is that he tends to use a tilde shaped macron to show *e* and a straight bar with half-serif-like flicks at either end to show *m*. That is, like Scribe A, he expected that the audience of his work would, at least to some extent, respond to the visual subtleties of his work and be capable of decoding his signs.

MEANING CONVEYED BY CAPITAL FORMS

Where the scribes seem to collaborate in delivering meaning through visual presentation is their use of major or marginal capitals, as shown in Table 1 below. Minor capitals are used by each scribe in very different patterns, suggesting that they may have had some control over when and how to use them.³¹ Scribe A uses minor capital *G* in *Wonders of the East*, *Alexander's Letter*, and *Beowulf*. In each text, he uses the same rounded shape. His marginal capitals, however, vary from text to text. What is left of his marginal capital *G* in *St Christopher* suggests a rounded back with a pointed upper terminal and his *G* in *Beowulf* is angular and uncial. Given the significant differences between other aspects of their hands, it is interesting that Scribe B uses precisely the same shape for marginal *G* in *Beowulf*. Similarly, the scribes seem to have an identical model for marginal *H* when copying *Beowulf*, but Scribe B uses a more decorative version of the same template in *Judith*.

Scribe A copies capital *O* in all four of his texts, although those in *Alexander's Letter* are minor rather than marginal capitals. Following the pattern suggested by his *G*'s, he uses a different form in each text. That used twice in *St Christopher* is a fundamentally

²⁹ Arguments about the skill or engagement of the scribes has generally focused on deciding which one is more competent in different areas; different scholars have come to different conclusions: Rypins and Klegraf find Scribe A more faithful to his exemplar; Klaeber, Hulbert (in 'The Accuracy of the B-Scribe of *Beowulf*', *PMLA* 43 (1928), 1196–99), and Kiernan find Scribe B a more reliable witness. See also Orchard, *Companion*, pp. 23–8.

³⁰ See for instance Malone, *Nowell Codex* pp. 25–6.

³¹ By my count, Scribe A uses 55 minor capitals in 1,939 lines of *Beowulf*, where Scribe B uses 11 in 1,243 lines.

symmetrical calligraphic shape, narrow at the top and wider down each side, with decorative points coming into the centre from each side. That in *Wonders* is similar in basic form, but with a more pointed internal shape and with no decoration. In *Alexander's Letter*, the narrow parts of the letter are off-centre at top and bottom; in *Beowulf*, thin lines are at top and bottom again, but the left side is significantly thicker than the right. Scribe B's only marginal *O* is mostly lost. It clearly narrows towards the base. It looks closer to the *Wonders* shape used by Scribe A, with the right side certainly thicker than that used by Scribe A in *Beowulf*; without a full letter shape, it is not possible to tell which model Scribe B is following.

The point of all of this is to observe that Scribe A changes his capital form based on the text he copies. Within *Beowulf*, he is certainly free to add basic internal decoration, as he does to *D* at 145r.8 (BL147r), 148 r.10 (BL151r), and 152r.18 (BL155r) and to *H* at 135 v.7 (BL137v), 141r.15 (BL143r), and 150r.8 (BL153r). In the only clear comparisons (of *G* and *H*), Scribe B seems to match his capital shape in *Beowulf*. Less certainly, it also seems to be the case that Scribe B adjusts his *H* form when copying different texts. That is, where minor capitals seem to have been deployed at scribal discretion and thus conform to shapes preferred by scribes, 'compulsory' capitals at the start of fitts have an identical appearance.³² That this is the case even when both Scribe A and Scribe B can be seen to use different shapes for capitals elsewhere demonstrates that both placement and formation of some letters was not purely a matter of scribal preference. This cannot have been absolutely the case: *O* provides the clearest instance of Scribe A shifting shape with each text, but Scribe B does not match A's form in his stretch of *Beowulf*. But the variant use of capital forms in their work suggests that both scribes to some extent, and perhaps Scribe A more so, saw the visual shape of their work as relevant to its meaning.

This is less unlikely than it might at first appear. Julia Crick has demonstrated that scribes working on charters in the eleventh century were aware that 'graphic choices...signal a position within the wider literate world'.³³ She regards scribes imitating earlier hands as involved in deliberate 'archaising' and a kind of facsimile making.³⁴ In literary texts, Elaine Treharne has recently argued that archaising is a less useful term than

³² I have argued elsewhere that the use of minor capitals throughout the codex is indicative of scribal interpretation: S. Thomson, 'Capital Indications: How Scribe A thought readers should engage with the Nowell codex', in *Proceedings of the 5th International Conference on Language, Culture and Society in Russian / English Studies, 5th–6th August 2014*, eds. J. Roberts and R. Hawtree (forthcoming).

³³ J. Crick, 'Script and the Sense of the Past in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Anglo-Saxon Traces*, ed. J. Roberts and L. Webster, *Med. and Renaissance Texts and Stud.* 405 (Tempe, 2011), pp. 1–30. See especially p. 6.

³⁴ Crick, 'Sense of the Past' pp. 8 and 3 respectively.

'reliving': she finds scribes to be interested in bringing in 'the aura of the past' rather than attempting to deceive the reader. In her analysis, letter forms in the twelfth century Southwick codex show the scribe 'drawing in features

| Allograph | St Christopher | Wonders of the East | Alexander's Letter | Scribe A Beowulf | Scribe B Beowulf | Judith |
|------------------------|----------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|--------|
| Minor G | | | | | | |
| Marginal G | | | | | | |
| H (minor and marginal) | | | | | | |
| O (minor and marginal) | | | | | | |

Table 1: Some majuscule letterforms in the Nowell codex³⁵

³⁵ Due to a lack of comparable forms, the letterform *H* from the prose texts is minor rather than marginal, as is *O* from *Alexander's Letter*.

from the original as witness' as part of a 'visual appeal to the past'.³⁶ The Nowell codex scribes were certainly not attempting to fool readers into thinking that the manuscript was an old document, but they may well have been adapting major capital forms as a response to their exemplars; in *Beowulf*, this naturally means that they use roughly the same allographs as one another. This subtlety is, of course, lost in modern editions that mostly have to simply decide between upper and lower case, with a degree of flexibility in size and formatting for some editions.³⁷ Given that non-facsimile editions of the codex's texts do not present them together, the relationship between texts and their differing statuses or meanings implied by variant capital forms is also lost.³⁸ Some of the complexities of meaning clearly present to the scribes, and probably present for at least some of their audience, have been lost to us through both our flattened presentation and our diminished capacity to read. This finding is of some significance when considering how the Nowell codex was read, and how the scribes engaged with their exemplars: it makes it more likely (though of course not certain) that the codex was compiled from variant exemplars rather than being a direct copy of an existing collection.

INDICATIONS OF LITERARY ENGAGEMENT

There are some other, less clear, indications of encoding processes at play in the manuscript which our 'corrupted' sensibilities are no longer able to access. One example occurs at manuscript line 164 v.18 (BL167v), poetic line 1587. After killing Grendel's Mother, Beowulf sees his earlier foe lying in her cave and beheds him. The manuscript lines read:

³⁶ E. Treharne, 'Invisible Things in London, British Library Cotton Vitellius A.xv', presented at the International Congress on Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo, 2014. Treharne's paper was delivered after the 2013 Cambridge Colloquium in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic at which this paper was first presented. The Southwick codex (as noted above) is bound together with the Nowell codex, but connections between the two have been generally assumed to have not existed prior to the seventeenth century ordering of Robert Cotton's library, and to be relatively random; Treharne also suggests that reading the two together may be productive.

³⁷ This bears close similarities to an argument made by Derek Updegraff in his paper 'Medieval Layout, Old English Poems, and Visual Lineation: Reassessing the Uses of Aural Verse and Visual Lines in Modern Translation', presented at the International Congress on Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo, 2014.

³⁸ As noted above, pp. 56-7, n. 12, the exception to this rule is Fulk, *Beowulf Manuscript*, although that still includes a different version of *The Wonders of the East* and *The Finnsburg Fragment*, which has no manuscript relation to the Nowell codex.

he him þæs lean for geald reþe cempa
 toðæs. þe he onræste geseah guð perigne
 grendel licgan aldor leasne + spa him ær +
 gescod hild ætheorote...³⁹

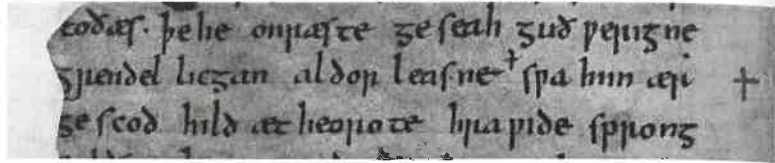


Figure 3: Marginal cross at 164v.18

The cross after *aldorleasne* and that highlighting the position in the margin, shown in Figure 3 above, are in a different colour to that of the main text at this point, though elsewhere Scribe A uses ink similar to this shade and it is not impossible that the marks are his; the general lack of this kind of marginal interaction in his texts makes it more likely to be someone else.⁴⁰ The use of two crosses is relatively frequent in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts to mark a site of omission: in such instances, the larger marginal cross is accompanied by the missing text. However, there does not seem to be any text missing here and no editors have suggested an emendation or addition. There is no indication of additional text written around the marginal cross, although there is a relatively large amount of marginal space still visible here. Zupitza's explanation for the crosses, followed by Kiernan, relates it to the same word (*aldorleasne*) on the first manuscript

³⁹ Both transcript and translation attempt to follow the manuscript lineation:
 'He [Beowulf] repaid him [Grendel], fierce warrior,
 for that when he saw him at rest: weary of war,
 Grendel lay deprived of life * because of what had earlier +
 taken place in battle at Heorot...'

The lines as normally rendered by editors are:

he him þæs lean forgeald,
 reþe cempa, to ðæs þe he onræste geseah
 guðwerigne grendel licgan
 aldorleasne swa him ær gescod
 hild æt Heorote.

⁴⁰ Though Scribe A does appear to show some interest in Grendel's narrative, as I have argued in 'Capital Indications:'.

page of *Beowulf*.⁴¹ The theory is that a reader in the Renaissance found the first occurrence of the word impossible to make out and, having read 71 pages of manuscript, realised that here was the same word again and marked it with crosses without returning to the first *aldorleasne* to clarify it for himself or future readers; this ink shade is also completely unlike that used elsewhere by more probable Renaissance readers such as Laurence Nowell.⁴² It is more likely that a reader (possibly the scribe), engaged with the narrative, marked the moment at which Grendel finally dies, and highlighted it in the margin for future reference. This is another moment in the manuscript where some 'richness', to borrow Kiernan's term, is lost by editing simply the text; in terms of considering Anglo-Saxon readership it is also a reminder that 'what happens to a text is just as interesting, ultimately, as where it came from'.⁴³

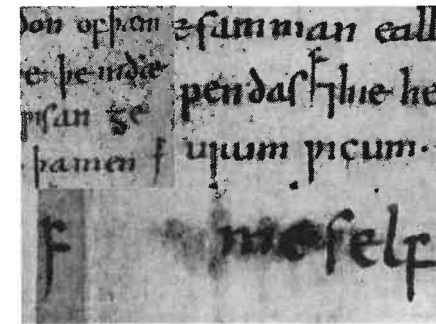


Figure 4: f-like signs in Alexander's Letter

Similarly, at three points in *Alexander's Letter*, shapes like an *f* appear, shown in Figure 4 above. One is placed at the end of a page of text, just to the right of the final

⁴¹ 'Beowulf' *Reproduced in Facsimile from the Unique Manuscript British Museum MS. Cotton Vitellius A. xv*, ed. J. Zupitza, EETS 77 (London, 1882; 2nd ed. 1959), p. 73; Kiernan notes Zupitza's suggestion in *Electronic Beowulf* and confirmed that he agrees with it in personal correspondence 22/1/14.

⁴² Such as Nowell's signature at 91(93)r (BL94r); perhaps his or a contemporary's hand above *egsode* on the first page of *Beowulf*; an Early Modern gloss for most of the text on 99(95) (BL102)v; the last few lines of *Judith* recorded in an Early Modern hand at the foot of 206 (BL209)v; the underlined names which appear regularly throughout the manuscript. Kiernan discusses many of these 'Reformed Codex'.

⁴³ D. Scragg, 'Ælfric's Scribes' in *Essays for Joyce Hill on her Sixtieth Birthday*, ed. Mary Swan (Leeds, 2006): 179–89, 186.

word at 111v.20 (BL122v). Another is on the following verso, in the middle of a line and almost superscript between a word and the succeeding 7 *hie* on 112v.12 (BL123v). The final instance occurs a gathering later, in the far left margin of a manuscript page at 117r.17 (BL112r). It is worth noting that this last sign is barely apparent in Kiernan's facsimile, where it is absolutely clear in the British Library's Digitised Manuscripts edition, because the manuscript was disbound for the latter, so the gutter is fully visible. This difficulty of access makes it more probable that the marks are scribal, although as the most recent binding was not undertaken until 1845 such a conclusion cannot be definitive. This last sign is similar to Scribe A's *f*-shape; the second is much closer to Scribe B's usual allograph; the first is less easy to place but comes closer to Scribe A's form. Each sign might, of course, be scribal or readerly and could date from almost any moment in the manuscript's history. Kiernan sees them as scribal practice letters, showing improvement in form if read in reverse order. But they bear no similarity to the placement or form of certain pen trials elsewhere in the manuscript and two are not particularly close to an occurrence of *f*.⁴⁴ That coming mid-line surely cannot be a rehearsal. Jim Hall suggested to me that they could be 'scriptorium directions' of some manner;⁴⁵ given the variable placement, and confinement to these three sites in *Alexander's Letter* this seems unlikely. As he agrees with me that they are probably not all the work of the same hand, this reading becomes less probable.

I do not yet have a convincing explanation for these signs and there is not space here for a full discussion: briefly, given their infrequency and inconsistent placement I find them extremely unlikely to be mechanically related to, for instance, the length of a scribal stint; given their clarity and that all three seem to show the same letter, they are not likely to be random. When written, they were written with a purpose; it may be that this purpose is now utterly irrecoverable. It is, though, at the very least interesting that they all occur in parts of *Alexander's Letter* that can be connected with passages in *Beowulf*. Orchard makes a convincing argument that this Old English translation of the *Epistola Alexandri* was made with close reference to the phrasing employed in *Beowulf*.⁴⁶ The first two *f* shapes occur in §16 of the text.⁴⁷ §16 is mostly concerned with the discovery of a

⁴⁴ Pen trials can be found at, for instance, the foot of 183r (BL186r). Kiernan suggested this possibility to me per. corr. 22/1/14.

⁴⁵ Per. corr. 12/1/14.

⁴⁶ In Orchard *Companion*, pp. 25–39.

⁴⁷ Sectional divisions used here are those in Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*. Fulk, *Beowulf Manuscript* prints the text without sectional divisions, with sentences numbered; by his system, the first *f*-shape is at 91 p. 50 and the second at 100 p. 52.

freshwater lake where the desperate thirst of Alexander and his army could be slaked; Orchard notes the 'general resemblance' of this scene to the monster-mere in *Beowulf*.⁴⁸ It is also one of several passages adjusted from the Latin source in order, Orchard argues, to depict Alexander 'in more selfish terms'.⁴⁹ The strongest reading, then, is that the scribe or a reader was interested in these correspondences and marked them out: the only argument against this is that other passages have much stronger correspondences with *Beowulf* and receive no marking. The first occurs mid-sentence but at the end of a line and the end of a manuscript page, suggesting that whoever wrote it (probably Scribe A) may have seen it as marking the conclusion of a section, with *þa men* perhaps starting a new section, Orchard's §16. The second takes place shortly afterwards and is more disruptive: it comes mid-sentence, mid-manuscript-line, and mid-manuscript-page. It may not be coincidental that this is the least likely to be written by Scribe A: perhaps Scribe B or another reader wished to follow up on the scribe's note with an insertion of his own.

The third apparent annotation comes during Alexander's entrance into a rival king's camp, in §24 of the text.⁵⁰ Alexander disguises himself as a deserter and manages to see King Porus on the pretext of having information to disclose about the enemy on the eve of battle. Thinking the whole event a great joke, Alexander claims himself to be:

forealdod...þæs eald...þæt he ne mihte elcor gewearnigan buton æt fyr
ond æt gledum.

As a result, Porus exults in his inevitable victory, saying:

Hu mæg he la ænige gewinne wið me spowan swa forealdod mon,
forþon ic eom me self geong ond hwæt?⁵¹

The marginal *f*-shape occurs in the middle of this exchange, to the left of *me self*. Orchard does not discuss this passage, but the discourse of young and old rulers is broadly parallel to that sustained throughout *Beowulf*, from its opening consideration of Scyld Scefing and his son Beow (called *Beowulf* in the manuscript) to the implicit contrast of Hrothgar and

⁴⁸ Orchard, *Companion* p. 34.

⁴⁹ The Old English version stresses Alexander slaking his own thirst before that of his men and beasts. See Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* pp. 137–8.

⁵⁰ Fulk, *Beowulf Manuscript* 161 p.60.

⁵¹ Text and translation from Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies* §24 pp. 240–1: 'aged...so old...that he cannot keep himself warm except at the fire and coals.'; 'How can he have any success in battle against me when he is such an extremely old man and I myself am young and fit?'

Beowulf, and on to the final contrasts between Beowulf and Wiglaf, and indeed between Beowulf's own youth and age.⁵² This scene of intrusion into an opponent's camp also corresponds with the same idea in other texts of the codex: *St Christopher*, *Wonders*, *Beowulf*, and *Judith* all offer instances of a heroic (or at least sympathetic in the case of 'Wonders') figure entering another's home with hostile intent.

OBSCURE VISUAL DETAILS

Two final indications, both again from Scribe A's stint, are suggestive of an awareness of the purely visual properties of his work, engaging just with the reader rather than the literary qualities of the text. The first occurs at manuscript line 149v.1 (BL152v), poetic line 896a, shown in Figure 5 below. As noted above, Scribe A uses few abbreviations. Where he uses a macron, it is always above a vowel, usually *u*, to indicate terminal *-m*; it is usually (but not exclusively) used towards the end of manuscript lines where he may have felt some pressure of space. Utterly exceptional is the abbreviation here, with: *bær* on *bear̄ scipes*.⁵³

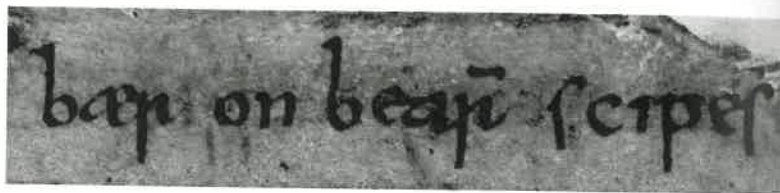


Figure 5: Possible visual pun at 149v.1

There is no apparent reason for this anomalous use at this point: it is interesting that it results in a form of visual pun. It is perhaps possible that the *n* was missed off, and the macron added at a proof-reading stage,⁵⁴ but there are numerous instances of correction by insertion (even at the end of the word), and no others of this use of punctuation. No reader has identified him as using corrective macrons or other abbreviations elsewhere, even

⁵² Youth and age are explicitly used as a contrastive (or all-encompassing) pair in, for instance, *Beowulf* lines 72 and 853–4a. It is also used (along with other doublets) in *Judith* at line 166.

⁵³ 'carried into the bosom of the ship'.

⁵⁴ As suggested to me by Jim Hall, pers corr 12/1/14.

when they might be appropriate.⁵⁵ He would be making an unusual, almost risky, choice here if he expected a reader to be able to read this mark with no difficulty. It is most likely – but, again, unprovable – that the scribe, visually sensitive as he seems to have been, was briefly engaged by the similarity of the two words, and used the abbreviating bar to leave a visual pun of sorts for his reader(s).

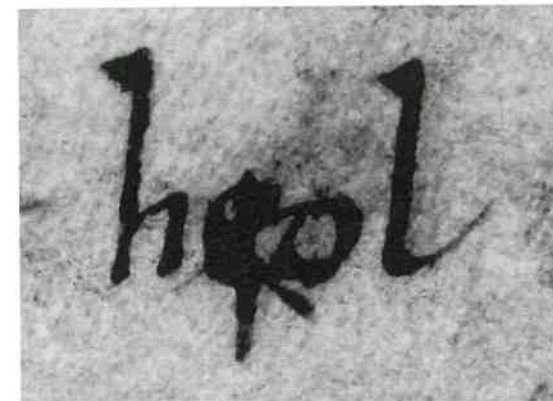


Figure 6: Possible runic mark behind *heol* 157r.10

Similarly unprovable but suggestive is an angular shape behind the *e* of *heol* at manuscript line 157r.10 (BL160r), poetic line 1229b, shown in Figure 6 above. It has been suggested that this was one of two instances of metathesis committed by Scribe A, and that he intended to write *hleō*.⁵⁶ Having placed the *l* at the end, he drew a line through the *e* to indicate the correct reading. This does not seem likely. The one known instance of metathesis is that of *wlonc* at manuscript line 137r.14 (BL139r), poetic line 331b. The original letters were erased and the correct form written; it is not even certain that he

⁵⁵ The most comprehensive published survey of scribal corrections is as an appendix to Orchard, 'Reading *Beowulf*', though I would add eighteen instances to his list for *Beowulf* and he does not consider those in *Judith* or in the prose texts. Corrections to the prose texts are discussed by Rypins *Prose Texts* and Malone, *Nowell Codex*; I would add twenty-two instances to those identified by Rypins. Kiernan discusses corrections in the manuscript *Beowulf Manuscript* pp. 191–218 and provides important images of many that he identifies in *Electronic Beowulf*. I shared a full list of the corrections I see in the codex at 'Mistakes made, unmade, and remade: a millennium of making the Nowell codex' in 'Un/making mistakes in medieval media' at the International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo 2014.

⁵⁶ Zupitza, *Facsimile* p. 58; Kiernan, *Electronic Beowulf*.

originally wrote *woncl*.⁵⁷ This is far closer to his usual approach to corrections and, indeed, is much clearer. Most editors, at any rate, do not accept *hleō* as the correct reading and use *hold*. More simply, it has also been suggested that he intended to strike out the *e*, leaving *hol*.⁵⁸ This would at least be partially analogous to the use of a horizontal straight line to cancel the dittographic second writing of *hlaforð* at manuscript line 135v.15 (BL137v). However, as discussed above, if Scribe A did elect at this moment to use a coding system unlike that deployed elsewhere then he was either very open to risk or not very good at his job. The extreme close-ups enabled by the latest digital edition of the manuscript are not absolutely conclusive, but seem to show that the *e* is written above the line rather than the other way around.⁵⁹ It is also absolutely clear that the scribe has not simply drawn a straight line. The line behind *e* has a strong secondary line coming out just below its centre, and projecting down to the right at about 115 degrees from vertical. Less certainly, there may be a line to the other side, at the same angle to the left of the main stroke. It seems likely that the scribe started to write something, then changed his mind and (incorrectly) wrote *heol*.

Such a shape would not be parallel to any of Scribe A's letter forms, even at a half-written stage. It has elsewhere been suggested that the scribes struggled to read their exemplar at points,⁶⁰ and, further, that where they did not understand it they sought to represent it as faithfully as possible.⁶¹ Given that *heol* is not accepted by editors, it is possible that Scribe A was simply struggling to copy what he saw, and resolved the shape he had begun to transcribe into an *e*. However, given the angles used, and his use of the ethel rune, noted above, it is also feasible that he began to write a rune here, but changed his mind and wrote a word instead. An incomplete runic shape behind an incorrect word is impossible to decipher. If it is runic, it is obscure: it may perhaps have been intended as *ƿ* (*rad*), *ᵛ* (*kalc*), *ᵝ* (*myd*), *ᵞ* (*lagu*), or *ᵟ* (*cen*), or possibly another incomplete *ᵠ* (*ethel*).⁶² Following Fleming's reading of the uses of *ᵠ* (*ethel*) discussed above, this could be an

⁵⁷ Based on his use of UV photography, Kiernan, *Electronic Beowulf*, suggests that the erased word was *oled*; Cf. Orchard, 'Reading *Beowulf*', p. 70.

⁵⁸ Orchard, 'Reading *Beowulf*', p. 70.

⁵⁹ Jim Hall is not convinced that the line passes behind *e* and thinks it may be above it, per corr 12/1/14.

⁶⁰ Lapidge, 'Archetype'.

⁶¹ See for example Neidorf, 'Scribal Errors', p. 255, pp. 265–6 and notes.

⁶² Kiernan has identified what could be read as another rune above the first line of *Beowulf* on 129r (BL132r). It looks like *ᵛ* (*eoh*), but I am inclined to agree with Dr Hall that it is more likely to be relatively random cuts in the manuscript that happen to form a runic shape; Kiernan does not note this in *Electronic Manuscripts* and presumably also sees it as a coincidence. I am grateful to Dr Hall and Professor Roberts for discussing this mark with me.

appropriate site for a rune as it concludes Wealhtheow's celebration of the unity of Heorot.⁶³

CONCLUSION

It would, of course, be excessive to claim that these loci of visual interest in the manuscript demand a complete revision of our understanding of *Beowulf*, its manuscript, or its scribes. But collectively they do point to the relative visual complexity of the manuscript, generally ignored in modern editions and critical readings of its texts. In turn, this sophistication matters because it is indicative of an environment of production and reception where this visual complexity was relatively widely recognised: the variation in majuscule shapes, for instance, is useful evidence that the codex was based on more than one exemplar; more significantly, the apparent attempt to preserve this variation indicates that the scribes and their anticipated readers could 'read' this variation. Further, it perhaps makes it more likely that the relationship between the Nowell codex and its exemplars was of contemporary interest. Similarly, that there are several different forms of visual expectation from Scribe A in the codex bolsters arguments made by Crick and others that the readers of vernacular manuscripts in the late Anglo-Saxon period were engaging with texts in a complex way: finding themselves connected with both a historical matrix of textual production; extra-linguistic meanings through signs such as runes; the narrative of figures such as Grendel; and interested in the intertextual relationships presented by a codex. This in turn has implications for the meaning of *Beowulf* for the community who copied it into the codex.

Eleventh century scribes increasingly appear to have been sophisticated representatives of their texts, capable of considering both source and reader. More work on literary and non-literary manuscripts may further develop our understanding in this regard. The *Beowulf* manuscript is damaged: corrupted by the ravages of time and some poorly thought through interactions. But however much has been lost to such damage, more may well have been lost by the corruption of our capacity to engage with the subtleties and sophistication of manuscript presentation.

⁶³ At poetic lines 1226b–31b; the rune occurs in line 1229b.

A Second Witness to the Welsh Material in Harley 3859

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London, British Library, Harley 3859 is arguably the most important manuscript for the study of early Welsh history. Between folios 174v and 198r, the manuscript contains the best surviving text of the *Historia Brittonum*, the earliest surviving Welsh chronicle and the earliest extant collection of Welsh genealogies, known as the 'Harleian genealogies'. It is universally agreed that these texts, as a group, derive from a collection finalised in St David's, in south-west Wales, in the mid-tenth century.¹

The purpose of this paper is to explore the possibility that a second witness to the mid-tenth-century St David's compilation of historical texts was available to a Welsh scholar working in the second half of the twelfth century, possibly in Deheubarth in 1171. I argue that a genealogical tract preserved in a number of late medieval Welsh manuscripts was produced at this time, and that this tract contains material cognate with the Harleian genealogies, and may once have been accompanied by a text akin to the Harleian chronicle (known usually as the 'A-text of the *Annales Cambriae*'). A careful delineation of the relationship between the later genealogical tract and the texts in the Harley manuscript can, moreover, indicate instances where the Harleian texts, which are usually considered to be the most reliable, are defective.

I begin by asking what can be known of the Harley manuscript itself. It is agreed that the manuscript was written around the year 1100, probably somewhere in south-eastern England.² That the manuscript was not written much later than this is suggested by its employment of single rather than double columns, almost all of which are ruled in hard point rather than plummet.³ The first part of the manuscript, which contains a text of Vegetius's *Epitome rei militaris*, was most probably written before 1125, because Oxford, Lincoln College, Latin 100, which takes its Vegetius from Harley 3859, had seemingly been written for William of Malmesbury by that date.⁴

¹ See, for example, T. M. Charles-Edwards, *Wales and the Britons 350–1064* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 359–64.

² D. N. Dumville, *Annales Cambriae, A.D. 682–954: Texts A–C in Parallel* (Cambridge, 2002), p. vii; M. Reeve, 'The Transmission of Vegetius's *Epitoma rei militaris*', *Ævum* 74 (2000), 243–354, at p. 319.

³ H. McKee, 'St. Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury: Book-Production in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of Cambridge, 1997), pp. 234–5.

⁴ Reeve, 'The Transmission', p. 319; R. M. Thomson, *William of Malmesbury*, rev. ed. (Woodbridge, 2003), p. 86.

With regard to provenance, it was once thought that Harley 3859 could have come from St Peter's, Ghent, because Frank Granger, the editor of Vitruvius, had suggested that the *Blandinianus* (i.e. Mons Blandinius, Ghent) to which the corrector of the Vitruvius in San Lorenzo de El Escorial, El Escorial O II 5 refers in the late fifteenth century should be equated with Harley 3859.⁵ Michael Reeve, however, has proved this to be impossible; Harley 3859 was in Italy from the fourteenth century at latest and, contrary to the opinion of Granger, the annotator of Escorial O II 5 is not identical with any of the three annotators of Harley 3859.⁶

A different place of origin might be indicated by the textual traditions of two other texts found in the manuscript.⁷ The first and last texts of Harley 3859 are Vegetius's *Epitome rei militaris* and Vitruvius's *De architectura* respectively. It has been independently demonstrated that both of these texts derive from two of the three manuscripts now bound together as London, British Library, Cotton Cleopatra D. i.⁸ The two parts of the latter that contain Vitruvius and Vegetius were certainly in St Augustine's by the final decade of the fifteenth century, since they are listed in a contemporary library catalogue.⁹ They may have both been there by the mid-twelfth century, if Michael Gullick is correct to identify their coloured initials as the product of the St Augustine's scriptorium

⁵ F. Granger, *Vitruvius: on Architecture. Edited from the Harleian Manuscript 2767 and translated into English*, 2 vols. (London, 1934), I, xxi–xxiv.

⁶ M. D. Reeve, 'Two Manuscripts at the Escorial', in *Actas del VIII Congreso Español de Estudios Clásicos*, 3 vols. (Madrid, 1994), II, 829–39. For Harley 3859 in Italy, see too R. A. Kaster, *Studies on the Text of Macrobius' 'Saturnalia'* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 91–2; Reeve, 'The Transmission', p. 320; C. E. Wright, *Fontes Harleiani: a Study of the Sources of the Harleian Collection of Manuscripts preserved in the Department of Manuscripts at the British Museum* (London, 1972), pp. 242 and 436.

⁷ For the texts contained in the manuscript, see H. Gneuss, *Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: a List of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments written or owned in England up to 1100* (Tempe, 2001), p. 77, no. 439; R. Gameson, *The Manuscripts of Early Norman England (c.1066–1130)* (Oxford, 1999), p. 108, no. 450; The British Museum, *A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum: with Indexes of Persons, Places and Matters*, 4 vols. (London, 1808–12), II.iv, 939.

⁸ Reeve, 'The Transmission', p. 319; S. F. Weiskittel and L. D. Reynolds, 'Vitruvius', in *Texts and Transmission: a Survey of the Latin Classics*, ed. L. D. Reynolds (Oxford, 1983), pp. 440–5, at p. 443. For Cotton Cleopatra D. i, see Gneuss, *Handlist*, p. 63; R. Gameson, 'English Manuscript Art in the Late Eleventh Century: Canterbury and its Context', in *Canterbury and the Norman Conquest: Churches, Saints and Scholars, 1066–1109*, ed. R. Eagles and R. Sharpe (London, 1995), pp. 95–144, at p. 124, n. 102. The breakdown of the three manuscripts bound together as Cotton Cleopatra D. i is as follows: fols. 1–82: Vitruvius; fols. 83–128: Vegetius; fols. 129–98: Solinus. Gneuss highlights the possibility that the part of the manuscript containing Vegetius may have been in England before c. 1100.

⁹ M. R. James, *The Ancient Libraries of Canterbury and Dover* (Cambridge, 1903), pp. 320 and 519. The catalogue was written between 1491 and 1497 and is preserved in Dublin, Trinity College Dublin 360: cf. Reeve, 'The Transmission', p. 319, n. 137.

at this time.¹⁰ Moreover, the copy of Solinus found in the third part of Cotton Cleopatra D. i may have been produced in St Augustine's in the early twelfth century, as suggested by the embellished initial on 130r written in the distinctive bunting style.¹¹ The Vitruvius and Vegetius of Cotton Cleopatra D. i were written by different continental hands probably in the tenth and early eleventh centuries respectively, but they must have been brought together by the early twelfth century in order to form the exemplar of Harley 3859.¹² Given both their eventual association with the Solinus and their presence in St Augustine's by the fifteenth century at latest, it seems likely that Harley 3859 was copied from them in St Augustine's, Canterbury. This scenario is supported by the textual tradition of Harley 3859's *Inuectiua in Ciceronem*, which similarly indicates that its exemplar probably originated in south-eastern England or northern France.¹³

¹⁰ Michael Gullick quoted in Reeve, 'The Transmission', p. 319, n. 138.

¹¹ Gameson, 'English Manuscript Art', pp. 123–4.

¹² David Ganz and David Dumville agree in designating the hand of the Vegetius of Cotton Cleopatra D. i as a German hand of the early eleventh century, as reported in Reeve, 'The Transmission', p. 319, n. 136. The same footnote mentions that Michael Gullick regards the hand of the Vitruvius of Cotton Cleopatra D. i as the product of a continental scribe of the tenth century. Bishop noted that the scribe of the Vitruvius uses the abbreviation '—' for *est*, an abbreviation employed at Fleury in the tenth and eleventh centuries: T. A. M. Bishop, *English Caroline Minuscule* (Oxford, 1971), p. xii, n. 2. Other writers advocate different dates and places for these two parts of the manuscript. Helen McKee suggests North Germany in the tenth century; Richard Gameson more vaguely prefers the continent in the late ninth or tenth century; while Helmut Gneuss favours the first half of the eleventh century: McKee, 'St. Augustine's Abbey', p. 296; Gameson, 'English Manuscript Art', p. 124, n. 102; Gneuss, *Handlist*, p. 63.

¹³ Harley 3859's copy of *Inuectiua in Ciceronem* belongs to subgroup χ of the manuscript tradition of that text, which consists of four manuscripts of English or French provenance, the oldest of which is Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, Adv. 18.7.8, a manuscript from Thorney Abbey produced around the same time as Harley 3859: A. A. Novokhatko, *The Inuectives of Sallust and Cicero: Critical Edition with Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Berlin and New York, 2009), pp. 65–75; cf. the stemma on p. 29. This supersedes the stemma in L. D. Reynolds, 'Appendix Sallustiana', in *Texts and Transmission*, pp. 349–52, at p. 350.

| Text | Scribe | Foliation | Quires | Quire Numbers? | Lines p/p | Ruling Medium | Rubrication |
|---|--------------------|-----------|---|----------------|-----------|---------------|---------------|
| Vegetius, <i>Epitome rei militaris</i> | A | 1–38 | I–III ¹² , IV ² | No | 42 | Drypoint | Red/green |
| Computistica | B | 39–41 | V ² (2 cancelled), VI ² | No | N/A | Drypoint | N/A |
| ¹⁴ Macrobius, <i>Saturnalia</i> , books 1–6 | A ₁ (?) | 42–146a | VII–XV ² | No | 38 | Drypoint | Red/green |
| Macrobius, <i>Saturnalia</i> , book 7 | A | 147–168 | XVI ¹² , XVII ¹⁰ | No | 39 | Drypoint | Red/green |
| Sallust (attrib.), <i>Inuectiua in Ciceronem</i> | C | 169–173 | XVIII ⁶ (6 cancelled) | No | 27 | Drypoint | Red |
| <i>Historia Brittonum</i> , interpolated with <i>Annales Cambriae</i> and the Harleian genealogies | D | 174–198 | XIX ¹² , XX ¹⁰ , XXI ⁶ (4–6 cancelled) | No | 39 | Drypoint | Red (incomp.) |
| Augustine, <i>De diversisibus haeresibus</i> | A | 199–204 | XXII ⁸ (3 and 5 cancelled) | No | 42 | Plummet | Green/Red |
| Solinus, <i>Collectanea rerum memorabilium</i> , appended with Ovid (attrib.), <i>Cantus avium</i> , and <i>Quadrupedum</i> | A | 205–252 | XXIII–XXVIII ⁸ | No | 42 | Drypoint | Red/green |
| Aethicus Ister (Virgil of Salzburg), <i>Cosmographia</i> | E | 253–285 | XXIX–XXX ¹⁰ , XXXI ¹⁴ (2 cancelled) | No | 41–2 | Drypoint | Red/green |
| Vitruvius, <i>De architectura</i> | A | 286–365 | XXXII–XXXVII ¹² , XXXVIII ⁸ | Yes | 42 | Drypoint | Red/green |

Figure 1: The Contents of London, British Library, Harley 3859

¹⁴ The seventh book of Macrobius's *Saturnalia* has been separated from the other six books in the table because several blank folios at the end of quire 15 intervene between book 6, which ends part way through quire 15, and book 7, which begins at the beginning of quire 16. The text of book 6 ends seven lines down 146v, the rest of which is left blank. The following three folios, which finish quire 15, have also been left blank; the first two of these blank folios carry no folio numbers while the third is labelled 146a. Book 7 then begins at the beginning of quire 16, at the top of 147r. Both of book 7's quires are ruled for 39 lines, unlike the quires containing the first six books which are ruled for 38 lines. The description of the manuscript in the British Library online catalogue claims that there is a change of scribe at this point; I am unable to confirm or deny this with certainty. There is little to distinguish the hands of either quires 7–15 or of quire 16 from the manuscript's main hand, as seen, for example, in the Vegetius. The only observable difference is the size of the letters; in quire 16, as in the Vegetius, the letters usually fill about a third of the space between two ruled lines, whereas in quires 7–15 the letters fill about half of the space. This might indeed indicate that a separate but very similar hand wrote quires 7–15, though it might just be the same scribe writing a larger script.

The quiring of the manuscript and the apportionment of the texts between its scribes present some complexities. Harley 3859 appears to be the product of a collaborative effort coordinated only in the loosest sense. The texts of the manuscript are all written on holograph quires, each of which displays certain idiosyncratic features in its production. As may be seen from fig. 1, there is rarely complete agreement between the quires of one text and the quires of another with regard to matters such as the number of folios per quire, quire numbering, ruling and rubrication. Even the quires that I have attributed to the main hand, scribe A, differ between texts; for example, scribe A uses quire numbers only for Vitruvius, whilst he only rules in plummet for Augustine.¹⁵ Nevertheless, there are certain aspects of the manuscript suggesting that its components were deliberately written for eventual assembly in a compendium such as the one now extant. The scribes all wrote a roughly contemporary Caroline script.¹⁶ Michael Gullick has suggested that scribe A was of continental origin, as many of the scribes resident at St Augustine's undoubtedly were after the influx of Norman monks in 1089.¹⁷ Scribe C wrote a similar script with more carefully spaced letters, while scribe E tended to exaggerate the feet of his minims; each of these practices agrees with the Anglo-Caroline script of the late eleventh century.¹⁸ The script of scribe D, who wrote the Welsh texts, is the most distinct, especially with regard to his formation of the letter *g*, executed in a typically Anglo-Caroline way.¹⁹ The work of all of these scribes is united by their insistence on keeping their texts on discrete quires. All of the texts are followed by blank spaces, which sometimes extend to multiple folios if

¹⁵ It is possible that my 'scribe A' in fact represents more than one scribe; but, if so, their hands are close enough to render it likely that they were trained in the same scriptorium.

¹⁶ David Dumville calls the manuscript a 'palaeographical unity': D. N. Dumville, review of Kathleen Hughes, 'The Welsh Latin Chronicles', *Studia Celtica* 12/13 (1977/8), 461–7, at p. 461.

¹⁷ Michael Gullick's opinion is quoted in Reeve, 'The Transmission', p. 319, n. 141. For a plate showing the work of scribe A, see Reeve, 'Two Manuscripts', p. 839 [15v]. For the influx of Norman monks into St Augustine's in 1089, see McKee, 'St. Augustine's Abbey', pp. 183–4.

¹⁸ Cf. N. R. Ker, *English Manuscripts in the Century after the Norman Conquest* (Oxford, 1960), pp. 22–3.

¹⁹ Noël Denholm-Young compared scribe D with the hand of a manuscript produced in Flanders between 1101 and 1106, an autograph copy of the chronicle of Sigebert of Gembloux. An example of the latter can be seen in plate XXIV (not plate XXVI, as Denholm-Young states), opposite p. 201 in E. H. J. Reusens, *Éléments de paléographie* (Louvain, 1899). See N. Denholm-Young, *Handwriting in England and Wales* (Cardiff, 1964), p. 41. For plates showing the work of scribe D, see J. Gwenogvryn Evans, *Facsimile and Text of the Book of Aneirin* (Pwllheli, 1908), pl. facing p. vi [188v]; John Morris-Jones, 'Taliesin', *Y Cymmrodor* 28 (1918), *passim*. (pl. facing the title page [188v]); John Williams ab Ithel, *Annales Cambriae* (London, 1860), pl. facing the title page [192r]; P. C. Bartrum, *Early Welsh Genealogical Tracts [= EWGT]* (Cardiff, 1966), plate facing p. 9 [194r]. Other images showing the work of scribe D may be found on the British Library's online catalogue of illuminated manuscripts: <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=6581&CollID=8&NStart=3859> (viewed 21 May, 2014).

the text in question had not been finished at the end of the quire. Moreover, there is a tendency for shorter quires to be used for the final portions of each text, so as to avoid excessive blank space following the end of the text. Thus, Vegetius is written mostly on three quires of six bifolia and then finished on a single bifolium, Macrobius is written mostly on ten quires of six bifolia and then finished on a quire of five bifolia, and so on. Each of the texts was evidently intended in the first instance to occupy a discrete booklet. Considering that more than one of these booklets were seemingly written by the same scribe, they were perhaps always intended to be bound into the same volume. That they did not exist as individual booklets for any great length of time is suggested by the lack of noticeable soiling on the first leaves of any of the quires. The codicological differences between the quires might then be explained as the product of the texts having been copied and then eventually bound together over the course of a number of years, perhaps a lifetime. Most importantly in the present context, the probability that the texts were bound together not long after their production helps to associate the writing of the quires containing the Welsh texts with the quires tentatively linked with St Augustine's.

A St Augustine's provenance for Harley 3859 would have interesting implications for the transmission of the Welsh texts contained within it. Recent work undertaken by Christine Voth on the development of script in St Augustine's in the tenth century suggests that manuscripts imported from the Brittonic-speaking world could have exerted a significant influence on the development of Style II English Caroline minuscule.²⁰ Voth points out that many of the nineteen manuscripts known to have been copied at St Augustine's between 930 and 960 show Insular and late Celtic abbreviations, and at least two were certainly copied from Welsh exemplars. One may compare the late-ninth- or early-tenth-century Welsh copy of Martianus Capella's *De nuptiis*, contained in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 153, which had travelled to St Augustine's by c. 930.²¹

²⁰ C. Voth, 'Irish Pilgrims, Welsh Manuscripts and Anglo-Saxon Monasteries: Was Script Change in Tenth-Century England a Legacy of the Celtic World?' in *Insular Cultures: Textual and Material Connections in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. M. Clayton, A. Jorgensen and J. Mullins (forthcoming); cf. McKee, 'St. Augustine's Abbey', pp. 67–72 and 244–6. Many thanks to Christine Voth for sharing her work with me prior to its publication.

²¹ For the dates see D. N. Dumville, 'English Square Minuscule Script: the Mid-Century Phases', *ASE* 23 (1994), 133–64, at pp. 136–43 (esp. p. 140, n. 37); H. McKee, *The Cambridge Juvencus Manuscript Glossed in Latin, Old Welsh and Old Irish. Text and Commentary* (Aberystwyth, 2000), p. 5, n. 22; S. E. Zeiser, 'Latinity, Manuscripts, and the Rhetoric of Conquest in Late-Eleventh-Century Wales' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Harvard Univ., 2012), p. 66. For the manuscript in general, see T. A. M. Bishop, 'The Corpus Martianus Capella', *Trans. of the Cambridge Bibliographical Soc.* 4 (1964–8), 257–75, at pp. 262–5. In 1912 it was proposed by Montague Rhodes James that this manuscript was produced in St David's on the

These links between St Augustine's and Welsh *scriptoria* in the middle of the tenth century might indicate a possible line of transmission through which the mid-tenth-century collection of historical texts from St David's came to be incorporated into a St Augustine's manuscript. Such an early removal from Wales would help to explain why the mid-tenth-century orthography of Harley 3859's Welsh texts appears to have been preserved intact.

So much for Harley 3859; what of the twelfth-century tract mentioned above? This tract is preserved as part of a genealogical compilation extant in a number of fifteenth- to eighteenth-century manuscripts. Most parts of this compilation have been edited and published by Peter Bartrum.²² These editions, however, are highly problematic.²³ Bartrum's arrangement and division of the various parts of the compilation obscure the textual boundaries suggested by a comparison between the manuscripts themselves. Although some of the sections of the text are ordered differently in different witnesses, the sections themselves are both thematically and chronologically consistent and internally ordered in an intelligent manner. Such identifiable sections are often divided by the textual boundaries imposed by Bartrum's editions. One such section is the tract presently under consideration. The tract is edited by Bartrum as part of the text which he labels *Achau Brenhinoedd a Thywysogion Cymru*, and appears as sections 10 to 27 of Bartrum's edition.²⁴ Bartrum's label is, however, misleading, because the sections of text grouped together in this way never formed a discrete unit in the manuscript tradition. I thus prefer to call the particular section of text here under consideration *Bonedd Gwehelaethau Cymru* [= *BGC*], using a title found in two of its witnesses.²⁵

basis that it might have been donated to Archbishop Matthew Parker by Bishop Richard Davies of St David's, with whom Parker was in correspondence. However, since the manuscript was at St Augustine's already by the 930s, this is impossible. M. R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1912), p. 346.

²² P. C. Bartrum, 'Bonedd y Arwyr', *BBCS* 18 (1959), 229–52, at pp. 229–32; *idem*, 'Achau Brenhinoedd a Thywysogion Cymru', *BBCS* 19 (1961), 201–25, at pp. 201–5; *idem*, 'Hen Lwythau Gwynedd a'r Mars', *National Lib. of Wales Jnl.* 12 (1962), 201–35, at pp. 213–22. These editions were reprinted, with corrections but fewer notes, in *EWGT* 75–120.

²³ Some of the problems with the editions are noted in P. K. Ford, review of *EWGT*, *Speculum* 44 (1969), 440–2, at p. 441 and in D. E. Thornton, 'Power, Politics and Status: Aspects of Genealogy in Medieval Ireland and Wales', (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of Cambridge, 1991), pp. 202–8.

²⁴ *EWGT* 103–9. References to the tract are to Bartrum's editions of *Achau Brenhinoedd a Thywysogion Cymru* [= *ABT*], and thus appear in the form '*ABT* §§10–27'. For Bartrum's editions, see above, n. 22.

²⁵ The rubric *Llyma Vonedd Gwehelaethe Kymrv* appears in Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales [= NLW], Peniarth 131, part 2, p. 25, written by Ieuan ap Madog ap Rhys in 1544/5, while the rubric *Yma y treuhir am wehedyddion Kymru* appears in Cardiff, Cardiff Central Library 3.77, p. 69, written by John Jones of Gellilyfdy in 1640. A similar appellation is given in Aberystwyth, NLW, Peniarth 177, p. 216,

The dating of *BGC* may be adduced from the evidence for the period in which the protagonists of its pedigrees were active. A summary of the evidence is provided in fig. 2 below. It is clear that almost all of the people concerned were Welsh rulers active during the lifetime of the figure at the head of the first pedigree, the Lord Rhys, who ruled Deheubarth until his death in 1197. The exception to the latter is Morgan ap Hywel of Caerleon, who flourished in the first half of thirteenth century. Since Morgan's father and grandfather were contemporaries of the Lord Rhys, it is conceivable that Morgan could have been added to the pedigree at a time later than its original composition. A motivation for such an addition is suggested by a note accompanying Morgan's pedigree, which states that Morgan's mother was Gweurfyl ferch Owain Cyfeiliog. This relationship has important implications that should be considered in light of the manuscript contexts of extant copies of *BGC*. In all extant manuscript copies, *BGC* is accompanied by genealogical material probably composed in Gwynedd in the first quarter of the thirteenth century. Much of this material, alongside *BGC*, was edited by Bartrum as part of his *Achau Brenhinoedd a Thywysogion Cymru*. The material focuses on the family of Owain Gwynedd. In one section it is stated that Gwenllian, daughter of Owain Gwynedd, was the mother of Gwenwynwyn ab Owain Cyfeiliog.²⁶ If Gwenllian was also the mother of Gweurfyl ferch Owain Cyfeiliog, then Morgan ap Hywel of Caerleon would be Owain Gwynedd's great-grandson. Considering that the only extant copies of *BGC* have been transmitted alongside the Gwynedd genealogical material, it is possible that *BGC*'s Caerleon pedigree was updated at some point in its transmission in order to reflect the connection with Owain Gwynedd.

Discounting Morgan, the particular combination of the remaining dates allows for a much more precise dating of *BGC*. The rulers named in the tract were only ruling together in the year 1171, after Maredudd of Cydwain succeeded his father Rhobert but before the death of Iorwerth Goch.²⁷ This seems to indicate that the tract was written precisely in this year, sometime between the deaths of Rhobert ap Llywarch and Iorwerth Goch. A significant proportion of the rulers named, moreover (indicated in fig. 2 in bold type), were present together with the Lord Rhys at Henry II's court at Gloucester in 1175, at

written between 1544 and 1561 by Gruffudd Hiraethog, who had access to a cognate genealogical collection: *EWGT* 79–80.

²⁶ *ABT* §2a.

²⁷ For the date of Iorwerth Goch's death, see R. M. Andrews and D. Stephenson, 'Draig Argoed: Iorwerth Goch ap Maredudd c. 1110–71', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 52 (2006), 65–91, at p. 75.

which they made peace with the king.²⁸

| ABT §§: | Subject(s) of Pedigree | | Father of Subject(s) | | Associated Territory |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| | Name | Date | Name | Date | |
| 10 | The Lord Rhys | d. 1197 | Gruffudd | d. 1137 | Deheubarth |
| 11 | Cadwallon | d. 1179 | Madog | d. 1140 | Maelienydd |
| 12 | Gruffudd Maelor | d. 1191 | Madog | d. 1160 | Powys Fadog |
| | Owain Fychan Elisse [brothers] | d. 1187 fl. 1188–1202 | | | |
| 13 | Hywel | d. 1185 | Ieuf | | Arwystli |
| 14 | Maredudd | | Rhobert | d. 1171 | Cydewain |
| ²⁹ 8h | Iorwerth Goch | d. 1171 | Maredudd | d. 1132 | Powys |
| 15 | Morgan | fl. 1175–88 | Caradog | | Morganwg |
| 16 | Gruffudd | fl. 1175 | Ifor | fl. 1158 | Senghennydd |
| 17 | Morgan | d. 1248 | Hywel (son of Iorwerth) | fl. 1171–1185 (d. 1175 × 1184) | Caerleon |

Figure 2: Evidence for the Dating of *Bonedd Gwehelaethau Cymru*

The chronicle accounts emphasise that all of the rulers who accompanied the Lord Rhys on this journey were his close relatives. The sphere of influence of the Lord Rhys may well be the unifying factor of the tract. These considerations may serve to place the composition of *BGC* in Deheubarth in 1171. Perhaps the text was composed in response to the recent death of Owain Gwynedd, which unquestionably left the Lord Rhys as the paramount Welsh ruler, a position acknowledged by Henry II during his visit to Wales in 1171. Earlier in the same year Rhys had gone to war against Owain Cyfeiliog; perhaps it was this sentiment that led to the curious absence of Owain Cyfeiliog from the text.³⁰

It was probably at a slightly later date that the tract was incorporated into the larger

²⁸ *Brut y Tywysogyon* 1175 (Peniarth 20 version; Red Book version; *Brenhinedd y Saesson*): *Brut y Tywysogyon*: Peniarth MS. 20, ed. T. Jones (Cardiff, 1941), pp. 126–7 (text); *Brut y Tywysogyon or The Chronicle of the Princes*. Peniarth MS. 20 Version, trans. T. Jones (Cardiff, 1952), pp. 70–1 (translation); *Brut y Tywysogyon or the Chronicle of the Princes: Red Book of Hergest Version*, ed. and trans. T. Jones (Cardiff, 1955), pp. 162–7; *Brenhinedd y Saesson or The Kings of the Saxons*. BM Cotton MS Cleopatra B v, and *The Black Book of Basingwerk*, NLW MS. 7006, ed. and trans. T. Jones (Cardiff, 1971), pp. 180–1.

²⁹ Iorwerth Goch is not included amongst the material deriving from *BGC* in Bartrum's edition of *Achau Brenhinoedd a Thywysogion Cymru*, but his appearance in this position in Manchester, John Rylands Library, Welsh 1, f. 5r, separately from the additional Powys material found in Cardiff Central Library 3.77 and Peniarth 131, part 2, makes it almost certain that he appeared in this position in the archetype.

³⁰ *Brut y Tywysogyon* 1171 (Peniarth 20 version; Red Book version; *Brenhinedd y Saesson*): Peniarth MS. 20, ed. Jones, pp. 116–17 (text); Peniarth MS. 20 Version, trans. Jones, p. 66 (translation); *Red Book of Hergest Version*, ed. and trans. Jones, pp. 152–3; *Brenhinedd y Saesson*, ed. and trans. Jones, pp. 172–3.

compilation in which it is found in the manuscript witnesses. The compilation itself clearly originated in Gwynedd, probably in the first quarter of the thirteenth century. The manner in which *BGC* was incorporated into this compilation is important for present purposes because evidence for the use of a chronicle akin to the Harleian chronicle occurs only in the part of the compilation concerned with Gwynedd, and not in *BGC* itself. Thus, if we are to assume that the compiler of the Gwynedd material obtained the chronicle entries and *BGC* from the same source, then that source may have taken the form of an updated version of the mid-tenth-century St David's collection represented by Harley 3859. On the other hand, if the compiler took *BGC* and the chronicle entries from two different sources, then each of these sources may have had an independent relationship with the St David's collection. A relationship of some sort with the St David's collection is amply illustrated by the examples discussed below.

The first example is the pedigree of Owain ap Hywel Dda, great-grandson of Rhodri Mawr.³¹ Owain ruled Deheubarth between 950 and his death in 988.³² The Lord Rhys was directly descended from Owain in the male line, as is shown at the beginning of *BGC*, and so it is odd that the tract should choose to start a new pedigree with Owain and his mother Helen. I suggest that this was done because this was the form of the pedigree in the St David's collection, as exemplified by the Harleian genealogies.³³ The St David's collection was itself finalised in the mid-tenth century, during the reign of Owain ap Hywel Dda. That the compiler of *BGC* drew this pedigree directly from a genealogical collection cognate with the Harleian genealogies is suggested by the introduction of a corruption among the earlier generations. The names *Amloyd* and *Amweryd* (shown in bold type in fig. 3 below) do not appear in the texts of this pedigree preserved elsewhere; they seem rather to have been accidentally copied from the pedigree of Cunedda Wledig, which is written adjacent to that of the early kings of Dyfed only in the Harleian genealogies.³⁴

³¹ *ABT* §18a.

³² For the date of Hywel Dda's death in 950, see D. E. Thornton, 'The Death of Hywel Dda', *Welsh Hist. Rev.* 20 (2001), 743–9.

³³ The genealogies in Harley 3859 are edited in E. Phillimore, 'The *Annales Cambriae* and the Old-Welsh Genealogies from Harleian MS. 3859', *Y Cymmrodor* 9 (1888), 141–83, at pp. 169–83. Subsequent references to the Harleian genealogies take the form 'HG §§1–2', following Phillimore's section numbering.

³⁴ HG §§1–2. Cf. Bartrum, 'Achau Brenhinoedd', p. 223; *EWGT* 153.

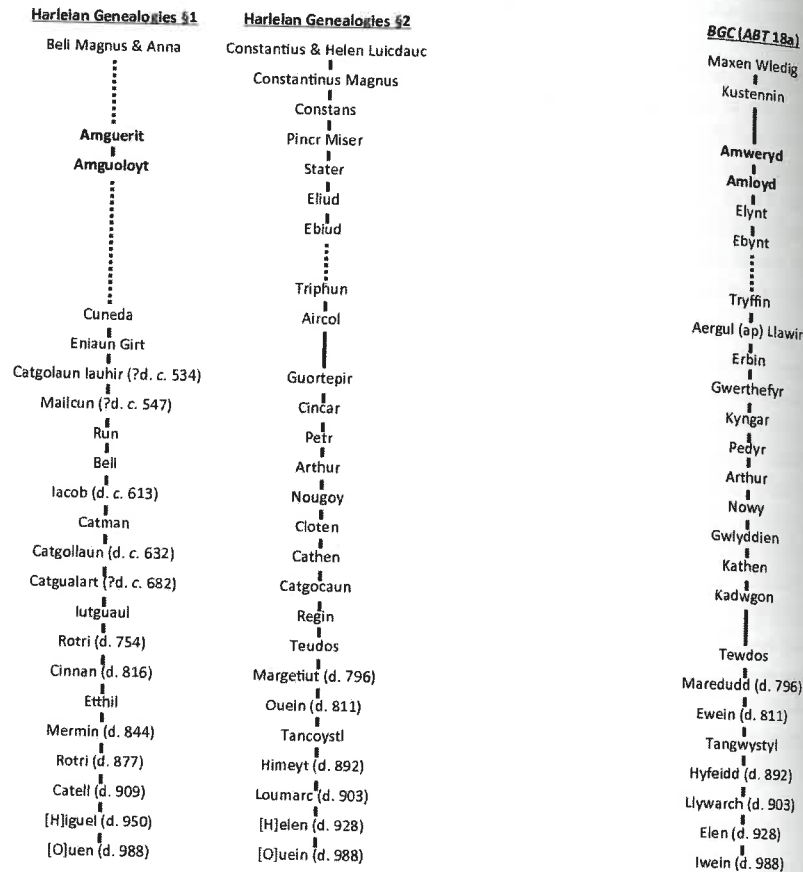


Figure 3: The Pedigrees of Owain ap Hywel Dda

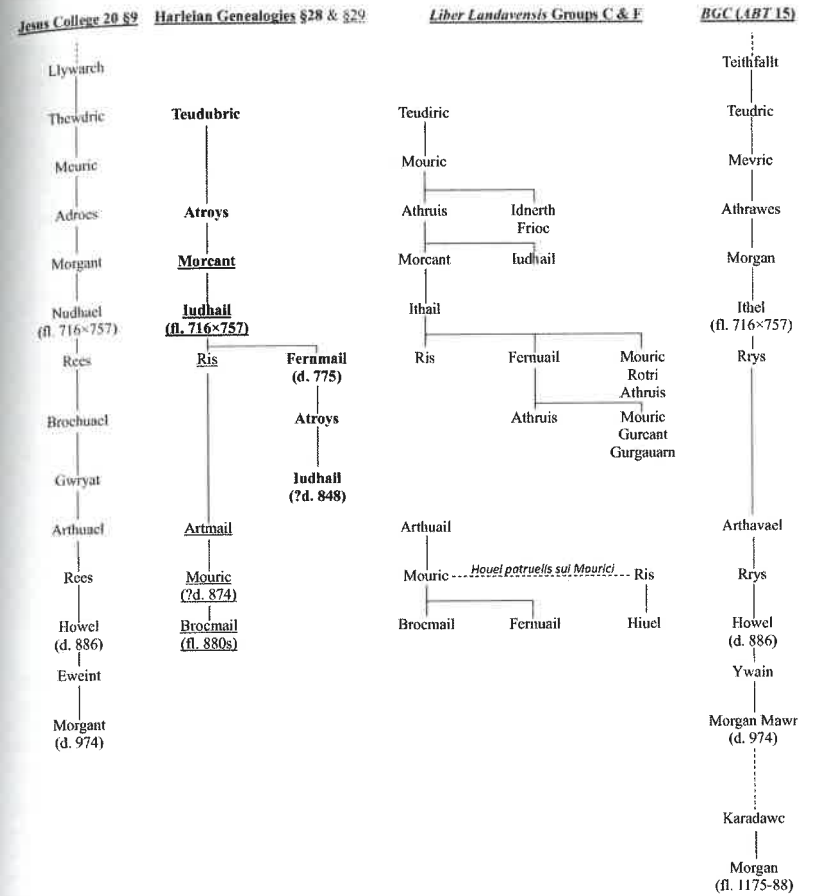


Figure 4: The Kings of Morgannwg

A second indicative parallel may be observed in *BGC*'s pedigree for the kings of Morgannwg, in south-eastern Wales. Comparison between this and the two pedigrees for Gwent and Glywysing in the Harleian genealogies reveals that both *BGC* and the Harleian genealogies agree in representing Arthfael, the grandfather of the Brochfael, the king of Gwent mentioned by Asser, as the son of Rhys ab Ithel.³⁵ The genealogies in Oxford, Jesus College 20, however, in a section that seems to derive from a genealogical collection assembled for this very family in the mid-tenth century, insert another two generations between Arthfael and Rhys.³⁶ The discrepancy between *BGC* and the Harleian genealogies, on the one hand, and the Jesus College genealogies, on the other, is not accidental. I have argued elsewhere that the Gwent and Glywysing pedigrees in the Harleian genealogies were actually composed using the information of a group of charters, now represented by stratum CF of the Llandaf charters, as delineated by Wendy Davies.³⁷ The charters, as they survive, do not form a continuous sequence, being instead separated into three groups by two chronological gaps, as indicated by discontinuity in the sequences of witnesses in the witness lists. One of these gaps occurs precisely during the time of the two generations seemingly missing from the pedigrees in the Harleian genealogies and in *BGC*. If the deduced relationship between stratum CF of the Llandaf charters and the Gwent and Glywysing pedigrees in the Harleian genealogies is correct, then the original compiler of the pedigrees concerned, working from archival sources, must have been compelled to adduce the relationship between Arthfael and Rhys, the first and last kings mentioned in two chronologically discrete sequences of charters. The error must have appeared in the mid-tenth-century St David's collection and is perpetuated in both the Harleian genealogies and in *BGC*.

This set of relationships indicates an omission on the part of the Harleian genealogies that would not otherwise be apparent. In the article already cited I noted that, since both texts share all the relevant names except that of Meurig son of Tewdrig, who appears in the charters but not in the Harleian genealogies, Meurig must have been present in the genealogy of the St David's collection but was subsequently omitted during the

³⁵ Asser, *Vita Ælfredi regis*, ch. 80, ed. W. H. Stevenson, *Asser's Life of King Alfred* (Oxford, 1904), pp. 66–7; trans. S. Keynes and M. Lapidge, *Alfred the Great: Asser's 'Life of King Alfred' and Other Contemporary Sources* (Harmondsworth, 1983), p. 96.

³⁶ JC §9. References to the Jesus College 20 genealogies [= JC] follow the section numbering of the edition in *EWGT* 42–50.

³⁷ B. Guy, 'Did the Harleian Genealogies Draw on Archival Sources?', *Proc. of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 32 (2012), 119–33; W. Davies, *The Llandaff Charters* (Aberystwyth, 1979), pp. 12–16.

transmission of the text to Harley 3859.³⁸ *BGC* would seem to confirm this suspicion; although *BGC* perpetuates the omission of the two generations between Arthfael and Rhys, it still names Meurig, indicating that Meurig's name did in fact appear in the St David's collection.

A third example serves to demonstrate more conclusively *BGC*'s dependence not only on texts circulating in St David's in the mid-tenth century, but on a descendant of the actual manuscript from which the ancestor of the Harleian genealogies was copied, probably, as indicated by the Harleian text of the Welsh annals, around 954. *BGC* records the pedigree of one *mor m. morudd*, whose line is attributed to Rhufoniog in Gruffudd Hiraethog's copy of the text.³⁹ The Harleian genealogies record the same pedigree and begin in the same way with *mor map moriud*. The *mor* in the Harleian text, however, is almost certainly a mistake. The manuscript at St David's from which the exemplar of the Welsh texts in Harley 3859 was taken had evidently not yet been fully rubricated. In Harley 3859, the texts of the *Historia Brittonum*, the Harleian genealogies, *De civitatibus Britannie* and *De mirabilibus Britannie* are all missing their rubricated initials.⁴⁰ That this was not the fault of the scribe of Harley 3859 is shown by the genealogies, in which the initial letters of the names at the beginning of each pedigree are missing.⁴¹ Since the initial-less names begin with a minuscule rather than the usual majuscule letter and yet are still aligned with the other names, the Anglo-Norman scribe must have been aware of the deficiency but found himself unable to supply the missing letters.⁴² The Welsh composer responsible for *BGC*, however, would, in most cases, have noticed such a problem, and would have been able to supply the initial letters had they been missing. This was

³⁸ Guy, 'Archival Sources', p. 130.

³⁹ *ABT* §26. The critical value of this pedigree within *BGC* is a little problematic because it does not appear in the related copies of the compilation produced by Gutun Owain, contained in Peniarth 131, part 3 and in Manchester, John Rylands Library, Welsh 1 (the latter supposedly being the exemplar of Bartrum's witnesses FHJ). The text of this pedigree may, however, have been deliberately omitted by Gutun Owain, or by the scribe of his exemplar, because a previous scribal slip had made *Mor*, the first name of this pedigree, into the father of Cunedda Wledig, the last name of the preceding pedigree. This is the state of the text in the related copies in Peniarth 131, part 2 and Cardiff Central Library 3.77 (John Jones of Gellilyfdy), each of which indicates the error. Gutun Owain would have been perfectly aware that the father of Cunedda Wledig was not supposed to have been called *Mor*, and so he might have deliberately omitted what he saw as a false ancestry.

⁴⁰ Rubricated initials are provided for the *Historia Brittonum* only up until fol. 180r. However, since these initials begin ordinary Latin words, they could have been provided by the scribe of Harley 3859 even if they had been absent from the exemplar.

⁴¹ See, for example, the plate showing fol. 194r in *EWGT*, facing p. 9.

⁴² For the Harley scribe's ignorance of Welsh, see Phillimore, 'Annales Cambriae', pp. 142–3 and 146.

evidently not done in the case of the obscure name ending in *mor*, indicating that the composer of *BGC* was indeed using a text that was directly descended from the St David's collection. The Jesus College genealogies have the form *Amor* for the first name of this pedigree, perhaps indicating that an *A* might have been the intended rubricated initial.⁴³ If the initials were ever supplied to the manuscript of the St David's collection or to any intermediate copies between this collection and *BGC*'s source text, the initial letter of *mor* remained unknown.

Aside from those already mentioned, there are a further four pedigrees in *BGC* that closely parallel the relevant pedigrees in the Harleian genealogies.⁴⁴ Such parallels support the conclusion that the compiler of *BGC* drew upon a version of the mid-tenth-century St David's collection, from which the Harleian genealogies descend. In some cases this hypothesised relationship can help to indicate points at which the Harleian text of those genealogies is defective. Two examples will suffice here.

One of the more suspicious pedigrees in the Harleian genealogies unusually records only two names, those of *Meriaun* and his father *Loudogu*.⁴⁵ *BGC*, on the other hand, begins with these two names but goes on to enumerate a twenty generation pedigree connected with Penllyn.⁴⁶ This is the kind of text one would expect in the Harleian genealogies, rather than the two generations now extant, but upon first inspection it might seem impossible to prove that *BGC*'s longer pedigree had not been added by the compiler of *BGC* from another source. Unexpected confirmation that this was not the case, however, comes from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*. It has long been known that Geoffrey used a collection of texts closely akin to those preserved in Harley 3859 in order to construct his *Historia*.⁴⁷ He seems to have used a set of genealogies as a source for Welsh name forms. That this set of genealogies was cognate with the Harleian genealogies in particular is shown not only by the number of forms

⁴³ JC §46. Phillimore, followed by Bartrum, conjectured that the missing initial was an *I*: Phillimore, *Annales Cambriae*, p. 179, n. 2; EWGT 19.

⁴⁴ These are *ABT* §19 = HG §25 (Glastening); *ABT* §23 = HG §18 (Meirionydd); *ABT* §24 = HG §17 (Dunoding/Ardudwy); and *ABT* §25 = HG §3 (Rhos).

⁴⁵ HG §21.

⁴⁶ *ABT* §22.

⁴⁷ E. Faral, *La légende Arthurienne: études et documents*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1929), II, 137–9; A. E. Hutson, *British Personal Names in the Historia regum Britanniae* (Berkeley, 1940), p. 89; S. Piggott, 'The Sources of Geoffrey of Monmouth: I. The "Pre-Roman" King-List', *Antiquity* 15 (1941), 269–86, at pp. 280 and 282; J. S. P. Tatlock, *The Legendary History of Britain. Geoffrey of Monmouth's Historia regum Britanniae and its Early Vernacular Versions* (New York, 1974), p. 163, n. 254.

common to the two, but also by at least one instance of an error made in the St David's collection that was perpetuated by Geoffrey of Monmouth. In the pedigree of Dyfed, the Harleian collection gives *Gloitguin* as son of the eponymous *Nimet map Dimet*.⁴⁸ The name should probably be *Cloitguin*, considering that this is the name attached to the conqueror of South Wales in the genealogical texts concerning the family of Brychan Brycheiniog.⁴⁹ The first letter of the name in the Harleian genealogies must have already been corrupted to a *G* in the St David's collection, since it also appears with a *G* as *Gletwin* in *BGC*. Likewise Hutson, in his study of the British personal names in Geoffrey's *Historia regum Britanniae*, suggested that the source for Geoffrey's *Gloigin* was the corrupted *Gloitguin* represented in the Harleian genealogies.⁵⁰ This implies that the collection of genealogies used by Geoffrey derived from the same mid-tenth-century St David's collection. This conclusion may shed some light on other names used by Geoffrey for which Hutson was unable to identify a likely source. These included *Pir* and his successor *Capoir*.⁵¹ These two names are not found in the Harleian genealogies, but they do appear in *BGC*'s pedigree for Penllyn, where we find *Pybyr* son of *Kaper*.⁵² If this identification is correct, then something akin to *BGC*'s twenty generation pedigree of Meurig was probably also present in Geoffrey's copy of the St David's collection. This strengthens the case for a pedigree of the same kind having been mistakenly omitted from the Harleian genealogies rather than innovatively introduced into *BGC*.

My second example concerns the forms of the name Gwyddno. This name occurs twice in the Harleian genealogies, spelled as *Guipno* and *Gueinoth*.⁵³ Egerton Phillimore proposed that the *p* in the first form had been miscopied from a thorn; other examples of such miscopying in other Welsh manuscripts have indeed come to light.⁵⁴ Phillimore's

⁴⁸ HG §2.

⁴⁹ A. W. Wade-Evans, 'The Brychan Documents', *Y Cymmrodor* 19 (1906), 18–48, at p. 38; Phillimore, *Annales Cambriae*, p. 171, n. 4.

⁵⁰ Hutson, *British Personal Names*, p. 16.

⁵¹ Faral, followed by Hutson, speculated that the source for *Capoir* may be the *Camuir* in HG §3, but Hutson admitted that the change from *m* to *p* would present a difficulty with the identification: Faral, *La légende Arthurienne* II, 138, n. 19; Hutson, *British Personal Names*, p. 42.

⁵² *Pybyr* might have been produced by dittography, through stages such as *Pyr* > *Pyppyr* > *Pybyr*.

⁵³ In HG §§5 and 18 respectively.

⁵⁴ Phillimore, *Annales Cambriae*, p. 172, n. 5. The tenth-century Juvencus manuscript has *papep bi*, probably for *papep bi* 'what is it': McKee, *The Cambridge Juvencus*, pp. 42, 69, 72, 75 and 543–4. Likewise the *Gododdin* contains three instances (two of which appear in corresponding stanzas from the A- and B-texts) of *gipno/cipno*, apparently for the name Gwyddno, as in the Harleian genealogies: *Canu Aneirin*, lns. 780, 788 and 1257, ed. I. Williams, *Canu Aneirin*, 3rd ed. (Cardiff, 1970), pp. 31 and 50; J. T. Koch, *The Gododdin of Aneirin: Text and Context from Dark-Age North Britain* (Cardiff, 1997), p. 151. The

explanation has recently been questioned by James Fraser, who argues that *Guipno*, with a *p*, is a Northern British name separate from Gwyddno.⁵⁵ However, Fraser's proposed derivation of *Guipno* from **uepo-genos*, supposedly meaning 'Fife-born', cannot be correct, since apocope would have caused the final *-os* of *-genos* to be lost. The *-no* of names such as 'Gwyddno' actually derives from **gnāuos*, a word for 'knowing'.⁵⁶ It might just be possible that the *Guipno* of the Strathclyde pedigree in the Harleian genealogies and *gipno/cipno* of the *Gododdin* represent a name other than Gwyddno and never contained a thorn, but such a proposition remains unsubstantiated.⁵⁷

The second form, *Gueinoth*, is a little harder to explain. It seems as though the *th* in this word has been displaced from its original position (between the *i* and the *n*) to the end of the word. E. W. B. Nicholson suggested that this displacement had been caused by the Harleian genealogies having been copied from an exemplar with narrow lines, where the final letters of words occasionally had to be written above the end of the word.⁵⁸ A better explanation is suggested by the scribe's treatment of /θ/ in Harley 3859's chronicle. There are numerous instances of this sound having been spelt originally with a *t*, before a *h* was later inserted interlineally above the word.⁵⁹ These examples include OW *gueith*, 'battle'. It seems that at one stage in the text's history these words were regularly written as, for example, *gueit*, with *t* for /θ/, and that later a corrector added a *h* to most such forms.⁶⁰ Since it has been demonstrated that the scribe of Harley 3859 was ignorant of Welsh and of Welsh orthography, the spelling update is unlikely to have been carried out by him; it

appearance of the same name spelled with a *p* for thorn in this text suggests that the thorn spelling may have been standardised. Compare the spelling of Dyngad, which appears in three separate contexts spelt with an anachronistic composition vowel (*Dinacat* in HG §§4 and 17; *Dynigat* in *De situ Brecheniauc*, §11.7, ed. EWGT 15; *dinogat* in *Canu Aneirin*, ln. 1101, ed. Williams, p. 44). See P. Russell, 'Old Welsh *Dinacat*, *Cunedag*, *Tutagual*: Fossilised Phonology in Brittonic Personal Names', in *Indo-European Perspectives in honour of Anna Morpurgo Davies*, ed. J. H. W. Penney (Oxford, 2004), pp. 447–60.

⁵⁵ J. E. Fraser, *From Caledonia to Pictland: Scotland to 795* (Edinburgh, 2009), p. 136.

⁵⁶ P. Schrijver, *Studies in British Celtic Historical Phonology* (Amsterdam, 1995), pp. 299–300 (esp. p. 300, n. 1); E. P. Hamp, 'Early Welsh Names, Suffixes, and Phonology', *Onoma* 14 (1969), 7–13, at p. 12; K. Jackson, *Language and History in Early Britain: a Chronological Survey of the Brittonic Languages, First to Twelfth Century A.D.* (Edinburgh, 1953), pp. 382–3.

⁵⁷ For references, see above, n. 54.

⁵⁸ E. W. B. Nicholson, 'The Dynasty of Cunedag and the "Harleian Genealogies"', *Y Cymmrodor* 21 (1908), 63–104, at pp. 78–9. Nicholson cites only three other examples for this apparent phenomenon, but two of these end with final *-gualart* (for expected *-gualatr*), a form found elsewhere in the Harleian manuscript as well as in Breton sources, as Nicholson himself notes. The third example, *Tancoysit* (for expected *Tancoysitl*), may simply be a scribal error.

⁵⁹ E.g. 191vb *gueit*; 191vc *Cudbert*; 192ra *Arthgen*.

⁶⁰ Compare *gueit* at 192va and 192vc.

seems, rather, that Harley 3859's scribe simply reproduced faithfully the interlinear additions, without incorporating them into the main text. The erroneous insertion of a *h* into a name spelled *Gueitno* (where *t* = /θ/) must have been motivated by the same principle. The same explanation probably lies behind the form *Pantha* for Penda of Mercia.⁶¹ This would explain the unusual use of *th* for /ð/ in *Gueinoth*/*Gueithno*; elsewhere in the Harleian genealogies, /ð/ is spelled with a *t* or a *d* at least twenty-seven times, but never with a *th*.⁶² The interlinear *h* of Harley 3859's exemplar must have caused both the *h* and the glossed *t* to have been miscopied to the end of the word, unlike in the Harleian chronicle. Perhaps in the exemplar the name looked somewhat similar to the present state of the name Arthen in the Harleian chronicle, where the *th* is written above the other letters (192ra *Arthgen*). In the case of *Gueinoth*, the dislocation of the letters may have been influenced by the many Anglo-Saxon names ending in *-noth*.⁶³ Most revealingly for present purposes, the presence of the conjectured *h* gloss already in the mid-tenth-century St David's manuscript is confirmed by *BGC*; here the relevant pedigree also unusually has *th* for /ð/, but it is written in the correct position within the word as *Gweithno*.⁶⁴

A similar process might also account for the seemingly superfluous *th* in *Glitnoth*, the name following *Gueinoth* in the Harleian manuscript. The equivalent name in *BGC* is *Klutno*, without the *-th*. This might suggest that the form in the St David's collection also lacked a final *-th*, implying that the extant *-th* was added by the scribe of Harley 3859 or an exemplar, perhaps on the analogy of *Gueinoth* and/or Anglo-Saxon names. The error of *G-* for *C-* might already have been present in the St David's collection, given that *C/G* confusion had already occurred elsewhere in the collection (e.g. *Gloitguin*/*Cloitguin*, mentioned above). Alternatively, as Phillimore suggested, *Glitnoth* might be a doublet of *Gueinoth* rather than a corruption of *Clitno*, since no equivalent to *Glitnoth* appears in the Jesus College genealogies.⁶⁵ However, the form *Glitno(-th)* as a corruption of

⁶¹ 191rb.

⁶² E.g. *Cunedda* 'Cunedda' HG §§1, 3, 17, 18, 26, 32; *Himeyt* 'Hyfaidd' HG §2; *margetiud*, 'Maredudd' HG §2; *morgetiud* HG §§13, 14; *Eugein dant guin* 'Owain Ddantgwyn' HG §3; *Riderch* 'Rhydderch' HG §§5, 6; *itudon* 'Iddon' HG §14; *Gripiud* 'Gruffudd' HG §15; *bleydiud* 'Bleiddudd' HG §17; *moruid* 'Morudd' HG §20; *Elbodgu* 'Elfoddw' HG §23; *Bodug* 'Boddw' HG §24; *Bodgu* HG §26; *Merguid* 'Merwydd' HG §25; *Arthbodgu* 'Arthfoddw' HG §26; *Elitet* 'Elisedd' HG §27; *Eliud* 'Eludd' HG §27; *Elized* HG §§30, 31; *ædan* 'Aeddán' HG §31. Less certain examples include *loudogu* HG §21; *Moriutned* HG §25.

⁶³ My thanks to Richard Dance for this suggestion.

⁶⁴ *ABT* §23. Thus it is in Gutun Owain's copy in Peniarth 131, part 3 and John Jones's copy in Cardiff Central Library 3.77; elsewhere the form has been updated to *Gwyddno*.

⁶⁵ JC §41. Phillimore, '*Annales Cambriae*', p. 178, n. 4.

Gueir^hno/Gueinoth is a little hard to explain unless one posits that the *li* of *Glitnoth* could be a misreading of an incurling *v* [6].⁶⁶ On the other hand, a form such as *Clitno* could easily have been omitted from the Jesus College genealogies through eyeskip from one name ending in *-itno* to the next, i.e. from *Gueitno* to *Clitno*. Such an eyeskip would support the case made above for the form *Gueinoth* having been produced as a form from the form *Gueitno* glossed with a *h*. I am thus inclined to think that the mid-tenth-century St David's collection did include a name of the form *Glitno*, which was corrected to *Klutno* in *BGC* but came to be misrepresented in Harley 3859 as *Glitnoth*.

Finally, I turn to the evidence for the use of a chronicle akin to the Harleian chronicle (the 'A-text of the *Annales Cambriae*') in the Gwynedd section of the compilation in which *BGC* is now found. A number of items in the Gwynedd section imply that a chronicle was used during its composition, but one in particular suggests access to a chronicle cognate with that found in Harley 3859. In the section dedicated to the sons of Rhodri Mawr the following is stated: 'Rhodri mawr a Gwryat y fab. Yn yr un kyfrangk y lladdawdd Saesson eill dau'.⁶⁷ Similar information appears in all of the versions of the Welsh annals, both Latin and Welsh, in the entries for the year 878. The Breviate chronicle ('B-text') and all of the Welsh *brutiau*, however, make Rhodri Mawr and Gwriad brothers; only the Harleian and Cottonian ('C-text') chronicles agree with the relationship as described in the genealogical collection.⁶⁸ The Cottonian chronicle, however, does not mention the name of Rhodri's son; this information is found only in the Harleian chronicle, preserved uniquely in Harley 3859. It would seem that the compiler of the genealogies did indeed have access to a Welsh chronicle cognate with that in Harley 3859, but it is as yet uncertain whether or not this chronicle appeared in the same source as *BGC*.

I hope to have demonstrated two things in this article, one textual and the other methodological. Textually speaking, evidence has been produced in support of the claim

⁶⁶ For a misreading of this kind, see P. Russell, 'Scribal (In)consistency in Thirteenth-Century South Wales: the Orthography of the Black Book of Carmarthen', *Studia Celtica* 43 (2009), 135–74, at p. 164. For incurling *v*, see T. M. Charles-Edwards and P. Russell, 'The Hendregadredd Manuscript and the Orthography and Phonology of Welsh in the Early Fourteenth Century', *National Lib. of Wales Jnl.* 28 (1993–4), 419–62, at p. 423.

⁶⁷ *ABT* §7s: 'Rhodri Mawr and Gwriad his son. In the same battle the Saxons killed them both'. Translation is my own.

⁶⁸ Bartrum, 'Achau Brenhinoedd', p. 221; *EWGT* 152; P. M. Remfry, *Annales Cambriae: a Translation of Harleian 3859; PRO E. 164/1; Cottonian Domitian, A1; Exeter Cathedral Library MS.3514 and MS Exchequer DB Neath, PRO E. 164/1* (Shrewsbury, 2007), p. 56, n. 173.

that a copy of the mid-tenth-century archetype of the British material of Harley 3859 was available to a scholar working probably in South Wales in 1171, and possibly to another scholar working in Gwynedd in the early thirteenth century. Methodologically speaking, the arguments presented should illustrate how an approach that treats the genealogical tracts as coherent texts, rather than as miscellaneous conglomerations of individual genealogical items, can profitably be employed as a means by which medieval genealogies may be subjected to the kind of critical scrutiny that they have often lacked.

Wind Diagrams in Medieval Iceland

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INTRODUCTION

In the Greco-Roman tradition, the winds were envisaged as a property of air, and therefore a 'sublunary atmospheric phenomenon'.¹ Treatises about the winds and the directions from which they rose were inherited from classical antiquity, and elaborated upon by medieval anthologists of antique learning. Information about the winds circulated through both texts and diagrams. The most commonly known written accounts were those in Pliny the Elder's *Historia Naturalis*,² Isidore of Seville's *De natura rerum*³ and *Etymologiae*⁴ and Bede's *De natura rerum*.⁵ Although there are variations in the names given to the winds between these accounts, they usually describe four principal winds and eight secondary or satellite winds. The four primary winds rise in the directions of the four cardinal points. The secondary winds rise from the left (*sinister*) and right (*dexter*) of the cardinal winds from their own perspective, looking inwards from the points on the horizon from which they blow. The principal winds were, to use the names favoured by Isidore in the *Etymologiae*: *Subsolanus* from the east; *Auster* from the south; *Favonius* from the west; and *Septentrio* from the north.⁶ Each of these winds had a pair of winds associated with it: *Subsolanus* was flanked by *Vulturnus* to its right (*dexter*) and *Eurus* to its left (*sinister*); *Auster* by *Euroauster* (*dexter*) and *Austroafricus* (*sinister*); *Favonius* by *Africus* (*dexter*) and *Corus* (*sinister*); and *Septentrio* by *Circius* (*dexter*) and *Aquilo* (*sinister*).⁷ The four principal winds were closely associated with the cardinal directions from which they arose.⁸

Diagrammatic representations of the winds, having originated in Aristotle's

¹ For a comprehensive overview of the role of the winds in medieval cosmography see B. Obrist, 'Wind Diagrams and Medieval Cosmography', *Speculum* 72 (1997), 33–84, at p. 34.

² Pliny the Elder, *Historia naturalis* (HN) II.47.

³ Isidore of Seville, *De natura rerum* (NR) 37.

⁴ Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum sive originum libri xx* (*Etymologiae*), 2 vols., ed. W. M. Lindsay (Oxford, 1911), XIII.xi.

⁵ Bede, *De natura rerum* (NR), ed. J-P Migne, *PL* 90, cols. 187–274, at ch. 27.

⁶ Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* XIII.xi.2.

⁷ *Ibid.* XIII.xi.3.

⁸ Obrist, 'Wind Diagrams', p. 40.

Meteorologica,⁹ were numerous and variable.¹⁰ Wind diagrams frequently appear in single-author encyclopaedic treatises, like the *Etymologiae*, as well as encyclopaedic compilations that abridge, translate, and combine works written by multiple authors.¹¹ Through their inclusion in these encyclopaedias, the winds became connected with diverse bodies of knowledge, and their associations with other domains were thematised in science and literature. For example, the influence of the four principal winds on human health is often cited in medical treatises on the balance of the four humours. A medical treatise in Oxford, St John's College MS 17, 1v (a manuscript that contains two wind diagrams) warns against certain treatments and blood-lettings during the dog days (when the sun passes through the constellation Sirius) while the winds named *Subsolanus* or *Vulturnus* blow.¹² In an Icelandic encyclopaedic treatise that appears to have been adapted from William of Conche's *De philosophia mundi* (III.xiv–xv), the winds are associated with the ocean currents.¹³ More well-known is the allegory of the sun and the winds in the Norwegian *Konungs Skuggsjá*, in which the winds are described in a circular survey that, like the wind diagram and many written descriptions, begins in the east.¹⁴ In literature and science the winds were strongly associated with geographic direction, and were frequently used to refer to the parts of the sky from which they arose.

Wind diagrams are often overlooked in studies of the medieval conception of the physical world, an oversight that extends to the Icelandic material. Icelandic manuscripts

⁹ Aristotle, *Meteorologica*, ed. and trans. H. D. P. Lee, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge MA, 1987), 2.6, p. 189.

¹⁰ Obrist, 'Wind Diagrams', p. 34.

¹¹ For an example of the former, see H. Bober, 'An Illustrated Medieval School-Book of Bede's *De natura rerum*', *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* 20 (1957), 64–97.

¹² The twelve winds appear on two diagrams in this encyclopaedia: an Isidorian wind diagram on f. 40v and the Byrthferth diagram on f. 7v, on which the four principal winds feature alongside other cosmic and temporal fours that are represented also on the Icelandic world maps (see below). Facsimiles of these wind diagrams are available at *The Calendar and the Cloister: Oxford, St John's College MS17*, ed. F. Wallis. <http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/ms-17> (accessed 9th October 2014).

¹³ The Old Norse treatise on the relationships between the winds and the ocean currents is edited in *Alfræði Íslenzk*, vol. 2: *Rímöl*, ed. K. Kälund (Copenhagen, 1914–16), pp. 85–88. The multi-volume *Alfræði Íslenzk* shall hereafter be referred to as *ÁÍ* I–III. R. Simek examines this treatise in *Altnordische Kosmographie: Studien und Quellen zu Weltbild und Weltbeschreibung in Norwegen und Island vom 12. bis zum 14. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1990), pp. 63–9.

¹⁴ *The King's Mirror* (*Speculum Regale – Konungs Skuggsjá*): *Translated from the Old Norse with Introduction and Notes*, ed. L. M. Larson (New York, 1917), pp. 86–92. It has been argued that the concord and peace visited on the winds by the warming sun is an allegory for kingship. On this interpretation see S. Bagge, *The Political Thought of the King's Mirror* (Odense, 1987); and D. Brégaud, 'Conquering Minds: *Konungs Skuggsjá* and the Annexation of Iceland in the Thirteenth Century', *Scandinavian Studies* 84 (2012), 439–466, esp. p. 447.

from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries preserve Latin and Old Norse treatises on the winds based on the works of Isidore and Bede. Furthermore, three schematisations of the winds are preserved in Icelandic encyclopaedias: a wind diagram (c. 1300–25) and two world maps that incorporate a perimeter of winds (c. 1225–50). There are no editions of or commentaries on the Icelandic wind diagram, and the circles of winds on the two world maps have received minimal attention. An understanding of these hitherto unstudied diagrams is an obstacle to a larger challenge: that of understanding medieval cosmographical ideas, and the mechanisms of their transmission in Iceland. This article examines the three diagrammatic schematisations of the winds preserved in Icelandic manuscripts. It provides transcriptions of the names of the winds as they appear on these diagrams, with commentaries on their sources and relationships to other contemporary maps and diagrams.

AN ICELANDIC WIND DIAGRAM

A single wind diagram survives from medieval Iceland. This is preserved in the encyclopaedia at the Arnarnagnæan Institute in Copenhagen with the shelf mark AM 732b 4to, on f. 2r (c. 1300–25). AM 732b is a learned miscellany that contains a diverse range of texts written in Latin and Old Norse.¹⁵ The diagram accompanies a Latin text about the winds excerpted from Isidore's *Etymologiae*, which concludes overleaf from the diagram, on f. 2v.¹⁶ This is followed by an Old Norse text on the conjunctions of the sun and moon and their effects on the tides.¹⁷ The wind diagram is preceded on 1v by a number of shorter texts written in Latin and Old Norse that pertain to the calendar and the determination of the date of Easter.¹⁸

The wind diagram measures 96 mm in diameter and comprises three concentric circles around a central medallion. The outer circle accommodates the Latin names of the four

¹⁵ The contents of AM 732b have been edited in the variant apparatus of texts taken from other manuscripts, notably the computistical treatise *Rim II* (written c. 1275–1300) edited in *ÁÍ II*, pp. 81–178, to which much of the material in AM 732b has been added. Its contents were later summarised in *ÁÍ III*, p. ix.

¹⁶ Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae* XIII.xi.3–15.

¹⁷ This tidal treatise has been edited, alongside others like it, in *ÁÍ II*, pp. 117–8, §§ 67–8.

¹⁸ The texts on f. 1v comprise: a Latin explanation of the Paschal full moon (*ÁÍ II*, pp. 235–v 236); a nineteen line Latin mnemonic verse to aid memorisation of the dates of the Paschal full moon written out twice, once with Roman and again with Arabic numerals for the *ferial regular* (*ÁÍ II*, pp. 236–37); an Old Norse explanation of how to count the year from creation (*ÁÍ II*, p. 125); an Old Norse explanation of the disparity between the lunar and solar years; an Old Norse note on the concurrent; an Old Norse explanation of the indiction cycle (*ÁÍ II*, p. 273); and an Old Norse note on the error in the Julian Calendar (*ÁÍ II*, pp. 237–39).

cardinal directions. The diagram is oriented, in both the conventional and etymological senses of the term, with *oriens* ('east') at the top, then proceeds clockwise through *meridies* ('south'), *occidens* ('west'), and *septentrio* ('north'). The middle circle contains the names of the twelve winds, with three winds (the cardinal wind and its two satellite winds) named in each quarter. The inner circle notes the qualitative, climatic characteristics of the winds from that quarter. At the centre of the diagram there is a short inscription on two lesser movements of air, breezes on land and at sea, which are not tied to a particular quarter.

| | Sinistral | Cardinal | Dextral |
|--------|--|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| East | ORIENS | | |
| | Eurus | Subsolanus qui et apelotes | Vulturus qui et calcias |
| | temperatus | | |
| South | MERIDIES | | |
| | Euronothus | Auster qui et Nothus | Euroauster |
| | calidus humidus | | |
| West | OCIDENS | | |
| | Chorus qui et argestes | Zepirus qui et Fauonius | Affricus qui et Lbius |
| | temperatus | | |
| North | SEPTENTRIO | | |
| | Aquilo qui et Boreas | Septentrio | Circius qui et Tracias |
| | frigidus siccus | | |
| Centre | Duo uenti sunt extra hos ubique terarum spiritus magis quam uenti. aura . et . altanus. aura enim est lenis motus aeris in terra. altanus in pelago. | | |

*Icelandic Wind Diagram (Copenhagen, Arnarnagnæan Institute, AM 732b 4to, 2r)*¹⁹

¹⁹ On the tables that follow, the cardinal winds are highlighted.

Commentary on the Icelandic Wind Diagram

Before the names of the winds on this diagram are discussed it would be helpful to outline the wind diagram's main formal characteristics. The wind diagram's circular form derives from Aristotle's *Meteorologica*. Aristotle describes the relative positions of the ten winds in diagrammatic terms:

The treatment of their position must be followed with the help of a diagram. For the sake of clarity, we have drawn the circle of the horizon; that is why our figure is round. And it must be supposed to represent the section of the earth's surface in which we live; for the other section [the temperate region in the southern hemisphere] could be divided in a similar way.²⁰

The circular form of the wind diagram and the related world map symbolises the horizon, which is subsequently divided into segments between the points at which the various named winds rise.²¹

The second main formal characteristic of the wind diagram is its quadripartition. The twelve winds are divided into four groups of three, with the four principal winds at the head of each quarter. The quadripartition of the horizon also finds expression in written texts. In his *De natura rerum*, Bede divides the world into four quarters, along two diameters that extend across the earth between four points on the horizon: the points at which the sun rises and sets on the summer (NE and NW) and winter solstices (SE and SW).²² Diameters drawn between these four points on the horizon divide both the horizon into four quarters, each with one of the four cardinal points at their centres. Thus Bede divides the horizon into four quarters.

climata, id est plagae mundi, sunt quattuor: orientalis ab exortu solstitiali ad brumalem, australis inde ad occasum brumalem, occidentalis ex hinc usque ad solstitialem, porro septentrionalis ab occasu solstitiali usque ad exortum eiusdem partis.²³

²⁰ Aristotle, *Meteorologica* 2.6, ed. and trans. H. D. P. Lee, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge MA, 1987), p. 189.

²¹ P. Whitfield, *The Charting of the Oceans: Ten Centuries of Maritime Maps* (London, 1996), p. 7; and Obrist, 'Wind Diagrams', p. 42.

²² The sun rises due east and sets due west on two days per year: the spring and autumn equinoxes. On the solstices the sunrise and sunset occur at their northern and southernmost extents.

²³ Bede, *NR* 10: 'There are four quarters, that is, regions, of the world: the eastern from sunrise at the summer solstice to sunrise on the winter solstice (NE to SE); the southern from there to sunset on the winter

The twelve winds are allocated to these four regions, which are clearly marked on the Icelandic wind diagram. On the wind diagram the four principal winds blow from the four cardinal directions, and each principal wind is associated with two satellite winds, one sinistral and the other dextral.²⁴ The four principal winds are prominently positioned beneath the names of the cardinal directions. These winds are: *Subsolamus* or *Apeliotes*, which rises due east, the direction in which the sun rises on the equinox;²⁵ *Auster* or *Nothus*, which rises due south, the direction of the sun in the sky at midday;²⁶ *Zephyrus* or *Favonius*, which rises due west, the direction of the sun in the sky when it sets on the equinox;²⁷ and *Septentrio* which rises due north. These different quarters are marked out on the diagram through broad radials in the outer and inner circles: three short pen lines divide the winds into four groups of three, with the four principal winds at their centres. A wind diagram in St John's College MS 17 (c. 1100), on f. 40v, likewise divides the winds into four groups of three centred on the cardinal points. These winds are divided into four groups by broad foliate radials. The Icelandic world maps similarly divide the winds into four groups, as will be described in the next section.

Wind diagrams are numerous, and exhibit variations within which it is often difficult to trace lines of descent or development.²⁸ However, the names of the winds on the Icelandic wind diagram appear to derive principally from Isidore's *De natura rerum* and Bede's *De natura rerum*,²⁹ which follows the former's example. The Icelandic diagram's only departure from these works is the absence of *Aparctias*, which is an alternative name for *Septentrio* that appears in both Isidore and Bede's *De natura rerum*.

That the wind diagram seems to derive its information about the winds from one of these works is surprising given that it is preserved in the manuscript alongside an extract from Isidore's chapter on the winds from the *Etymologiae*. The extract beneath the wind

solstice (SE to SW); the western from there to sunset at the summer solstice (SW to NW); and then the northern from sunset at the summer solstice to sunrise of the same region (NW to NE)', parentheses are my own. The translation is adapted from Bede, *Bede: On the Nature of Things and On Times*, trans. Faith Wallis (Liverpool, 2010), p. 79.

²⁴ These winds are described in texts as being to the left and right of the principal winds from their own perspective, that is to say, from the perspective of the wind looking inwards. This difficulty resulted in widespread confusion about the ordering of the winds on medieval diagrams, as will become clear below.

²⁵ Isidore, *Etymologiae* XIII.xi.4.

²⁶ Pliny the Elder, *HN* II.47.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Obrist, 'Wind Diagrams', p. 43.

²⁹ Isidore, *NR* 37; Bede, *NR* 27.1-9.

diagram opens: 'Hii. xii uenti mundi globum circumagunt flatibus',³⁰ but the names given to 'these twelve winds' in the text are different from those on the diagram. The wind diagram includes three names that are not found in this extract from the *Etymologiae*.³¹ Firstly, the name *Euronothus* appears on the diagram but not in the *Etymologiae*, where the name *Austroafricus* is used instead.³² The name *Euronotus* does, however, appear in Bede's *De natura rerum*.³³ Secondly, the name *Thracias* appears as an alternative name for *Circius* on the diagram, but does not appear in the *Etymologiae*.³⁴ Thirdly, the name *Calcias* appears on the diagram as an alternative for *Vulturnus*, but this does not appear in the *Etymologiae*. In summary, Isidore's *Etymologiae* lacks three names represented on the Icelandic diagram: *Euronothus*, *Thracias*, and *Calcias*, but these three names all appear in *De natura rerum*.

In addition to the twelve winds, the diagram describes the winds' qualitative characteristics, and two lesser movements of air that are not associated with any particular geographic direction. The qualitative characteristics of the winds written on the inner circle show the clear influence of Isidore's description of the winds in the *Etymologiae*, which characterises the winds thus: 'natura enim omnium septentrionalium ventorum frigida et sicca est, australium humida et calida'.³⁵ The text written at the centre of the diagram describes the breeze on land, *aura*, and the breeze at sea, *altanus*.

There are two additional winds that blow everywhere [that is, are not associated with a particular geographic direction] that are more movements of air than winds: the breeze (*aura*) and the sea-breeze (*altanus*). *Aura* is a gentle motion of air on the land; *altanus* over the sea.³⁶

The text from the central medallion comes verbatim from Bede's *De natura rerum*.³⁷ The relevant section in Isidore's *De natura rerum*, which Bede otherwise follows for the

³⁰ 'These twelve winds blow around the world' (my translation).

³¹ Isidore, *Etymologiae* XIII.xi.3–17.

³² *Ibid.* XIII.xi.3–7.

³³ Bede, *NR* 27.2.

³⁴ Isidore, *Etymologiae* XIII.xi.12.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, XIII.xi.13: 'The nature of all the northern winds [the three winds that hail from the northern quarter] is cold and dry, and that of the southern winds [those that hail from the southern quarter] is moist and warm' (my translation).

³⁶ Refer back to the previous table for the Latin text, which is inscribed at the diagram's centre. The translation is my own.

³⁷ Bede, *NR* 27.9.

names of the winds, is lighter on detail than the account in the *Etymologiae*, which Bede expands. The passage from Isidore's *De natura rerum* reads: 'duo sunt tamen extra hos ubique spiritus magis quam uenti, aura et altanus', but does not supply the explanation 'aura enim ... in pelago' that follows in Bede's expanded account and on the Icelandic diagram.³⁸ It appears, therefore, that Bede obtained his information about *aura* and *altanus* from the *Etymologiae*, and that the Icelandic encyclopaedist adapted the wind diagram from Bede's expanded account.³⁹ The extract from the *Etymologiae* ends on f. 2v, overleaf from the wind diagram, where the description of the *aura* and *altanus* would begin. It seems, therefore, that the compiler of the encyclopaedia has abridged this section from the *Etymologiae* so as to not duplicate material between the text and diagram.

The example of the wind diagram and extract from Isidore's *Etymologiae* in AM 732b is a salutary reminder of the long process of combination and re-combination of sources that produced the medieval encyclopaedia. AM 732b is an anthology of texts and diagrams associated with various authors that have been excerpted and paraphrased and thus rendered 'encyclopaedic'.⁴⁰ In the case addressed above, the differences between the written and diagrammatic expressions of information about the winds demonstrates that the compiler of AM 732b, or the encyclopaedia from which it was copied, had access to multiple sources. It seems possible, even likely, that the compiler did not notice the differences between his sources, that he associated the text and diagram on thematic grounds but did not scrutinise the names they contain, or seek to harmonise them. AM 732b shows that both texts and diagrams were operative in the dissemination of information about the winds in Iceland, and that variance was possible even in such close quarters as a manuscript folio.

WINDS ON ICELANDIC WORLD MAPS

Two world maps from medieval Iceland – both preserved in the learned miscellany in Stofnun Árna Magnússonar in Reykjavík with the shelf mark GkS 1812 4to – feature a perimeter of winds.⁴¹ These two maps, preserved alongside one another in a part of the compilation that dates c. 1225–50, have circular frames that show the divine order inherent

³⁸ 'There are two additional winds that blow everywhere that are more movements of air than winds: the *aura* (breeze) and the *altanus* (sea-breeze)', Isidore, *NR* 37.5; Bede, *NR* 27.

³⁹ Bede, *NR* 27; Isidore, *Etymologiae* XIII.xi.16–18.

⁴⁰ B. Ribémont, 'Encyclopaedias', in *Medieval Science, Technology, and Medicine: An Encyclopaedia*, eds. T. Glick, S. J. Livesey and F. Wallis (London, 2005), pp. 159–61.

⁴¹ The world maps produced in medieval Iceland are the focus of my doctoral thesis, 'Cartography and Culture in Medieval Iceland', submitted at the University of York in September 2014.

in nature through the alignment of the four cardinal points with their associated features in the macrocosm and human microcosm. Disposed around these maps' perimeters are the names of the four cardinal points, the four principal winds (as above), the four seasons (spring, summer, autumn, and winter), the four ages of man (infancy, youth, old age, and decrepitude), and the four elements of the human body (breath, blood, water, and flesh), qualities sometimes referred to in modern scholarship as the 'Physical and Physiological Fours' or 'quaternities'.⁴² Through the alignment of these fourfold schemes with the four cardinal points spaced around the maps' circumferences, these maps' frames are at once representations of the observable horizon, the seasonal rhythms of a solar year, the measure of a human life, and the human body.⁴³ That the map's frame could be made to stand for all of these things exemplified the symmetry and cohesion of creation and man's place within it.

The two world maps share this quadripartite frame, but are otherwise quite different. The larger of the two maps spans two folios (5v–6r) and includes more than 100 legends arranged in a geographically suggestive way.⁴⁴ The smaller of these two maps is preserved overleaf (f. 6v) and is a simple T-O map that contains only the names of the three continents.⁴⁵

The perimeter of winds is a common feature of medieval world maps.⁴⁶ On such maps,

⁴² See A. C. Esmeijer, *Divina Quaternitas: a Preliminary Study in the Method and Application of Visual Exegesis* (Assen, 1978). The fours as they appear on the larger Icelandic map (5v–6r) have been described briefly by L. S. Chekin, *Northern Eurasia in Medieval Cartography: Inventory, Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Brepols, 2006), pp. 69–71; and are reproduced (with small errors) in R. Simek, *Altnordische Kosmographie*, pp. 419–20 and *ÁÍ* III, p. 71. The fours and other cosmological concepts disposed around the smaller Icelandic map (f. 6v) have not been transcribed. These fours receive extensive commentary in my doctoral thesis.

⁴³ This map therefore sustains comparison with manifold other cosmographical diagrams. See my doctoral thesis.

⁴⁴ This map is reproduced, and its legends transcribed, in C. C. Rafn, *Antiquités Russes d'après les monuments historiques des Islandais et des anciens Scandinaves*, 2 vols. (Copenhagen, 1852), II, 392–4; *ÁÍ* III, pp. 71–2; O. Pritsak, *The Origin of Rus', volume I: Old Scandinavian Sources other than the Sagas* (Cambridge MA, 1982), pp. 514–16; Simek, *Altnordische Kosmographie*, pp. 419–23; and Chekin, *Northern Eurasia*, pp. 69–71. Its fullest examination is presented in my doctoral thesis.

⁴⁵ This map is reproduced in Rafn, *Antiquités Russes*, p. 391; and Simek, *Altnordische Kosmographie*, pp. 508–9.

⁴⁶ For examples, see E. Kitzinger, 'World Map and Fortune's Wheel: A Medieval Mosaic Floor in Turin', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 117 (1973), 344–73, esp. p. 350; and D. Woodward, 'Medieval Mappaemundi', in *The History of Cartography vol. 1: Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient, and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean*, ed. J. B. Harley and D. Woodward (London, 1987), pp. 286–370, esp. p. 336.

it is common for the four principal winds to be differentiated from their satellites by some means of decoration or ornament. On the near contemporary English Psalter map (London, British Library, Add. 28681, 9r) produced c. 1225, the twelve winds are spaced around the map's perimeter and are personified by twelve heads blowing in towards the map's centre. The heads representing the four principal winds at the four cardinal points are highlighted in red, while the lesser sinistral and dextral winds are blue.⁴⁷ The twelve winds also feature on a map produced at St Emmeram monastery in Regensburg between 1145 and 1152 (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, CLM 14731, 83v). The twelve winds are again arranged in four groups of three: the four principal winds and their satellites are grouped and made distinct from one another by square inserts in the map's perimeter.⁴⁸ On the monumental Hereford world map (c. 1290–c. 1300) the four principal winds are represented by small naked figures with grotesque faces, while the eight secondary winds are represented by open-mouthed dragon heads.⁴⁹ P. D. A. Harvey states that the Hereford map's connection with the works of Isidore is 'clear but imprecise', since the descriptions of all the winds on the map can be extracted from Isidore's relevant works, but are in some cases differently named.⁵⁰

The Perimeter of Winds on the Larger Icelandic World Map (GkS 1812 4to, 5v–6r)

On the Icelandic maps the winds blow inwards from their points around the horizon. On the larger map (5v–6r), the fours are accommodated by the map's outer frame, and the twelve winds are placed evenly around its perimeter.

⁴⁷ The colour red was frequently used on medieval maps to highlight important features, see U. Ehrensverd, 'Colour in Cartography: a Historical Survey', in *Art and Cartography: Six Historical Essays*, ed. D. Woodward (London, 1987), pp. 123–46, esp. p. 127.

⁴⁸ This map is reproduced in Chekin, *Northern Eurasia*, p. 48 [no. II. 7. 2].

⁴⁹ S. D. Westrem, *The Hereford Map: A Transcription and Translation of the Legends with Commentary* (Turnhout, 2001), pp. 12–19; see also P. D. A. Harvey, *Mappa Mundi: The Hereford World Map* (London, 1996), p. 3.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

| | Sinistral | Cardinal | Dextral |
|-------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| South | Suðr Meridies | | |
| | Auster qui et nothus | Euroauster | Eurus |
| West | Occidens Vestr | | |
| | Zephrus qui et Favonius | Affricus qui et Libs | Euronothus |
| North | Norðr Septentrio | | |
| | Septentrio | Circius qui et Troacias | Corus qui et Argestes |
| East | Austr Oriens | | |
| | Subsolanus qui et Afeliotes | Vultumus qui et Calcias | Aquilo qui et Boreas |

Commentary on the Winds on the Larger Icelandic Map

As on the wind diagram, the twelve winds are distributed evenly around the horizon. The cardinal points feature prominently at the head of each quarter, with the relevant fours listed beneath them. This map shows the same winds as the Icelandic wind diagram in AM 732b; the winds' names appear to derive from Isidore's *De natura rerum* or Bede's work of the same name.

However, a significant departure from these written descriptions emerges in the placement of the winds around the map's perimeter. As outlined above, the authorities described three winds that rise from each quarter of the horizon: the principal winds rise from the four cardinal points and their satellites to their left (*sinister*) and right (*dexter*). While the Icelandic map features three winds in each quarter, the perimeter of winds is not quite in alignment with the cardinal points, so that the four principal winds do not rise, as they should, from the cardinal points.

On this Icelandic world map, the cardinal winds have been misplaced so that the wind traditionally located to the right (*dexter*) of the cardinal wind occupies the cardinal position, and the principal winds (*Auster/Nothus*, *Zephyrus/Favonius*, *Septentrio*, and *Subsolanus/Apeliotes*) occupy the sinistral positions in the same quadrants. The winds are, as the above table shows, one space clockwise out of alignment with the four cardinal points.⁵¹

⁵¹ Note that the winds are named 'sinistral' and 'dextral' from the perspective of the cardinal wind looking inward, not from the perspective of the viewer.

The displacement is systematic and regular: the winds are not entirely out of place, but are one position out of alignment. This error might reveal much about the circumstances of the map's production. Wind diagrams, in accordance with the principles that govern the orientation of medieval world maps, most commonly show east at the top.⁵² Narrative descriptions of the four cardinal winds, such as Pliny's *Historia Naturalis*, Isidore's *Etymologiæ*, and *Konungs Skuggsjá* also typically begin with the eastern wind *Subsolanus* or *Apeliotes*.⁵³ Isidore's *De natura rerum* and Bede's work of the same name begin with the northern wind *Septentrio*, then proceed clockwise.⁵⁴

The misalignment of the twelve winds might derive from an error on the part of an Icelandic scribe in identifying the traditional principal wind when copying his exemplar. The error is systematic and regular, and a simple error in adapting a written or diagrammatic source along these lines is easily conceivable. It might further be suggested that the unusual orientation of the Icelandic map, with south at the top, contributed towards the likelihood of such an error. The Icelandic world maps are unusual in that all five maps in the corpus are oriented with south at the top.⁵⁵ Given the paucity of other European maps that share this southern orientation, it is possible that the Icelandic maps were copied from east-oriented exemplars and that errors were introduced in the process of its reorientation. Whether the map's exemplar shared its south orientation or not, a twelve-wind system would be more difficult to copy and adapt to the quadripartite form of the map's frame than the other fours.

The Perimeter of Winds on the Smaller T-O map (GkS 1812 4to, 6v)

The smaller T-O map preserved overleaf from the larger map (f. 6v) features an incomplete or abbreviated scheme of six winds. The quadripartite structure of this map's frame is similar to that of the larger map, but is made more explicit by the prominent diameters that divide the diagram into its four quarters. The smaller world map clarifies the fourfold division of the world pictured also on the larger world map, whose complexity and detail makes its fourfold structure more difficult to discern.⁵⁶

⁵² Obrist, 'Wind Diagrams', p. 47.

⁵³ Pliny, *HN* II.47; Isidore, *Etymologiæ* XIII.xi.2; *Konungs Skuggsjá* ch. 5; The winds are not cited by their classical names in *Konungs Skuggsjá*, rather the eight winds are identified by the directions from which they blow. The circular survey of the winds nonetheless might expose the influence of such treatises or diagrams.

⁵⁴ Isidore *NR* 37; Bede *NR* 27.

⁵⁵ The curious alignment of the corpus of Icelandic maps, and some possible explanations, are considered at length in my doctoral thesis.

⁵⁶ It may be that this smaller map does an exegetical service to the larger one, enabling its viewer to discern the fourfold structure that inheres to both.

The diagram in which the small T-O map is embedded has been referred to by both its commentators, Rafn and Simek, as a wind diagram.⁵⁷ However, close inspection of the scheme of winds on this small T-O map reveals this to be a misnomer.

| | Sinistral | Cardinal | Dextral |
|-------|------------|------------|----------|
| South | MERIDIES | | |
| | | Subsolanus | Favonius |
| West | OCCIDENS | | |
| | Nothus | Zephyrus | |
| North | SEPTENTRIO | | |
| | Aquilo | Boreas | |
| East | ORIENS | | |
| | | | |

Commentary on the Winds on the Smaller Icelandic Map

On the small T-O map there is an incomplete scheme of six winds, and their placement around the map's perimeter is incoherent. Four of these six winds are principal winds in the Isidorian and Bedan tradition. *Favonius* is placed to the right of *Subsolanus* in the southern quarter of the map, but is actually the west wind and an alternative name for *Zephyrus*. *Subsolanus* is placed due south on the map, but is actually the east wind. *Zephyrus* is placed due west on the map, and is indeed the west wind. *Nothus* is placed to the left of *Zephyrus* in the western quarter of the map, but is actually the south wind (an alternative name for *Auster*). *Boreas* is placed due north on the map, and while it is one of the northern winds, it is secondary to *Septentrio*. *Aquilo* is placed left of *Boreas* in the northern quarter of the map, but is actually an alternative name for *Boreas*. The only wind in its proper place is the west wind *Zephyrus*. However, the winds *Zephyrus* (in the map's western quarter) and *Favonius* (in the southern quarter) are in Bede's *De natura rerum* two alternative names for the same wind, and likewise *Boreas* and *Aquilo* (both in the map's northern quarter). The circle of winds on the small T-O map exhibits no regularity in its error. The placement of the winds on the map corresponds with their placement on the wind diagram in only one instance, and this may well be accidental.

The continents on the central T-O map are clearly oriented with south at the top, like the Icelandic world map on the previous two folios. The south-orientation is also made clear by the names of the cardinal points disposed around the map's perimeter: the

⁵⁷ See Rafn, *Antiquités Russes*, p. 391; and Simek, *Altnordische Kosmographie*, pp. 371 and 384.

inscription 'meridies' ('south') is particularly prominent at the top of the diagram. However, the south orientation does not extend to the perimeter of winds. Immediately below the inscription 'meridies' is marked the wind *Subsolanus*. In the *Etymologiae*, Isidore states that *Subsolanus* is so named 'quod sub ortu solis nascatur'.⁵⁸ *Subsolanus* is therefore the east wind, the wind that generally features at the top of the wind diagram. The placement of *Subsolanus* on this map might support the thesis that the arrangement of the winds on the Icelandic maps stems from an imperfectly executed attempt to reorient an east-oriented original or else to extract information about the names of the winds from an east-oriented wind diagram: the mapmaker changing the orientation of the map's central T-O, cardinal points, and other fours consistently, but being unable to realign the perimeter of winds. The appearance of *Subsolanus* at the top of the map might be an indication of the orientation of its sources, since wind diagrams were conventionally oriented, like their cartographic cousins, with east at the top. There are no winds at all in the map's eastern quarter. Perhaps the mapmaker realised his mistake in placing the easterly winds in the map's southern quarter (which is unusually, here, at the top of the map), and therefore abandoned the scheme.

This suggestion might be weakened by the preponderance of errors elsewhere on this circle of winds: the placement of *Subsolanus* at the top of the map may well be accidental and not derive from its placement on an east-oriented original. Indeed, errors in the placement of the winds were elsewhere widespread. Isidore's double names for the winds led to considerable confusion in later medieval attempts at schematisation and graphic representation.⁵⁹ Pulsiano remarks that 'the tradition among Anglo-Saxon manuscripts reflects such widespread confusion... as to make it impossible for one to understand what comprised the correct division of the winds'.⁶⁰ Morgan likewise detects a number of errors made by an eleventh-century glossator of a wind diagram in an eleventh-century English learned miscellany (London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius C. i.) who attempted unsuccessfully to gloss the Isidorian names of the winds with the directions from which they hail in English.⁶¹ Such confusions, in relation to both their proper names and positions, are evident on the Icelandic world maps. That these errors have not been

⁵⁸ XIII.xi.4: 'Because it arises beneath (*sub*) the rising sun (*sol*)' (my translation).

⁵⁹ P. Pulsiano, 'The Twelve-Spoked Wheel of the *Summoner's Tale*', *The Chaucer Review* 29 (1995), 382–389, p. 385.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 384.

⁶¹ H. Morgan, 'Old English Items in London, British Library, MS Cotton Tiberius C. i.', *New Medieval Literatures* 13 (2011), 137–147, pp. 139–40.

noticed previously is unsurprising, as little attention has been directed towards these maps' frames in previous commentaries. Moreover, previous facsimiles of the smaller map (6v) have reproduced only the central T-O map, excerpted from the larger quadripartite framework in which it is embedded in the manuscript.⁶²

CONCLUSION

Three examples of the wind diagram survive from medieval Iceland. The wind diagram in AM 732b 4to (c. 1300-25), preserved alongside an extract of Isidore's *Etymologiae*, demonstrates that information about the winds was disseminated in Iceland through both written treatises and diagrams. The names of the twelve winds on the diagram appear to derive from *De natura rerum*, while the central text about breezes on land and at sea can be identified more certainly with a parallel text in Bede's *De natura rerum*. The discontinuity between the names of the winds cited on the diagram and those in the accompanying extract from Isidore's *Etymologiae* demonstrate that information about the winds derived from multiple sources that subsequently met in the medieval encyclopaedia.⁶³

Two Icelandic world maps in GkS 1812 4to (c. 1225-50) feature a perimeter of winds. The larger of these two maps (5v-6r) features the same twelve winds named on the Icelandic wind diagram in AM 732b, and it is likely that they also derived from *De natura rerum* or an intermediary diagram. The slight error in these winds' alignment with the four cardinal directions probably evidence some difficulty in adapting the twelve-wind system to a quadripartite frame. The smaller map (6v) exhibits a far greater degree of confusion about the names of the winds and their order. Although the diagram that encloses this T-O map has a number of times been identified as a wind diagram, its perimeter of winds is altogether incoherent. The presence of the eastern wind *Subsolanus* at the top of this diagram might suggest that it was ultimately adapted from an east-oriented original.

These three diagrams bring into focus the mechanisms by which information about the winds was disseminated, and cast new light on an unstudied aspect of the encyclopaedic tradition in medieval Iceland. Collectively, these examples are a salutary reminder of the

⁶² Rafn, *Antiquités Russes*, p. 391; and Simek, *Altnordische Kosmographie*, p. 509. The smaller map (6v) is reproduced in facsimile twice in *Altnordische Kosmographie*, on p. 509 (where it is erroneously assigned to GkS 1812 4to, 11r) and p. 99 (where it is correctly assigned to 6v). The facsimile on p. 99 shows the complete diagram, including the winds.

⁶³ Isidore *Etymologiae* XIII.xi.3-16.

processes of recombination, adaptation, and excerption that were operative in the development of the medieval encyclopaedia, and evidence the wide variety of sources from which later writers who dealt with the winds drew.

The Corruption of Evidence in a Critical Tradition: Welsh and Old English Elegies

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The Old English elegies have long been the *locus classicus* for investigations of Welsh influence on Old English literature. William Owen Pughe published his edition and translation of the 'Heroic Elegies of Llywarch Hen' in 1792, and already in 1826 we find John Conybeare speculating on links between these poems and the Old English texts he studied.¹ I use the controversial term 'Old English Elegy' here for the most critically prominent of these poems, Greenfield's 'famous seven': *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer*, *Deor*, *The Wife's Lament*, *The Husband's Message*, *Wulf and Eadwacer*, and *The Ruin*.² These are the texts where Welsh influence has most commonly been detected.

The Welsh poems which have been brought into comparison with these are largely contained within what is known as 'Canu Llywarch Hen', thematically linked poetic groups found in manuscripts ranging in date from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century.³ Within 'Canu Llywarch Hen', *Claf Abercuawg*, *Cân yr Henwr* and *Diffaith Aelwyd Rheged* have been particularly prominent in the comparative critical tradition. Outside these groups, *Cyntefin Ceinaf Amser*, which survives in the Red Book of Hergest

¹ W. Owen [Pughe], ed. and trans., *The Heroic Elegies and Other Pieces of Llywarch Hen* (London, 1792); J. Conybeare and W. D. Conybeare, *Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Poetry* (London, 1826), pp. 250–1.

² S. Greenfield, 'The Old English Elegies', in *Continuations and Beginnings: Studies in Old English Literature*, ed. E. G. Stanley (London, 1966), pp. 142–75, at p. 142. The term has also been stretched to include a number of other texts and sections of longer poems. A. Klinck offers a concise summary: Klinck, 'Elegies', in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. M. Lapidge, J. Blair, S. Keynes and D. Scragg (Oxford, 1991), pp. 164–5. I think we still can usefully speak of the Old English elegies as a genre, but under a more flexible 'family resemblance' model as discussed by Alastair Fowler, rather than as a fixed and exclusive category: A. Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 37–44; cf. A. Klinck, *The Old English Elegies* (Montreal, 1992), p. 224. For my purposes here, I use the term "early Welsh elegiac verse" simply as a convenient label, designed to encompass the poems with which the Old English elegies have been compared.

³ The standard editions of these poems are I. Williams, ed., *Canu Llywarch Hen* (Cardiff, 1935) and J. Rowland, ed. and trans., *Early Welsh Saga Poetry* (Cambridge, 1990). Rowland's text is quoted here unless otherwise noted. On the manuscript tradition, see Rowland, *Early Welsh Saga Poetry*, pp. 393–402; J. Rowland, 'The Manuscript Tradition of the Red Book Englynion', *Studia Celtica* 18/19 (1983/4), 79–95; cf. R. Sharpe, 'Claf Abercuawg and the Voice of Llywarch Hen', *Studia Celtica* 43 (2009), 95–121, at pp. 95–7, 102–3 and 117–18.

(1382 x c. 1403) and the mid-thirteenth-century Black Book of Carmarthen, has also been a common site of comparison.⁴

Despite the lateness of the manuscript tradition, most of the poems of 'Canu Llywarch Hen' have traditionally been dated to around the ninth century, with Jenny Rowland suggesting a range of dates from the late eighth century to the tenth.⁵ More recent linguistic research has suggested that these poems might overlap with twelfth- and thirteenth-century court-poetry.⁶ As regards *Cyntefin Ceinaf Amser*, recent critics have tended to favour a twelfth-century origin.⁷ If the Welsh poems are early, and nothing

⁴ For an edition of *Cyntefin Ceinaf Amser*, see M. Haycock, ed. and trans., *Blodeugerd Barddas o Ganu Crefyddol Cynnar* (Llandybie, 1994), pp. 141–50. I follow the manuscript datings given in D. Huws, 'Llyfr Coch Hergest', in *Cyfoeth y Testun: Ysgrifau ar Lemyddiaeth Gymraeg yr Oesoedd Canol*, ed. I. Daniel, M. Haycock, D. Johnston and J. Rowland (Caerdydd, 2003), pp. 1–30, at pp. 1–2; Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts* (Aberystwyth, 2000), p. 58. Criticism which argues for some Welsh influence on or connection to the Old English elegies includes E. Sieper, *Die altenglische Elegie* (Straßburg, 1915), pp. 55–77; N. K. Chadwick, 'The Celtic Background of Early Anglo-Saxon England', in *Celt and Saxon: Studies in the Early British Border*, ed. N. K. Chadwick (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 323–52; H. Pilch, 'The Elegiac Genre in Old English and Early Welsh Poetry', *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 29 (1962–4), 209–24, at p. 217; P. L. Henry, *Early English and Celtic Lyric*, (London, 1966), pp. 25, 67–83, 92, 136 and 237; I. Gordon, ed., *The Seafarer*, (London, 1960), p. 17; Greenfield, 'Old English Elegies', p. 159; S. L. Higley, 'Lamentable Relationships? "Non-Sequitur" in Old English and Middle Welsh Elegy', in *Connections between Old English and Medieval Celtic Literature: Three Essays*, ed. Karen G. Borst and Patrick K. Ford (California, 1982), pp. 45–65, at p. 62; N. Jacobs, 'Celtic Saga and Old English Elegies', *Études Celtiques* 26 (1989), 95–144; R. G. Gruffydd, 'Cyntefin Ceinaf Amser o Lyfr Du Caerfyrddin', *Ysgrifau Beirniadol* 4 (1969), 12–26, at p. 19; Rowland, *Early Welsh Saga Poetry*, pp. 202–7; O. Davies, *Celtic Christianity in Early Medieval Wales* (Cardiff, 1996), pp. 41–2. Hildegard Tristram argues that the Welsh and English elegies developed separately from shared Latin sources: H. L. C. Tristram, 'The Early Insular Elegies: ITEM ALIA', in *Celtic Linguistics / Ieithyddiaeth Geltaidd: Readings in the Brythonic Languages, Festschrift for T. Arwyn Watkins* (Amsterdam, 1990), pp. 343–61. Peter Dronke groups a number of Old English, Old Norse and early medieval Irish and Latin poems together with 'Canu Llywarch Hen' into the genre of lyrical *planctus*, but does not state how he views them as being related: P. Dronke, *Poetic Individuality in the Middle Ages: New Departures in Poetry 1100–1150*, 2nd ed. (London, 1986), pp. 27–9.

⁵ Williams, *Canu Llywarch Hen*, p. lxxiii; Rowland, *Early Welsh Saga Poetry*, pp. 388–9. On the possible geographical origins of 'Canu Llywarch Hen', see P. K. Ford, ed. and trans., *The Poetry of Llywarch Hen* (California, 1974), pp. 25–32; P. Sims-Williams, 'The Provenance of the Llywarch Hen Poems: A Case for Llan-gors, Brycheiniog', *CMCS* 26 (1993), 27–63; cf. P. Sims-Williams, 'Historical Need and Literary Narrative: a Caveat from ninth-century Wales', *Welsh History Review* 17 (1994–5), 1–40. Sims-Williams also suggests an eighth to tenth-century date is probable: 'Provenance', p. 63.

⁶ S. Rodway, 'A Datable Development in Medieval Literary Welsh', *CMCS* 36 (Winter 1998), 71–94, at pp. 77–8 and 88; S. Rodway, 'Two Developments in Medieval Literary Welsh and their Implications for Dating Texts', in *Yr Hen Iaith: Studies in Early Welsh*, ed. P. Russell (Aberystwyth, 2003), pp. 67–74, at pp. 69–70 and 72; S. Rodway, *Dating Medieval Welsh Literature: Evidence from the Verbal System* (Aberystwyth, 2013), pp. 156 and 166. The dates for these poems require fresh detailed investigation in light of this new research.

⁷ On the date of *Cyntefin Ceinaf Amser*, see J. G. Davies, 'The Welsh Bard and the Poetry of External Nature: from Llywarch Hen to Dafydd ab Gwilym', *Transactions of the Honourable Society of*

compels us to believe they are, they have clearly developed a great deal from their earlier forms, and there is no reason to think that such development would have been solely linguistic. The Old English elegies are similarly difficult to date, but we have a *terminus ad quem* of c. 965–75 provided by the Exeter Book, in which they are all contained.⁸

Before I discuss the critical tradition fully, it might first be worth indicating what evidence we lack for Welsh influence on these Old English poems. There is no linguistic evidence for Welsh influence. As the Welsh poems use English loan words and have a far later *terminus ad quem*, perhaps examining whether the English texts might have influenced the Welsh would be the more obvious approach, but this has not been done.⁹ There are no close parallels between the English and the Welsh poems where the same objects or ideas are described using closely equivalent words. Thus there is no equivalent to the parallel between ‘Her bið feoh læne, her bið freond læne; / her bið mon læne; her bið mæg læne’ in *The Wanderer* and ‘Deyr fé, / deyrja frændr, / deyr siálfir it sama ...’ in *Hávamál*.¹⁰ As Richard Dance has argued, such links would not constitute irrefutable evidence for the influence of one literary tradition upon the other, but they might suggest some sort of connection, in this case, common origins.¹¹ Such similarities are lacking in the case of the Welsh texts.

The modern critical tradition which has drawn all these texts together starts with Ernst Sieper’s *Die altenglische Elegie*.¹² Sieper was concerned to explain away the elegies as

Cymmrodorion (1912–13), 81–128, at p. 83; P. L. Henry, *Early English and Celtic Lyric*, p. 67, n. 1; K. H. Jackson, *A Celtic Miscellany*, 2nd ed. (Harmondsworth, 1971), pp. 298–9; Haycock, *Blodeugerdd*, p. 144; cf. A. Breeze, ‘Master John of St. David’s, a new twelfth-century poet?’, *BBCS* 40 (1993), 73–82.

⁸ B. Muir, ed., *The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry*, 2nd ed., 2 vols (Exeter, 1994), I, 1. Klinck’s detailed treatment suggests a range of dates for the texts from the mid-ninth to the early-tenth centuries, but with little basis: see Klinck, *Old English Elegies*, pp. 15–21. Much emphasis has been placed on West Mercia as a possible place of origin for these poems, but with little evidence, other than the assumption of some Welsh connection: see Gordon, *Seafarer*, pp. 31–2; R. F. Leslie, *Three Old English Elegies* (Manchester, 1961), pp. 31–4.

⁹ See Rowland, *Early Welsh Saga Poetry*, p. 386 and ‘hebawc’ in *Marwnad Cynddylan* l. 19 (*Early Welsh Saga Poetry*, p. 430.)

¹⁰ Muir, *Exeter Anthology*, I, pp. 215–19, ll. 108–9: ‘Here wealth is transient, here a friend is transient; / here a man is transient; here a kinsman is transient’; G. Neckel and H. Kuhn, ed., *Edda: Die Lieder des Codex Regius nebst Verwandten Denkmälern*, 5th ed. (Heidelberg, 1983), pp. 17–44: ‘Wealth passes away, / kinsmen pass away, / one’s own self passes away the same’. All quotations of the Old English elegies are taken from Muir’s edition. All translations are my own.

¹¹ R. Dance, ‘North Sea Currents: Old English-Old Norse Relations, Literary and Linguistic’, *Literature Compass* 1 (2004), 1–10.

¹² Sieper, *Die altenglische Elegie*. Much good work has already been done by Barry Lewis and especially Sarah Higley to highlight some of the weaknesses in this tradition: see B. Lewis, ‘Genre a Dieithrwyh yn y

having undergone foreign influence, as they have ‘einen solch ernsten, grüblerisch weichen, um nicht zu sagen sentimentalén Charakter’, which he claims makes them incongruent with the rest of early Germanic literature.¹³ He knows exactly who to blame for this sentimentality: ‘Unser Blick wendet sich natürlich zu der Literatur der Kelten, und zwar desjenigen Zweiges der Kelten, mit dem die Angelsachsen in der engsten Berührung standen: der Walliser.’¹⁴ Primarily comparing Welsh poems with the Old English material, Sieper concludes that a number of features in the Old English elegies, especially the lamenting cuckoo, are of Celtic origin.¹⁵ Sieper is unfamiliar with the Welsh material, for which he depends upon the unreliable translations in Skene’s *Four Ancient Books of Wales*, and which he notoriously described as ‘unendlich primitiv’.¹⁶ Yet the modern positivist tradition of comparing these texts would not exist had Sieper not felt the need to explain away the ‘softness’ of the Old English elegies.

Following on from this, Nora Chadwick wrote of the probability of Welsh influence on the Old English elegies, before Herbert Pilch pushed Sieper’s arguments much further.¹⁷ He did not argue, and indeed nobody does, that these particular Welsh poems in their current form influenced extant Old English elegies. Rather, Pilch saw them, especially *Claf Abercuawg*, as being representative of an elegiac tradition, which, he argues, was responsible for the genesis of the Old English elegies. He goes so far as to say that ‘the elegiac genre in Old English was created in imitation of a similar Welsh genre as known to us through “Claf Abercuawg”’.¹⁸ Pilch dismisses the obvious differences between the Welsh and Old English texts by suggesting that Anglo-Saxon poets struggled to imitate

Cynfeirdd’, *Llenyddiaeth mewn Theori* 2 (2007), 1–33, at pp. 10–16 and 21–7; S. L. Higley, *Between Languages: The Uncooperative Text in Early Welsh and Old English Nature Poetry* (Pennsylvania, 1993); S. L. Higley, ‘Forcing a Gap: The Stylistics of “Amputation” in *Marwnad Llywelyn* by Gruffudd ab yr Ynad Coch’, *Viator* 19 (1988), 247–72; Higley, ‘Lamentable Relationships?’, pp. 45–65.

¹³ Sieper, *Die altenglische Elegie*, p. 55: ‘such a solemn, pensively soft, not to say sentimental character’.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*: ‘Our sight naturally turns towards the literature of the Celts, and indeed of that branch of the Celts with which the Anglo-Saxons were in the nearest contact: the Welsh’.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 77. Sieper vacillates, seemingly quite comfortably, between saying Welsh and Celtic, although it is clear he views this Celtic influence as primarily a Welsh rather than an Irish one, and it is this idea of Welsh influence I treat here.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 66.

¹⁷ Chadwick, ‘Celtic Background’, pp. 335–46; cf. the more careful arguments of Gordon, *Seafarer*, pp. 17–18 and 31; A. Renoir, ‘The Old English Ruin: Contrastive Structure and Affective Impact’, in *The Old English Elegies: New Essays in Criticism and Research*, ed. Martin Green (Rutherford, 1983), pp. 148–73, at p. 166; K. Hume, ‘The “Ruin Motif” in Old English Poetry’, *Anglia* 94 (1976), 339–60, at pp. 356–60; Greenfield, ‘Old English Elegies’, pp. 159 and 169.

¹⁸ Pilch, ‘Elegiac Genre’, p. 221.

this genre successfully.¹⁹ The influence of Pilch's claims is seen in Nicolas Jacobs' work, who follows Ifor Williams's theory that the Welsh poems once formed part of a now-lost prose saga.²⁰ He argues that this hypothesized Welsh genre was loaned into Old English, and formed a (now also non-extant) context for Old English poems such as *The Wife's Lament*.²¹ Needless to say, such an argument piles conjecture upon conjecture, moving far away from the actual evidence we have.

Patrick Henry developed a less simplistic model for looking at interchange between Welsh, Old English and Old Irish poetry. He suggests these languages had a shared genre - the *penitential lyric* - which included Old English elegies and Welsh poems like *Claf Abercuawg*.²² The idea of a Welsh connection is important for many of our standard editions and treatments of the Old English elegies. It allows R. F. Leslie and Ida Gordon, for example, to link some of the poems to West Mercia.²³ In terms of scholarship of Welsh poetry, the comparative argument plays a key role in the most significant recent study of 'Canu Llywarch Hen': Jenny Rowland's *Early Welsh Saga Poetry*. Rowland accepts the arguments that the Old English elegies have been subject to Welsh influence, and thus her introductions and notes are filled with quotations from Old English poems, supporting her interpretations, and occasionally emendations, of the Welsh texts.²⁴

Sarah Higley, however, has been instrumental in highlighting the differences between the Welsh and English poems, juxtaposing them so as to bring out their contrasts.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ I. Williams, 'The Poems of Llywarch Hen', *Proceedings of the British Academy* 18 (1932), 269–302; cf. J. Rowland, 'The Prose Setting of the Early Welsh *Englynion Chwedlonol*', *Ériu* 36 (1985), 29–45. Ford argues that no prose setting is necessary: *Poetry of Llywarch Hen*, p. 49; cf. Sharpe, 'Claf Abercuawg', p. 120.

²¹ Jacobs, 'Celtic Saga'; cf. C. L. Wood, *An Overview of Welsh Poetry before the Norman Conquest* (New York, 1996), p. 104; Chadwick, 'Celtic Background', p. 341.

²² Henry, *Early English and Celtic Lyric*, pp. 21 and 126.

²³ Leslie, *Three Old English Elegies*, pp. 31–4; Gordon, *Seafarer*, pp. 31–2.

²⁴ Rowland, *Early Welsh Saga Poetry*, pp. 191 and 226; cf. P. Sims-Williams, *Irish Influence on Medieval Welsh Literature* (Oxford, 2011), p. 94. Perhaps the most notorious of these changes is Rowland's decision to switch around the final two verses of *Claf Abercuawg* (without any indication in her *apparatus criticus*) so that it more closely resembles Old English elegies like *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*. This has been extensively criticised: Higley, *Between Languages*, pp. 49–50; Lewis, 'Genre', pp. 24–5; Sharpe, 'Claf Abercuawg', p. 113. Rowland goes on to claim that the poem's order, as emended by her, 'strongly suggests this poem is linked to the [elegiac] genre seen more fully in Old English', the text having been manipulated to suit comparative arguments: *Early Welsh Saga Poetry*, pp. 196–7.

Nevertheless, Higley still argues for connections between the texts, suggesting links between the cuckoo in *Cyntefin Ceinaf Amser* and *The Seafarer*.²⁵

CUCKOOS

The idea that the trope of the lamenting cuckoo, which occurs once in *The Seafarer* and once in *The Husband's Message*, derives from Welsh remains the most important site for critical arguments in favour of Welsh influence on the Old English elegies. The most detailed treatment of this trope in the Old English poems is found in Friedrich Schubel's 'Der ags. „klagende“ Kuckuck', and this article perhaps serves as a warning as to what can happen when texts are compared without first-hand knowledge of the languages involved.²⁶ Schubel cites the following lines as an example of happy cuckoos in early Welsh poetry: 'when cuckoos sing on the branches of pleasant trees, may my joyfulness become greater'.²⁷ He then gives a counter-example of the sad cuckoo: 'when cuckoos sing on the tops of fine trees, / greater grows my gloom'.²⁸ The similarities between these lines are striking. In fact, they both represent the same lines of the same poem, *Cyntefin Ceinaf Amser*, the former being an incorrect translation found in Skene's *Four Ancient Books of Wales* and the latter being a more accurate translation by Ifor Williams.²⁹

Schubel is nevertheless rightly sceptical of the idea that the Welsh poems influenced the English. He draws on Gerhard Dietrich's work, which highlights that the connection of the cuckoo with sadness appears to be fairly wide-spread in many European traditions, including later Germanic ones.³⁰ Jacobs is unconvincing in arguing that not a single one of

²⁵ Higley also suggests there is a link between putative non-sequiturs in the Welsh poetry and *The Wife's Lament*, which has not been generally accepted: Higley, 'Lamentable Relationships', pp. 61–2; Jacobs, 'Celtic Saga', p. 121.

²⁶ Schubel, 'Der ags. „klagende“ Kuckuck', in *Festschrift Prof. Dr. Herbert Koziol zum siebzigsten Geburtstag*, ed. G. Bauer, F. Stanzel and F. Zaic (Vienna, 1973), pp. 280–96.

²⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 293–5

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ W. F. Skene, *The Four Ancient Books of Wales*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1868), I, p. 509; I. Williams, *Lectures on Early Welsh Poetry* (Dublin, 1954), p. 12; cf. Pilch's misleading translation 'emanates my murder': Pilch, 'Elegiac Genre', p. 217.

³⁰ Schubel, 'Der ags. „klagende“ Kuckuck', p. 285; G. Dietrich, 'Ursprünge des Elegischen in der altenglischen Literatur', in *Literatur – Kultur – Gesellschaft in England und Amerika: Aspekte und Forschungsbeiträge Friedrich Schubel zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. G. Müller-Schwefe and K. Tuzinski (Frankfurt, 1966), pp. 3–27, at p. 21; 'Kuckuck', in *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, ed. H. Bächtold-Stäubli, 10 vols (Berlin, 1927–42) V, cols. 689–751; O. S. Anderson, *The Seafarer: An Interpretation* (Lund, 1937), p. 23; F. J. Oinas, 'Karelian and Finnish Negative Analogy: a Construction of Slavic origin', *The Slavic and East European Journal* 20 (1976), 379–86, at p. 384; cf. Sieper, *Altenglische*

these traditions contains a truly sad cuckoo, but the presentation of the cuckoo in the Welsh poems merits further investigation.³¹ Only in non-elegiac texts, which need not be dated earlier than the twelfth or early thirteenth centuries, is the cuckoo actually sad in early Welsh poetry, and even here its depiction is far from unambiguous.³²

In *Angar Kyfyndawt*, we find perhaps the most mournful representation of the cuckoo in early Welsh poetry. Taliesin boasts that he knows:

tant telyn py gwyn;
coc, py gwyn py gan,
py geidw y didan;
py dydwc garthan
Gereint ar Arman,³³

Like the string of the harp, the cuckoo is represented as something which certainly *can* lament. However, it is at the same time associated with happiness, reference being made

Elegie, pp. 72–7.

³¹ Jacobs first dismisses the Slavic examples of the sad cuckoo noted by Sieper, claiming ‘that the sadness involved in them is the result of a metamorphosis; the cuckoo is not in itself a constant reminder of sadness, nor is it, as in all the cases mentioned, associated with what in Old English is called *longung* and in Welsh *hiraeth*’: Jacobs, ‘Celtic Saga’, p. 122. Jacobs also dismisses the Swedish proverb cited by Anderson (*Norregök är sorggök, södergök är dödergök* ‘The Northern cuckoo is a sorrow cuckoo, the Southern cuckoo is a death cuckoo’, Anderson glossing this as ‘if the note of the cuckoo is heard for the first time from the north it means sorrow, if from the south it means death’: Anderson, *Seafarer*, p. 23). Jacobs claims ‘the significance of the bird here lies not in itself but in the direction from which its song is heard’: Jacobs, ‘Celtic Saga’, p. 122. However, both the Northern cuckoo and the Southern cuckoo are connected to sadness and loss, and therefore it seems that the use of the cuckoo itself is significant here, as it is linked to sadness regardless of which direction its cry comes from. Jacobs then attempts to dispose of the examples of the sad cuckoo cited by Dietrich from the *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, saying that ‘[a] number of alleged German instances prove on investigation to fall into a different class of superstitions: those which are centred on the cuckoo itself, using the circumstances in which a person first hears it to predict his or her condition for the following year’; *Handwörterbuch*, 5. cols. 717–8; Dietrich, ‘Ursprünge’, p. 21; Jacobs, ‘Celtic Saga’, pp. 122–3. Although the examples from Germanic folklore may tend to express the association between the cuckoo and sadness in this form, that connection is still present. Each tradition about the cuckoo will of course have its own idiosyncrasies, but the association between the cuckoo and its call and sadness or loss in these traditions is undeniable. All Jacobs has shown is that these representations of the cuckoo and the sorrow it causes are not exactly the same, but neither are the depictions of the cuckoo in early Welsh and Old English poetry.

³² On the dating of these poems, see M. Haycock, ed. and trans., *Legendary Poems from the Book of Taliesin* (Aberystwyth, 2007), pp. 21–36; M. Haycock, ed. and trans., *Prophecies from the Book of Taliesin* (Aberystwyth, 2013), pp. 14–18.

³³ *Angar Kyfyndawt* in Haycock, *Legendary Poems*, pp. 110–123: ‘What the string of a harp laments; / the cuckoo – what it laments, what it sings, / what upholds its music; / what brings Geraint’s camp to Garman’, ll. 156–60.

to its *diddan*, which invariably has connotations of entertainment and amusement, being defined by John Lloyd-Jones’ *Geirfa Barddoniaeth Gynnar Gymraeg* as ‘cysur, digrifwch, difyrwrch, hyfrydwch; cerdd, cynghanedd’.³⁴ In his treatment of these lines, Pilch states:

It is tempting, in this context, to divide *garthan* as *garth an* and to treat *an gereint* as a spelling for *a'nghereint*: ‘(the cuckoo) why does he carry the forest and my beloved ones on the Garman’. This interpretation would bring this cuckoo passage into even closer agreement with the elegiac version of the cuckoo theme. It yields the same association of the cuckoo’s call with death, with trees, and with water as is found in *The Seafarer* and (with the substitution of absent for dead *cereint*) in *The Husband’s Message*.³⁵

Pilch has thoroughly and unjustifiably rewritten the text here in order to support his arguments.

In *Gwawt Lud y Mawr*, we are told:

Byt a uyd diffeith direit,
kogeu tyghettor
hoywwed trwy groywed,
gwyr bychein bron otwyllyd.³⁶

As Marged Haycock has suggested, rather than a simple association of cuckoos with worldly destruction, which Pilch sees here, the cuckoos’ appearance in a wasteland is associated with the disruption of the seasons – this is not the plentiful world they normally inhabit – and this is part of the wider focus of these lines on disruption and things being out-of-joint.³⁷ In addition to this, there are also clearly positive depictions of the cuckoo in early Welsh poems, as in *Aduwyneu Taliessin*: ‘atwyn Mei y gogeu ac eaws’.³⁸

³⁴ J. Lloyd-Jones, *Geirfa Barddoniaeth Gynnar Gymraeg*, 2 vols (Caerdydd, 1931–63) s.v. ‘diðan’: ‘solace, pleasure, amusement, joy; song, music’.

³⁵ Pilch, ‘Elegiac Genre’, p. 217.

³⁶ *Gwawt Lud y Mawr* in Haycock, *Prophecies*, pp. 126–32: ‘The world will be an evil desolate place, / cuckoos will be fated / - opulence mixed with purity - / little men, deceptive in heart’, ll. 67–70.

³⁷ Pilch, ‘Elegiac Genre’, p. 217. Haycock compares the line *Mei marw cogeu rac annbyt* (‘cuckoos are dead in May because of a chill’) from *Gwasgardgerd Vyrðin yn y Bed* (Red Book of Hergest, cols. 584–5 (col. 584 ll. 36–7)) which ‘prophesies a world upside-down: cuckoos will die in May, the very month of their annual flourish’: Haycock, *Prophecies*, p. 142.

In terms of the elegiac poems, the main *locus* of the critical comparison, Barry Lewis, who is generally sceptical of arguments in favour of influence, states 'y cyswllt agosaf yw'r gog alaethus'.³⁹ Yet I do not think the cuckoo itself is presented as being mournful in the Welsh poems.⁴⁰ Here is how the cuckoo is presented in *Cyntefin Ceinaf Amser*:

Kintevin keinhaw amsser:
Dyar adar, glas callet,
Ereidir in rich, ich yguet,
Guirt mor, brithottor turet.

Ban ganhont coge ar blaen guit guiw
handid muy vy llauridet.
Tost muc, amluc anhunet
Kan ethint uy kereint in attwet.⁴¹

The line containing the cuckoo, with its 'pleasant trees', represents a continuation of the loveliness of spring, described in the first *englyn*. However, as the cuckoo is a migratory bird, disappearing after summer to a then unknown location and returning in spring, it is easy to see how, across many cultures, it could gain associations of worldly transience, and thus of longing for what has passed away.⁴² The cuckoo is not described as sad or lamenting in itself, but brings back memories of former times, and so also of the loved ones whom the speaker has lost.

In *Claf Abercuawg*, the frequently-occurring cuckoo is set in contrast with the sadness of the speaker:

³⁸ *Aduwyneu Taliessin* in Haycock, *Legendary Poems*, pp. 94–7: 'May is fair in terms of its cuckoos and nightingale' (l. 21). The cuckoo also appears more neutrally at line 177 of *Angar Kyfyndawt: Gogwn gogeu haf, / a uydant ygayaf* ('I know whether the cuckoos of summer / exist in winter', l. 177).

³⁹ 'The closest connection is the mournful cuckoo': Lewis, 'Genre', p. 12.

⁴⁰ Cf. Gruffydd, 'Cyntefin', p. 18.

⁴¹ *Cyntefin Ceinaf Amser* in Haycock, *Blodeugerdd*, pp. 145–6: 'May is the most beautiful time; / birds are loud, stalks are green, / ploughs in a furrow, oxen in their yoke, / the sea is green, the lands are adorned. / When cuckoos sing at the top of fair trees, / my dejectedness becomes greater. / Smoke is fierce, lack of sleep prominent, / because my loved ones died', ll. 1–8.

⁴² See H. W. Witherby, *A Practical Handbook of British Birds*, 2 vols. (London, 1919–24), I, 55.

Llem awel llwm **beudyr** byw.⁴³
pan orwisc coet teglyw
haf. teryd glaf wyf hediw.

Nyt wyf anhyet. milet ny chatwaf.
ny allaf darymret.
tra vo da gan goc canet.⁴⁴

The cuckoo is constantly associated with the beautiful surroundings of summer – it sings *ar gangeu blodeuawc* ('on flower-covered boughs', ll. 14 and 17), much like the *blaen guit guiw* ('top of fair trees', l. 5) of *Cyntefin Ceinaf Amser*. This contrast is used to foreground the speaker's sorrow, the rhyme of *haf* 'summer' and *glaf* 'sick' in line 6 making this especially prominent.⁴⁵ The cuckoo causes sadness to the speaker, but by a similar method to that in *Cyntefin Ceinaf Amser*. The speaker states:

Yn aber cuawc coge a ganant.
ys atuant gan vym bryt.
ae kigleu nas clyw heuyt.⁴⁶

The cuckoo reminds the speaker of previous summers, when his now-departed friend had been able to hear it. If the cuckoo is symbolic of sorrow now, it cannot have been so back when his loved one was around to hear its song. The cuckoo at its most basic level is associated with the joy of the pleasant seasons, and it only gains associations with longing because it reminds the speaker of an inaccessible happiness in the past.⁴⁷ The closest the cuckoo comes to being called mournful is the single description of it as *hiraethawc y llef* ('having a cry full of longing', l. 28). However, Ifor Williams suggested that this is because it causes *hiraeth*, and Sharpe argues that this represents a placing of the longing-filled speaker's emotions onto the cuckoo.⁴⁸ The depiction of the cuckoo is complex in

⁴³ Emendation suggested by Henry, *Early English and Celtic Lyric*, p. 75. Rowland retains the manuscript reading *bededyr* and does not translate.

⁴⁴ 'The breeze is sharp; the cattle paths bare. / When a wood wears upon itself the beautiful colour / of summer, I am terribly sick today. / I am not nimble; I do not maintain a host. / I cannot run around. / While the cuckoo likes it, let it sing!', ll. 4–9.

⁴⁵ Cf. Sharpe, 'Claf Abercuawg', p. 101.

⁴⁶ 'In Aber Cuawg, cuckoos sing. / My mind finds it sad / that one who heard it does not hear it too', ll. 19–22.

⁴⁷ The cuckoo also clearly brings forth memory of this longed-for past in the line *coc uann cof gan bawp a gar* ('a loud cuckoo, everyone remembers the one / those they love', l. 27).

⁴⁸ Williams, *Canu Llywarch Hen*, p. 165; Sharpe, 'Claf Abercuawg', p. 106.

early Welsh poetry, but it is never an unambiguous symbol of sorrow, and is frequently associated with the joys of spring and summer. Thus we cannot say, with Jacobs, that the sad cuckoo is an 'unmistakably Welsh motif'.⁴⁹

In the Old English elegies, on the other hand, the cuckoo is explicitly sorrowful itself.⁵⁰ This is seen in *The Husband's Message*, where the speaker tells his addressee:

... heht nu sylfa þe
 lustum læram, þæt þu lagu drefde,
 siþþan þu gehyrde on hliþes oran
 galan geomorne geac on bearwe.⁵¹

Here the accusative case of *geomorne* 'sorrowful', makes it quite unambiguous that this goes with *geac* – the cuckoo. Rowland criticizes the poet of *The Husband's Message* for having, in what she terms 'a happy poem', 'used without regard to its inappropriate context an elegiac commonplace'.⁵² But it is far simpler, and far fairer to the poet, to accept that the use and representation of the cuckoo is not the same in early Welsh and Old English elegiac verse, and so the trope in *The Husband's Message* does not have to

⁴⁹ N. Jacobs, 'The Seafarer and the Birds: A Possible Irish Parallel', *Celtica* 23 (1999), 125–31, at p. 130. The cuckoo also occurs once in *Cân yr Henwr*, where the line in Rowland's composite text of the Red Book and NLW 4973a, *rud cogeu, goleu ynghwyn* (l. 17) would appear to mean 'cuckoos are red, bright in a feast'; see Rowland, *Early Welsh Saga Poetry*, p. 542. However, Jacobs has argued that the term *rud* 'red' would never be suitable for a cuckoo, and indeed, the line may not refer to cuckoos at all, but cooks: see N. Jacobs, 'Red, Brown, and Grey Cuckoos: A Problem in Poetic Ornithology', *CMCS* 40 (Winter 2000), 27–33; cf. G. Thomas, 'Cân yr Henwr', in *Astudiaethau ar yr Hengerdd: Studies in Old Welsh Poetry cyflwynedig i Syr Idris Foster*, ed. R. Bromwich and R. B. Jones (Caerdydd, 1978), pp. 266–80, at pp. 274–6. Jacobs does note that certain female cuckoos can be more reddish in colour, but argues that *rudd* would still be an inappropriate term for this hue: Jacobs, 'Red, Brown, and Grey Cuckoos', pp. 30–2. Thomas Jones's emendation to *cwyn* 'lament' has no manuscript support, and prejudices how the cuckoo is represented in these poems: see T. Jones, 'Rud cogeu goleu ewyn', *BBCS* 13 (1948–50), 14–19.

⁵⁰ Cf. Anderson, *Seafarer*, p. 31. Outside the elegies, the cuckoo also appears in *Guthlac B* and is generally supposed to be the solution to *Riddle 9*; see J. Neville, 'Fostering the Cuckoo: *Exeter Book Riddle 9*', *Review of English Studies* 58 (2007), 431–446. This shows another, quite different, negative portrayal of the cuckoo in Old English poetry. In *Guthlac B*, (l. 744) the cuckoos, recently fed by Guthlac, are joyful. As this is also a very widespread representation of the cuckoo, there is no need to link this to the happy cuckoos found in early Welsh poetry; see J. Roberts, ed., *The Guthlac Poems of the Exeter Book* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 156–7; cf. B. Colgrave, ed. and trans., *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac* (Cambridge, 1956), pp. 116–123.

⁵¹ 'He has now ordered that you / be joyfully instructed, that you should stir the waves, / after you have heard on the edge of the hillside / the sad cuckoo sing in a grove', ll. 20b–3.

⁵² Rowland, *Early Welsh Saga Poetry*, p. 225.

conform to the Welsh model. Here we have, as Whitelock notes, 'the mournful cuckoo in a happy context', whereas in the Welsh poems it appears we have quite the opposite.⁵³

It is the following lines from *The Seafarer* which have been most strongly linked to the Welsh poems:

Bearwas blostmum nimað, byrig fægriað,
 wongas wlitigiað, woruld onetteð –
 ealle þa gemoniað modes fusne
 sefan to siþe, þam þe swa penceð
 on flodwegas feor gewitan.
 Swylce geac monað geomran reorde,
 singeð sumeres weard, sorge beodeð
 bitter in breosthord.⁵⁴

The only real similarity between the cuckoo in *The Seafarer* and the Welsh poems is the association with summer – it is *sumeres weard* 'summer's guardian'. But that is of course what it was, and this is simply reflective of the fact that the poets all lived in lands where the cuckoo visited in spring and summer. The *peregrinus* element found in *The Seafarer* next to the depiction of the cuckoo is hard to detect in the Welsh poems.⁵⁵ In *Cyntefin Ceinaf Amser* and *Claf Abercuawg*, there is a contrast between the joys of summer and the sadness of the speaker because his loved ones have passed away. In *The Seafarer*, there is a deliberate rejection of the world, specifically to venture out on to the sea. Indeed, both instances in the Old English elegies are associated with sea-voyages, but this does not occur in the Welsh texts. The cuckoo is also more clearly and more prominently sad here than in the Welsh poems: it sings 'in a sorrowful voice', the adjective *geomor* 'sorrowful'

⁵³ D. Whitelock, 'The Interpretation of *The Seafarer*', in *The Early Cultures of North-West Europe*, H. M. Chadwick Memorial Studies, ed. Cyril Fox and Bruce Dickins (Cambridge, 1950), pp. 261–72, at p. 265, n. 5; cf. Klinck, *Old English Elegies*, p. 241.

⁵⁴ 'Woods bear themselves with flowers, towns becomes fair, / the fields become beautiful, the world rushes on - / all these urge one eager of heart, / the soul to a journey, for one who intends thus / to depart far away on the sea-ways. / Thus the cuckoo urges in a sorrowful voice, / the guardian of summer sings, proclaims sorrow, / bitter in spirit', ll. 48–55a.

⁵⁵ See Whitelock, 'Interpretation'. *Cyntefin Ceinaf Amser* highlights that God is everywhere, but there is no rejection of the world to travel the seas. Much has been made of the lines 'Oed in chuant - in car - in trosset / Treitau ty tir dy alltudet' (Haycock, *Blodeugerdd*: 'Our desire - our Dear One - our triumph / would be to get in to the land of your exile' ll. 12–13.) Whether 'tir dy alltudet' is interpreted as Palestine (Rowland, *Early Welsh Saga Poetry*, p. 204) or, more probably, heaven (Gruffydd, 'Cyntefin', p. 21; Haycock, *Blodeugerdd*, p. 143), expression of a desire to get in to such a place is not the same as the self-imposed exile of the *peregrinus* seen in *The Seafarer*.

being associated with the bird in both poems. The cuckoo 'proclaims sorrow, bitter in spirit'. If, like Gordon and Orton, we take the *anfloga* of line 62b of *The Seafarer* to refer to the cuckoo, this negative portrayal would be even stronger.⁵⁶ It is puzzling how the very different depictions of the cuckoo in these two literary traditions, which may well not be contemporary, can be seen as any sort of evidence for one influencing the other, especially when the association of the cuckoo with sadness is found in so many different European cultures.

CONTRAST: NARRATIVE

Moving away from this fruitless search for influence, Higley's model of contrasting the poems with each other is perhaps more productive. Critics have often emphasized how little narrative there is in the Old English elegies, with Pilch and Jacobs highlighting the similarities between this and early Welsh verse.⁵⁷ Higley, however, talks of the 'narrative ... nature of much Old English elegy', contrasting this with the Welsh.⁵⁸ *The Ruin* and *Diffaith Aelwyd Rheged*, two texts which have been linked together a number of times, are particularly useful for demonstrating this contrast, due to their similarity of subject.⁵⁹

Diffaith Aelwyd Rheged is focused entirely upon a contrast between states – the desolate present and the glorious past of the hall. The *englynion* have a contrastive structure, illustrated by the following example:

⁵⁶ See Gordon, *Seafarer*, pp. 41–2; P. R. Orton, "'The Seafarer' 58–64a", *Neophilologus* 66 (1982), 450–9. Counter-arguments have been made by P. Clemons, 'Mens absentia cogitans in *The Seafarer* and *The Wanderer*', in *Medieval Literature and Civilization: Studies in Memory of G. N. Garmonsway*, ed. D. Pearsall and R. A. Waldron (London, 1969), pp. 62–77, at p. 64, n. 3; J. C. Pope, 'Second Thoughts on the Interpretation of *The Seafarer*', *ASE* 3 (1974), 75–86.

⁵⁷ See Jacobs, 'Celtic Saga', p. 110; Pilch, 'Elegiac Genre', p. 219; cf. U. Böker, 'The Non-Narrative Structure of "The Wife's Lament": A Reconsideration of its Lyrical Elements', in *Festschrift für Karl Schneider zum 70. Geburtstag am 18. April 1982*, ed. E. Dick and K. Jankowsky (Amsterdam, 1982), pp. 417–29; K. Hume, 'Ruin Motif', p. 352; P. Belanhoff, 'Women's Songs, Women's Language: Wulf and Eadwacer and The Wife's Lament', in *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature*, ed. H. Damico and A. H. Olsen (Indiana, 1990), pp. 193–203, at p. 198.

⁵⁸ Higley, *Between Languages*, p. 90.

⁵⁹ See J. J. and W. D. Conybeare, *Illustrations*, pp. 250–1; Sieper, *Die altenglische Elegie*, pp. 63–5; Leslie, *Three Old English Elegies*, p. 30; Klinck, 'Elegies', p. 240; Hume, "'Ruin Motif'", pp. 356–60; Renoir, 'Old English Ruin', p. 159.

Yr aelwyt honn, neus cud myr.
Mwy gordyfnassei babir
Gloew, a chyuedeu kywir.⁶⁰

The desolation of the court in the first line is strikingly juxtaposed with the positive descriptions of life there before (*gloew, kywir*) in the final two lines. This pattern, depicting the present scene in the first line and the past scene in the second and third, is followed in the vast majority of the poem's *englynion*.

In none of the *englynion* is an explicit attempt made to link up the two states causatively, or to provide details of any states between the two extremes: we are given a vision of one period in the past, layered on to what we see *now*. There are no references to how much time has passed between the states, although the descriptions of vegetation and animals in the abandoned hall suggest this is substantial. One way in which the poem separates its two temporal layers is through the use of tense. In the *englyn* quoted above, there is a contrast between the present indicative of the opening line (*cud* 'cover(s)') and the plu-perfect of the second line (*gordyfnassei* 'had been accustomed to'). Plu-perfects are used in such a way eight times in the poem, with the preterite and imperfect both being used twice. Some form of the past tense thus occurs in every *englyn* included in Rowland's edition of the text. These finite verbs can make temporal difference clear, and are aided further here by temporal conjunctions. We can see this if we turn to the poem's second *englyn*:

Llawer ki geilic a hebawc wyrennic
a lithiwyt ar y llawr.
kynn bu er lleon llawdrawr.⁶¹

The conjunction *kyn* 'before' makes the temporal separation here clearer, dividing the two states into two distinct periods.

Efforts are also made to link the two lines set in the past together temporally in the other *englynion*. This must have been the original effect of 'tra vu yw y gwercheitwat' at line 8, although the line to which it would have been linked is lost.⁶² The expression *ym*

⁶⁰ 'This hearth, ants cover it. / It had been more accustomed to bright / candles and proper feasts', ll. 22–4.

⁶¹ 'Many spirited hounds, and lively hawks, / were fed on its ground, / before this place was heaps [of rubble]', ll. 1–3.

⁶² 'while its guardian was alive', l. 8.

myw (literally ‘in the living [of]’, ‘during the life [of]’) uses the preposition *yn* to link together two states in the past, as in line 36: ‘Nys eidigauei anghen / ym myw owein ac vryen’.⁶³ The use of temporal conjunctions and prepositions, along with tense, makes the temporal order more obvious in *Diffaith Aelwyd Rheged* than in much early Welsh narrative verse, such as *Armes Dydd Brawd*. The clarity with which the temporal distinction is made underscores the disparity and disconnection between the courtly splendour which existed and the ruin that remains.⁶⁴ Temporal adverbs are lacking, however. In particular, *yna* and *yno* (both meaning ‘then’ or ‘there’), very common adverbs in narrative prose, do not appear to occur in their temporal sense in early Welsh elegiac poetry. This means that, even where it has narrative, this tends simply to link two events or a state and an event, never moving beyond these blocks of two.

The Ruin, in contrast, is far more strongly narrative than this, with the poem repeatedly explaining what happened in what order, and what was responsible. This is perhaps seen most clearly in the long narrative sequence from lines 18 to 31a. In line 18, we are moved back in time to before the construction of the city:

mod mo[nade m]yne swiftne gebrægd
hwætred in hringas, hygerof gebond
weallwalan wirum wundrum togædre.⁶⁵

Lines 21–3 then describe the joyous state of the city after it has been built, *mondreama ful* ‘full of human joys’ (23b). This inevitably comes to an end, and its destruction ensues in a group of parallel narrative clauses in the following lines:

oppæt pæt onwende wyrð seo swiþe.
Crungon walo wide cwoman woldagas,
swylt eall fornóm **secgrofra** wera;
wurdon hyra wigsteal westen stapolas,
brofnade burgsteall. Betend crungon
hergas to hrusan.⁶⁶

⁶³ ‘Neediness did not use to afflict it [this hearth] during the life of Owain and Urien’, ll. 32–3; cf. l. 11.

⁶⁴ A very similar juxtapositional structure is seen in *Y Drefwfen* (Rowland, *Early Welsh Saga Poetry*, p. 436).

⁶⁵ ‘a mind brought about that swift in thought plan, / ingenious in rings, a brave-spirited man / bound the wall-braces wondrously together with wires’, ll. 18–20.

⁶⁶ ‘until mighty fate changed that. / They fell with widespread slaughter, days of affliction came, / death took away all the battle-brave men; / their bastions became desolate foundations, / the city decayed. The repairers

Oppæt ‘until’ makes it obvious that these lines follow on temporally from those before them. However, there is nothing in the phrases above from line 25 onwards to suggest they themselves are in any sort of sequence, and, indeed, are best viewed as being parallel. An indefinite number of short narratives can be stacked up like this in an Old English poem. The difference between this and the repetition that occurs in the Welsh poems is that it does not prevent progression: the seven parallel statements here still function as part of a longer sequence containing four consecutive elements. The temporal order of these elements is made very clear. Thus the repetition and parallelism in *The Ruin* allows for narrative progression in a way that *Diffaith Aelwyd Rheged* does not.

This long narrative sequence then concludes with two parallel staves:

Forþon þas hofu dreorgiað,
ond þæs teaforgeapa tigelum sceadeð,
hrostbeages rof.⁶⁷

While the exact meaning of elements of these lines has been the subject of much critical debate, they clearly describe states which follow on from the events of the lines before them.⁶⁸ *Forþon* ‘wherefore’ makes this explicit: the inhabitants have to die (and so forth) in order for the buildings to become ruined and the roofs to fall down. The use of *Diffaith Aelwyd Rheged* as a radical foil for *The Ruin* allows us to see the latter text’s narrative elements more prominently. As Higley writes, ‘each tradition throws into sharp relief quirks of the other that are normally taken for granted.’⁶⁹

It is difficult to comprehend how *The Ruin* and *Diffaith Aelwyd Rheged* can in any way be seen as close analogues. They depict ruins which are fairly close to one another geographically (albeit vastly different in nature), and it is not impossible that they ultimately date from a similar period. However, they treat these ruins in highly disparate ways. *The Ruin* always wants to tell the story of what happened, following the strong narrative pull in Old English verse. It makes the main stages of narrative sequences clear, even where this does not involve the contrast between how things were and how things are. This contrast is shared by both poems, but *The Ruin* does much beyond this. It tells of

fell, armies to the earth’, ll. 24–29a.

⁶⁷ ‘Wherefore these buildings grow desolate, / and this red-curved roof parts from [its] tiles, / strong and curved roof-work.’, ll. 29b–31a.

⁶⁸ On the various interpretations, see Muir, *Exeter Anthology*, II, p. 703.

⁶⁹ Higley, *Between Languages*, p. 13.

how the city was skilfully crafted (ll. 18–20) and how the builders' corpses will remain in the earth's grip until Judgement Day (ll. 6b–9a). It attributes the destruction to particular entities (*wyrð* and *ældo* 'fate' and 'age' ll. 1b and 6a) and actively tells of how the settlement fell apart with narrative (ll. 2a, 11b, 24b–9a and 31b–2a). While the contrast of past and present is only one element of *The Ruin*, it is the whole purpose of *Diffaith Aelwyd Rheged*. The Welsh poem never moves beyond the two temporal points of *now* and *then*, showing no desire to tell a story. Indeed, there are no references at all to how the hall reached its present state or what was responsible for its destruction. Where the temporal order is made explicit, this serves to highlight how wonderful the hall was before now, or at a certain point in the past, when its leaders were alive. This unyielding focus on a central contrast emphasizes the desolation of the speaker and their powerless longing for what once was, surrounded by its ruins.

It is true that the Old English elegies are less strongly narrative than most Old English verse, but they are not unique in being so. We need only think of gnomic poetry, especially poems like *Maxims II*, *Precepts*, and *The Gifts of Men* to show how Old English poetry certainly had the potential to be largely non-narrative.⁷⁰ Thus there is no need to link them to Welsh poems in this regard. Whether or not one follows all of Joseph Harris's complex reconstructions of the 'Germanic elegy', his work has shown that the elegies are quite congruent within a Germanic context with Christian Latin influence.⁷¹ They do not need to be explained away by reference to Welsh.

To conclude, however flexible we may want or need to be when examining literary influence in this period, there is simply no reason for viewing these poetic traditions as particularly closely connected. The attempt to force them together has resulted in the mistreatment and misreading of the texts we have in both literatures. What I hope to have shown at least to some extent, however, and what Higley certainly has shown, is that

⁷⁰ Susan Deskis claims that these poems contain no narrative at all: 'Exploring Text and Discourse in the Old English Gnomic Poems: The Problem of Narrative', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 104 (2005), 326–44, at p. 326. While this statement itself is questionable, it is certainly the case that, despite the strength of the narrative tradition, a considerable number of Old English poems have little narrative, and these are by no means confined to the elegies.

⁷¹ J. Harris, 'Elegy in Old English and Old Norse: A Problem in Literary History', in *Old English Elegies*, ed. Green, pp. 46–56; Harris, 'North-Sea Elegy and Para-Literary History', in *Heroic Poets and Poetic Heroes in Celtic Tradition: A Festschrift for Patrick K. Ford*, eds. Joseph Falaky Nagy and Leslie Ellen Jones (Dublin, 2005), pp. 103–14; cf. A. Orchard, 'Not what it was: the World of the Old English Elegy', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Elegy* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 101–17, at pp. 101–2 and 113.

bringing these texts together can still be useful, but this lies more in the productiveness of contrast than in the search for influence.