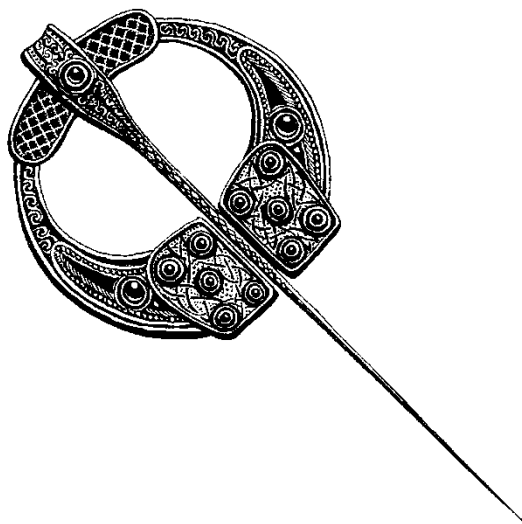The Cambridge Colloquium in Anglo-Saxon,
Norse and Celtic is a yearly spring conference
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Celtic at the University of Cambridge.
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Volume 19 · 2018

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ANF	*Arkiv för nordisk filologi*
ASPR	*The Exeter Book*: *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, ed. by George P. Krapp and Elliott V. K. Dobbie, 6 vols (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936)
Bosworth-Toller	*An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary: Based on the Manuscript Collections of the Late Joseph Bosworth*, ed. and enlarged by Thomas N. Toller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1898)
eDIL	*eDIL: Electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language*, <http://www.dil.ie>
EHD I	*English Historical Documents I, c. 500–1042*, ed. by Dorothy Whitelock, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 1979)
EHD II	*English Historical Documents II, 1042–1189*, ed. by David C. Douglas and George W. Greenaway, 2nd edn (London: Eyre Methuen, 1981)
SBVS	*Saga-Book of the Viking Society*
SS	*Scandinavian Studies*

I am delighted to introduce the nineteenth issue 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 2018 conference, on the theme of Performance and Perception, was a very successful and well-organised event which saw a stimulating array of papers given by postgraduate students from a wide range of institutions. Headed up by Prof. Ruairí Ó hUiginn's compelling exploration of the performance of Irish saga literature, the papers published in this volume aptly embody the cross-cultural nature not only of the Colloquium, but also of the lively graduate community that gives it shape every year. The Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic is delighted to continue its association with CCASNC and its published proceedings. Quaestio Insularis 19 and all back numbers of the journal can be ordered directly from the Department's website (www.asnc.cam.ac.uk).

Dr Richard Dance
Head of the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic
University of Cambridge

The 2018 Colloquium in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic took place in Room GR06/07 of the Faculty of English on Saturday 10 February. This year's Colloquium saw a range of engaging papers on the theme of 'Performance and Perception', followed by a dinner held in the dining hall of Newnham College. Nine postgraduate speakers from across the United Kingdom and further afield were invited to discuss their research. We were delighted to welcome this year's plenary speaker, Prof. Ruairí Ó hUiginn, from the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies. The contributions made at the 2018 meeting exhibited an impressively broad chronological and geographical range, and each was followed by a fruitful and engaging discussion. As the day drew to a close, we gave thanks to our speakers and the organising committee. Special thanks are also owed to this year's helpers, Patrick McAlary and William Griffiths, who gave their time and effort to ensure that the 2018 Colloquium ran as smoothly as possible.

Session I — Encoding Performance (*Chair: Francesco Colombo*)
Lars Nooij, 'A Pocket Missal and its Priest in Early Ninth Century Ireland'
James McIntosh, 'Performance versus Providence: Anglo-Saxon Perceptions of Salvation and the *Legend of Saint Eustace*'
Kathryn A. Haley-Halinski, 'The Oars of the Eagle are Feathers: Skaldic Practice and Perception Beyond Performance'

Session II — Performance in Practice (*Chair: Sven Rossel*)

Bianca Patria, 'Quotations with a Twist: Verbal Echoes and the Kenning System'

Ellen Ganly, 'Defining the Patronage of an Early Irish Saint: Performing the Death of St. Abbán'

Steven Breeze, 'Greeting the Harp: Instrumental Anthropomorphisms in the Anglo-Saxon Cultural Imagination

Plenary Speaker (*Chair: Tom Grant*)

Prof. Ruairí Ó hUiginn, 'In Song and in Story: Medieval Irish Literature in Performance and Presentation'

Session III — Perceiving the Periphery (*Chair: Anouk Nuijten*)

Joseph McCarthy, 'Curing Crime: Disease, Penitentials and Legal Texts'

Kayla Kemhadjian, 'Perceiving the 'Monstrous' in The Nowell Codex'

Caitlin Ellis, 'Perceptions of the Slave Trade in Britain and Ireland: 'Celtic' and 'Viking' Stereotypes'

The members of the colloquium committee for 2017–18 were Alice Taylor, Sven Rossel, Anouk Nuijten, Bathsheba Wells-Dion, Francesco Colombo and Tom Grant.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In Song and in Story: Aspects of the Performance of Medieval Irish Saga Literature[1]

Ruairí Ó hUiginn
Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies

The body of writings transmitted to us from medieval Ireland is both extensive in breadth and wide-ranging in scope, encompassing many types of composition. Not only do we have an extensive body of overtly religious matter: translations, adaptations, commentaries, and original composition of a devotional nature, but also a vast range of other texts that deal with many different facets of society: genealogy, history, poetry, law, medicine and grammar, in addition to a rich and diverse body of narrative literature in prose and in verse, both in Latin and in Irish.

In its earliest phases, Irish literature was composed and committed to writing in ecclesiastical centres, writing – a new technology – being part of the cultural revolution which the advent of Christianity brought to the land.[2] We have evidence,

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[1] I am grateful to an anonymous reader for a number of useful suggestions regarding an earlier draft of this paper and for providing me with several further references.

[2] As James Carney has remarked with regard to the impact of Christianity in Ireland: 'There was no aspect of life there upon which it did not impinge in a vital and decisive way. The new religion and the Graeco-Roman culture that accompanied it affected political development, moral and

in the written and archaeological record, for some 5,500 such centres in existence between 500 and 1100 AD.[3] These, of course, were not all contemporary with each other, and ranged in size and influence from extensive monastic foundations to smaller, more modest establishments. Nor would all ecclesiastical centres have had the patronage or the means to support a scriptorium, school and community of scholars,[4] but those that did left us this literary legacy that was multifarious and extensive.[5]

During the later medieval period, ecclesiastical centres of learning were gradually eclipsed and eventually replaced by schools run by learned laymen who enjoyed the patronage and

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ethical ideas, art and literature'. See James Carney, 'The impact of Christianity', in *Early Irish Society*, ed. by Myles Dillon (Dublin: Mercier Press, 1954), pp. 66–78 (p. 66).

[3] On medieval Irish ecclesiastical foundations cf. Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, *Monasticon Hibernicum* <https://monasticon.celt.dias.ie/about.php> [accessed 1 August 2018].

[4] On some of the more important scriptoria, see Kathleen Hughes, 'The distribution of Irish scriptoria and centres of learning from 730–1111', in *Studies in the Early British Church*, ed. by Nora K. Chadwick, Kathleen Hughes, Christopher Brooke and Kenneth H. Jackson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), pp. 243–92. See also the obituaries of members of the 'literate elite' listed in Elva Johnston, *Literacy and Identity in Early Medieval Ireland* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), pp. 177–202.

[5] For a detailed catalogue of this literary output, see now Donnchadh Ó Corráin, *Clavis Litterarum Hibernensium. Medieval Irish Books and Texts (c.400 – c.1600)*, 3 vols (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017).

support of the ruling classes, a situation that endured down to the fall of the Gaelic order in the seventeenth century.[6]

This extensive body of written material produced in church or lay centres in the thousand years or so down to this time has much to tell us about how a medieval society functioned and developed over a long period of time; we have detailed information about familial, societal and political structures and the laws that governed them, kingship, status and rank, genealogy and kinship, warfare, the rise and fall of secular and religious dynasties, economy, farming practice, trade, contact with the outside world and many other aspects of everyday life, including the religious, and religious belief and practice.

While we can be grateful that so much of this material has survived, our record, extensive though it may be, is far from complete and there are many areas of Early Irish society about which we would like to know far more, but about which our sources are at best laconic if not totally silent.

One such area concerns the question of the communication, presentation and reception of what has been transmitted to us as text. That is to say, how did material we now access in our primary sources in manuscript form relate to the wider community in which that work was conceived and came into being? In a medieval society with limited levels of literacy, how

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[6] On this development, see Proinsias Mac Cana, 'The rise of the later schools of *filidheacht*', *Ériu*, 25 (1974), 126–46.

was the import of what was in a text communicated to a wider non-literate public?[7]

This is a very wide-ranging question, and I suspect that any answers we may be able to provide will differ depending very much on the nature of the text and the time and circumstances of its composition.

In this paper I would like to look quite briefly at some issues surrounding this wider question. I wish to focus in particular on certain matters associated with the manner in which Irish saga literature is presented in our written sources and to explore what this might have to tell us about how this type of literature would have been performed and received.

Of necessity, we approach medieval works as readers, and it is possible that some of the texts we now have were composed and remained at the level of the written word. That is, they were intended for the eye and would have been approached by the medieval reader in a manner that may not have greatly dissimilar from how we might do so today. Here, we are referring to works by scholars for the eyes of their pupils or for other scholars, but although we might consider writings such as biblical exegesis, computistics, grammatical treatises, glossing and such like under the heading of scholarship, we could also assume, for then as now, that many such scholarly works would also have had a presence in the classroom and thus have an associated performative dimension, however that might have been realised.

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[7] On the question of literacy in general in early medieval Ireland, see Johnston.

To address questions of presentation and performance of text, we have to attempt to close the gap between ourselves as modern readers, and the medieval listener or viewer for whom the work was intended. And as our sources rarely spell out for us how texts may have been presented or performed, and have little to tell us about setting, we have to use a number of approaches to garner the information that will give us at best an incomplete picture.[8]

In broaching such a question and in trying to envisage how early saga literature might have been communicated to an audience, it is quite likely that one will be drawn to accounts in the relatively recent past of traditional storytelling in Irish or in Scottish Gaelic. We have a considerable body of Gaelic texts that have been recorded in Ireland and Gaelic Scotland from the recitation of traditional storytellers, mainly during the mid to late twentieth century. The storytellers, born for the most part in the latter part of the nineteenth century, would typically have been small farmers or fishermen; many would have been illiterate, and often were for all intents and purposes monoglot speakers of Irish or Scottish Gaelic. Within their communities, however, they were known and admired as artists and as consummate masters of their craft.

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[8] An excellent example of how to approach questions such as these with regard to medieval legal material can be found in Robin Chapman Stacey's *Dark Speech: The Performance of Law in Early Ireland* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

Versions of many of the stories, poems and ballads recited at such occasions are known to us from manuscript sources, dating back several centuries in some cases.[9] Establishing the links and lines of transmission from earlier written sources to the versions recited at such gatherings is fraught with difficulty, but it seems clear that the oral versions of several tales recited by traditional storytellers are ultimately derived from written texts that circulated in manuscript form. The large number of manuscript copies of several such narratives that now survive is likely to be but a fraction of what once was in circulation and with increasing levels of literacy from the late medieval period onwards there must have been many opportunities to gain access to such material and to re-communicate it orally. The remove at which various oral versions we have of tales stand from their written source is rarely clear. It is not improbable that a story would have entered oral tradition on numerous occasions and indeed there is likely to have been a degree of interaction between the two modes of transmission.

A good deal of research has been carried out on tales recorded or transcribed from the recitation of traditional storytellers, with attention being paid to matters such as style, vocabulary, narrative techniques, themes, motifs, the influence of printed or written sources on oral recitation and other such

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[9] On many aspects of the relationship between manuscript sources and orally recorded folk-narratives, see Alan Bruford, *Gaelic Folk-tales and Mediæval Romances: A Study of the Early Modern Irish 'Romantic Tales' and their Oral Derivatives* (Dublin: Folklore of Ireland Society, 1969).

matters. Apart from a small number of audio recordings, however, we should always remind ourselves that our principal manner of engaging with these tales is as *readers*, an experience greatly different to that of those who would have heard them as part of the storyteller's audience. Where we might read such material in well-lit libraries, studies or sitting rooms, a traditional audience would have *listened* to them in a setting where light was minimal. Traditional storytelling was an activity always pursued at night and then only in the winter season. Many of the accounts we have of such gatherings, known by a number of names in Irish,[10] belong to a time before the era of rural electrification, so the audience would have gathered in the living space of the small house around a fire. Any other light would have been provided by a candle, rush-light or a lantern and the flickering shadows generated by such poor illumination would have been an integral part of the setting. The storyteller would have recited to an audience of native speakers, familiar with the world of the narrative that was been recited. The storyteller's narrative techniques, pitch and tone of voice, cadences, pauses and silences, facial expressions, gesticulations and body language, all formed part of his performance as he related tales of the supernatural, the otherworld or tales of travel to some exotic land in the eastern reaches of the world. What he recited was played out and visualised in the imagination of each member of his audience.

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[10] For some of these terms and their dialectal distribution, see Heinrich Wagner, *Linguistic Atlas and Survey of Irish Dialects*, 4 vols (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1958), I, p. 188.

We can reconstruct such performances and their settings because they took place in the relatively recent past and we have extensive and reliable accounts from people who frequently attended and observed story-telling gatherings of this nature.[11] We furthermore are knowledgeable about many of the storytellers themselves and about the society in which they would have performed.

Attempting to bridge the gap between us as modern readers and the medieval world in which our sagas came into being, however, is a far more challenging task. While accounts of traditional storytellers and their art may have something to tell us about oral performance and narrative technique, their value in our attempts to envisage how medieval texts might have been communicated to an audience is limited, for on the one hand we are dealing with folk entertainment provided by people who were primarily farmers or fishermen, while on the other we have to do with works that were intended for a medieval aristocracy, produced and possibly also performed by those for whom it was a professional calling.[12] The very fact that our medieval texts were committed to vellum – a not-inexpensive commodity – bespeaks their value in that society.

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[11] On traditional storytellers and their art, see James H. Delargy, 'The Gaelic Storyteller, with some notes on Gaelic folk-tales', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 31 (1945), 177–221.

[12] See Proinsias Mac Cana, *The Learned Tales of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1980), p. 11.

That Early Irish sagas were recited, can be established from terms used in the language itself and from several references in the literature. The noun *scél* which has a wide range of meaning in Early Irish originally meant 'a story'; compare its Welsh cognate *chwedl* which also has this meaning. Both derive from a root **sek^w*, which denotes the act of speaking.[13] The derived agentive *scélaige* 'storyteller' is a noun of long standing, as is the abstract *scélaigecht* 'the act of storytellying'.[14] The Early Irish tale *Longas mac nUislenn* 'the exile of the family of Uisliu', opens with a scene in which the king of Ulster is visiting the house of his *scélaige,* Feidlimid the son of Dall, a reference that gives us to understand the *scélaige* was a person of status and importance in society.[15] Not infrequently, *scélaigecht* is paired with the noun *senchas*.[16] The latter term originally appears to have had a more technical meaning, being used with reference to ancient history, traditional lore, law and the like,[17] but the two are sometimes used as though they were synonyms. There is likely to have been a degree of overlap in their semantic ranges and this may have

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[13] See Ranko Matasović, *Etymological Dictionary of Proto-Celtic* (Leiden: Brill 2009), p. 328.

[14] Cf. *eDIL* [accessed 10 November 2018], s.vv *scél, scélaige, scélaigecht.*

[15] *Longes Mac n-Uislenn. The Exile of the Sons of Uisliu*, ed. and trans. by Vernan Hull (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1949), p. 43, l. 3.

[16] Cf. *eDIL*, s.vv. *scél*, *senchas*.

[17] On the range of meaning encompassed by this term, see Francis J. Byrne, '*Senchas*: the nature of Gaelic historical tradition', *Historical Studies,* 9 (1974), 137–59.

developed further over time. In Modern Irish the agentive noun *seanchaí* (OIr *senchaid*) can mean simply 'a storyteller'.

The *scélaige* was not the only functionary who was accorded the function of storytelling. The twelfth-century Book of Leinster contains a tract commencing: *De Nemthigud Filed* 'on the qualifications of poets', which lists the type of tales the *ollamh, anrath, clí* and *cano* – four types of poet – should know.[18] These are divided into 250 main tales and a further 100 sub-tales, and the tract proceeds to classify and name these various narratives. Variant versions of this tale list mention the requirement to recite such tales at assemblies and gatherings for kings, over-kings, royal heirs, lords, chieftains and bishops for their entertainment (*dá n-urgairdiugud*).[19]

Another relevant text found in the Book of Leinster, is that which sets out the dimensions and seating arrangement of the Tech Midchuarta, the 'Banqueting Hall' at Tara, the legendary centre of kingship in Ireland.[20] This text, comprising an illustration and accompanying poem, enumerates those who would be present at festive occasions there and sets out the portions of food to be given to each. In addition to nobles and

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[18] *The Book of Leinster, formerly Lebar na Núachongbála*, ed. by Richard I. Best et al., 6 vols (Dublin, 1954–1983), IV, 835–37; see also *Uraicecht na Ríar. The Poetic Grades in Early Irish Law*, ed. by Liam Breatnach (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1987).

[19] See Rudolf Thurneysen, 'Irisches und Gallisches', *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie*, 14 (1923), 1–2.

[20] *The Book of Leinster*, I, pp. 116–20.

other dignitaries, craftsmen and officials, it also lists artists and entertainers: different types of poet, harpists and pipers, and goes even as far as listing entertainers of lower status. While the *scélaige* is not mentioned in this particular text, the *senchaid* does appear. Also included are the *ollamh, anrath, clí* and *cana* members of the poetic class who counted the recitation of tales among their duties. The illustration has at its centre the image of a *daul* 'satirist' standing in the middle of the hall, presumably engaged in a public display of his craft. [21] A poem in the fourteenth-century Book of Uí Mhaine describing aspects of medieval Irish society, counts reciting from a raised platform or stage as one of the characteristics of the *scélaige*.[22]

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[21] While the depiction of the Tech Midchuarda refers to a legendary setting, it is likely that it is based on arrangements found in festive assemblies contemporary with the time of writing of the text. On the other hand, Woolf has drawn attention to the absence of evidence in the archaeological record for the presence of large assembly halls suitable for the purposes of accommodating such an audience in early medieval Ireland; Alex Woolf, 'The court poet in medieval Ireland', in *Princes, Prelates and Poets in Medieval Ireland. Essays in honour of Katharine Simms*, ed. by Sean Duffy (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2013), pp. 377–88. As such structures were most likely constructed from timber and thus subject to decay, the lack of physical evidence may not be so surprising.

[22] The poem, commencing *A fhir, na hiad dreich Temrach* 'O man do not close the front of Tara', has been edited by Liam Breatnach and will be published in a forthcoming volume of essays on the Book of Uí Mhaine. I am grateful to Professor Breatnach for providing me with a copy of his paper.

Incomplete though our information may be, it nevertheless allows us to conclude that the relating of sagas and other tales could involve members of the professional literary classes in a formal aristocratic setting. That setting might have been festive, or otherwise could have been on the occasion a meeting or assembly for transacting business or for some other purpose. It is also possible that the nature of the gathering would have determined the type of composition that was to be recited.

As we have noted, the aforementioned tract, *De Nemthigud Filed*, contains an inventory of the medieval Irish tales that should be related at aristocratic gatherings. Many of the tales listed in this text still survive, having been transmitted to us in one or more manuscript copies; others are unknown to us, having been lost or possibly surviving under a title different to that of the tale lists, and there are yet some other tales dating from an early period that were not included in the medieval tale lists for whatever reason.[23]

The next question we should consider is what function the recitation of such sagas had in the society in which they came into being. We have already observed with regard to traditional Irish storytellers, that their recitation was primarily for the entertainment of those who would gather in their houses. Given the presence of members of the literary classes at festive functions in medieval Irish society, it is not unlikely that the recitation of these medieval narratives also served as a form of entertainment, as indeed some of our tracts state. This, however, is unlikely to have been their only function. Many of these tales can be classed

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[23] Mac Cana, *Learned Tales*, p. 66.

under the broad heading of 'heroic literature', and celebrate heroes, kings and other worthy figures from a distant past. The people and events portrayed in these tales, legendary though they may have been, were perceived to belong to periods in Ireland's prehistory, and as such formed part of the country's *senchas*, 'traditional history'. Several of these tales can be seen as origin legends, stories that purport to show how certain dynasties came to be established or to occupy the territory in which they were.[24] As such, some of these narratives would have had a clear political import, while others may have contained elements of social or moral teaching.

The involvement, moreover, of figures such as the *ollam*, the highest-ranked member of the poetic class, in such activity suggests that some aspects of what we might call 'storytelling' were likely to have been of a highly formal nature in early Irish society.[25] Many 'historical' narratives such as those in our tale-lists

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[24] On this point, see Mac Cana, *Learned Tales*, p. 7.

[25] It is unclear if the *ollam* or other high-ranking members of the poetic order would themselves have engaged in the actual recitative performance of a saga or if there was a special class of reciters to whom this functions fell. From later Irish tradition we know that the recitation of formal praise poetry would have been carried out by a functionary known as a *reacaire* 'reciter', and it is possible that a similar kind of arrangement obtained for the recitation of prose narratives at an earlier stage. In medieval Welsh tradition the performance of poetry was generally carried out by the *datgeiniad* 'a professional singer', rather than by the poet. On this, see Daniel Huws, 'From Song to Script in Medieval Wales', *Quaestio Insularis*, 9 (2008), 1–16 (p. 9).

may possibly have been recited to recall past glories of the people, to affirm the legitimacy of their current rulers and social dispensation, or indeed to inspire them to future achievement.

How the written texts that have been transmitted to us relate to the version of these tales that would have been recited at medieval gatherings is not at all clear. Some of the texts we now have to us do not have the appearance of being matter that could be recited for an audience. The earliest recension of the lengthy saga *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, for instance, is replete with marginal glosses and scholarly notes.[26] It contains in-text references to other manuscript versions of the tale that were known to the compiler and how such versions might have differed from his own narrative on various points. This is a feature of the manuscript in which it is found, Lebor na hUidre ('The book of the Dun Cow'),[27] which has the appearance of being a scholar's workbook rather than a compendium of texts that might have been performed in front of an audience.[28] The second recension of the tale, found in the aforementioned Book of Leinster,[29] presents a more unitary text and is devoid of such scholarly

[26] *Táin Bó Cúailnge. Recension 1*, ed. and trans. by Cecile O'Rahilly (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1976).

[27] Royal Irish Academy, MS 23 E 25 (1229).

[28] On this, see Donnchadh Ó Corráin, 'Máel Muire, the scribe: family and background', in *Lebor na hUidre. Codices Hibernenses Eximii 1*, ed. by Ruairí Ó hUiginn (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2015), pp. 1–28 (p. 27).

[29] *Táin Bó Cúalnge: from the Book of Leinster,* ed. and trans. by Cecile O'Rahilly (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1967).

paraphernalia, yet it is also uncertain if this represents the text as it might have been related to an audience.

Some other texts we have are extremely brief and are unlikely to represent versions of tales that would have been recited by paid professionals in formal aristocratic settings. Gerard Murphy expressed the opinion that such brief narratives might be mere summaries of tales taken down from oral recitation.[30] However, another way we might view such texts is to take them as summaries, not recorded from oral narration, but representing the outline of a plot that could be expanded on and embellished by the reciter. *Táin Bó Flidais* 'the cattle raid of Flidais', is possibly an example of such a summary. This text is found in two main recensions – one from the early Irish period, possibly belonging to the eighth century,[31] and one that dates from c.1200 AD.[32] The text of the early recension amounts to a

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[30] Gerard Murphy, *Saga and Myth in Ancient Ireland* (Dublin: The Cultural Relations Committee of Ireland, 1955), p. 12.

[31] 'Táin Bó Flidais', ed. by Ernst Windisch, in *Irische Texte mit Wörterbuch*, ed. by Ernst Windisch and Whitley Stokes, 4 vols (Leipzig, 1887), II, pp. 206–223. The incomplete version of this earlier recension found in Lebor na hUidre, however, differs from the other manuscript witnesses in some detail. On this see Ruairí Ó hUiginn, 'Growth and development in the late Ulster Cycle: the Case of *Táin Bó Flidais*', in *Memory and the Modern in Celtic Literatures*, ed. by Joseph F. Nagy, CSANA Yearbook, 5 (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), pp. 143–62.

[32] 'The Glenmasan manuscript', ed. and trans. by Donald MacKinnon, *The Celtic Review*, 1 (1904–05), 3–17, 102–131, 208–229, 296–315; *The Celtic Review* 2 (1905-06), 20–33, 100–121, 202–223, 300–313; *The Celtic*

little over 600 words, while that of the later recension is more than 50 times as long with a word count of more than 30, 000 words. Both relate what is essentially the same tale but where the early text gives merely a summary of the plot and its most salient points, the greater extent of the latter version is attained through the provision of much more detail, of long descriptive passages, of extensive sections of dialogue and copious amounts of verse. Given that this later version is separated from its early forerunner by a remove of five hundred years or so, and may well have been subject to a process of accretion over the centuries, we cannot assume that the early recension summarises a composition as extensive as this, but it is likely to represent something that in recitation would far exceed its c. 600 words of written text.

The presence of such an extensive amount of verse in the second recension of this narrative is noteworthy, but far from unique, in medieval Irish tradition and indeed is also well attested in several other medieval literary traditions.[33] Very many early Irish sagas are cast in such a prosimetrical structure. The first recension of *Táin Bo Cúailnge*, for instance, contains in excess of 40 metrical interventions in about 4,000 lines of text;[34] for the second recension the figure is about 35 for 5,000 lines, but this

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Review 3 (1906–07): 10–25, 114–37, 198–215, 294–317; *The Celtic Review* 4 (1907–08): 10–27, 104–121, 202–19.

[33] For a discussion of prosimetrum in several literary traditions, see *Prosimetrum. Cross-cultural Perspectives on Narrative in Prose and Verse*, ed. by Joseph Harris and Karl Reichl (Cambridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1997).

[34] This also includes passages in *rosc* style which we discuss below.

recension has omitted a section of the text that has many passages in *rosc* style; *Buile Suibne*[35] has 31 for about 2,500 lines; but these are all dwarfed by *Acallamh na Senórach*, the 8,000 lines of which are interspersed with over 160 poems.[36] Some of these poems consist of a single stanza, but others are far lengthier. One poem in *Buile Suibhne* runs to a full 65 stanzas.[37]

In addition to appearing in narrative texts such as these, poetry or verse may be interspersed in other types of prose composition. Many legal maxims are couched in poetic language or verse.[38] Annals and even medieval glossaries such as *Sanas Cormaic,* 'Cormac's Glossary',[39] are interspersed with what we can term authenticating or evidential verse where the authority of a poet named or otherwise is invoked in support of a historical occurrence being recounted or an argument being advanced in the body of the text.

The role played by the verse embedded in our sagas can be considered under three general headings we can designate as 'dynamic', 'static' and 'dialogue'. By 'dynamic' we understand

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[35] *Buile Suibne*, ed. by James G. O'Keefe (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1931).

[36] *Acallam na Senórach*, ed. by Whitley Stokes, in Windisch and Stokes, III.i, pp. 1–438 (ix–xiv).

[37] *Buile Suibne*, ll. 964–1223.

[38] On the presentation of legal texts, see Liam Breatnach, *A Companion to the Corpus Iuris Hibernici* (Dublin: Scoil, 2005), pp. 370–71.

[39] '*Sanas Cormaic*', ed. by Kuno Meyer, in *Anecdota from Irish Manuscripts*, ed. by Osborn J. Bergin et. al., 5 vols (Halle: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1912), IV, pp. i-xix; 1-128.

that verse is used as a device to narrate an event or series of events, thus contributing to the storyline of the tale and advancing its plot. By 'static', on the other hand, we can understand that the verse does not contribute to the narration of events in the tale, but may recapitulate or expand something that already has been narrated in the prose.

The dynamic use of verse is reasonably well attested in Irish. The early tale, *Immram Brain* 'the Voyage of Bran', for instance, is related almost entirely in verse with brief linking prose passages providing the narrative mortar that keeps them together.[40] From a somewhat later period we have the tradition of *Fiannaigecht* lays or ballads in which an event is narrated in a long poem.[41]

When we turn to our sagas we find that the verse embedded in them is rarely of the dynamic type. Typically such verse will recapitulate something that already has been narrated in the preceding prose; it will be used for praise or lamentation, for prophecy, or to make an emotional or heightened statement.[42] It is also frequently used for dialogue and while such metrical intervention can contribute to the aesthetics of a composition and may indeed have been an integral component of the text to be

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[40] See *Immram Brain. Bran's Journey to the Land of the Women*, ed. by Séamus Mac Mathúna (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1985).

[41] For an extensive collection and discussion of these ballads, see *Duanaire Finn. The Book of the Lays of Fionn*, ed. by Eoin MacNeill and Gerard Murphy, Irish Texts Society 7, 28, 43, 3 vols (London: D. Nutt, 1907–53).

[42] Cf. Proinsias Mac Cana, 'Prosimetrum in Insular Celtic Literature', in Harris and Reichl, pp. 99–131.

performed, in very many cases the verse could be removed without any appreciable effect on the storyline.

Such verse passages appear in the two main metrical forms we encounter in Early Irish: in syllabic metre – by far the most common – or, less frequently, in rhythmical *rosc* metre. These metres have different origins. The former, the syllabic type, is taken to derive from the syllabic metres of Late Latin,[43] while the stressed type is assumed to be inherited and, as has been argued by Watkins, represents the Irish reflex of the Indo-European poetic short line.[44]

With regard to their distribution in our prosimetrical texts, the *rosc* passages, as might be expected, are largely a feature of earlier compositions. This is the dominant type found in early sagas such as *Fled Bricrenn*[45] and *Brisleach Maige Murthemne*, the death tale of Cú Chulainn, which, however, is fragmentary. [46] *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, which is a stratified text that grew over a period of time and therefore has a number of linguistic and stylistic

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[43] On this development, see Gerard Murphy, *Early Irish Metrics* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1961), pp. 8–20.

[44] Calvert Watkins, 'Indo-European metrics and archaic Irish verse', *Celtica*, 6 (1963), 194–249.

[45] *Fled Bricrenn. The Feast of Bricriu,* ed. and trans. by George Henderson, Irish Texts Society, 2 (London: D. Nutt, 1899).

[46] *The Death of Cú Chulainn. A Critical Edition of the Earliest Version of* Brislech Mór Maige Muirthemni *with Introduction, Translation, Notes, Bibliography and Vocabulary*, ed. and trans. by Bettina Kimpton (Maynooth: School of Celtic Studies, National University of Ireland, 2009).

layers, shows both. In later compositions such as *Buile Suibhne* or *Acallam na Senórach*, only the syllabic type is found.

This development can further be exemplified by texts for which we have early and later variants. Thus the death-tale of the Ulster hero Cú Chulainn to which we have already alluded is dated to the eighth century but found in only fragmentary form. This has twenty-one poems in *rosc* style and only one in syllabic verse. A modernised version of the tale, dated perhaps to the thirteenth or fourteenth century has 35 poems, only five of which are in *rosc* form, the other *rosc* compositions of the earlier recension having been replaced by syllabic verse.[47]

As to the syllabic verse we find embedded in our tales, we should note that it always is cast in a looser metrical form, conforming only to a regular syllabic pattern but with a minimum of metrical embellishment. This is to be contrasted with a more ornate style of syllabic verse which developed through the Early Irish period and reached its apotheosis in the highly embellished *dán díreach* compositions of Early Modern Irish, used mainly in formal court poetry.

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[47] The published version of this text is edited from a manuscript in which the verse does not appear; see *Compert Con Culainn and other Stories*, ed. by Anton G. Van Hamel (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1933). The fuller version has been edited by Lára Ní Mhaoláin: *Brisleach Mhór Mhaighe Muirtheimhne agus Deargruathar Chonaill Cearnaigh: Eagrán Criticiúil*: unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Maynooth University, 2008. For the earlier version see the reference in n. 46 above.

The poems embedded in the sagas are usually referred to by the term *laíd*, translated as 'poem, verse composition or song' and generally are introduced by a number of formulaic phrases.[48] The Early Irish laws associated this type of composition with the *dos*, the fifth of the seven grades of poet they identify, but it is probable that its meaning changed in the course of time.[49]

While this prosimetrical form marks very many Irish saga texts composed down to the late Middle Ages, we should note, as Mac Cana has pointed out, that it is never used in the classical texts that were adapted into Irish, such as *Togail Troí*, *In Cath Catharda* and others, even though such texts would have provided ample scope for such to be inserted.[50]

How was poetry performed? We can answer that by stating: generally in public, and not unusually to musical accompaniment of some kind. One of the few visual images transmitted to us of the performance of poetry is found in a woodcutting by John Derricke's in his *Image of Ireland* (1581). This woodcut illustration purports to show the lord McSweeney of Donegal feasting while being entertained by various functionaries. The lord is seated at the table with other dignitaries, while in front of him a person Derricke calls the 'bard' recites poetry to the accompaniment of a

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[48] On this term, see Gearóid Mac Eoin, 'The Irish metrical term *laíd*', in *Indogermanica et Caucasica. Festschrift für Karl Horst Schmidt zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. by Roland Bielmeier and Reinhard Stempel (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1994), pp. 375–84.

[49] See Breatnach, *Uraicecht na Ríar*, p. 102, §1; 110, §15 and Mac Eoin, p. 378.

[50] Mac Cana, 'Prosimetrum', pp. 113–14.

harper. This figure, however, is most likely to be the *reacaire* 'reciter', a functionary whose task it was to recite the composition of a professional poet for an audience. While the image is late, and deals most likely with the recitation of formal verse, we have corroborative evidence from the corpus of late medieval bardic poetry itself and also from some earlier sources that associate musical accompaniment of some kind with the recitation of poetry. An earlier text relates the tale of an abbot who appeared before the Munster king Feidlimid mac Crimthain (†847), and taking an eight-stringed harp from his girdle, uttered a poem of supplication to him to the accompaniment of its music.[51]

The association of poetry and music, as depicted in Derricke's image and referred to elsewhere in Irish literary tradition, is of long standing. The poetic vocabulary of early Irish strongly attests to the connection of music with poetic composition, this being part of a cultural inheritance the origin of which predates our written records.[52] While it is unlikely that all poetic performances had instrumental accompaniment, we have clear evidence poetry was sung or chanted in medieval

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[51] 'tall a ocht-tétaich mbic chuici asa chris ⁊ ro sephaind ceól mbind ⁊ rogob láid le ⁊ ro ráid' (he took his small eight-stringed [harp] from his girdle, played melodious music and sang a lay to it, saying …[poem follows]), quoted from *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 5, 500.11. See also Padraig Ó Macháin, *Téacs agus Údar i bhFilíocht na Scol* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1998), p. 32, verse 53. For a discussion of instrumental accompaniment, see Alan Bruford, 'Song and recitation in Early Ireland', *Celtica*, 21 (1990), 61–74.

[52] On this connection, see Watkins, p. 215.

times. Poetic texts, both in *rosc* and in the syllabic style are frequently introduced by formulae such as *cechain/cachain* 'sang' (< *canaid* 'sings') or a variant thereof, or its Latin cognate *cecinit*. Two other verbs are also frequently encountered in such introductory phrases: *as-beir* 'says, utters, sings',[53] and *gaibid*, a verb that has a wide semantic range, but which encompasses the act of recitation through singing or chanting.[54]

Our principal verb here, however, is *canaid*, cognate with Latin *canere*, and sharing a somewhat similar semantic range. Both are derived from an Indo-European root *⋆kan* which has the general meaning to make a sound or noise, but which in Celtic and Italic, has developed a specific semantic range.[55] This verbal root is found in very many compounds in Irish, e.g. *ar-cain* 'sings, chants, recites'; *do-cain*: 'chants, recites (a spell, incantation or magic formula)'; *do-inchain* 'chants, utters spell'; *do-airchain*: 'foretells, prophesies', etc.[56] From these examples we can see that its semantic range encompasses far more than casual song, but

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[53] *eDIL* s.v. *as-beir*. We may note that this meaning is also retained in modern reflexes of the verb; cf. Niall Ó Dónaill, *Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla* (Dublin: Oifig an tSoláthair, 1977), s.vv. *abair, amhrán*.

[54] *eDIL* s.v. *gaibid*, IV. This meaning is also retained in modern reflexes of the verb; cf Ó Dónaill, *Foclóir Gaeilge-Béarla*, s.vv, *gabh, amhrán, fonn*. A list of such introductory formulae found in a number of Early Irish texts is given in Mac Eoin, pp. 378–80. See also Bruford, 'Song and recitation', p. 62 for a discussion of some of these terms.

[55] Cf. Julius Pokorny, *Indo-Germanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Bern: A. Francke, 1959), pp. 525–26.

[56] For these verbs and their meanings, see *eDIL* s.vv.

also includes areas such as prophecy, cursing, charming and, like its Latin cognate *canere* and its borrowings into English (e.g. *charm*, *incantation*,[57] *vaticination* etc.) which show a very similar semantic development, it belongs to the realm of sacral language or magic.[58]

Singing was also an important part of the Christian culture the Irish were to encounter at an early stage and was to have such an impact on Irish literature and its development. The psalms, at the core of religious practice, the Magnificat and other canticles and hymns were sung or chanted in Ireland as elsewhere in medieval Christendom.[59] We have numerous references to such practice in the early Irish Church and it clearly was an important part of life in the very ecclesiastical foundations in which our sagas were being written down.[60]

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[57] Both *charm* and *incantation* have been borrowed into English through the medium of French.

[58] Cf. Watkins, pp. 214–15. Etymologising a word, of course, will inform us somewhat about the circumstances that obtained when it was coined, which in the case of *canaid* and its derivatives was some time in a remote past. But the meaning of words does not always remain static and change takes place. Nevertheless the inherited vocabulary shows that singing or chanting represented an important component of the performance of poetic material in medieval Ireland.

[59] On this practice, see Joseph Dyer, 'The singing of psalms in the Early-Medieval Office', *Speculum*, 64 (1989), 535–78.

[60] On this see Aloys Fleischmann, 'References to chant in Early Irish MSS', in *Féilscríbhinn Torna: essays and studies presented to professor Tadhg Ua Donnchadha (Torna) on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, September 4th,*

As with poetic composition in Irish the verb normally used in Irish with reference to psalmody is *canaid* 'sings, chants'; its verbal noun *cétal* refers to the act of singing and from it we have the agentive noun *cétlaid* 'singer'. The Irish term for psalmody is *salmchétal* while the term for psalmist is *salmchétlaid*, which is a derivative of this. Forms of the verb *gaibid* can also be used with reference to the singing of the psalms and other devotional matter: *salmgabál* 'psalmody' appears as an alternative to *salmchétal*.[61]

We do not know how such ecclesiastical singing or chant may have differed from that used in Irish poetic composition. While the verb *canaid* is employed in the two contexts, it does not follow that the nature of what is implied by it was identical in both. The use of this verb with reference to devotional song in Latin would have been suggested by its Latin cognate *canere* and would have been readily adopted for use in Irish.

On the other hand, while *canaid* and *gabaid* can refer both to native secular composition in *rosc* or in syllabic metre, or to devotional song in Latin, the verb *as-beir* is not used with reference to the latter, as far as I am aware. It is possible that *canaid* and *as-beir* would originally have referred to different manners of recitation, but if this is the case they have become

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1944, ed. by Séamus Pender (Cork: Cork University Press, 1947), pp. 43–49.

[61] For these and other terms with many illustrative examples of their use in Early Irish, see *eDIL*. s.vv.

quite confused and alternate freely with each other with reference to the recital of many types of composition.

In view of the fact that the origins of Irish syllabic metres are to be traced to some structures of Late Latin verse, it is not unlikely that the form of song or chant used in syllabic verse was also influenced by ecclesiastical practice.

In the absence of musical notation in our early Irish sources we cannot tell how such sung or chanted verse may have sounded, but later evidence might give us a hint. We have already mentioned the *Fiannaighecht* tradition of narrative verse that relates the adventures of the legendary Finn mac Cumaill and his warriors. This type of composition, also known as the Fenian (or Ossianic) ballad or lay (*laoidh Fiannaighechta*) was to become very popular in the later medieval period and afterwards and survived as a notable feature of folk culture in Ireland, the Isle of Man and in Gaelic Scotland until comparatively recent times. We have some recordings made in Scotland and in Ireland in the last century and also references to their recitation in earlier works.[62] These lays or ballads were also cast in the loose syllabic metres we find in the verse embedded in our prosimetrical sagas. Such a looser metrical structure allows for development and change

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[62] For some of the earlier collections, see John F. Campbell, *Leabhar na Feinne*: *heroic Gaelic ballads collected in Scotland chiefly from 1512 to 1871* (London: self-published, 1872). Recordings of some of the Scottish material can be heard on the website hosted by the School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh, *Tobar na Dualchais*: <http://www.tobarandualchais.co.uk/> [accessed 22 November 2018].

within a poem, whereas any change to a composition in the formal and more elaborate metres will almost invariably impair its metrical structure. We have a number of Fenian ballads attested in multiple manuscript copies that stretch over several centuries and comparison between them shows that while the basic loose metrical structure is retained in each, we also find many changes in vocabulary and phrasing.[63] While such change and development can take place at the literary level, the effect of continuous recitation must also have played a role in their development.

The tradition of Fenian ballads had all but died out by the early part of the last century, but we have several accounts of how such poems were performed from the eighteenth century onwards. Most of these agree that these compositions were sung in some manner. Of one reciter, Joseph Cooper Walker writes in his *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards* of 1786:

> He did not chant his tales in an uninterrupted even tone: the monotony of his modulation was frequently broken by cadences introduced with taste at the close of each stanza,

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[63] For a discussion of some aspects of this question, see Ruairí Ó hUiginn, 'Duanaire Finn', in *An Fhiannaíocht*, Léachtaí Cholm Cille, 25 (Maynooth: An Sagart, 1995), pp. 47–68 (pp. 61–3). In the later period we find that many of these compositions recorded from oral narration lose their syllabic character.

And then quoting another commentator says:

> in rehearsing any of Oisín's poems or any composition in verse … he chants them pretty much in the manner of our cathedral service.[64]

In assessing some of the later evidence, Hugh Shields speaks of a style of singing closer to speech but distinguished from it.[65]

Whether such descriptions based on later sources have much to tell us about the performance of the verse we find in Early Irish sagas is far from certain, but it seems clear that the manner in which such early verse would have been performed had a musical dimension which in certain circumstances may have involved instrumental accompaniment, but quite likely differed according to the nature of the performance, and may have been subject to further change and development through the ages.[66]

We have been concerned mainly with the role and performance of the verse sections of some Early Irish sagas. This is but a single component of their structure, albeit in many cases a very important one.

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[64] Cited by Hugh Shields, *Narrative Singing in Ireland: Lays, Ballads, Come-All-Yes and Other Songs* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1993), p. 16.

[65] Shields, p. 16.

[66] For a discussion of this and other points regarding the possible relationship of modern recorded ballads to the singing of formal verse at an earlier period, see Terence P. McCaughey, 'The performing of dán', *Ériu,* 35 (1984) 39–57.

Apart from the narrative prose and sung/chanted verse, many of the sagas have a third stylistic component, consisting of lengthy descriptive passages, heavily laden with adjectives and very often strongly alliterative. Long lists of places or people are also prominent in some texts and questions arise as to how these might have been presented to an audience.

In all events, the formal recitation of such tales to 'kings, over-kings, royal heirs, lords, chieftains and bishops for their entertainment' is likely to have represented an elaborate performance, involving a professional reciter.[67] Passages in verse are likely to have been sung or chanted, possibly to the accompaniment of instrumental music, and perhaps by a person or by people other than the main reciter. While metrical passages of dialogue, such as those that are found in the Fer Diad episode of *Táin Bó Cúailnge*,[68] could have been performed by a single person, the performance would surely have been more effective if more than one reciter were involved, especially if such verse was sung.

This however, is but one aspect of the presentation and performance of these tales. Further examination of the structure of the sagas and the arrangement of their components may provide firmer answers to some of the many other remaining questions associated with the performers and performance of these texts.

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[67] Cf the text referred to in n. 18 above.

[68] *Táin Bó Cúailnge, Recension 1*, ll. 2567–3142; *Táin Bó Cúalnge: from the Book of Leinster*, ll. 2606–3596.

Performance v. Providence: Anglo–Saxon Perceptions of Salvation and the *Legend of Saint Eustace*

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Although less familiar to modern readers, the prose Latin *Legend of St Eustace* enjoyed a good deal of popularity in medieval Europe, as well being adapted into several vernacular and poetic versions. As such, it can provide an interesting case study for the reception and adaptation of various themes and ideas by different writers and intellectual milieus. The earliest extant form of the Latin legend as it was known in Anglo-Saxon England, titled the *Vita et Passio Sancti Eustachii*, is found in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 9, better known as one half of the Cotton–Corpus Legendary,[1] the large compilation of Latin saints' Lives which has been dated to the third quarter of the eleventh century.[2] An anonymous tenth-century Old English translation, the *Passio*

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[1] Quotations from the Corpus 9 text are taken from my forthcoming edition. Translations are my own.

[2] Mechthild Gretsch, *Ælfric and the Cult of Saints in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 6. See Peter Jackson and Michael Lapidge, 'The Contents of the Cotton-Corpus Legendary', in *Holy Men and Holy Women: Old English Prose Saints' Lives and their Contexts* (New York, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996), pp. 131–46 for more information on the provenance and contents of the Cotton Corpus Legendary.

Sancti Eustachii Martyris Sociorumque Eius,[3] is extant as an interpolation into Ælfric of Eynsham's *Lives of Saints* collection in BL, Cotton Julius E. vii, produced in south England at the beginning of the eleventh century.[4] Hugh Magennis has described this Old English version as an 'abbreviated paraphrase' of an earlier copy of the Corpus 9 text.[5] Also of interest is the hexametrical *Vita Beati Eustachii et Uxoris Filiorumque eius*, preserved uniquely in Bodleian, Bodley Laud Misc. 410, a manuscript from south-west Germany dated to c.1000.[6] Michael Lapidge argued that the *Hexametrical Eustace* may be a later copy of a poem about St Eustace reportedly granted to Peterborough by Bishop Æthelwold of Winchester in 970, and has plausibly identified the *Hexametrical Eustace* as being of Anglo-Saxon origin, and suggested that it could be linked to Abingdon, both

[3] Henceforth the *Old English Eustace*. Quotations are taken from William Skeat, *Aelfric's Lives of Saints: Being A Set of Sermons on Saints' Days formerly observed by the English Church*, Early English Text Society, 76 and 114, 2 vols (London: EETS, 1881, 1890), II, pp. 190–219. Translations are based on Skeat, with some modifications of my own.

[4] Neil Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), pp. 206–10; Ker suggested Bury St Edmunds as the location of origin.

[5] Hugh Magennis, 'Contrasting Features in the Non-Ælfrician Lives in the Old English *Lives of Saints*', *Anglia*, 104 (1986), 316–348 (p. 336).

[6] Henceforth the *Hexametrical Eustace*. Dating and quotations are taken from Hermann Varnhagen, 'Zwei lateinische metrische versionen der legende von Placidus–Eustachius II: Eine version in hexametern', *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur*, 25 (1881), 1–25. Translations are my own.

because Abingdon possessed relics of St Eustace and because poetry identified with tenth-century Abingdon contains elements of style and vocabulary shared with the *Hexametrical Eustace*.[7] This paper will argue that the treatment of the *Legend of St Eustace* in Anglo-Saxon England was informed by questions concerning the level of autonomy mankind had in their salvation, that is to say, the extent to which salvation was preordained, or rather was achievable through the performance of good works. The standard text of the *Legend of St Eustace* is printed in the Bollandists' *Acta Sanctorum* and assigned the number BHL 2760,[8] but as the *Old English Eustace* is closest to the text of Corpus 9, and the source text of the *Hexametrical Eustace* appears to have been very similar, Corpus 9 will be used as the base text for comparison rather than BHL 2760.[9] As the *Legend of St Eustace* is not well known to contemporary readers, the basic narrative will first be outlined.

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[7] See Michael Lapidge, 'Æthelwold and the *Vita S. Eustachii*', in *Scire litteras: Forschungen zum mittelalterlichen Geistleben*, ed. by Sigrid Krämer and Michael Bernhard, Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse, Abhandlungen, neue Folge, 99 (Munich: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1988), pp. 255–65; reprinted in *Anglo-Latin Literature: 900–1066*, ed. by Michael Lapidge (London and Rio Grande: Hambledon, 1993), pp. 213–23, for further details of his arguments.

[8] *Acta Sanctorum*, ed. by John Bolland et al., *Septembris* VI (Paris and Rome: Victor Palmus, 1867), pp. 123–33.

[9] For quotation purposes, this will be referred to simply as the *Legend of St Eustace*.

The Legend of Eustace: A Summary

Placidus, a Roman officer of high rank and a pagan, sees a vision of Christ between the horns of a stag he is hunting. Christ praises his good and charitable deeds and exhorts him to convert. Placidus is baptised, along with his wife and two sons, and takes the name Eustace. In a second vision, Christ informs Eustace that he must undergo a trial akin to Job's, due to the Devil's spite. Eustace agrees to begin the trial immediately, and soon his servants and livestock are killed by plague and his house is ransacked. He flees to Egypt with his family, and on the journey his wife is kidnapped by a heathen ship's captain and his sons are abducted by a lion and a wolf respectively during an attempt to ford a river. Eustace despairs and rails against God, before reconciling himself to his loss and becoming a menial labourer in a nearby town.

Fifteen years later, a heathen army invades the Roman Empire. Emperor Trajan recalls Placidus' former prowess and sends soldiers to find him. Two of Eustace's former servants identify him by a scar, bring him back to Rome in glory and reinstate him in his former position. Eustace's two sons, miraculously unharmed, are recruited and are reunited when they reminisce together and realise that they are brothers. Their mother overhears them, and when she recognises Eustace as her husband, the family is reunited. The war is won, with Eustace casting the enemy out of Roman lands and even invading and plundering the heathen lands in retaliation. They return to Rome

in glory, with plunder and many captives. On their return they discover that Trajan has died and has been replaced by the more fiercely heathen Hadrian. When Eustace refuses to sacrifice to the idols in gratitude both for the victory and his family's reunion, he and his family are first cast to lions, who refuse to harm them. After a final prayer, they are then martyred by being roasted alive in a giant bronze bull and are rewarded with sainthood for enduring their trials.

The *Legend of St Eustace* is clearly not a stereotypical saint's life.[10] Eustace is a warrior who abandons the military life, as do many saints such as SS Martin and Guthlac. Unlike these, however, he is called back to his warrior lifestyle and continues to be successful in the role while being a Christian. Likewise, Eustace is taught to live without worldly goods through deprivation, as are several saints, but is also returned to his worldly estate after a period of impoverished exile. Placidus provides the example of a noble pagan who is picked out for miraculous conversion through his good deeds, and his tale combines military exploits with asceticism and eventual martyrdom. Key themes that emerge include the correct use of wealth and military power, the correct response to despair and the questions of 'noble

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[10] The *Legend of St Eustace*, for example, does not fit the reductive schema that Regis Boyer devised for a "standard" medieval hagiography; see his 'An attempt to define the typology of medieval hagiography', in *Hagiography and Medieval Literature: A Symposium*, ed. by Hans Bekker-Nielsen (Odense: Odense University Press, 1980), pp. 27–36.

heathenism' and human agency in salvation. It is on the latter theme of salvation and agency that this paper will focus.

EUSTACE AND AGENCY IN SALVATION

The theme of human agency in securing salvation is common to all reflexes of the *Legend of St Eustace*. One example of this is the question of salvation for good non-Christians, which John Marenbon called 'The Problem of Paganism':

[U]p until the life of Christ […] Christianity was unavailable to anyone, at least in an obvious and explicit way. […] On the face of it, then, the large numbers (indeed, the great majority) of people, now and in the past, who were or are not Christians, must be considered to be living in alienation from the true God, not knowing or rejecting the revealed truths they need to understand their world and live well, and heading for eternal punishment. Yet this view implies a sharp moral and intellectual distinction between Christian and non-Christian societies and individuals which goes against all the evidence: non-Christian societies and individuals are not, overall, obviously and grossly more evil and ignorant than Christian ones. Moreover, this view apparently implies that God, whom Christians hold to be perfectly good, will condemn many

people to eternal punishment, because of when or where they happened to have been born.[11]

An especial awareness of this issue is apparent in the *Old English Eustace*, when the translator softens the sense of Placidus[12] being 'daemone captus'[13] to that of him and his wife being 'ða git hæðene',[14] adding that this was because 'him nan mann þone godcundan geleafan ne tæhte.'[15] While acting to excuse the protagonist of a saint's *vita* of his heathenism, it also acknowledges the importance of knowing the Christian faith, and the question of Placidus' geographical and historical placement in relation to the revelation of Christian salvation.

This 'Problem' also touches on a major controversy of the early Church, that of the arguments of Augustine and Pelagius concerning the human capacity for salvation. The broad line of the Augustinian model was that, due to Original Sin, grace imparted by baptism was necessary for salvation, otherwise good deeds of pagans were false and void as they were not directed at God, but rather grew from selfish motives such as pride.[16]

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[11] John Marenbon, 'Boethius and the Problem of Paganism', *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 78 (2004), 329–48 (p. 332).

[12] For clarity, Placidus refers to St Eustace before his baptism, and Eustace to St Eustace after his baptism.

[13] *Legend of St Eustace* 5. 'Captured by demons'.

[14] *Old English Eustace* 11. 'As yet heathen'.

[15] *Old English Eustace* 12. 'No man had taught them the divine faith'.

[16] Based on his writings in works such as *Ad Simplicianus*, *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio* and *De Dono Perseverantiae*.

Augustine rationalised this as being in the interests of humility, as if one acknowledged that all good came from God, one could not become proud of one's goodness. Augustine also argued that some men were predestined to damnation, albeit because God foresaw that they would sin, rather than because they had no free will.[17] The model of Pelagius, however, denied the idea that Original Sin was transmittable, and defined grace as a gift of human capacity for moral choice. Grace could lead to good actions and true faith, which God would then reward with further grace. According to this view, mankind had more autonomy in their salvation.[18] The *Legend of St Eustace* touches on this controversy across its reflexes in the emphases it places on the tale of a pagan who performed good deeds and subsequently converted.

The *Legend of St Eustace* begins with an enumeration of the good deeds performed by Eustace under his pre-Christian identity of Placidus, including the Christian staples of defence of

[17] See John Marenbon, *Pagans and Philosophers: The Problem of Paganism from Augustine to Leibniz* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015); John Rist, 'Augustine on Free Will and Predestination', in *Journal of Theological Studies*, 23.2 (1969), 420–47; James Wetzel, 'Snares of Truth: Augustine on free will and predestination', in *Augustine and His Critics: Essays in honour of Gerald Bonner*, ed. by Robert Dorado and George Lawless (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 124–41.

[18] Based on Augustine's writings against Pelagius, for example, *De Bono Vidvitatis*, *De Gratia Christi* and *De Gestis Pelagii*. Also see Aaron Kleist, *Striving with Grace: Views of Free Will in Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), p. 6; Wetzel, 'Snares of Truth'.

the oppressed, clothing the naked and feeding the hungry, alongside his secular virtues of wealth, nobility and military prowess. These are accompanied, however, with the aforementioned caveat that he was 'daemone captus'.[19] This acknowledgement of heathenism means that the way the *Legend of St Eustace* represents the direction and result of Placidus' pre-conversion good deeds is significant. When Christ first appears to Placidus, he introduces himself as Christ 'quem ignorans colis'.[20] While the *Old English Eustace* translates this in the same way ('þe þu nytende wurðast'),[21] in the *Hexametrical Eustace* it is 'cui servis tu nescius ipse'.[22] The wording of the *Legend of St Eustace* runs counter to Augustine's belief that non-Christian deeds could never be directed towards the good that is God; if Placidus' good deeds can be regarded as worship, then they are directed towards God, albeit unwittingly. Likewise, the concept of service in the *Hexametrical Eustace* goes against the

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[19] *Legend of St Eustace* 5. 'Captured by demons'.

[20] *Legend of St Eustace* 36. 'Whom you unknowingly worship'. The close verbal correspondence to Acts 17:23, where St Paul refers to an altar 'ignoto deo quod ergo ignorantes colitis' ('to an unknown god, whom you unknowingly worship'), implied to be the Christian God, provides further evidence for an awareness of the 'Problem of Paganism' in the *Legend of St Eustace*.

[21] *Old English Eustace* 47. 'Whom you unknowingly worship'.

[22] *Hexametrical Eustace* 71. 'Whom you unknowingly serve'. It is possible that this alteration was made in the interests of poetic vocabulary, but the alteration of the sense nonetheless impacts the reading of the poem by those receiving it.

Augustinian model in a more direct way than the prose versions. He may not be Christian, but Placidus can do good and so gain God's attention.

It is apparent, however, that this attention alone does not constitute grounds for salvation. During the first vision, Christ tells Placidus that 'Non enim iustum est dilectum meum propter bona opera seruire doemoniis immundis, et simulacris uita credentibus et uacuis insensatis.'[23] The *Old English Eustace* follows this, although it translates 'dilectum meum' as 'se leofa þeow',[24] while in the *Hexametrical Eustace* God also describes Placidus as 'meus […] famulus'.[25] Both reflexes, therefore, cast Placidus as a servant, but also retain the idea that his deeds are misdirected at idols, rather than in the service of Christ. His relationship with Christ is closer in these versions, but still insufficiently close – in acting as a misdirected servant, he serves, or delights, God to the extent that he gains his notice, but no further as yet.

This issue of the alignment of Placidus' deeds and his relationship with God is established during his pursuit of the Christ-Stag. The *Legend of St Eustace* states that 'misericors et benignus Deus, qui semper et ubique ad se sibi dignos uocat, bona non d[e]spexit eius opera nec uoluit benignam et deo dignam mentem sine mercede deseri, idolatrie contectam

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[23] *Legend of St Eustace* 39–40. 'It is not right that one who is delightful to me on account of his good works should serve foul demons and images, which are alive to believers, and which are empty and insensible'.
[24] *Old English Eustace* 51. 'The dear servant'.
[25] *Hexametrical Eustace* 75. 'My servant'.

tenebris'.[26] The danger that Placidus is in is clear – he may do good deeds, but without a reward, he will be abandoned to damnation due to his lack of faith. In the *Hexametrical Eustace*, the nature of this reward is made explicit:

> Sed dominus pius et clemens, qui semper ubique
> Quos novit dignos fieri sibi convocat ad se,
> Hujus opus non spernit, sed mercede rependit,
> Illius et mentem vero de fonte rigavit,
> Tuncque modo tali tulit ex cultu simulacrum.[27]

The reward, the 'true fountain', is baptism, which is regarded as key to Eustace's salvation in the *Legend of St Eustace* – although he has performed many good deeds, Eustace is informed that he must be baptised if he is to earn salvation. Indeed, the level of baptismal imagery is increased in the *Hexametrical Eustace*.[28]

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[26] *Legend of St Eustace* 12–14. 'The merciful and good God, who always and everywhere calls those who are worthy to him, did not despise his good deeds nor did he want a mind that was good and worthy of God to be abandoned without reward and covered over by the darkness of idolatry'; translated closely in *Old English Eustace* 17–21.

[27] *Hexametrical Eustace* 25–9, 'But the benevolent and merciful Lord, who always and everywhere calls those whom he knows are worthy to himself, did not reject his deeds, but repaid a reward, and he watered his mind from the true fountain, and so he raised him from the worship of idols.'

[28] Besides the additional reference in *Hexametrical Eustace* 28, there are expansions of the idea of baptism as cleansing at 114–16, 144, and 190–1; there are also more explicit mentions of Eustace's baptism made at his

However, it is Placidus' good deeds that earn the attention of God and allow him to be shown the path to salvation – here his pre-Christian performance is essential. What is more, while it is baptism that ensures his eligibility for salvation, it is nonetheless a ritual that he must undergo through his own volition – a performative act resulting in salvation.

<div align="center">PROVIDENCE AND *PIETAS*</div>

We can observe an interest in emphasising performance in another striking aspect of the Anglo-Saxon treatment of the *Legend of St Eustace* – the dichotomy of *providentia* (providence, that is God's foreknowing and guiding of events)[29] and *pietas* (mercy or grace, a means by which God can impart gifts and salvation).[30] The former implies that events are generally fixed, with humans having little autonomy in their actions which are, after all, foreseen, while the latter implies that God acts as an aid to those who merit it, allowing them greater autonomy in their

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reunion with his former servants (474) and with his wife (577), as well as additions concerning sacramental chrism (164 and 578).

[29] *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* <http://clt.brepolis.net/dmlbs/Default.aspx> [accessed 24 July 2018], 'prouidentia' 2; 'prescient force that governs the created order, divine Providence (also as personified attribute of God)'.

[30] *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* <http://clt.brepolis.net/dmlbs/Default.aspx> [accessed 24 July 2018], 'pietas' 2; 'goodness of God or Christ towards man-kind'; 4) 'mercy, compassion, kindness'.

earning of salvation. It is significant that references to providence in the Latin base Legend are replaced by the idea of *pietas* in the *Hexametrical Eustace*.[31]

The most significant instance of this alteration of *prouidentia* to *pietas* takes place at the pivotal moment at which the loss of his sons drives Eustace to contemplate suicide, and it is especially significant as it is an alteration shared by both the *Old English* and *Hexametrical Eustaces*. C9 reads: 'Sed iterum constantem eum reddidit prouidentia Dei, que futura prouidebat.'[32] The *Old English* and *Hexametrical Eustaces* alter this in similar ways: the

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[31] It should be noted that vocabulary may be an issue here, as *prouidentia* is a prosodic word that is difficult to fit into hexameters. Such alterations in the *Hexametrical Eustace* may therefore be for metrical reasons. However, the near-contemporary *Carmen de libero arbitrio*, which Michael Lapidge attributed to Lantfred of Winchester, uses variations on the word *prouidentia* to express the concept; examples include *Carmen de libero arbitrio* 5, *porrouidentia* 'providence'; 7, 105, *praedesituenatio* 'predestination'; 109, *antescientia* 'foreknowledge'. The possibility that the alteration of *prouidentia* to *pietas* in the *Hexametrical Eustace* was deliberate, or at least responded to thematically by the poet, should not be dismissed out of hand. For the dating and location of the *Carmen*, see Michael Lapidge, 'Three Latin Poems from Æthelwold's School at Winchester', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 1 (1972), 85–137; reprinted in *Anglo-Latin Literature: 900–1066*, ed. by Michael Lapidge, pp. 225–77. The attribution to Lantfred, if genuine, would provide closer context for the *Hexametrical Eustace* through shared links to Æthelwold of Winchester, who potentially granted an earlier copy of the poem to Peterborough in 970; see above.
[32] *Legend of St Eustace* 147–8. 'But the providence of God, which foresaw the things to come, returned him to constancy again'.

Old English Eustace states that 'hine seo uplice arfæstnyss gestaþelode hine, þæt he þæt ne dyde',[33] while the *Hexametrical Eustace* has it that 'Sed pietas domini illum constantem fore fecit, | Illius et mentem fidei cum robore firmans.'[34] Through these changes Eustace's resistance to his suicidal impulse becomes a product of his own action. It is no longer a decision of God's provenance that things were not to be so, ergo they are not. Instead, God's grace is imparted to Eustace, strengthening him in both cases (albeit in a stronger manner in the *Old English Eustace*) – Eustace is given the tools with which he can overcome his despair, but it is up to him to use them and this is his triumph. Here his salvation (in his avoidance of damnation through suicide) becomes performative, rather than passive.

EUSTACE AND THE *CONSOLATION OF PHILOSOPHY*

Interest in the *Legend of St Eustace* in England appears to have been related to the study of Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae*.[35] The debates within *De Consolatione Philosophiae*

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[33] *Old English Eustace* 181–2. 'Heavenly virtue fortified him with patience, so that he did not do so'.

[34] *Hexametrical Eustace* 311–12. 'The mercy of God rendered him constant and was strengthening his mind with the vigour of faith'.

[35] Quotations and translations are taken from Stanley J. Tester, 'The Consolation of Philosophy', in *Boethius: Theological Tractates and The Consolation of Philosophy*, ed. and trans. by Hugh Fraser Stewart, Edward Kennard Rand and Stanley J. Tester, Loeb Classical Library series, 74 (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library, 1918), pp. 130–435.

surrounding one's agency in relation to providence are certainly relevant to the *Legend of St Eustace*, and it is notable that there was clear interest in agency at Winchester, the seat of Bishop Æthelwold, who is known to have been familiar with the *Legend of St Eustace*.[36] the tenth-century *Carmen de libero arbitrio* provides further evidence for this interest.[37] The *Legend of Saint Eustace* and the Old English translations of *De Consolatione Philosophiae* also reflect similar attitudes to the correct use of wealth, power, and the ideal structure of a Christian society.[38] Especially pertinent to the questions concerning salvation in the *Legend of St Eustace*, however, is the metaphor that appears in book 4 prose 6 of *De Consolatione Philosophiae*.[39] Here, Philosophy describes a series of spheres orbiting a central hub, the 'principal divinity'; the further they are from the hub, the more they become entangled in vicissitudes of fate. The closer a consciousness aligns itself with the principal divinity, the less affected it is by earthly fortunes. This metaphor is adapted in the *Old English Boethius* to be that of a wagon-wheel, with the hub again being the principal

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[36] As evidenced by his former position as Abbot of Abingdon, the apparent centre of the Eustace cult in England, and his gift of a poetic version of the *Legend of St Eustace* to Peterborough in 970.

[37] Michael Lapidge, 'Three Latin Poems'.

[38] B refers to the prose translation, and C to the prosimetric version. References are taken from *The Old English Boethius: An Edition of the Old English Versions of Boethius' De Consolatione Philosophiae*, ed. by Malcolm Godden and Susan Irvine, 2 vols (Oxford, 2009).

[39] *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, Book IV, pp. vi, 60–93.

divinity, this time explicitly referred to as God.[40] The *Old English Boethius* relates mankind to the spokes, attached both to the hub of God and the rim which rolls in earthly matter. The weakest men reside closest to the rim, where they are rolled in cares, while the righteous men who trust in God nearer the hub are more secure from hardship. People who trust more in God, therefore, are better able to endure the hardships of fortune as they are better able to seek the 'best good' in the proper place, that is, God rather than in the world. This could be read as suggesting that salvation involves human agency – the closer to God, the better able to look past earthly things and thus actively seek salvation. Significantly, the *Hexametrical Eustace* appears to follow this model closely. As Eustace's relationship with God fluctuates, so the poet edits his source text to alter Eustace's level of agency. There are ten identifiable instances of this:[41]

1. Before his conversion, the vision of Christ is so awe-inspiring to Placidus that he falls to the ground. In the *Legend of St Eustace*, this is expressed with the active verb 'cecidit'.[42] In the *Hexametrical Eustace*, however, the passive

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[40] *Old English Boethius* (B) Ch.39, *Old English Boethius* (C) P.29.

[41] Though the practicalities of versification may have led to the changing of some prosodic vocabulary to a more favourable poetic lexicon, the weight of evidence favours the poet's editing of the *Legend of Eustace* in this fashion in the *Hexametrical Eustace*. Issues regarding prosodic and poetic language will be discussed where necessary.

[42] *Legend of St Eustace* 42. 'He fell'.

construction 'volvitur arvis' is used.[43] The same phrase is also used in the *Aeneid* x.590 to describe Aeneas striking Lucagus to the ground in battle. This allusion further heightens Placidus' passivity before God.

2. The representation in the *Hexametrical Eustace* of Eustace's reaction to his second vision of Christ, being after his baptism, contrasts with this. Here Eustace 'terram petit',[44] replacing the present participle 'cadens' of the *Legend of St Eustace*;[45] this creates a sense that Eustace falls as an active choice to honour God, rather than as a mere reaction, as 'petere' has connotations of active seeking or beseeching.[46]

3. Likewise, when asked when he desires his trial to take place, the *Hexametrical Eustace* omits Eustace's caveat that he will undergo the trial 'si non est possibile euadere quae a te nobis sunt decreta'.[47] Eustace, now converted, is closer to God, and therefore has no desire to avoid the divinely-ordained trials.

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[43] *Hexametrical Eustace* 107. 'He was cast to the dry earth'.

[44] *Hexametrical Eustace* 180. 'Fell to the earth'.

[45] *Legend of St Eustace* 84. 'Falling'.

[46] *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* (2016) <http://clt.brepolis.net/dmlbs/Default.aspx> [accessed 24 July 2018]; 'petere' 3) 'to seek to obtain, to go to get'; 5) 'to try to obtain by asking, request'.

[47] *Legend of St Eustace* 102–3. 'If it is not possible for us to avoid the things which are decreed for us by you'.

4. This increased sense of volition and activity continues when the impoverished family travel to Egypt – where the *Legend of St Eustace* simply states that 'pergebant ad Egiptum',[48] in the *Heximetrical Eustace* it becomes an active choice: 'Aegypti cupiunt invadere regna'.[49] Their trust in the divine plan is indicated in their active engagement with the decision, rather than merely acting in accord with it.

5. However, following the loss of his family and his near-succumbing to despair, Eustace begins to adopt a more passive manner, expressed in the clear statements of this in his Lament in the *Hexametrical Eustace*. He expressly says 'impellor'[50] and 'cogor',[51] making it clear that he regards himself as having no volition.

6. Interestingly, the poet appears to play with this idea of passivity, altering Eustace's recollection of God's injunction for him to be as Job. Compare the readings of the *Legend of St Eustace* and the *Hexametrical Eustace* respectively:

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[48] *Legend of St Eustace* 129. 'They went to Egypt'.
[49] *Hexametrical Eustace* 275. 'They wanted to go into the kingdom of Egypt'.
[50] *Hexametrical Eustace* 327. 'I am driven'.
[51] *Hexametrical Eustace* 332. 'I am forced'.

'Memini Domine te dicente quod "oportet te temptari sicut Iob"' (*Legend of St Eustace*);[52] 'Nam bene te memini quondam mihi, Christe, loquentem Quod veris deberem exemplis Job imitari' (*Hexametrical Eustace*).[53] While the *Legend of St Eustace* reads more passively and the *Hexametrical Eustace* involves active choice, this active choice is a false friend; it is an active choice that Eustace is not making. Eustace would be able to make this decision if he were to trust in God, but his lack of faith prevents him from doing so.

7. Once Eustace's despair has been overcome with the apologetic conclusion to his Lament, his closeness to God is not immediately reaffirmed. His relationship with God becomes more distant, as there is no explicit response to his final prayer in the Lament in the *Legend of St Eustace* in general, nor does God speak to him until fifteen years later, when he sees his former servants seeking him. When Eustace prays that he might see his family again as he has seen them, God reassures him in a prayer – but where in the *Legend of Saint Eustace* 'audiuit uocem de celo dicentem sibi',[54] in the *Hexametrical Eustace* he has not yet fully

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[52] *Legend of St Eustace* 159. 'I remember, Lord, you saying that, "You ought to be tempted like Job"'.

[53] *Hexametrical Eustace* 335–6. 'For I remember well those things which you once telling me, Christ, that I ought to imitate Job through his true examples'.

[54] *Legend of St Eustace* 199. 'He heard a voice from Heaven, speaking to him'.

reconciled with God, and so instead 'ex arce poli vox illa missa locuta est'.[55] In the prose, Eustace has agency in that he hears the voice, where in the poem, the active verb is performed by another agent, which sends the voice of which Eustace is the passive recipient.

8. This divine reassurance can be seen to be the turning point, both of Eustace's fortunes and his improving relationship with God. At the culmination of God's speech to him, the poet of the *Hexametrical Eustace* gives Eustace greater agency in his response to God and his reaction to the awe with which he is filled. In the *Legend of St Eustace*, Eustace 'terrore perculsus sedebat',[56] whereas in the *Hexametrical Eustace* he is only described as 'terrore repletus'.[57] There is no sense of violence assailing him, nor of him falling. He fears God but is no longer cast down as before.[58]

9. Nevertheless, the poet shows nuance. Though Eustace is now reconciled with God, there is one more instance of additional passivity. When his former servants identify him, he denies it, although God has only recently informed him that he is to be restored to his former state. The poet adds a

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[55] *Hexametrical Eustace* 405. 'A voice was sent to him from the height of Heaven, speaking to him'.

[56] *Legend of St Eustace* 199. 'Sat, struck by terror'.

[57] *Hexametrical Eustace* 412. 'Was filled with terror'.

[58] While this may be another alteration made to better fit the hexameters, as *repletus* is more metrically flexible than *perculsus*, it nonetheless fits the general pattern of fluctuating agency and faith that the poet is creating.

passive phrase to Eustace's admission of his identity: 'Cum magna tandem pulsus vi vera fatetur'.[59] Eustace's resistance to the divine plan, though apparently well-intentioned and born of Christian humility, results in a loss of agency.

10. The final instance of the poet playing with the idea of agency and passivity occurs when Eustace refuses to sacrifice to idols. As he affirms his relationship with God, the poet makes the explicit addition that Eustace is 'spernens oracula Phoebi.'[60] Eustace has aligned himself with God and is able to act of his own volition in securing his salvation.

Of the two Boethian models of agency related to closeness to God, the *Hexametrical Eustace* is arguably closer to that of the *Old English Boethius* – with its more direct analogy of moving up and down the spokes towards and away from the 'hub' representing God – than that in *De Consolatione Philosophiae*. This could be seen, therefore, as further evidence strengthening Lapidge's argument for the poem's composition in England.

Conclusions

The *Legend of St Eustace* explores the limitations of direct human involvement in attaining salvation, through the example of a noble heathen who achieves salvation through a combination of

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[59] *Hexametrical Eustace* 456. 'When he was driven by great compulsion he confessed the truths'.

[60] *Hexametrical Eustace* 656. 'Rejecting the oracles of Phoebus'.

his own deeds and the grace granted to him. His good deeds can earn him sufficient grace to be able to perceive God, but without the grace provided in baptism, he is lost. Yet he must actively agree to be baptised, and afterwards prove himself in trials – both the deeds he has performed and divine grace play fundamental roles in his salvation. There is also good evidence that the *Legend of St Eustace* was read in Anglo-Saxon England in light of *De Consolatione Philosophiae* and its reception, as the restructuring of the *Hexametrical Eustace* suggests. We can, therefore, locate the study of the *Legend of St Eustace* in an intellectual milieu which was interested in the dichotomy between free will and divine providence, also reflected in tenth-century England by the vernacular translations of *De Consolatione Philosophiae* and the *Carmen de libero arbitrio* attributed to Lantfred of Winchester. In so doing, we can build a more complete picture of the intellectual culture of the Reformed centres of the Anglo-Saxon Church and its reception and adaptation of texts and ideas from continental sources.

'The Eagle's Oars are Feathers' – Skaldic Practice and Perception Beyond Performance

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One of the perennial mysteries of Old Norse skaldic poetry is how skalds learned to compose such complex verses. The medieval Icelandic sagas feature a multitude of characters who compose skaldic poetry, many of whom appear to have been capable of improvising intricate skaldic verses in response to events that are happening around them, such as Egill Skalla-Grímsson, who even at the age of three is said to have improvised kenning-rich verses, such as this one in response to the actions of his grandfather Yngvarr:

> Síþǫgla gaf sǫglum
> sárgagls þría Agli
> hirðimeiðr við hróðri
> hagr brimrótar gagra,
> ok bekkþiðurs blakka
> borðvallar gaf fjorða
> kennimeiðr, sás kunni,
> kǫrbeð, Egil gleðja.[1]

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[1] *Egils saga*, ed. by Bjarni Einarsson (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2003), p. 45; 'The wound-goslings' herding-tree [WARRIOR]

This particular episode is, like many of its kind in the sagas, likely to be exaggerated for literary effect. However, it attests to the idea that skalds' ability to communicate ideas in intricate metre and metaphor was almost second nature – something which recurs throughout the Old Norse literary corpus.

However, the sagas remain oddly silent on exactly how skalds acquired their skills, or how they practiced them, with *practice* here being used in the sense of developing and refining their grasp of the techniques of skaldic diction outside of the realm of recitation.[2] This has been noted by Elena Gurevich, who comments:

> All the technical features of skaldic poetry testify to the necessity of special training of practitioner. "Poetic inspiration" […] accompanied by some knowledge of tradition […] could hardly be enough to produce this highly complicated poetry [… but] the Old Norse sources completely ignore the problem of young poets' training […] Instead they try to convince us that

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gave three ever-silent dogs of the ocean floor [SEA-SNAILS] to the talkative Egill for his praise. The knowing-tree of the horses of the field of planks [WARRIOR], who knew how to gladden Egill, gave as the fourth gift the chosen bed of the brook-grouse [DUCK'S EGG]'. All translations from Old Norse are my own.

[2] 'practice, n. 4', *OED Online* <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/149226?rskey=AmkXAI&result=1&is Advanced=false> [accessed 7 May 2018].

everybody capable of composing skaldic verses simply possessed this ability.[3]

Judy Quinn has also commented on this phenomenon, stating that '[l]ittle is known about the traditional training of skalds or the theoretical discourse that enabled the cultivation and oral transmission of vernacular poetics.'[4] Yet although the *process* of skaldic pedagogy is obscure certain medieval Icelandic texts, including the twelfth-century *Háttalykill* attributed to Jarl Rognvaldr of Orkney and the Icelandic skald Hallr Þórarinsson; the thirteenth century *Prose Edda* attributed to Snorri Sturluson; and the *Third Grammatical Treatise*, attributed to Snorri's nephew, Óláfr Þórðarson, attest to the existence of some form of training in the comprehension, if not the composition, of skaldic verse by the time that they were written.[5]

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[3] Elena Gurevich, 'Ok varð it mesta skáld: Some Observations on the Problem of Skaldic Training', *Collegium Medievale: Tverrfaglig tidsskrift for middelaldersforskning*, 1–2 (1996), 57–71 (p. 62).

[4] Judy Quinn, 'Eddu list: The Emergence of Skaldic Pedagogy in Medieval Iceland', *Alvíssmál*, 4 (1994 [1995]), 69–92 (p. 69).

[5] Snorri Sturluson, *Edda: Skáldskaparmál 1. Introduction, Text, and Notes*, ed. by Anthony Faulkes (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1998); Snorri Sturluson, *Edda: Háttatál*, ed. by Anthony Faulkes (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2007); Rǫgnvaldr *jarl* and Hallr Þórarinsson, 'Háttalykill', ed. by Kari Ellen Gade, in *Poetry from Treatises on Poetics*, ed. by Kari Ellen Gade and Edith Marold, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages, 3 (Brepols, Turnhout, 2017), pp. 1001–93; hereafter 'Háttalykill'; *Dritte grammatische Abhandlung: der isländische Text nach den Handschriften AM748 I, 4° und Codex Wormianus*, ed. by Björn

Although *Háttalykill* survives only in later paper manuscripts, it is attributed to jarl Rognvaldr Kali Kolsson and Hallr Þórarinsson by *Orkneyinga saga*.[6] Although the poem itself makes it clear that it is concerned with recounting the deeds of traditional heroes, proclaiming 'forn frœði lætk | framm of borin',[7] the form of the poem is something of an innovation. It displays over 41 verse-forms, some traditionally skaldic and some imported from foreign literature, particularly Latin poetry.[8] Indeed, the name *Háttalykill* is itself a play on the Latin term *clavis metrica*, a didactic genre of poem used to teach metre. Thus, it has been argued that this poem signals a turning point in Old West Norse literary culture, whereby the poetry and poetics of the elites began to acquire a cosmopolitan and scholarly flavour, influenced by the pedagogical practices of the Continental European schoolroom and its approach to Latin poetics.[9]

Magnus Olsen and Thomas Krömmelbein, Studia Nordica, 3 (Oslo: Novus Forlag, 1998).

[6] *Orkneyinga saga*, ed. by Finnbogi Guðmundsson, Íslenzk fornrit, 34 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1965), pp. 1–300 (p. 185).

[7] 'Háttalykill', p. 1009; 'I will bring forth old wisdom'.

[8] *Háttalykill enn forni,* ed. by Jón Helgason and Anne Holtsmark, Bibliotheca Arnamagnaeana, 1 (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1941), p. 118.

[9] Paul Bibire, 'The Poetry of Earl Rognvald's Court', in *St Magnus Cathedral and Orkney's Twelfth-Century Renaissance*, ed. by Barbara E. Crawford (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988), pp. 208–40 (p. 217); Preben Meulengracht Sørensen, 'Snorris frœði', in *Snorrastefna, 25.–27. júlí 1990*, ed. by Úlfar Bragason, Rit Stofnunar Sigurðar Nordals, 1 (Reykjavík: Stofnun Sigurðar Nordals, 1992), pp. 270–83 (p. 279); Guðrún

This attitude continued through the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, influencing others such as Snorri Sturluson. *Skáldskaparmál* and *Háttatál*, two parts of the *Prose Edda*, directly address skaldic composition, looking at the two branches of Old Norse poetics – 'mál ok hættir', lexicon and metre.[10] In fact, *Skáldskaparmál* explicitly states that it was intended for the education of aspiring skalds:

> En þetta er nú at segja ungum skáldum þeim er girnask at nema mál skáldskapar ok heyja sér orðfjǫlða með fornum heitum eða girnask þeir at kunna skilja þat er hulit er kveðit.[11]

The *Third Grammatical Treatise*, meanwhile, draws heavily upon the classical grammatical treatises by Donatus and Priscian, which were part of the pedagogic traditions of Christian Europe. Thus, as Judy Quinn notes, both texts 'illuminate the way the discourse of poetics was being constituted during this dynamic period of Icelandic literary history, and how the pedagogic impulse of Latin textbooks was being taken up within the vernacular tradition.'[12]

Nordal, *The Tools of Literacy: The Role of Skaldic Verse in Icelandic Textual Culture of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press, 2001), pp. 29–36.

[10] *Skáldskaparmál*, p. 5.

[11] *Skáldskaparmál*, p. 5; 'And now to speak to those young skalds who are eager to study the language of poetry and increase their vocabularies with the traditional poetic terms, or yearn to make clear that which is obscurely spoken.'

[12] Quinn, 'Eddu list', p. 69.

However, although these texts suggest that skaldic poetics were being taught in the thirteenth-century Icelandic schoolroom, the corpus of skaldic poetry extends far beyond these boundaries in terms of time and space. How then, did skalds practise beyond the walls of the medieval Icelandic schoolroom? One possible answer can be found in the runic inscription found on Lund Benstykke 4. As this is a single source, the following discussion should not be uncritically extrapolated into an overarching statement on Old Norse poetry and poetics. Yet, when viewed through the lens of oral poetic theory and current research into language and perception, it raises interesting considerations regarding skaldic practice prior and parallel to those suggested by twelfth- and thirteenth-century Icelandic grammatical texts.

Lund Benstykke 4, as the name suggests, is a stick of bone, approximately 16cm long and 2.5cm wide, found in Lund in 1938. It uses a medieval runic alphabet, or *fuþark*, and has been dated somewhere between the years 1050 and 1300. Both sides of the stick feature an inscription in Old Danish.[13] Side A reads: ᛒᚯᛙᛁ ᛭ ᚱᛁᛋ ᛭ ᛁᛁ ᛭ ᛘᛅᛚ ᛭ ᚱᚢᚾᚢ, **bøndi:ris:ti:mal:runu**, *Bóndi risti malrunu*; and Side B reads: �ᛅᚱ ᛭ ᛅᚱᛁ ᛭ ᛅᚱᚢ ᛭ ᚠᛁᛅᚦᚱᛅᚱ, **arar:ara:æru:fiaþrar**, *Arar ara eru fjaðrar*. The runes themselves are relatively clear, and no significantly alternative readings have been proposed. The Side A inscription is relatively commonplace, naming Bóndi, and proclaiming his act of carving runes. This kind of inscription appears throughout the corpus of Germanic

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[13] 'Lund Benstykke 4', *Danske Runindskrifter*,
<http://runer.ku.dk/VisGenstand.aspx?Titel=Lund-benstykke_4>
[accessed 11 January 2018].

runes, from Migration Period bracteates, to Viking Age runestones, to medieval bone sticks such as this one.[14] It is the inscription on Side B which holds potential clues regarding skaldic practice.

Arar ara eru fjaðrar is a metrical inscription in keeping with many techniques found in skaldic verse. The first three words, starting with vowels, all alliterate with one another, and this side of the inscription is heavily invested in internal rhyme, as *ara* and *eru* feature *skothending* – partial internal rhyme based on consonants – and *arar* and *fjaðrar* feature a fuller internal rhyme based on the word-final syllable *-rar*.[15] In addition to this, Side B's inscription also appears to be an explanation of a kenning: the oars of the eagle are feathers, which can be rendered as a kenning-type: <*oar*> of <*bird*> [FEATHER].[16] Kennings are one of

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[14] Judith Jesch, 'Runes and Verse: The Medialities of Early Scandinavian Poetry', *European Journal of Scandinavian Studies*, 47 (2017), 181–202, gives a number of Late Iron Age runic inscriptions from Scandinavia and Anglo-Saxon England, several of which identify the runes' carver.

[15] For an overview of skaldic metres, see Kari Ellen Gade, 'General Introduction §4.3, Skaldic metres', in *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 1: From Mythical Times to c. 1035*, ed. by Diana Whaley, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages, 1, 2 vols (Brepols, Turnhout, 2012), I, pp. lvii–lxiv.

[16] This orthographic rendition of the kenning-type adheres to that used in my MA thesis. Triangular brackets indicate semantic fields for the base-word(s) and determinant(s), and the capital letters and square brackets indicate the referent. See Kathryn A. Haley-Halinski, 'Kennings in Mind and Memory: Cognitive Poetics and Skaldic Verse' (unpublished MA thesis, Universitetet i Oslo, 2017). PDF available at <https://www.duo.uio.no/handle/10852/58862> [accessed 8 May 2018].

the defining features of skaldic diction, and are short phrases that consist of two or more nouns that are used to replace another noun in the stanza.[17] In its most basic form, a kenning has three parts. There is the implicit referent, which is the thing to which the kenning refers; there is the base-word, which metaphorically stands in for the referent; and there is the determinant, which is usually in the genitive and serves to narrow down the semantic range of the base-word by being metonymically attached to the referent.[18] Thus, although the base-word *oars* could potentially stand in for multiple referents, the presence of the determinant

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[17] Edith Marold, 'General Introduction §5.1, Kenning', in *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 1: From Mythical Times to c. 1035*, I, pp. lxx–lxxxv (p. lxx).

[18] Marold, 'General Introduction §5.1, Kenning', p. lxx; with reference to the definition of kennings as 'ein zweigliedriger Ersatz für ein Substantiv der gewöhnlichen Rede' in Meissner, p. 2. See also Margaret Clunies Ross, 'The Cognitive Approach to Skaldic Poetics, from Snorri to Vigfússon and Beyond', in *Úr dölum til dala: Guðbrandur Vigfússon Centenary Essays*, ed. by Rory McTurk and Andrew Wawn, Leeds Texts and Monographs New Series, 11 (Leeds: Leeds Studies in English, 1999), pp. 267–86 (p. 276). Andreas Heusler, *Die altgermanische Dichtung,* 2nd edn (Potsdam: Athenaion, 1941), p. 296 states that true kennings are solely metaphorical in nature; an argument supported in Frederic Amory, 'Kennings, Referentiality, and Metaphors,' *ANF*, 130 (1987), 87–101. However, a strictly metaphorical definition misrepresents kennings, as many incorporate metonymy in cases such as *nomen agentis* kennings, which characterise referents through behaviour, described in Rudolf Meissner, *Die Kenningar der Skalden: Ein Beitrag zur skaldischen Poetik* (Bonn and Leipzig: Kurt Schroeder, 1921), pp. 283–332, or *viðkenningar*, which characterise a specific entity through unique characteristics such as kinship-links, described in *Skáldskaparmál*, p. 107.

eagle means that the interpretation is restricted to the things that steer an eagle; its wing- and tail-feathers. The term *kenning-type* refers to a semantic formula which can be filled in with any number of synonyms, such as *eagle* for the semantic field *<bird>* in this case.[19] The kenning-type *<oar>* of *<bird>* [FEATHER] is otherwise unattested in the skaldic corpus, although there is a similar kenning in the twelfth-century poem *Haraldsdrápa II*, by Einarr Skúlason, where a sail is referred to as *ráfiðri* – sailyard-feather.[20] Thus, the semantic fields and associations Lund Benstykke 4 uses do appear related to other kennings attested to in the skaldic corpus.

In the twentieth century, scholars took an interest in studying kennings as a system, and following the work of Bjarne Fidjestøl, it is generally thought that kennings operated as a paralinguistic system, building upon ordinary language-use. This system operated on a strict series of rules and formulae regarding referents and the base-words and determinants that could be used to reach them.[21] This means that, with enough practice, one could gain communicative competence – meaning the ability to send and receive information through a given semiotic system – as the

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[19] Bjarne Fidjestøl, 'The Kenning System. An Attempt at a Linguistic Analysis', in *Bjarne Fidjestøl: Selected Papers*, ed. by Odd Einar Haugen and Else Mundal, trans. by Peter Foote (Odense: Odense University Press, 1997), pp. 16–68 (pp. 17–20).

[20] Einarr Skúlason, *Haraldsdrápa II* 4:2, ed. by Kari Ellen Gade, in *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 2: From c. 1035 to c. 1300*, ed. by Kari Ellen Gade, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), II, pp. 544–48 (p. 547).

[21] Fidjestøl, pp. 16–68; with reference to Meissner.

rules regarding boundaries of meaning in the kenning-system were shared between the speech-community of skalds, performers, and audience-members.[22] The purpose of this kenning-system was twofold: on the one hand, it was a verbal art form that showcased the skald's vocabulary and command of poetic techniques. On the other hand, as John Lindow has argued, it is likely that the kenning-system as it is known today was an elite version of Old Norse poetic practice, and that complex skaldic diction acted as a kind of marker to show who was part of the courtly in-group.[23]

The presence of kennings in a runic inscription is, in itself, not unusual – the oldest known source that contains something that could be a kenning is often thought to be *walhakurne*, written in the Elder Fuþark on the Migration Period Tjurkö I bracteate and interpreted as *foreign corn*, meaning *gold*; and several fourteenth-century runic inscriptions such as N B548 from Bryggen appear to be skaldic compositions containing kennings.[24] It is the fact that this inscription explains a kenning that is remarkable, given the characteristic reticence of Old Norse

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[22] Dell Hymes, 'On Communicative Competence', in *Sociolinguistics: Selected Readings*, ed. by John B. Pride and Janet Holmes (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), pp. 269–93.

[23] John Lindow, 'Riddles, Kennings, and the Complexity of Skaldic Poetry', *SS*, 47.3 (1975), 211–327 (pp. 321–23).

[24] 'IK 184', *Die Goldbrakteaten der Völkerwanderungstid 1,2*, ed. by Karl Hauck et al. (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1985), p. 316; 'N B548M', *Samnordisk Runtextdatabas* <http://www.nordiska.uu.se/forskn/samnord.htm> [Accessed 22 January 2018].

sources on the subject of how skaldic competence was obtained discussed above. Some scholars have suggested that the *þulur*, metrical lists of names, could have served as 'a database of partially-digested information' to be used by scholars and poets to cue recall of mythological figures and narratives – information relevant to the formation of kennings, and that kennings were improvised from these vocabulary-lists.[25] This may help in understanding how the wide vocabulary of Old Norse words exclusive to poetry was perpetuated, but it still doesn't explain how the kenning-system itself was memorised.

Yet Lund Benstykke 4 arguably holds a clue as to how competence was gained in the kenning-system itself. This inscription has a very tightly-knit metrical structure, and according to theories of oral poetics, alliteration and rhyme both act as strong memory-cues in the recitation of oral poetry, especially when used in conjunction with meaning, as the meaning of a phrase and the sound-patterning of the poem both act to limit the possible word-choices.[26] A Modern English example would be reciting the short rhyming phrase 'Never Eat Shredded Wheat' to recall the order of compass points. Thus, Lund Benstykke 4 could be seen as a rare written attestation of one method of skaldic practice, in which short metrical sayings

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[25] Christopher Abram, 'Einarr Skúlason, Snorri Sturluson, and the Post-Pagan Mythological Kenning', in *Eddic, Skaldic, and Beyond: Poetic Variety in Medieval Iceland and Norway*, ed. by Martin Chase (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), pp. 44–61 (p. 58).

[26] David C. Rubin, *Memory in Oral Traditions: The Cognitive Psychology of Epic, Ballads, and Counting-Out Rhymes* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 65–89.

were composed in order to memorise the formulae that underpinned the kenning-system, with the metrical nature of each phrase cueing recall.[27] This would be in keeping with Gurevich's theory that skalds were trained orally, by exchanges between a master and their apprentice, as such mnemonic phrases could have been transmitted orally between skalds with relative ease.[28]

This method of memorising and internalising kenning-formula may well have had wider implications for skaldic practitioners' perceptions of the world. The theory of linguistic relativism, that language determines beliefs, norms, and values, and even an individual's perceptions of reality, in accordance with the concepts and structures favoured by a given language, has been hotly debated in the field of cognitive linguistics, and current research favours that idea that 'language may not replace,

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[27] Although he does not discuss metrical kenning-type explanations such as the one being considered here, Frog, 'Metrical Entanglement and Dróttkvætt Composition – a Pilot Study on Battle-Kennings', in *Approaches to Nordic and Germanic Poetry*, ed. by Kristján Árnason et al. (Reykjavík: University of Iceland Press, 2016), pp. 149–229 (pp. 164–65), discusses the process of learning skaldic *langue* through exemplars such as those found in the *Prose Edda.*

[28] Gurevich, p. 68. Gurevich also cites the common metaphor of poetry as a drink in skaldic verse. Judy Quinn, 'Liquid Knowledge: Traditional Conceptualisations of Learning in Eddic Poetry', in *Along the Oral-Written Continuum: Types of Texts, their Relations and their Implications*, ed. by Slávica Rankovic, Leidulf Melve and Else Mundal (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), pp. 183–226 (p. 183) also discusses the metaphor of knowledge as a drink in oral cultures such as Old Norse poetic traditions.

but instead may put in place, representational systems that make certain kinds of thinking possible.'[29] Thus, skalds who internalised kenning-formulae through mnemonic techniques did more than memorise stock phrases in the manner often discussed in relation to oral formulaic poetry. Rather, skalds who internalised the metalanguage of the kenning-system may have acquired a kind of conceptual double-vision. In this, the referents, base-words, and determinants of kennings were seen simultaneously as their ordinary, everyday selves, and as being related to one another as part of a cluster of potential kenning-elements.

This conceptual double-vision is not as improbable as it sounds. According to the cognitive linguistic hypothesis of conceptual metaphor theory, metaphors are a foundational element of human thought:

> Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature [… and our] conceptual system thus plays a central role in defining our everyday realities […] the

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[29] Philip Wolff and Kevin J. Holmes, 'Linguistic relativity', *Wiley interdisciplinary reviews: Cognitive science*, 2.3 (2011), 253–65 (p. 261). Similar conclusions are reached in John A. Lucy, 'Recent Advances in the Study of Linguistic Relativity in Historical Context: A Critical Assessment', *Language Learning*, 66.3 (2016), 487–515; and Gary Lupyan, 'The Centrality of Language in Human Cognition', *Language Learning*, 66.3 (2016), 516–53.

way we think, what we experience, and what we do
every day is very much a matter of metaphor.[30]

Humans often use metaphors based on bodily or social
experiences to conceptualise abstract ideas by mapping the
similarities between source (bodily/social experience) and target
(abstract concept).[31] Cognitive metaphor theory has been
criticised, particularly in its prioritisation of bodily metaphors
over culturally-constructed ones.[32] However, it has been
successfully employed in discussions of how the kenning system
operated in the minds of skalds and their audiences, as 'from a
cognitive linguistic point of view, basic kenning patterns and
their linguistic realisations are grounded in entrenched
conceptual metaphors. These metaphors may be more or less
'alive' depending on the surrounding verse context.'[33] Thus, in

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[30] George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (London:
University of Chicago Press, 2003 [1980]), p. 3.

[31] Lakoff and Johnson, pp. 5, 16–22.

[32] Zoltán Kövecses, *Metaphor in Culture: Universality and Variation* (New
York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 4, 11.

[33] Deborah Potts, *A Cognitive Approach to the Analysis of the Extant Corpus
of Kennings for Poetry* (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of
Cambridge, 2012), p. 3. An 'alive' metaphor is one that is still actively
generating meaning in language and culture, while a 'dead' metaphor is
one that consists of perhaps one or two conventionally fixed expressions
but does not actively generate meaning or structure thoughts beyond
these. See Lakoff and Johnson, pp. 55–56. For an overview of several
cognitive linguistic theories of metaphor and their potential applications
in the study of kennings, see Haley-Halinski, pp. 14–21.

the same way that many Anglophone people see anger as hot and sadness as dark, Bóndi could have been culturally conditioned to perceive feathers as an eagle's oars. This in turn could account for the ways in which characters in sagas are portrayed as having an almost preternatural ability to rapidly improvise skaldic verses complete with kennings. Practiced skalds possessed a linguistically-altered perceptual framework, where objects in the world around them served as mnemonic cues for clusters of predetermined kenning-elements. They were, in a sense, already perceiving in a skaldic mode.

As already mentioned, there are issues with extrapolating the implications of Lund Benstykke 4 to the entirety of the skaldic corpus. Lund Benstykke 4 has no analogous medieval inscriptions, and furthermore, it is an inscription from medieval Denmark. This poses two issues: firstly, although metrical inscriptions are known from Denmark, and literary sources do suggest that skalds worked at and were appreciated by Danish courts during the Viking Age, the skaldic corpus as it is known today is the product of West Norse (Icelandic and Norwegian) skalds, with East Norse (Danish and Swedish) literary practice almost completely out of the picture.[34]

Secondly, the social position of runes and their inscribers changed from 1050 to 1300. If Lund Benstykke 4 is from the

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[34] Clunies Ross, *A History of Old Norse Poetry and Poetics* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2005), pp. 2–3; 'Runic Poetry', *Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages database*, <http://skaldic.abdn.ac.uk/m.php?p=runic> [accessed 11 January 2018] gives a list of metrical runic inscriptions, including filters for region and time period.

earlier end of this period, it is more likely that it is the result of somebody using runes to make a note. If it is from the thirteenth century, however, the use of runes and kennings are more likely to be a piece of learned antiquarianism. Medieval Danish interest in runes experienced a revival in the twelfth- and thirteenth-century royal court, starting with Valdemar I and carrying on with his son, Valdemar II.[35] Saxo Grammaticus commented on this cultural phenomenon in several places in the *Gesta Danorum*, stating that the Danes recorded historical events in runes, and recounting an episode where King Valdemar I sent some people to record and interpret a runic inscription at Blekinge.[36] In addition to this, the *Third Grammatical Treatise* by Óláfr Þórðarson includes sections on runes and skaldic verse, and it is said in *Knýtlinga saga* that Óláfr Þórðarson underwent scholarly training at the court of Valdemar II.[37] With this in mind, Rikke Steenholt Olesen argues that in medieval Denmark, runic and Latinate literacy were both largely the preserve of the clergy.[38] On the other hand, the vernacular, prosaic, and occasionally even

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[35] Discussed in Tarrin Wills, 'The Thirteenth-Century Runic Revival in Denmark and Iceland', *North-Western European Language Evolution*, 69.2 (2016), 114–29.

[36] Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum: The History of the Danes*, ed. by Karsten Friis-Jensen, trans. by Peter Fisher (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 4–7, 12–13.

[37] Óláfr Þórðarson, pp. 60-72; 'Knýtlinga saga', in *Danakonunga sogur,* ed. by Bjarni Guðnason, Íslenzk fornrit, 35 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1982), pp. 91–321 (p. 315).

[38] Rikke Steenholt Olesen, 'Runic Amulets from Medieval Denmark', *Futhark*, 1 (2010), 167-174 (pp. 173–74).

obscene nature of the medieval rune-sticks found in Bryggen suggest that runic literacy was a more widespread phenomenon in Norway, even if this may not have been the case elsewhere in the Norse cultural area.[39] It is not known who Bóndi was, and whether he was a highly-educated, socially-elite poet who viewed skaldic verse and runes as antiquarian curios, one of the largely lost voices of non-elite poetry making a record of a mnemonic kenning-explanation, a passing Norwegian, or someone else entirely.

If a dating based upon Norwegian runes is used, it does appear that Lund Benstykke 4 might be from the thirteenth century. In the thirteenth century, the long-twig and short-twig fuþarks were merged to create the medieval runic inventory.[40] Lund Benstykke 4 uses a short-twig a-rune and a long-twig æ-rune, and a long-twig o-rune with double strokes to represent the long ó, although this character was usually used to represent the phoneme [ø]. This dating is – as mentioned – somewhat speculative,[41] yet it is rather likely that Bóndi was writing in the thirteenth century at the earliest. If this is the case, this runic inscription containing a kenning-explanation could be an erudite scholarly exercise in runes and skaldic poetics, rather than an example of traditional skaldic practice. Ultimately, the lack of

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[39] Examples include 'N B1 M', 'N B11 M', 'N B17 M', and 'N B149', *Samnordisk Runtextdatabas* [Accessed 22nd January 2018].

[40] Lars Magnar Enoksen, *Runor: historia, tydning, tolkning* (Falun: Historiska Media, 1998), p. 136.

[41] Olesen, p. 162 comments that the grouping of Danish runic inscriptions into 'early' and 'late' medieval based upon linguistic or runological features has become increasingly difficult as finds increase.

analogous objects from medieval Denmark or elsewhere in Scandinavia leaves it unclear as to whether such mnemonic phrases were widely used to internalise skaldic diction.

In conclusion, extrapolating the conclusions drawn here from Lund Benstykke 4 to the wider skaldic corpus should be done with caution. It is hard to reconstruct oral traditions due to the lack of physical evidence left behind, and this is the case for much skaldic verse and the traditions accompanying it. However, when looked at through the lens of cognitive research into memory, language, and perception, the inscription on Lund Benstykke 4 becomes a very tempting piece to fit into the puzzle of how skalds acquired and polished the skills necessary to compose and perform skaldic verse. If metrical phrases such as these were used to memorise and even internalise the conceptual metaphors underpinning the kenning-system, such a linguistic system could, over time, have created a kind of language-enhanced cognition whereby skalds perceived the elements of the kenning-system as cues for the elements they were related to, thus facilitating metrical and lexical improvisations within the strict parameters of skaldic diction.

Quotations with a Twist: Aware Intertextuality in Skaldic Verse

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SKALDIC POETRY AS A PRODUCT OF ORALITY

In the oldest texts containing it, such as the Icelandic *First Grammatical Treatise* (mid-twelfth century), Old Norse skaldic poetry is treated as a traditional verbal art belonging to the oral sphere, meaning by this a poetic genre composed and performed before the advent of written culture.[1] The 'second life' of skaldic poems as written texts is presumably a later development in the history of this genre, generally assumed to have taken impetus in

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[1] Cf. the quotation of a couplet by Þjóðólfr Arnórsson in the *First Grammatical Treatise*, introduced by the remark *sem skáld kvað* 'as the poet said' (*The First Grammatical Treatise*, ed. by Hreinn Benediktsson (Reykjavík: Institute of Nordic Linguistics, 1972), p. 222); even more explicit about the oral transmission of the stanzas quoted is the introductory remark to a *helmingr* by Óttarr *svarti*: 'en þessa lund kvað einn þeira eða þessu líkt' ('one of them said in this way or in a somewhat similar way'; *The First Grammatical Treatise*, p. 226; translation my own). On the circumscribed meaning to attribute to the 'oral' character of pre-written poetry in general and of skaldic verse in particular, though, see Alaric Hall, 'The Orality of a Silent Age: The Place of Orality in Medieval Studies', in *Methods and the Medievalist: Current Approaches in Medieval Studies*, ed. by Marko Lamberg et al. (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), pp. 270–90 (pp. 275–76).

the course of the twelfth century, when skaldic stanzas became of central importance for the peculiar *prosimetrum* form of Scandinavian medieval historiography, as well as for the emerging Icelandic grammatical and poetological reflection. For instance, the previous skaldic tradition was employed both for historiographical and poetological purposes by Snorri Sturluson, a key figure in the process of transition from orality to literacy. Despite his engagement with writing, Snorri's own knowledge and skill as a composer of skaldic verse must have been founded on an internalized competence that had very little to do with literacy, but one rather based on the memorization of a great deal of skaldic stanzas.[2]

A number of intertextual phenomena, ranging from more or less vague verbal echoing, adoption of motifs and word collocations, to specific allusion and deliberate quotation, might be ascribed to the skalds' strong awareness of tradition. Unlike anonymous poetry, though, skaldic praise verse appears to have valued originality of form and authorship, the stanzas composed by an authoritative skald being associated with his name not less than with that of the dedicatee of the poem. The risk of being accused of plagiarism is an indirect proof of the fact that this extreme case of intertextuality was stigmatized and evidence from the extant corpus suggests that plain appropriation of other

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[2] On the likelihood of Snorri's dependence on non-written sources, see Sigurður Nordal, *Völuspá, gefin út með skýringum*, ed. by Sigurður Nordal (Reykjavík: Prentsmiðjan Gutenberg, 1923).

skalds' expressions was as far as possible avoided. [3] An incessant pursuit of formal variation was realized in accordance with the requirements imposed by two major aspects of *dróttkvætt* composition, namely the metrical and phonic features of the verse-form on the one hand (prosody, alliteration, rhyme scheme), and the principle of word-substitution known as the 'kenning system' on the other. This results in a constant tension between systemic limitations and originality.

Leaving aside the cases of similarity in theme or imagery and loose verbal echoing, the focus of this paper will be three instances of strong intertextual dependency, that can be safely assumed to be cases of intentional quotation; by picking up another skald's words, the authors of these stanzas engage in direct dialogue with both their source and the competence and expectations of their audience, highlighting the social dimension of the two main moments of skaldic performance: composition and reception.

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[3] This is generally taken as the most probable explanation for a derogatory nickname like, for instance, *skáldaspillir* ('skalds-spoiler, plagiarist') attributed to the tenth-century Norwegian skald Eyvindr Finnsson, likely because of the strict dependency of his *Háleygjatal* on the analogous genealogical poem *Ynglingatal* by Þjóðólfr ór Hvini; it is worth noting, though, that even in the case of 'the plagiarist' *par excellence*—assuming this to be the right interpretation of Eyvindr's nickname—similarities between the two poems are mostly structural, pointing rather to a form of open emulation or rivalry (*Háleygjatal*, ed. by Russell Poole, in *Poetry from the King's Sagas I: From Mythical Times to c. 1035*, ed. by Diana Whaley, 2 vols (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), I, pp. 195-213 (p. 195); hereafter *SkP* I).

Haraldr *harðráði* Sigurðarson,
Gamanvísur 4 (ca. 1044)

Rǫgnvaldr *jarl* Kali Kolsson,
Lausavísur 1 (ca. 1140)

Íþróttir kannk átta:
Yggs fetk líð at smíða;
fœrr emk hvasst á hesti;
hefk sund numit stundum.

Tafl emk ǫrr at efla;
íþróttir kannk níu;
týnik trauðla rúnum;
tíðs mér bók ok smíðir.

Skríða kannk á skíðum;
skýtk ok rœk, svát nýtir;
hvártveggja kannk hyggja
harpslǫtt ok bragþǫttu.[4]

Skríða kannk á skíðum;
skýtk ok rœk, svát nýtir;
hvártveggja kannk hyggja:
harpslǫtt ok bragþǫttu.[5]

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[4] Haraldr *harðráði* Sigurðsson, *Gamanvísur*, ed. by Kari Ellen Gade, in *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas II: From c. 1035 to c. 1300*, ed. by Kari Ellen Gade, 2 vols (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), I, p. 39–40, hereafter *SkP* II. 'The skills I have are eight: I know how to forge Yggr's [ÓÐINN'S] drink [POETRY]; I ride swiftly on horseback; I have practiced swimming occasionally. I can glide on skis; I shoot and I row how one should; both these things I enjoy: harp-playing and poems.' Here as in the following stanzas, the translations of skaldic verse are mine, although I benefited from the translations provided by the editors in the Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages project.

[5] Rǫgnvaldr *jarl* Kali Kolsson, *Lausavísur*, ed. by Judith Jesch, in *SkP* II.ii, pp. 576–77. 'I am quick at playing chess; the skills I have are nine: I hardly forget runes; I devote time to the book and to smithing. I can glide on skis; I shoot and I row how one should; both these things I enjoy: harp-playing and poems.'

These two *lausavísur* represent one of the most evident cases of direct reference within the skaldic corpus. The 'source' or basic text is one of the occasional *Gamanvísur* ('Jesting verses') attributed to Haraldr Sigurðarson *harðráði* 'hard-ruler' (presumably composed around 1043-1044),[6] quoted and reframed a century later by *jarl* Rǫgnvaldr Kali Kolsson of Orkney. The topic of both compositions is a semi-serious boasting about one's own personal abilities; Haraldr had claimed his skills to be eight, but his emulator raises the stake: his *íþróttir* are nine.[7]

Assuming both *vísur* to be genuine, Rǫgnvaldr's second *helmingr* is a plain citation of Haraldr's one, stating without further comment that he has the same set of skills: skiing, shooting, rowing and enjoying both harp music and poetry.[8] The

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[6] See Haraldr *harðráði* Sigurðsson, *Gamanvísur*, ed. by Kari Ellen Gade, in *SkP* II.i, p. 35.

[7] The *íþróttir* theme occurs also in Glúmr Geirason's *Gráfeldardrápa*, st. 14 (ed. by Alison Finlay, in *SkP* I.i, p. 264), where Haraldr *gráfeldr* Eiríksson is said to have mastered twelve skills; however, the extant stanza fails to illustrate the accomplishments, possibly because of the lack of the second *helmingr* (*SkP* I.i, p. 260). Unfortunately, one can only speculate on the relationship between this precedent and the following *íþróttir vísur* by Haraldr and Rǫgnvaldr. On the question of possible European models for Rǫgnvaldr Kali's set of skills, particularly the parallel with Petrus Alfonsi's *septem industriae*, see Michael Schulte, 'Board games of the Vikings: From *hnefatafl* to chess', *Maal og Minne*, 2 (2017), 1–42 (pp. 2–5).

[8] Haraldr's *Gamanvísur* st. 4 is transmitted in the *Morkinskinna* version of his life (see stanza 4 of the poem, edited by Kari Ellen Gade, in *SkP* II.i, p. 35, and *Morkinskinna: The Earliest Icelandic Chronicle of the Norwegian Kings*

first *helmingr* of Rǫgnvaldr's stanza, by contrast, shows signs of original manipulation of the source. The first obvious difference is the predominantly intellectual character of the skills Rǫgnvaldr is claiming to master: a form of board-game probably identifiable with chess, knowledge of runes, acquaintance with books, and finally a form of *smíð* ('art, smithing') that, rather than actual craftsmanship, must be understood as a further allusion to the kenning used in his model-text, where Haraldr, according to a well-established trope, had defined his own poetical activity as *smíða líð Yggs* 'to forge the drink of Óðinn [POETRY]'.[9] This 'intellectual turn' instils some confidence in the authenticity of Rǫgnvaldr's reworking, since it fits what we know about the

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(1030–1157), trans. by Theodore M. Andersson and Kari Ellen Gade (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2000), p. 473), while Rǫgnvaldr's stanza is the first of the 'youthful *lausavísur*' attributed to the *jarl* in *Orkneyinga saga* (Judith Jesch, 'Biography', in *SkP* II.ii, p. 575; *Orkneyinga saga*, ed. by Finnbogi Guðmundsson. Íslenzk Fornrit, 34 (Reykjavík: Hið Íslenzka fornritafélag, 1965), p. 130). On the dubious attribution of Haraldr's second *helmingr*, see Bjarne Fidjestøl, *Det norrøne fyrstediktet* (Øvre Ervik: Alvheim & Eide, 1982), p. 60; on the supposed genuineness of Rǫgnvaldr's poetry, see Judith Jesch's comments in *SkP* II.ii pp. 575-609 and Judith Jesch, 'Earl Rögnvaldr of Orkney, a poet of the Viking diaspora', *Journal of the North Atlantic*, 4 (2013), 154-160 (p. 155); if the phenomenon of intertextuality here analysed is accepted as such, Rǫgnvaldr's paraphrase of Haraldr's stanza would constitute further evidence of the authenticity of the last, rather than a counterargument; see Mikael Males, 'The Last Pagan', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 116.4 (2017), 491–514 (p. 496).

[9] See Schulte.

social developments active in his times and, more specifically, what we know about his own personality.[10]

Taking a closer look at how quotation is realized, it is possible to appreciate the degree of sophistication and technicality the game of skaldic intertextuality could reach. Compared to his model, Rǫgnvaldr's *íþróttir*-line appears to be 'misplaced', occurring in l. 2 instead of l. 1; this apparently minor change has important consequences with regards to the phonic features of the line: even lines are in fact characterized by the *hǫfuðstafr* of alliteration and full internal rhymes (*aðalhendingar*), while odd lines carry the two *stuðlar* and half internal rhymes (*skothendingar*). In Haraldr's *lausavísa* these features are displayed as follows:

> **Í**þr**ótt**ir kannk **á**tt**a**
> **Y**ggs fetk l**íð** at sm**íð**a.

The displacement of the *íþróttir*-verse by Rǫgnvaldr alters, as expected, these relations, resulting in a redefinition of rhyme-scheme and alliteration:

> T**af**l emk ǫrr at **ef**la;
> **í**þróttir kannk n**í**u.

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[10] See Rǫgnvaldr *jarl* Kali Kolsson, *Lausavísur*, ed. by Judith Jesch, in *SkP* II.ii, pp. 575–609, and Jesch, 'Earl Rögnvaldr of Orkney', p. 156.

However the second line of Rǫgnvaldr's poem is extremely problematic from a metrical perspective, since it violates one of the strongest principles of *dróttkvætt* metre, namely the presence of a trochaic cadence in positions 5–6.[11] Ironically, the main problem resides in the very word with which the poet is claiming to be outdoing his predecessor: *níu* 'nine', where the first syllable counts as short.[12] The peculiarity of this verse is accentuated by

[11] The irregularity of this line was already recognized by Klaus Johan Myrvoll in 'Kronologi i skaldekvæde. Distribusjon av metriske og språklege drag i høve til tradisjonell datering og attribuering' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oslo, 2014), p. 59 and by Males, p. 496.

[12] In accordance to the requirements of Old Norse prosody, a long vowel does not produce a long syllable unless followed by a consonant, and a short vowel must be followed by more than one consonant for the syllable to count as long: hence bimoraic syllables followed by a vocalic ending count as short. The word *níu* is structurally akin to hiatus forms like *búa* and *sía*, which show a peculiar metrical behavior: 'they never occur in the penultimate position in a *dróttkvætt* line, and never have to be assumed to carry a full ictus by themselves in Eddic poems' (Kristján Árnason, *The Rhythms of Dróttkvætt and other Old Icelandic Metres* (Reykjavík: Institute of Linguistics, University of Iceland, 1991), p. 112). In fact, as a consequence of a possible reanalysis of the syllabic structure of hiatus forms as short disyllables (*bú.a* > *bu.ua*, *ní.u* > *ni.ju*), these words are excluded from positions 5-6 of *dróttkvætt* lines, just as words with a short stem, such as **hafa*, **taka*, **konungr*, **verǫld* (Kristján Árnason, p. 116; Kari Ellen Gade, *The Structure of Old Norse Dróttkvætt Poetry* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 29). The metrical behavior of hiatus forms was first observed by Sophus Bugge, 'Nogle bidrag til det norröne sprogs og den norröne digtnings historie, hentede fra verslæren', in *Beretning om forhandlingerne på det første nordiske filologmøde i København den 18.-21. juli*

the fact that the rhyme scheme presents an uncommon *aðalhending* without consonantal coda in the rhyme: the two vowels involved in the *hending* are the prefix *í-* of the compound *íþróttir* and the *-í-* in the word *níu*. This otherwise only happens in word-final position in rhymes where one of the two members contains a glide (such as *ævi*, *frýja*), which is not the case here. Failing to satisfy the most fundamental criteria of skaldic versifying would certainly defeat its purpose for someone who is boasting about his intellectual excellence; the metrical lapsus is all the more suspect, when considering that Rǫgnvaldr was an accomplished poet and the co-author of the first Old Norse *clavis metrica* (*Háttalykill*), an experimental composition on metrical variants, rich in innovative solutions. These observations suggest that the otherwise unattested metrical solution is the product of a conscious and rather ironic play with the audience's expectations, providing an explanation to the metrical oddity of the line. By evoking Haraldr's stanza, Rǫgnvaldr is joining in a line of tradition, and perhaps claiming his legitimate position among the number of poetically gifted rulers, but with his irregular cadence and rhyme he is both emulating and distancing himself from his predecessor, underlining the innovative character of his poetry.[13]

1876, ed. by Ludwig Wimmer (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1879), pp. 140–46 (pp. 142–43).

[13] Rǫgnvaldr's innovative poetical exploits are well documented; beside his engagement with unprecedented metres in *Háttalykill*, he is certainly testing unconventional ways of expression in some of the *lausavísur* attributed to him, one of the most representative being the 'almost surrealistic' *lausavísa* 10 (*Völuspá, gefin út með skýringum*, p. 270), where he

Quotation as parody: a solemn opening

Einarr *skálaglamm* Helgason's *Vellekla* ('Lack of Gold', probably composed around 975)[14] appears to have established a lasting influence on the later tradition.[15] The poem is outstanding for more than one reason, including relatively good state of preservation, length and richness in style. A number of half stanzas attributed to Einarr in *Skáldskaparmál* and displaying a consistent stylistic feature, namely variation on the motif of

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plays with metrical requirements to insert the onomatopoeic words *atatata* and *hutututu*, 'representing the chattering teeth of a shivering woman' (Rǫgnvaldr *jarl* Kali Kolsson, *Lausavísur* st. 10, ed. by Judith Jesch, in *SkP* II.ii, p. 587; Þorgeir Sigurðsson, 'Nýjar skjálfhendur á 12. öld', *Són*, 12 (2014), 55-67 (pp. 59-60). Perhaps the most famous instance of experimentation with new themes is the bunch of love stanzas in troubadour-style allegedly composed by Rǫgnvaldr and some of his retainers in praise of Viscountess Ermengarda of Narbonne, during their visit at her court in 1151 (Alison Finlay, 'Skalds, Troubadours and Sagas', *SBVS*, 24 (1995), 105-153).

[14] On the question of the dating, see Hans Kuhn, 'Vor tausend Jahren. Zur Geschichte der skaldischen Innreim', in *Speculum Norroenum: Norse Studies in Memory of Gabriel Turville-Petre*, ed. by Ursula Dronke et al. (Odense: Odense University Press, 1981), pp. 293–309 (pp. 299–306).

[15] Specific influence of *Vellekla*'s *upphaf* stanzas with regards to word-choice can be detected, for instance, in Arnórr *jarlaskáld*'s *Þorfinnsdrápa*, st. 1 and Hofgarða-Refr's *Poem about Þórsteinn*, st. 1; a verbal echo of *Vellekla* st. 14 is to be found in Eyjólfr *dáðaskáld*'s *Bandadrápa* st. 2; frequent similarities with other parts of the poem are found in Halldórr *ókristni*'s *Eiríksflokkr* (ed. by Kari Ellen Gade, in *SkP* I.i, pp. 469–85).

water-related kennings for 'poetry', have been assumed to be part of the elaborated, wide-ranging *upphaf* (opening) of this poem, unusually extending over five *helmingar*.[16] As one of the most rhetorically marked passages of an influential poem, *Vellekla*'s opening lines must have been quite memorable and immediately recognizable by skaldic audiences.[17] For this reason, the blatant reprise of Einarr's first line in Sigvatr Þórðarson's opening of *Austrfararvísur* strikes one as a different kind of intertextual strategy compared to the usual subtle verbal echoing employed by other poets.

Einarr *skálaglamm* Helgason, *Vellekla*, st. 1 (c. 980)	Sigvatr Þórðarson, *Austrfararvísur*, st. 1 (c. 1019)
Hugstóran biðk heyra — heyr, jarl, Kvasis dreyra — foldar vǫrð á fyrða	Hugstóra biðk heyra hressfœrs jǫfurs, þessar — þolðak vás — hvé vísur,

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[16] See Edith Marold, 'Introduction', in *SkP* I.i, p. 280. On the decision to attribute these stanzas to *Vellekla* rather than to the other *drápa* for Hákon ascribed to Einarr in *Fagrskinna*, see *SkP* I.i, pp. 280–89.

[17] Although it is not certain that the half-stanza usually edited as st. 1 constituted the very beginning of the poem, this seems likely because of the canonical bid for a hearing; the *helmingr* displays also extra ornamentation through retained rhyme between ll. 1–2, which provides these two lines with a peculiar sonority. Furthermore, the very fact that Sigvatr quotes them as the beginning of his own poem, seems to confirm the idea that these were the opening lines of Einarr's one.

fjarðleggjar brim dreggjar.[18]   verðung, of fǫr gerðak.[19]

Authorship and originality concerns are too strong in skaldic practice to allow such an evident quotation to be random and meaningless, so how can it be explained?

Even a casual glance at the first *helmingr* is enough to give a foretaste of the abundance of mythological references to be found in *Vellekla*, which is markedly pagan both in style and content, celebrating jarl Hákon as the restorer of the old heathen cults and depicting him, in contrast to the opposite trends radiating from the Christianized Danish kingdom, as a traditional pagan ruler favored by the gods. The cultural and political climate of jarl Hákon's court is reflected in the common poetics of the large number of skalds who were part of his entourage; these seem to have established a distinctive literary trend in skaldic style, with 'mythological variation as a cornerstone' of the artistic and, ultimately, political and ideological program of the *Hlaðajarlar*.[20]

Sigvatr's *Austrfararvísur* ('Verses on an eastward journey', composed ca. 1019), by contrast, is a realistic and sometimes

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[18] Ed. by Edith Marold, in *SkP* I.i, p. 283. 'I ask the mighty-hearted guardian of the land [RULER = jarl Hákon] to listen to the surf of the dregs of the men of the fjord-bone [ROCK > DWARVES > POEM]; hear, jarl, the blood of Kvasir [POEM].'

[19] Ed. by Robert D. Fulk, in *SkP* I.ii, p. 583. 'I ask the mighty-hearted retinue of the energetic ruler [Óláfr] to hear how I composed these verses about a journey; I endured hardship.'

[20] Males, p. 514. For the political and ideological implications of such stylistic features on the later tradition, see Males, pp. 504–6, 513.

humorous recount of the poet's uncomfortable journeys through Västergötland, probably on the occasion of two diplomatic missions at the Swedish royal court on behalf of King Óláfr Haraldsson. In what constitutes the first section of the reconstructed poem, among other minor misadventures, the meeting with some unfriendly locals offers the chance to give an ironical portrait of the worshippers of the old heathen cults.[21] The openly anti-pagan character of *Austrafararvísur* is one of the most evident motifs of contrast with *Vellekla*, the pagan praise poem par excellence, suggesting that ideological grounds might be identified as the reason of Sigvatr's reworking of the famous model; stylistic details also seem to point in the direction of an irreverent quotation.

At least in the first section (sts. 1–8), Sigvatr's rhapsody of travel-impressions is marked by a tone of comic irony and self-mockery, with an overturning of the typical praise style, which results in an anti-heroic complaint about the bad travelling conditions endured by the poet and his companions. The comic tone of the description is clearly detectable in sts. 3–4:[22]

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[21] On the variety of style, topic and tone of the edited *Austrfararvísur* and on the difficult arranging of the stanzas, see the poem as edited by Robert D. Fulk in *SkP* I.ii, pp. 578–614; the stanzas are transmitted in two different chapters about Sigvatr's Swedish journeys in Snorri's *Óláfs saga helga* (both in the *Separate* and in the *Heimskringla* versions, *SkP* I.ii, p. 578; *Heimskringla*, ed. by Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, Íslenzk Fornrit, 27, 2 vols (Reykjavík: Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag, 1945), I, p. 141).

[22] Sighvatr Þórðarson, *Austrfararvísur* sts. 3–4, ed. by Robert D. Fulk, *SkP* I.ii, pp. 587–88.

St. 3

Létk til Eiðs, þvít óðumk
aptrhvarf, dreginn karfa
(vér stiltum svá) valtan
vátr (til glœps á báti).
Taki hlœgiskip hauga
herr; sákat far verra;
létk til húms á hrúti
hætt; fór betran vættak.[23]

St. 4

Vasa fýst, es rannk rastir
reiðr of skóg frá Eiðum
— menn of veit, at mœttum
meini — tolf ok eina
Hykka fót án flekkum
—fell sár á il hvára—
—hvast gengum þó þingat
þann dag — konungsmǫnnum.[24]

In his parodic travel reportage, Sigvatr's unstable ship is not a
'horse of the sea', but rather a ram (st. 2: *húms á hrúti* 'on the ram
of the sea-spray'): a worse craft was never seen before! The king's
troop, afflicted with sore feet, is injured on the soles (*fell sár á il
hvara* 'a wound fell on each sole' st. 3); typical expressions used to
praise the lust for battle of kings and rulers are comically reversed
to express Sigvatr's unwillingness to undertake the journey: (st.

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[23] 'All the way to Eið— because I dreaded turning back—I had the unsteady
vessel dragged—[I was] drenched; we had managed so badly in the boat.
May the host of burial mounds [TROLLS] take the ridiculous ship; I never
saw a worse craft; I had a hard time on the ram of the wave [SHIP] —it went
better than I had expected.'

[24] 'It was not [my] desire when I ran, furious, through the forest from Eið
twelve leagues and one— people know that we met with harm. I think not
a foot of the king's men was without sores — a wound landed on each sole
—still, we travelled keenly there that day.'

3): *vasa* **fýst**, *es rannk rastir* | **reiðr** 'it was *not* my desire, when, furious, I rode …'

Ultimately, the general tone of the first part of this poem is significantly different from the roaring opening of the monumental *Vellekla*; in Sigvatr's reworking, the suggestive solemn opening line is intertwined with a self-mocking complaining inlet:—*þolðak vás*—'I suffered hardship', which produces a trivial switch of focus from the expected praiseworthy ruler to the whiny skald.

It is no coincidence that, despite the almost perfect quotation, Sigvatr, unlike Einarr, addresses not the king but his retinue, for the amusement of which the poem—or at least this section of it—was probably composed.[25] In fact, the adjective *hugstórr* 'mighty-hearted', that in the original text is affixed to a kenning for 'ruler' referring to Hákon (ll. 1–3: *hugstóran vǫrð foldar* 'mighty-hearted guardian/defender of the land') in Sigvatr's verse is in accord with *verðung* 'retinue'. The two poets are actually addressing two different social layers, thus performing different poetical acts and consequently employing different stylistic strategies.

The meta-literary character of Sigvatr's verses is clear: as it is often the case with this innovative skald, he is wittily playing with the system, overturning the conventions of his own poetic tradition, revealing its mechanisms and distancing himself from some of the typical stylistic features of the older poets.

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[25] See Fulk's 'Introduction' in *SkP* I.ii, p. 579.

Quotation as quality assurance: *þvít kannk yrkja*

The quotation-game becomes even more interesting from the perspective of stylistic conventions when skalds exploit the resources of skaldic diction—namely the kenning system—to redefine the meaning of a well-established expression. Because of the nature of kennings as combinational symbols, the substitution of a single element within a kenning structure is sufficient to re-determine its referent, thus attributing a brand new meaning to the old formulation.[26]

  The same retinue addressed by Sigvatr in the opening lines of *Austrfararvísur* is likely to be the one mentioned in the *upphaf* of Óttarr *svarti*'s *drápa* for Óláfr Haraldsson, probably Óttarr's most famous poem, which a branch of the Óláfr tradition relates to the topos of the 'head-ransom'.[27] This time, Sigvatr himself is the one who is subject to quotation.

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[26] Bjarne Fidjestøl, 'The Kenning System: An Attempt at a Linguistic Analysis', in *Bjarne Fidjestøl: Selected Papers*, ed. by Odd Einar Haugen and Else Mundal, trans. by Peter Foote (Odense: Odense University Press, 1997), pp. 16–67 (pp. 30–44).

[27] Stanza 1 of Óttarr's *drápa* is the only one not to have been preserved in a work by Snorri. It has been transmitted, together with the head-ransom episode, in biographies of saint Óláfr assumed to depend on the Styrmir Kárason's lost version of the king's life. According to this account, Óttarr is sentenced to death because of some love-verses composed for Óláfr's queen Ástríðr; he saves his head by composing this *drápa*, with the support and advice of his close friend Sigvatr. The whole stanza is attested only in the *Tómasskinna* redaction, together with the indication that this

Leaving the question of the head-ransom motif aside, the two stanzas involved refer respectively to Sigvatr's and Óttarr's first performances before a reluctant—if not very ill disposed—Óláfr.[28] In both cases the skalds manage to convince the king of their poetic skills, and both subsequently become very influential members of his retinue. Óttarr picks up some words from Sigvatr's first court performance, dating back to some years earlier, but, as is common skaldic practice, he gives a very personal twist to his quotation:[29]

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constitutes the *upphaf* of Óttarr's *Hǫfuðlausn* 'head-ransom' (Matthew Townend, 'Introduction', in *SkP* I.ii, pp. 739–41). Snorri does not mention this episode and he quotes other parts of the poem simply referring to 'Óttarr's *drápa* for Óláfr'; besides, in Snorri's account of Óláfr's life, Óttarr is Sigvatr's nephew (Jonathan Grove, 'Recreating Tradition: Sigvatr Þórðarson's *Víkingarvísur* and Óttarr *svarti*'s *Hǫfuðlausn*', in *Á austrvega: Saga and East Scandinavia: Preprint Papers of the 14th International Saga Conference, Uppsala, 9th-15th August 2009*, ed. by Agneta Ney et al., 2 vols (Gävle: Gävle University Press, 2009), II, pp. 327–35 (p. 328).

[28] On Óláfr's reluctance to have poetry composed to him, see Bjarne Fidjestøl, 'Icelandic sagas and Poems on Princes. Literature and Society in Archaic West Norse Culture', in *Bjarne Fidjestøl: Selected Papers*, pp. 228-254 (pp. 242–44).

[29] *Heimskringla* pp. 54–55.

Sigvatr Þórðarson,
Lausavísur, st. 2 (c. 1015)

Óttarr *svarti*,
Hǫfuðlausn, st. 1 (c. 1022–3)

Hlýð mínum brag, meiðir
myrkblás, þvít kannk yrkja,
alltíginn — mátt eiga
eitt skald — drasils tjalda.[30]

Hlýð, manngǫfugr, minni
myrkblás, þvít kannk yrkja;
finnum yðr ok annan,
allvaldr, konung fallinn.[31]

Óttarr's first two lines are clearly a quotation of Sigvatr, with a partial twist in the first line, where *mínum brag meiðir* is substituted with *manngǫfugr minni*.

Sigvatr's bid for a hearing displays a *tvíkennt* kenning for 'ruler', based on an expansion of the type 'horse of the sea'>[SHIP]: (ll. 1–2) *meiðir myrkblás drasils tjalda* 'destroyer of the dark black

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[30] Ed. by Robert D. Fulk, in *SkP* I.ii, p. 701. 'Listen to my poetry, most high-born destroyer of the dark black steed of awnings [SHIP > WARRIOR], because I know how to compose — you can have one skald'.

[31] Ed. by Matthew Townend, in *SkP* I.ii, p. 741. 'Listen, noble with your retinue, to the recollection of the dark black [one] [ÓTTARR], because I know how to compose; we [I] come to you, mighty ruler, and another worthy king'. The expression *annan konung fallinn* seems to imply a reference to Óttarr's previous patron, king Óláfr Eiríksson of Sweden, after whose death (1022) Óttarr decided to come to Norway and enter the retinue of Óláfr Haraldsson; on the ambiguity of the expression. See Matthew Townend, 'Introduction', in *SkP* I.ii, p. 742).

steed of awnings, the colour probably alluding to the tarring of the ship or to the colour of the sails. [32]

When we look at Óttarr's quotation of Sigvatr's stanza, we find a significantly simpler syntactic structure; the whole kenning is gone with the sole exception of the genitive adjective *myrkblás*, which remains apparently pending: *Hlýð, manngǫfugr, minni myrkblás* ('Listen, noble with your retinue, to the recollection of the black one'). We might speculate that an audience acquainted with the verses Óttarr is quoting would have expected to hear the name to which the adjective *myrkblár* refers 'a couple of lines away', as is actually the case with Sigvatr's hyperbaton (l. 2): *myrkblás drasils* (l. 4). But when Óttarr's *helmingr* is completed, the adjective is still isolated, leaving no other option but a

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[32] The kenning type is extremely common, but it seems indeed to be one of Sigvatr's favorite ones, when it comes to experimental play with referential levels. In the above mentioned 'spray-ram' kenning (*Austrfararvísur* st. 2, ed. by Robert D. Fulk, in *SkP* I.ii, p. 585), for instance, as well as the absurdity of riding a ram instead of a horse, the poet might be evoking the butting of a ram and the way a bad boat is buffeted by the waves. The continuous shift in referential levels between 'marine' and 'terrestrial' mounts is a recurrent motif in *Austrfararvísur* as well as in *Fragments* 2 (ed. by Diana Whaley, in *Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages III: Poetry from Treatises on Poetics*, ed. by Edith Marold and Kari Ellen Gade, 2 vols (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), I, p. 349; hereafter *SkP* III). I therefore suggest that the 'realistic' descriptive element *myrkblár* 'dark black' must be considered in this light, as an analogy of the tarred ship with a black horse (cf. *Austrfararvísur* st. 11 (ed. by Robert D. Fulk, in *SkP* I.ii, p. 599) where *blakkr* 'black' is an elliptical expression for 'horse'; see also *Hesta Heiti*, st. 3 (ed. by Elena Gurevich, in *SkP* III.ii, p. 935).

substantival reading: 'the black one'. As suggested by Kock, this might be an onomastic play on Óttarr's own nickname, *svarti* 'the black', employing synonymic substitution (*myrkblár* = *svartr*) according to a well-established practice with proper names in skaldic verse.[33] The hearer might also have expected *minni* to be a possessive pronoun—'listen to my...' as *mínum* is in Sigvatr's version—but in the end *minni* has to be taken as a noun. Óttarr's quotation, then, is carried out as a 'garden-path sentence'.

Even more interesting is the fact that in a number of instances Sigvatr himself seems to play around the motif of his being 'black', either black-haired (*Nesjavísur* st. 5: *skǫrt svǫrt mín*)[34] or black-eyed (*Austrfararvísur* st. 14: *augu þessi íslenzk in svǫrtu*),[35] as a significant distinctive feature. Óttarr thus appears to be alluding to Sigvatr's poetic self-portraits, and if Óttarr was indeed Sigvatr's nephew one might even go as far as to speculate whether he is alluding to some kind of family resemblance.

By quoting Sigvatr, Óttarr is not only reasserting his own strong relationship with one of the most highly regarded men of the king's retinue, thus implicitly seeking his mediation, but he is also emulating Óláfr's most gifted skald, showing off his own virtuosity by enriching the quotation with a verbal play. While hinting at Sigvatr's authority, Óttarr is, at the same time, literally

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[33] See Ernst Albin Kock, *Notationes Norrænæ: Anteckningar till Edda och skaldediktning*, Lunds Universitets årsskrift new ser. 1, 28 vols (Lund: Gleerup, 1923–44), § 721.

[34] Ed. by Russell Poole, in *SkP* I.i, p. 563; 'my black tuft of hair'.

[35] Ed. by Robert D. Fulk, *SkP* I.i, p. 604; 'these Icelandic black eyes'.

appropriating his verse, by hiding his own nickname in it, thus claiming his own place among Óláfr's skalds, for the outspoken reason that he, no less than Sigvatr, 'knows how to compose'.

Furthermore, he seems to be implicitly drawing an analogy between himself and his Icelandic colleague. As observed by Grove: 'Óttarr overtly situates his composition in relation to the work of his older contemporary […] inviting direct comparisons between them' not only in terms of 'patronage and political advantage', but also with regards to the competitive aspect of skaldic composition, considering that 'the work of successful poets presented the benchmark against which subsequent virtuosos and arrivistes were measured'.[36] Óttarr's quotation appears as a daring act of appropriation: twisting Sigvatr's phrase completely while at the same time appropriating his physical characteristics.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the instances of quotation examined in this paper help to shed light on the dynamics of intertextuality within the skaldic tradition. Quotation, as a moment of aware intertextuality, makes explicit the triangular relationship active in skaldic performance, within which the communication between the skald and his audience is made possible by the medium of tradition; access to this social ritual is made possible only by a

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[36] Grove, p. 334.

shared knowledge of what had been composed before. In this respect, the ludic and agonistic aspect of the skaldic moment is particularly stressed.

As regards the modalities of quotation, a plain 'paste-and-copy' procedure does not seem to be an option: when borrowing from others, skalds make more or less evident changes to their model, and in order to do so, they exploit all the means available to them: metrics, imagery, kenning structures with related referential levels, and linguistic play. The three examples examined above all share a common feature: in order to obtain their poetical effects, the skalds rely heavily on the audience's expectations, at the same time defying them and playing wittily with them.

Finally it must be highlighted that intertextuality involves not only the strictly stylistic aspect of the poem quoted, but addresses organically its socio-political dimension, in regards to the personality both of the author and of the dedicatee, as well as the circumstances of its composition, providing a contextual, political or polemical parallel to the new composition.

Greeting the Lyre: Instrumental Interrelationships in the Anglo-Saxon Cultural Imagination

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What did it mean to play a musical instrument in Anglo-Saxon England? The present article argues that being an instrumental performer was seen as a discrete, designated role in society during the period, and elaborate playing techniques were employed, particularly with the *hearpe*, 'lyre'. This is suggested by pictorial and archaeological evidence of the use of physical support, together with linguistic and literary evidence. The required level of technical skill engendered a close emotional as well as physical relationship, an intimacy, between performer and instrument. In order to articulate and conceptualise this relationship, creative notions were at work in the Anglo-Saxon mind. These imaginative conceptions were borne out in the Old English language, enabled through the semantic complexity of relevant terms in its lexis. Consequently, they were evidenced in Old English poetry, through linguistic creativity as well as in rhetorical techniques such as zoomorphism and anthropomorphism. Musical instruments, and acts of performance with them, were idealised in the poems, with the lyre in particular being associated with social joy and cohesion. More specifically, the verbs used in the poetry to refer to the act of instrumental performance reflect the significance of the

performer-lyre relationship. Such representation can aid our understanding of the ways in which the Anglo-Saxons imagined the essence, as well as the effects, of instrumental performance activity.

Although there are taxonomic and linguistic questions which problematise the classification of Anglo-Saxon musical instruments, it is generally understood that the principal instrument of the period, particularly in the context of feasting and entertainment, was the Germanic round lyre, Latin *cithara*, Old English *hearpe* or *rotte*, commonly referred to by critics as a harp.[1] This instrument is the principal subject of this article. While horns and trumpets are more common in Old English literature, they feature less often in the poetry, and do not possess the lyre's associations with social pleasure. Sometimes they are represented as a component of feasting and the social hall, but

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[1] The Old English word *hearpe* has doubtless influenced the use of 'harp' instead of 'lyre' in modern criticism. Concerning the Germanic round lyre being the referent for *hearpe* in the Anglo-Saxon period, see Rupert Bruce-Mitford and Myrtle Bruce-Mitford, 'The Sutton Hoo Lyre, *Beowulf*, and the Origins of the Frame Harp', *Antiquity*, 44 (1970), 7–13; cf. Robert Boenig, 'The Anglo-Saxon Harp', *Speculum*, 71.2 (1996), 290–320, for whom 'frame harp' is the referent. Concerning Old English terminology for harps and lyres generally, see Christopher Page, 'Anglo-Saxon *Hearpan*: Their Terminology, Technique, Tuning and Repertory of Verse 850–1066' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of York, 1981), pp. 10–11; pp. 75–164. Regarding the Germanic round lyre as referent for *rotte*, see Myrtle Bruce-Mitford, 'Rotte (ii)', in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. by Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell, 29 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), XXI, pp. 788–92 (p. 788).

they function primarily as a summons or call to arms, being the instrument of choice in martial contexts.[2] Moreover, despite an enthusiastic suggestion that the bagpipe was 'popular among the Anglo-Saxons' and 'in vogue all through the wars of the eighth to the eleventh century',[3] the round lyre was the most complex musical technology in England until the introduction of the

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[2] See Alice Jorgensen, 'The Trumpet and the Wolf: Noises of Battle in Old English Poetry', *Oral Tradition*, 24.2 (2009), 319–336 (pp. 325–31).

[3] William H. Grattan Flood, *The Story of the Bagpipe* (London: Walter Scott, 1911), p. 34. The existence of the Anglo-Saxon bagpipe is not attested to any acceptable extent. Manuscript illustrations, possibly anachronistic, depict players of double pipes without a bag, and the Anglo-Saxon bagpipe would have been far cruder than, for example, the Great Highland bagpipe. See Francis Collinson, *The Bagpipe: The History of a Musical Instrument* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), pp. 65–76, particularly p. 76. Evidence for bagpipe use among the Anglo-Saxons is limited to the illustrations, a small number of glosses, and a suggestion from the nineteenth century that *swegelhorn* referred to the instrument: see Franz Dietrich, 'Die Rathsel des Exeterbuchs: Wurdigung, Losung und Herstellung', *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur*, 11 (1859), 448–90 (p. 469). Despite this lack of evidence, almost all critics believe that 'bagpipe' is the solution to Exeter Book *Riddle 29*, discussed below. If so, that instrument is relatively complex in comparison with illustrations of bagpipes, as the riddler imagines it to have a chanter and two drones. On this evidence, see *The Old English Riddles of the Exeter Book*, ed. by Craig Williamson (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), pp. 233–34. Riddle numbers in this article follow Williamson.

frame harp late in the Anglo-Saxon period,[4] with the potential to afford the most subtle and sophisticated playing techniques, and the most diverse repertoire.

A physical intimacy was established when holding and playing the lyre, suggested by manuscript illustrations and archaeological evidence. Two factors concerning performance practice are significant: the playing position of the hands, and the use of physical support, for example with the knee, or with shoulder or wrist straps. We do not know whether there were standard performance practices, though a cursory review of modern-day performances with reconstructed instruments evidences diverse possibilities, as do Anglo-Saxon manuscript illustrations (see figures 1, 2, and 3).[5] It is possible that there were

[4] Concerning the introduction of the frame harp and the demise of the round lyre, see Page, pp. 163–64; also Bruce-Mitford and Bruce-Mitford, 'The Sutton Hoo Lyre', pp. 11–12.

[5] Various YouTube channels offer examples of the Germanic round lyre in performance. See, for example, Michael J. King, *YouTube,* <https://www.youtube.com/user/michaeljking> [accessed 5 May 2018]; Brian Kay Official, *YouTube*, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-0YNAEEXWjAQUyplon5ZCw> [accessed 5 May 2018]. Lawson also considers the likely playing position: Graeme Lawson, 'An Anglo-Saxon Harp and Lyre of the Ninth Century', in *Music and Tradition: Essays on Asian and Other Musics Presented to Laurence Picken,* ed. by Richard Widdess and R. F. Wolpert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 222–44 (p. 241). Page also considers technique, and questions the assumption that plectrums were used: pp. 165–87. Playing without a plectrum offers greater opportunity for complex fingerstyle techniques. Manuscript illustrations support the fingerstyle theory, being notable for

multiple hand positions, and damping, strumming, and plucking techniques could have varied by locale or for each performer. However, given the typical position of the lyre depicted in manuscript illustrations, at an angle between twenty and forty degrees from vertical,[6] at least one hand required support if there was any level of technical complexity involved in the action of playing the instrument, even if it was placed on the lap, as is sometimes represented. With support comes the opportunity for extended playing times and increased technical intricacy. Accordingly, a greater amount of time would have been required to become proficient in the discrimination of an Anglo-Saxon audience.

Let us now consider evidence for the use of support with the Germanic round lyre, beginning with its appearance in manuscript illustrations. The eighth-century Vespasian Psalter contains a well-known illustration of King David playing the instrument, surrounded by a retinue of musicians (figure 1).[7]

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their prominent, sometimes exaggerated depiction of the fingers (e.g. figure 3); cf. *The Fortunes of Men*, l. 83, in *ASPR*, IV, p. 156.

[6] See Lawson, 'An Anglo-Saxon Harp', p. 241.

[7] London, British Library, MS Cotton Vespasian A I, fol. 30ᵛ.

Figure 1: King David playing the round lyre, surrounded by his retinue of performers. Detail from London, British Library, MS Cotton Vespasian A I, fol. 30ᵛ.

A prominent white band passes behind David's neck, looping around his right wrist and left forearm, seemingly separate from his clothing. This band could be a long strap offering support to both arms, possibly attached to the instrument. I am not aware that this suggestion has been made elsewhere, and the theory must remain an interpretation rather than a certainty. Moreover, though the illustration was likely created in Southern England in the second quarter of the eighth century and features an instrument prevalent in the period, it does not depict an Anglo-Saxon. Historical accuracy was not the illustrator's concern; resultantly, for example, the lyre in the Vespasian illustration is shorter in scale than excavated Germanic lyres. Any similarity

between David's playing technique and setup and that of Anglo-Saxon musicians must not therefore be assumed.

Firmer evidence of strap use, a wrist strap in this instance, appears in another eighth-century illustration of King David (figure 2), in a manuscript containing an abbreviated version of Cassiodorus' *Commentary on the Psalms*.[8]

Figure 2: Detail from Durham, Durham Cathedral Library, MS B II 30, fol. 81ᵛ.

This kind of strap would provide minimal support when the left hand is in motion. Graeme Lawson, who reported on the lyre excavations at Bergh Apton, Morning Thorpe, and Snape Anglo-Saxon cemeteries, believes that this type of strap was used.[9]

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[8] Durham, Durham Cathedral Library, MS B II 30, fol. 81ᵛ.

[9] Lawson, 'An Anglo-Saxon Harp', p. 241. Lawson's archaeological reports are: Graeme Lawson, 'The lyre from Grave 22', in *The Anglo-Saxon*

Indeed, he uses a similar strap himself in performance, though he wraps the strap completely around the wrist. Even so, he still rests his palm against the arms of the lyre, rendering the strap largely redundant.[10]

David's playing position differs between the Vespasian and Durham illustrations, and the latter is less likely to be a faithful depiction of a performance, despite it having been seen as evidence of historical practices.[11] The functionality of the strap detail is at odds with the otherwise questionable depiction. A Germanic round lyre with five strings is not an impossibility, though six strings seem to have been standard. More problematic, however, are David's hand positions. His right hand appears redundant unless the fingers are supporting the upper part of the lyre, in which case the resultant one-handed technique would be limited. His left hand, meanwhile, manipulates the strings from

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Cemetery at Bergh Apton, Norfolk, ed. by Barbara Green and Andrew Rogerson, East Anglian Archaeology, 7 (1978), pp. 87–97; Graeme Lawson, 'Report on the Lyre Remains from Grave 97', in *Morning Thorpe Anglo-Saxon Cemetery, Norfolk*, ed. by Barbara Green, Andrew Rogerson, and Susan G. White, East Anglian Archaeology, 36, 2 vols (1987), I, pp. 166–171; Graeme Lawson, 'The Lyre Remains from Grave 32', in *Snape Anglo-Saxon Cemetery: Excavations and Surveys 1824–1992*, ed. by William Filmer-Sankey and Tim Pestell (Ipswich: Suffolk County Council, 2001), pp. 215–23.

[10] For a film of Lawson in performance, see Historic Environment Scotland, *Ancient Stringed Instrument - Replica Being Played*, *YouTube* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DFCvu0oKlvU> [accessed 5 May 2018].

[11] See, for example, Page, p. 186.

the front of the instrument, a position in opposition to the Vespasian illustration. There are certainly more efficient and effective hand positions, and modern players tend to play in the style of the Vespasian illustration. The Durham illustration may not be entirely erroneous, however, given that diverse playing techniques could have been used. A similar playing position is depicted in another illustration offering possible evidence for the use of straps (figure 3), in the Winchcombe Psalter.[12]

Figure 3: Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ff.1.23, fol. 4ᵛ

Another representation of David as musician, this illustration dates from approximately the second quarter of the eleventh century, which explains his use of the frame harp. David's companion appears to be playing a lyre, crudely drawn but resembling the Germanic type, with his right hand holding its

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[12] Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, MS Ff.1.23, fol. 4ᵛ.

cross–beam, possibly damping the strings with his fingers. Both performers use fairly substantial straps, wrapped around the wrist multiple times, but the resemblance of the representation to historical Anglo-Saxon lyre playing is again questionable.

We do not know the extent to which illustrators understood performance practices with the Anglo-Saxon lyre. They envisaged different types of strap, which in itself reflects the tenuousness of such evidence. Archaeological remains found at Anglo-Saxon gravesites provide firmer evidence of strap use. Before considering these findings, it should be noted that the fact that lyres accompanied inhumations evinces a profound personal connection with the instrument or its music among certain sections of the populace. Moreover, the lyre's situation within those burials suggests that relationships with the instrument or its music could have differed according to a person's status or role in society. For example, the instrument is buried at the feet of a high-ranking man, somewhat distant from the body, at Taplow Anglo-Saxon cemetery in Buckinghamshire, though commonly in the crook of the arm of low-ranking men, a significant example being grave 32 at Snape.[13] Reading such placement symbolically, being buried with the lyre below the feet reflects the position of the lyre player in relation to the ruler during

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[13] Lawson observes that the lyre is cradled in the left arm to the side of the upper torso in all but one of the lower class inhumations: Lawson, 2001, p. 215. Concerning the lyre in the Taplow burial, see Rupert Bruce-Mitford, *The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial*, 4 vols (London: British Museum, 1975–83), III, pp. 701–20; 611–731.

performance,[14] whereas being buried with the lyre at the side of the body indicates that he was a lyre player, who was buried with his instrument. This interpretation supports the proposal that lyre playing was the preserve of certain individuals.

Among the remains in grave 32 at Snape are what is believed to be the copper and iron attachments from a relatively ornate leather wrist strap.[15] These remains confirm less definitive archaeological evidence of similar strap fittings previously identified from lyre excavations at Bergh Apton and Taplow.[16] Archaeological evidence thus appears to support that of the illustrations and confirms that straps were in use. Questions remain, however. It is not possible to determine how long the straps were, how they were adorned, or how they aided the performer. It might well have varied according to personal preference. The positions at which the strap was attached to the lyre's frame are also not known. Indeed, the strap might not have been used during performance, but may have been used to hang or to carry the instrument.

Whatever the specific setup, unless just one hand manipulated the strings, a strap accessory has significance for playing technique, and also the performer's relationship with the instrument. Without support, one hand would be tasked with

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[14] Cf. *The Gifts of Men*, ll. 49–50, in *ASPR* III, p. 138.

[15] Lawson, 'The Lyre Remains from Grave 32', pp. 217–18.

[16] Concerning the Bergh Apton strap, see Lawson, 1978, pp. 92–95. Concerning the Taplow strap, see Bruce-Mitford, *The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial*, pp. 713–15.

supporting the lyre's frame in addition to strumming, plucking, or damping the strings. Such contact would reduce the lyre's resonance, and critically its volume too. An effective strap also frees the player's string-damping hand to manipulate the strings. Lawson notes that 'the musical importance of such an accessory can hardly be overstated […] [a strap enables] the development of intricate two-handed playing techniques. Without it the left hand would be reduced merely to a supporting role.'[17] While this is true with regard to a long, over the shoulder or neck type strap, which allows greater freedom for both hands, a wrist strap offers limited support, as stated above. Using a long strap, the lyre can be suspended entirely, leaving both hands free, with additional support possible using the lap, though this is not the kind generally envisaged. Crucially, by requiring the performer to 'strap themselves in', a ritual process of preparing to perform is necessitated. If the player tied the strap around the wrist, or if they used a neck or shoulder strap, then this would have been one bespoke aspect of the instrument's set up, along with other characteristics such as specific tunings. Essentially, a strap, together with other distinguishing variations, forms part of the idiosyncratic relationship between performer and instrument.

While illustrative and archaeological evidence does not reveal definitively the way in which lyres were played, references to musical instruments in Old English literature also fail to provide unequivocal information concerning instrumental performance. Overwhelmingly they are brief and lack

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[17] Lawson, 'The Lyre Remains from Grave 32', p. 218.

description. However, the fundamental significance of the human-instrument relationship is discernible in Old English identifiers for musical performers. The *hornbora*, for example, who features in line 54 of *Elene*, was defined by their (carrying of an) instrument. *Hearpere*, which appears in *Psalm 50*, the *Kentish Psalm* (4), as well as in prose and as a gloss for *citharedus* (and variants), 'lyre player', likewise identifies individuals by their performance with an instrument.[19] Glimpses of instrumental performance are often enticing, but they fail to provide detail concerning historical practices. The image often evoked from Bede's most famous reference to performing artistry, his chapter concerning Cædmon in the *Ecclesiastical History*, is that the lyre was passed around from person to person during communal performance activity.[20] However, the chapter reveals little regarding playing practices, and the *conuiuium*, 'feast', from which Cædmon departed was not one specific event that Bede intended to describe, but multiple occasions. *Generally*, Cædmon would up and leave *whenever* the lyre approached:

> Vnde nonnumquam in conuiuio, cum esset laetitae causa decretum ut omnes per ordinem cantare deberent, ille, ubi

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[19] For the gloss, see *Ælfrics Grammatik und Glossar*, Sammlung englischer Denkmäler, 1, ed. by Julius Zupitza (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1880), pp. 21–22.

[20] Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. by Judith McClure and Roger Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 215–18.

adpropinquare sibi citharam cernebat surgebat a media caena et egressus ad suam domum repedabat.[21]

At such feasts, if they ever occurred, the instrument could indeed have moved around, as Bede suggests, but in the hands of a skilled individual performer who would accompany each singer.

While the Cædmon story is fanciful, more concrete support for the significance of the performer-instrument relationship is provided in a letter dated 764 from Cuthbert, abbot of Bede's former monastery in Lindisfarne, to bishop Lul of Mainz in the Rhineland:

De lectat me quoque citharistam habere, qui possit citharisare in cithara, quam nos appellamus rottae; quia citharum habeo et artificem non habeo. Si grave non sit, et istum quoque meae dispositioni mitte. Obsecro, ut hanc meam rogationem ne de spicias et risioni non deputes.[22]

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[21] *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. by Bertram Colgrave and Roger A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), pp. 414–16. 'And therefore sometimes at a feast, when, for the sake of providing entertainment, it had been decided that they should all sing in turn, when he saw the lyre approaching him, he would then get up in the middle of the feast, go out, and return to his house.' Translation revised from Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, p. 215.

[22] *Die briefe des heiligen Bonifatius und Lullus*, Monumenta Germaniae historica, Epistolae selectae, 1, ed. by Michael Tangl, 2nd edn (Berlin: Weidmannsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1955), no. 116, pp. 251–52. 'It would also please me to have a lyrist who could play on the instrument

This intriguing, rather self-conscious request, which ultimately raises more questions than it answers, has been discussed elsewhere, particularly concerning the lack of certainty it provides.[23] Kevin Crossley-Holland argues that 'since [the *rotte*] called for expertise unavailable in Wearmouth, it must have been much more elaborate than the Anglo-Saxon six-stringed harp.'[24] The passage is plainly a request for expertise, though Crossley-Holland believes, likely erroneously, that the *rotte* was not the Germanic round lyre. However, Cuthbert is not necessarily requesting someone merely with lyre playing skills. He envisages the *citharista*, 'lyre player', to be an *artifex*, 'artist' or 'craftsman', someone who will occupy a designated role, with the abilities required to execute that role successfully. The manner of that execution remains unknown.

The evidence considered thus far establishes, at least tentatively, that a close individual relationship with musical instruments existed among certain members of Anglo-Saxon society, and that complex playing techniques may well have been developed. We turn now to the way in which conceptions established in the Anglo-Saxon imagination concerning

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that we call 'rottae', because I have a lyre and don't have a craftsman. If it is not a trouble, send one also to my disposal. I beg that you will not scorn my request nor think it laughable'; *EHD I*, no. 185, p. 886.

[23] See Jeff Opland, *Anglo-Saxon Oral Poetry: A Study of the Traditions* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 1980), p. 143.

[24] Kevin Crossley-Holland, *The Anglo-Saxon World: An Anthology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 180.

instrumental performance were articulated in poetic writing. Application of language in Old English poetry suggests an interpersonal mode of engagement between performers and their musical instruments. In order to illustrate the manner of representation concerning the performer–instrument relationship in the poetry, the use of transitive verbs will be considered. Before doing so, it should be noted that in poems, inventive articulation of the significance of musical instruments permeated the representation of performance through creative associativity. For instance, musical instruments – lyre, horn, and bagpipe – are the likely solutions to some Old English Exeter Book riddle poems. Moreover, they appear as component of the zoomorphic and anthropomorphic style of those riddles, and are infused with agency when imagined as creatures or people. In *Riddle 12*, 'horn', the implement is afforded *hleoþor*, 'speech' (4) and *stefn*, 'voice' (18).[25] It also 'swallows' air (*swelgan*, 15), and 'invites' warriors (*laðige*, 16). *Riddle 76*, also 'horn' is described using bodily terminology: *bosm*, 'bosom' (6), and *tunge* 'tongue' (8).[26] In *Riddle 29*, generally accepted as 'bagpipe', the instrument is zoomorphized, described as being *fugele gelice*, 'like a bird' (7) and given a *neb*, 'beak' (6) and also anthropomorphized as a *mæg mid mægne*, 'kinsman among an army' (23) with siblings (22). In

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[25] See Williamson, p. 170.

[26] See Dieter Bitterli, *Say What I am Called: The Old English Riddles of the Exeter Book* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), p. 168. The solution to *Riddle 76* is not entirely settled, yet lines 6 and 9–10b seemingly refer to a vessel filled with drink, precluding other suggestions such as 'falcon', 'spear', or 'sword'; See Williamson, p. 360.

Riddle 70, likely 'lyre', the instrument is identified as a *wiht*, 'person' or 'creature'. Instruments in the riddles are shown to be culturally significant artefacts that could be contemplated both imaginatively and enigmatically.

Whereas verbs are used in the riddles as part of the generation of agency in zoomorphic and anthropomorphic representation, they are used infrequently in relation to instrumental performance elsewhere in the poetry. Notably literal verbs are used in relation to horns and trumpets, *blowan*, 'to blow', being common, for example. The poet's concern is generally not naturalistic description, and the verbs used in relation to lyre performance in the poetry are limited to *gretan*, *styrian*, and *wræstan*. Yet these terms reflect that instrument's interpersonal significance in the Anglo-Saxon imagination. Rather than being a straightforward description of technique, these terms express something more complex, fundamental, and conceptual. *Hearpe* and its compound synonyms *gomenwudu* and *gleobeam* are associated with *gretan* four times in Old English literature, always in poetic instances and commonly translated as 'to touch'. A more commonplace Old English word for the verb 'to touch' was *hrinan*. However, *hrinan* is not used in conjunction with *hearpe*, despite the alliterative possibilities, though the word does feature in the poetry, notably in *Beowulf* where it has the senses 'reach', 'touch' and 'strike'.[27] The Old English translation of *Psalm 104* (15) in the Paris Psalter, which expands the Vulgate

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[27] Lines 988, 1515, 2270, 2976, and 3053.

source,[28] contains both *hrinan* and *gretan*: *ne sceolon ge mine þa halgan hrinan ne gretan*, 'you should not touch or lay hands on my consecrated ones', indicates that their senses differed.[29] *Gretan* has inherent symbolic characteristics, and is used for figurative purposes. Though many senses for *gretan* are identified in dictionaries,[30] such interpretations rely heavily on context, and primary senses are elaborated upon to account for specific uses in the literature, resulting in an apparently complex semantic range with diverse meanings, each applicable to a specific instance. This can overlook any creative applications of language, such as wordplay and punning. *Gretan*'s etymology is uncertain. According to the *OED*, early occurrence in Continental Germanic indicates the senses 'to approach', 'call upon', 'provoke or compel to action', 'attack', 'irritate, annoy', 'address, salute', all of which involve interrelationship.[31] The conventional translation of instances of *gretan* in connection with lyres as 'to touch' results from another etymological theory, that 'the Germanic root *grôt-* is an extension of a root which appears in

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[28] The Vulgate reads *Nolite tangere christos meos*; Psalm 104.15, *BibleGateway* <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalmi+104%3A15&version=VULGATE> [accessed 16 January, 2019].

[29] Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 8824. Translation from *Old English Psalms,* ed. by Patrick P. O'Neill (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), p. 411.

[30] See, for example, *The Dictionary of Old English*, 'gretan¹' <https://tapor.library.utoronto.ca/doe/?E12883> [accessed 4 April 2018].

[31] *Oxford English Dictionary*, 'greet, *v.¹*', <http://0-www.oed.com/view/Entry/81255> [accessed 4 April 2018].

Greek […] with the sense "to approach closely, touch"'.[32] As will be maintained below, however, emotional rather than physical touch is significant to *gretan*'s sense in the poetry.[33]

As might be expected considering the early Continental uses, application of *gretan* in the Old English poetic corpus overwhelmingly involves a relationship between people. An indicative example appears in the opening lines of the Exeter Book poem *The Order of the World*:

> Wilt þu, fus hæle,   fremdne monnan,
> wisne woðboran   wordum gretan
> fricgan felageongne   ymb forðgesceaft[34]   (ll. 1–3)

Interpreting the sense of *gretan* in this passage seems straightforward enough: someone is to address the *wis wothbora* with words, to greet him. The act of physical touch is not envisaged, because *gretan* refers to the intangibility of *worda*.

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[32] *Oxford English Dictionary*, 'greet, *v.¹*', <http://0-www.oed.com/view/Entry/81255> [accessed 4 April 2018].

[33] The *OED* also refers the word to 'Old Aryan *ghrōd-* : *ghrēd-* to resound, on which supposition the primary sense should be "to call on"': *Oxford English Dictionary*, 'greet, *v.¹*', <http://0-www.oed.com/view/Entry/81255> [accessed 4 April 2018].

[34] *ASPR*, III, p. 163 (any diacritics within editions of Old English poems are omitted in this essay). 'Will you, willing man, welcome the stranger, greet the wise seer with words, question the far-wanderer about the first creation.' (Unless stated otherwise, all translations of Old English are the author's own).

Instead, one is to touch the *woðbora* emotionally, to encourage him to communicate. This sense is also relevant in relation to the lyre, as it refers to the act of performance 'encouraging' and 'inspiring' the instrument to communicate the best music, as will be argued below. *Gretan* is also used in the context of personal greeting in *Beowulf*. A pertinent example occurs when Wealtheow, Hrothgar's queen, formally welcomes Beowulf and his troop:

> Eode Wealhþeo forð,
> cwen Hroðgares   cynna gemyndig,
> grette goldhroden   guman on healle[35]   (ll. 612b–14)

Wealtheow's actions establish that *gretan* refers to the respectful, formal meeting of individuals and peoples. This sense is also operating later in the poem, when the hero brings Grendel's head back to Hrothgar's hall:

> Ða com in gan   ealdor ðegna,
> dædcene mon   dome gewurþad,
> hæle hildedeor,   Hroðgar gretan.[36]   (ll. 1644–46)

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[35] *Klaeber's* Beowulf *and the* Fight at Finnsburg, ed. by Robert D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork and John D. Niles (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2008), p. 23. 'Wealtheow went forth, Hrothgar's queen, mindful of courtesy, to greet, adorned with gold, men in hall.'

[36] *Klaeber's* Beowulf, p. 56. 'Then came in marching the lord of the thanes, the deed-bold man exalted by glory, the battle-brave hero, to address Hrothgar.'

We soon discover that Beowulf's address to Hrothgar, the significant interpersonal act encapsulated by *gretan* at 1646, involves symbolic ceremony: following these lines, Grendel's head is hauled before Hrothgar (1647–48), Beowulf delivers a formal speech concerning his battle with Grendel's mother and other creatures (1652–1676), and the hilt of the giant's sword is presented to the king (1677–78).

These instances are relatively straightforward indicators of the uses of *gretan*. In none of them has the concept of physical touch been relevant. Indeed, attempts to infer a sense relating to physical touch in the translation of certain instances raise semantic issues when context is considered; for example, *gretan*'s earliest appearance in *Beowulf*, which appears within a significant crux:

> Swa fela fyrena   feond mancynnes,
> atol angengea,   oft gefremede,
> heardra hynða.   Heorot eardode,
> sincfage sel   sweartum nihtum.
> No he þone gifstol   gretan moste,
> maþðum for metode,   ne his myne wisse.
> Þæt wæs wræc micel   wine Scyldinga,
> modes brecða.[37]   (ll. 164–71)

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[37] *Klaeber's* Beowulf, p. 8. 'So many offences mankind's foe, that terrible lone traveller, often committed, hard humiliations. He occupied Heorot, the richly adorned hall, in the dark nights. By no means was he compelled to respect the throne, the treasure, by the Creator, nor did he have love for

This passage is so problematic that there is disagreement over the character to which *he* refers at line 168, though most commentators believe it to be Grendel.[38] Bosworth translated the instance of *gretan* in the same line as 'to touch', though it does not appear in the 1921 *Supplement*.[39] Many editors and translators suggest 'approach'.[40] However, it is surely not a great misery for Hrothgar that Grendel is not compelled to touch or approach the throne. For the passage to make more sense, therefore, most follow Fred C. Robinson, who suggests that *gretan*'s sense here is comparable with some other occurrences of the term in *Beowulf*, at lines 347, 1816, and 2010, as well as 1646 considered earlier. That is, where it refers to a retainer approaching a king, and thus has the more appropriate sense 'to address respectfully, salute a superior', which can be applied to all the occurrences quoted thus

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it. That was a great misery for the friend of the Scyldings, a breaking of his mind.'

[38] See *Klaeber's* Beowulf, p. 126.

[39] Bosworth-Toller, 'gretan', p. 489.

[40] There are many examples, but see, for example, *Beowulf: A Student Edition*, ed. by George Jack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 38. Jack notes Robinson's interpretation (p. 38, note to ll. 168–69); Seamus Heaney, *Beowulf: A Verse Translation* (London: W. W. Norton, 2002), p. 8; C.L. Wrenn questions whether the sense is 'approach' or 'attack': C.L. Wrenn, *Beowulf with the Finnesberg Fragment*, rev. by W. F. Bolton (London: Harrap, 1973), p. 104; Fulk et al. suggest 'approach, touch, attack': p. 388.

far.[41] Robinson resultantly offers 'pay respect to the throne' for *gifstol gretan*.[42] *Gretan* would thus refer to a respectful address to the throne, an inanimate object with significant symbolic cultural meaning.

Could such senses, to do with respectfully addressing and formally greeting, be applied usefully to poetic references to the lyre? This semantic range, together with the meaning from earlier Germanic 'provoke or compel to action', seems to be the most appropriate rendering in relation to the instrument. While it would be a stretch to interpret an inanimate object as being touched emotionally, as in a human-human interaction, there is a sense in which expressive performance with the lyre as respected instrument can achieve effective results, forming a significant component of 'joy in the hall'.[43] All uses of *gretan* in relation to the lyre are notably straightforward. For example, in *The Gifts of Men*:

> Sum mid hondum mæg   hearpan gretan,
> ah he gleobeames   gearobrygda list.[44]   (ll. 49–50)

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[41] Fred C. Robinson, 'Why is Grendel's Not Greeting the *gifstol* a *wræc micel*?' in *Words, Texts, and Manuscripts*, ed. by Michael Korhammer (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1992), pp. 257–62 (p. 259).

[42] Robinson, p. 259.

[43] See Jeff Opland, '*Beowulf* on the Poet', *Mediaeval Studies*, 38 (1976), 442–67 (pp. 445–53).

[44] *ASPR*, III, p. 138. 'One can greet the lyre with his hands; he possesses the skill of prompt vibration with the music-beam.'

In this passage, *gretan* does not form part of the alliteration, so there was no conventional pressure for it to be used. The common translation, 'to touch', is no doubt influenced by reference to the hands, which seemingly undermines the relevance of interpersonal 'greeting', lending weight to the more practical, literal 'touch' proposal. However, if the points about straps and the instrument's dynamics, resonance, and volume are accepted, the aim would have been to touch the instrument's frame as little as possible. Instead, the hands engage with the strings, which are referenced explicitly in *The Fortunes of Men* (82), and Vercelli *Homily 10*. Translating line 49 as 'one can touch the lyre with his hands' is acceptable, though rather prosaic; it is a rather limited expression of what happens when performing with the instrument. Indeed, a literal interpretation renders the phrase meaningless; after all, one does not have to be a skilled player in order to touch a lyre. The possibility of *gretan* meaning 'to handle', another sense listed in the *Dictionary of Old English*,[45] is also questionable in this instance, as the line would then translate awkwardly, e.g. 'one can handle the lyre with his hands'. Instead, it is illuminating to apply the meanings noted previously; 'one can pay respect to the lyre with his hands' gives the line a symbolic character, appropriate for an instrument which carries referential associations throughout the poetic corpus. Figuratively addressing the instrument, paying respect to it, enables the most joyous music to emerge. Alternatively, 'one can compel the lyre to action/inspire the lyre with his hands' is also

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[45] *DOE* [online], '*gretan*¹' [accessed 5 May 2018].

appropriate, emphasising the functionality of performance practice. Emotional, abstract senses are significant here, even if physical touch was intended as an element of the meaning.

A skilled individual with a designated role, as envisaged in *The Gifts of Men*, is represented elsewhere in wisdom poetry. For example, a similar reference to the lyre appears in *Maxims I*:

> Longað þonne þy læs   þe him con leoþa worn,
> oþþe mid hondum con   hearpan gretan;
> hafaþ him his gliwes giefe,   þe him god sealde.
> Earm biþ se þe sceal ana lifgan,
> wineleas wunian   hafaþ him wyrd geteod[46]   (ll. 169–173)

Again, reference is made to the hands, and alliterative requirements do not influence the use of *gretan*. Yet this passage goes further as an indicator of the importance of the instrument in the gnomic imagination: the ability to play the lyre can win you friends, or at least patronage; you shall gain popularity and languish less by possessing such skill. Moreover, knowing many songs or poems, or playing a lyre, can itself be an act that relieves *longað*, 'longing': the instrument envisaged as companion. Getting the best out of the instrument would require a significant investment of time, and the development of a beneficial

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[46] *ASPR*, III, p. 162. 'That man has less longing, who knows many songs/poems or can inspire the lyre with his hands; he has in him his gift of music-making which God gave him. Friendless is he who is must live alone, to dwell without friends, fate has ordained it for him.'

relationship which the passage suggests could result from skilful playing. Inspiring the lyre to produce fine music is the critical social purpose of such activity. Merely touching the lyre would be inadequate for the relief of *longað*.

Old English poetry's appositive style and characteristic variation also provides evidence for the sense of *gretan* in relation to the lyre. In *Beowulf*, reference is made to song and music being performed before Hrothgar:

> Þær wæs sang ond sweg   samod ætgædere
> fore Healfdenes   hildewisan,
> gomenwudu greted,   gid oft wrecen[47] (ll. 1063–65)

The passage yields little, except that its parallelism suggests a link between playing the lyre and the performance of a *gyd*, 'song' or 'utterance', and possibly that the lyre accompanies vocal performance. However, two further uses of variation in *Beowulf* provide additional semantic evidence. The first passage features *gretan*:

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[47] *Klaeber's* Beowulf, p. 37. 'There was song and music together before Healfdene's battle-leader. The wood of entertainment was inspired, a tale often uttered.'

> hwilum hildedeor   hearpan wynne,
> gome(n)wudu grette,   hwilum gyd awræc
> soð ond sarlic[48]   (ll. 2107–09a)

The second, comparable variation appears later: *næs hearpan wyn,* | *gomen gleobeames*, 'there is no joy of lyre, entertainment with the joy-wood' (2262b–63a). In both passages, the joyous potential engendered by the instrument has significance above any concern to allude to practical technique. Rather than expressing purely physical touch, the use of variation associates the instrument with its wider function: the emotions created by its music, with the half-line *hearpan wynne*, 'joy of lyre', suggesting a kind of social, instrumental joy.

Translating *hearpan gretan* as 'to touch the lyre' has as much to do with convenience as accuracy. While touching the instrument seems a limited and unsatisfactory definition of what happens when holding and performing with the lyre, another convenient interpretation for *Beowulf* (2108), 'to play the lyre', offered by Bosworth and Toller,[49] is also unsatisfactory, because 'play' does not relate to *gretan*'s semantic field. Such a translation derives from the influence of context alone. Again, the intention when using *gretan* was not to allude specifically to touching the instrument or to refer to such action in performance practice, or

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[48] *Klaeber's* Beowulf, p. 71. 'Sometimes a brave one inspired the joyful lyre, the wood of entertainment, at other times he told a tale, true and mournful.'

[49] 'Gretan', in Bosworth-Toller, p. 486.

to describe the actual physical process of playing the instrument. Instead, the idea was to be referential, and to allude, in a concise manner, to subtle concepts that relate to the instrument as an item of personal and cultural value, worthy of burial at the feet of nobles and alongside at least one warrior, together with weaponry, precious jewellery, and other significant cultural objects.[50] The senses of *gretan* in relation to the lyre, 'to provoke or compel to action' and 'to respectfully address', involve the performer's agency in stimulating or creating functional effects with the instrument.

In the creative, poetic imagination, musical instruments are often an aspect of what might for convenience be labelled 'Germanic' social situations: social hall–joy or battle, for example. This circumstance is best attested in *Beowulf*. Yet skill with an instrument is divinely given in wisdom poems, and the remaining use of *gretan* in relation to the lyre appears in a gnomic passage of *Christ*:

Sumum wordlaþe   wise sendeð
on his modes gemynd   þurh his muþes gæst,
æðele ondgiet.   Se mæg eal fela
singan ond secgan   þam bið snyttru cræft
bifolen on ferðe.   Sum mæg fingrum wel

> hlude fore hæleþum   hearpan stirgan,
> gleobeam gretan.[51]   (ll. 664–670a)

This is another relatively straightforward, concise instance, in a section of *Christ* characteristic of the catalogue wisdom poems. Here, *gleobeam gretan* varies *hearpan stirgan*. *Styrian*, another transitive verb used in relation to lyre performance in the poetry, had a similar semantic range to its Modern English reflex, 'stir', including 'to move, excite, urge',[52] analogous with *gretan*'s sense, 'provoke or compel to action'. Conflating the variation suggests that *gretan* refers to a more abstract concept than that of the act of physical touch. Physical and emotional stirring and moving combine here, and there is seemingly no reason why comparable equivocality is not operating with regard to *gretan* too, in all of the above instances. Another occurrence of *styrian*, in *Beowulf*, further exemplifies its relationship with creativity, compulsion, and inspiration. A performer-instrument relationship is absent, however; here, a *thegn* 'stirs' tales of the hero:

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[51] *ASPR*, vol 3, p. 21. 'He sends into someone's mind's intellect, through the breath of his mouth, wise speech, excellent insight. The craft of wisdom is granted to the spirit of he who can sing and say many things. One is able to stir the lyre well with his fingers and loudly before an audience, inspire the joy-wood.'

[52] Cf. *Juliana*, l. 296, *wordum styrde*, 'urged with words' (*ASPR*, III, p. 121), and *Beowulf* l. 2840, *hondum styrede*, 'stirred up with hands' (*Klaeber's* Beowulf, p. 97).

> secg eft ongan
> sið Beowulfes   snyttrum styrian
> ond on sped wrecan   spel gerade,
> wordum wrixlan[53]   (ll. 871b–874a)

Beowulf's deeds are being reconfigured in an artistic mode by the *thegn*, and *styrian* refers to purely vocal creativity; no physical object is 'stirred'. Unlike *gretan*, *styrian* also features in relation to the lyre, and particularly its strings, in prose writing, in which a comparable sense to the instance in *Christ* applies. In *Apollonius of Tyre*, Appolonius impresses King Arcestrates with his lyre playing:

> And Apollonius his hearpenægl genam and he þa hearpestrengas mid cræfte astirian ongan and þare hearpan sweg mid winsumum sange gemægnde[54]

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[53] *Klaeber's* Beowulf, p. 31. 'The man afterwards began to stir wisely about Beowulf, and in success uttered a skilful tale, weaving his words.'

[54] The Old English *Apollonius of Tyre*, ed. by Peter Goolden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 26. 'And Apollonius took his lyre–nail, and he began with skill to stir the lyre-strings, and the sound of the lyre mingled with pleasant song.' Translation revised from *The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Story of Apollonius of Tyre*, ed. by Benjamin Thorpe (London: John and Arthur Arch, 1834), p. 45.

Cf. the physicality of string manipulation alluded to by the term *snere wræstan*, 'to twist' or 'wrench the string', in *The Fortunes of Men*, l. 82 (*ASPR*, III, p. 156).

Finally, *styrian* is also used in Vercelli *Homily 10*, in which Satan describes how he 'stirred' his lyre strings to attract followers:

> þonn[e] hie gehyrdon þine bec rædan & þin godspel secgan & hira lif rihtan & him ecne weg cyðan, hy symle hiera earan dytton & hit gehyran noldon. Ac ðonne ic mine hearpan genam & mine strengas styrian ongan, hie ðæt lustlice gehyrdon, & fram þe cyrdon & to me urnon.[55]

Complex associations are developed in this application of *styrian*, encapsulating a performance act absent from this homily's Latin source. The term refers both to the skilful manipulation of the strings, and also the effect, the influence, created by the playing. Such duality, combining notions of the mechanics of performance practice with the more abstract, emotional effect of performance, is characteristic of *styrian*, and also *gretan*.

While the evidence considered above fails to provide conclusive proof concerning the relationship between performer and instrument in the Anglo-Saxon period, a picture begins to materialise. There were idiosyncratic, elaborate playing techniques, requiring designated players who had an intimate

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[55] *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*, ed. by Donald G. Scragg, EETS o.s., 300 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 200. 'When they heard your books being read and your gospel being spoken and their lives being set straight and their eternal path being made known to them, they fastened up their ears at once and did not want to hear it. But when I took my lyre and began to stir my strings, they willingly heard that, and they turned from you and ran to me.'

psychological connection with their instrument. Sophisticated playing techniques required as much freedom for the hands as possible. It is entirely possible that the process of preparing to play the lyre involved more than just placing the instrument on the lap or holding it by its frame. Intricate technique would have been difficult without a strap, particularly if standing. Strapping the instrument to one's wrist or over the shoulder or neck established a process of ritual adornment, and emotional as well as physical connection. Conceiving of an instrument in personal terms exemplifies the performer–instrument relationship, perhaps best demonstrated by the interpretative uncertainty that results from intentional semantic ambiguity and conflation. In *Widsith*, *Scilling* (103) could either be a human companion of Widsith, or — evoking the instrument that relieves *longað* in *Maxims I* — a lyre, a 'constant companion', as W.J. Sedgefield put it:[56]

> ðonne wit Scilling   sciran reorde
> for uncrum sigedryhtne   song ahofan,
> hlude bi hearpan   hleoþor swinsade,
> þonne monige men,   modum wlonce,
> wordum sprecan,   þa þe wel cuþan,
> þæt hi næfre song   sellan ne hyrdon.[57]   (ll. 103–08)

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[56] See Kemp Malone, *Widsith*, rev. edn (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1962), pp. 50–51, p. 194; Opland, 1980, pp. 210–11; W. J. Sedgefield, 'Scilling', *MLR*, 26 (1931), 75.

[57] *ASPR*, III, p. 152. 'Whenever with Scilling I clearly and eloquently upraised a song before our victorious lord and my voice rang out loud with

Although *for uncrum sigedryhtne*, 'we two before our victory-lord' (104), suggests that *Scilling* refers to a man, the expression could be figurative, with the lyre being envisaged as a retainer. Musician and instrument are conflated; both 'perform' the function of pleasing an audience, in what is after all a fanciful poem, not to be taken as a source of historical fact.

Diverse Anglo-Saxon sources support the notion of a close performer–instrument relationship, though the relationship was of particular concern in the literary imagination, in which concise phrasing belies a complex conception in the senses of transitive verbs referring to lyre performance, involving addressing the instrument, greeting it, initiating a relationship with it, and inspiring successful performance. Using the semantic flexibility of Old English, a single term, *gretan*, enabled literal concepts to be associated with those of status and respect, in keeping with the idea that the lyre was an instrument of significant cultural value. The sense 'to encourage' or 'to inspire' was also important, emphasising the significance of the performer's agency and the instrument's creative and social potential, both dependent on the performer–instrument relationship. While the status of instrumental performers is uncertain, and their occupation seemingly precarious, the status of musical instruments, particularly the lyre, appears to have been high, for those who performed with them, those who heard them,

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the lyre, then many men splendid of mind, those who were well informed, spoke words, said they never heard better song given.'

those buried with them, and those who imagined them pictorially and verbally in the manuscripts of the time.

Perceptions of the Slave Trade in Britain and Ireland:
'Celtic' and 'Viking' Stereotypes

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This article examines the slave trade through the lens of cultural interactions between different population groups in Britain and Ireland; it investigates how the resultant tensions impacted on their viewpoints of each other and, in particular, how their writers reported the taking and trading of slaves. This study will confine itself to the eleventh and twelfth centuries, when these tensions were heightened by conquests and the process of Europeanisation. The influence of these medieval tensions and perceptions on the way our available written sources discuss slavery must be considered. Viewpoints on the slave trade, and those involved in it, are especially foregrounded in source references to the trade being brought to an end. This article will critique the 'Viking' and 'Celtic' stereotypes of our sources, which have sometimes seeped into scholarship on the matter too. It will challenge the notion of Scandinavian-imported slavery, foisted upon Britain and Ireland, and analyse the biases of Anglo-Norman writers in their portrayals of 'Celtic' barbarians, particularly of Scottish forces at the Battle of the Standard in 1138.

THE EVIDENCE FOR SLAVERY AND ITS END

Slaves are virtually invisible in the archaeological record.[1] In addition, slaves are likely to be under-represented in historical sources.[2] In particular, little evidence remains of the practicalities of the taking and trading of slaves. Our written sources largely focus on elite conflicts of lasting importance, which likely obscures our view of slave-taking on more mundane military expeditions. According to Rio, these sources 'are unlikely to tell us much about smaller-scale raiding, such as short-ranging cross-border raids, and they tell us even less about such activities occurring within a single polity. This does not, of course, mean that it did not happen, and it is probably unsafe to assume that raiding activity happened only across political borders'.[3] The trafficking—as well as taking—of slaves is also difficult to reconstruct both archaeologically and textually. This lack of written evidence for the sale and trade of slaves applies more widely to economic affairs: McCormick notes that the 'apparent

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[1] Fontaine identifies four archaeological 'indicators' of slave-trading (shackles, fortified settlements, currency and burials) but notes that all are problematic (Janel M. Fontaine, 'Early medieval slave-trading in the archaeological record: comparative methodologies', *Early Medieval Europe*, 25.4 (2017), 466–488).

[2] Michael McCormick, *Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce, A.D. 300–900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 20 (referring to the Mediterranean).

[3] Alice Rio, *Slavery after Rome, 500–1100* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 20.

absence of mentions of traders in the historical sources should not be a surprise; the writers of the time were largely indifferent to merchants and trade'.[4] This might partly be a product of a Christian dislike for commerce and trade.[5] This is especially interesting with regards to the slave trade since Christians were not supposed to own others of their faith but we know that this principle was not always observed.[6]

Indeed it has often been argued that Christianity and a strengthened church brought an end to the medieval slave trade. And while it certainly contributed, particularly encouraging manumission, the slave trade continued into the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In Ireland at least there is in fact, as Holm observes, a 'relatively clear-cut case that slavery became more widespread in the course of the 11th century'.[7] The continued existence of the slave trade is borne out by written evidence, in the form of annalistic records of slave-taking, which will be discussed further later, but also in the form of laments at the trade's continued existence and attempts to curb it.

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[4] McCormick, p. 576.

[5] McCormick, p. 13.

[6] See John Gillingham, 'Christian warriors and the enslavement of fellow Christians', in *Chevalerie et Christianisme aux XIIe et XIIIe Siècles*, ed. by Martin Aurell and Catalina Girbea (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2011), pp. 237–56.

[7] Poul Holm, 'The Slave Trade of Dublin, Ninth to Twelfth Centuries', *Peritia*, 5 (1986), 317–45 (p. 339).

The VII Æthelred law code, from around 1009, specifically prohibits the sale of men out of the country.[8] This is a recurring concern in legislation associated with Wulfstan, archbishop of York.[9] The II Cnut law code also disallows selling people abroad and adds 'ne sylle ne on hæðendóme huru ne bringe'.[10] It seems therefore that slaves were traded with both Christian and heathen lands, but it is not specified which lands deemed heathen received slaves sourced from Anglo-Saxon England. While there might be a practical element to the concern for those enslaved in unfamiliar areas, presumably facing linguistic and cultural barriers, the primary objection seems to be to the notion of heathens owning Christians (not the notion of slavery itself). A legal code attributed to William the Conqueror reiterates the prohibition against selling people out of the country.[11] These repeated injunctions might reflect the trade's continued survival, but also reflect the ruler's desire to appear pious while upholding order.

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[8] *VII Æthelred* §5 (*Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen von F. Liebemann; hrsg. im Auftrage der Savigny-Stiftung*, ed. by F. Liebermann, 3 vols (Halle: Niemayer, 1903–1916), I, p. 261).

[9] David A. E. Pelteret, *Slavery in Early Medieval England: from the reign of Alfred until the twelfth century* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1995), p. 91.

[10] *Cnut II*, §3 (*Die Gesetze*, ed. by F. Liebermann, I, p. 310): 'and especially of conveying them into heathen lands' (translation from *The Laws of the Kings of England from Edmund to Henry I*, trans. by Agnes J. Robertson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1925), p. 177).

[11] *Leges Wilhelmi*, §3 (*EHD II*, p. 400).

The trade was presumably too profitable to cease, notwithstanding these legislative attempts to limit it. Bristol in particular seems to have been a centre of the slave trade and connected to Dublin's slave market, perhaps not surprising given the considerable economic connections between the two towns. According to William of Malmesbury in his *Vita Wulfstani* ('Life of Wulfstan', bishop of Worcester from 1062 to 1095), the people of Bristol were so impressed by one of the saint's miracles that as a result 'ab eis morem uetustissimum sustulit, qui sic animis eorum occalluerat ut nec Dei amor nec regis Willelmi timor hactenus eum abolere potuisset'.[12] Pelteret suggests that the text would have stated if these merchants in Bristol had been foreigners, but notes that we do not know 'whether many of these English traders actually went out and captured the slaves themselves, as many of the Scandinavians certainly did'.[13] It seems likely that William of Malmesbury's emphasis on these slaving activities being a long-standing custom in the area is to attribute much of the blame to the pre-Conquest Anglo-Saxons, whose general morality he questioned in his works, even crediting it for their defeat at Hastings. The *Vita Wulfstani* particularly mentions

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[12] William of Malmesbury, *Vita Wulfstani*, ii. 19 (ed. by M. Winterbottom and R. M. Thomson, *William of Malmesbury Saints' Lives: SS. Wulfstan, Dunstan, Patrick, Benignus and Indract* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), p. 100: 'he put a stop to an ancient habit of theirs which had become so ingrained that neither love of God nor fear of King William had hitherto been able to abolish it' (trans. ibid., p. 101).

[13] Pelteret, p. 76.

that the slaves were destined for Ireland while decrying the actions of the Englishmen involved in the trade at length:

> Homines enim ex omni Anglia coemptos maioris spe questus in Hiberniam distrahebant, ancillasque prius ludibrio lecti habitas iamque pregnantes uenum proponebant. Videres et gemeres concatenatos funibus miserorum ordines et utriusque sexus adolescentes, qui liberali forma, aetate integra, barbaris miserationi essent, cotidie prostitui, cotidie uenditari. Facinus execrandum dedecus miserabile, nec beluini affectus memores homines necessitudines suas, ipsum postremo sanguinem suum, seruituti addicere![14]

This condemnatory account by a twelfth-century historian reflects the fact that by his own day attitudes in England towards slavery had apparently shifted.

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[14] William of Malmesbury, *Vita Wulfstani*, ii. 19 (ed. by M. Winterbottom and R. M. Thomson, pp. 100, 102: '…they would buy up men from all over England and sell them off to Ireland in hope of a profit, and put up for sale maidservants after toying with them in bed and making them pregnant. You would have groaned to see the files of the wretches roped together, young persons of both sexes, whose youth and respectable appearance would have aroused the pity of barbarians, being put up for sale every day. An accursed deed, and a crying shame, that men devoid of emotions that even beasts feel should condemn to slavery their own relations and even their flesh and blood!' (trans. ibid., p. 101, 103)

The Council of Westminster in 1102 issued a general ban on all trade in slaves in England.[15] It is unclear how effective this was, though. In Ireland the slave trade presumably continued late into the twelfth century if we believe Gerald of Wales' account of the council of Armagh in 1170 which decided 'ut Angli ubique per insulam servitutis vinculo mancipati in pristinam revocentur libertatem'.[16] Holm, though, argues that these 'liberated Englishmen may well have been born in Ireland of English parents' and that the bulk of this trade between England and Ireland had come to an end, perhaps surviving illicitly on a smaller-scale.[17] The churchmen at this council also agreed that the Anglo-Norman or English conquest of Ireland had occurred,

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[15] 'Nequis illud nefariium negotium quo hactenus homines in Anglia solebant uelut bruta animalia uenundari deinceps ullatenus facere praesumat (*Eadmeri Historia Novorum in Anglia: Et opuscula duo de vita Sancti Anselmi et quibusdam miraculis ejus*, ed. by Martin Rule (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 143): 'That no one is henceforth to presume to carry on that shameful trading whereby heretofore men used in England to be sold like brute beasts' (*Eadmer's History of Recent Events in England: Historia Novorum in Anglia*, trans. by Geoffrey Bosanquet (London: Cresset Press, 1964), p. 152).

[16] Gerald of Wales, *Expugnatio Hibernica*, ch. 19 (*Expugnatio Hibernica: the Conquest of Ireland, by Giraldus Cambrensis*, ed. by A. B. Scott and F. X. Martin (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1978), p. 70): 'that throughout the island Englishmen should be freed from the bonds of slavery and restored to their former freedom' (trans. ibid., p. 71).

[17] Holm, p. 340.

…propter peccata scilicet populi sui, eoque precipue quod Anglos olim tam a mercatoribus quam predonibus atque piratis emere passim ei in servitutem redigere consueverant, divine censura vindicte hoc eis inccommodum accidisse, ut et ipsi quoque ab eadem gente in servitutem vice reciproca iam redigantur.[18]

Gerald's depiction of the Irish is in general rather unfavourable, portraying them as uncivilised barbarians. Unfortunately there is no other account of this council to compare to Gerald's version. Interestingly, Gerald notes that when the English had similarly committed these crimes, it had also led to their punishment by conquest:

Anglorum namque populus, adhuc integro eorundem regno, communi gentis vico liberos suos venales exponere, et priusquam inopiam ullam aut inediam sustinerent, filios proprios et cognatos in Hiberniam vendere consueverant.

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[18] Gerald of Wales, *Expugnatio Hibernica*, ch. 19 (ed. by Scott and Martin, p. 70): 'because of the sins of their own people, and in particular because it had formerly been their habit to purchase Englishmen indiscriminately from merchants as well as from robbers and pirates, and to make slaves of them, this disaster had befallen them by the stern judgement of the divine vengeance, to the end that they in turn should now be enslaved by that same race' (trans. ibid., pp. 69, 71)

Unde et probabiliter credi potest, sicut venditores dim ita et emptores tam enormi delicto iuga servitutis iam meruisse.[19]

Such a one directional view of the trade might be simplistic. Another problem here is that the Irish church was portrayed as inherently corrupt, secular and in dire need of reform as an excuse for invasion, when, in reality, it had enthusiastically embraced European trends.[20] Wyatt notes that the measures against unchivalric activities imposed by this council 'were inextricably bound up with the ideology of the reform movement'.[21] This was made more explicit at the Synod of Cashel in 1172 where it was claimed that 'tam ecclesias quam regnum Hibernie debent' to the

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[19] Gerald of Wales, *Expugnatio Hibernica*, ch. 19 (ed. by Scott and Martin, p. 70): 'For the English, in the days when the government of England remained fully in their hands, used to put children up for sale—a vicious piracy in which the whole race took part—and would sell their own sons and relations into Ireland rather than endure any want or hunger. So there are good grounds for believing that, just as formerly those who sold slaves, so now also those bought them, have, by committing such a monstrous crime, deserved the yoke of slavery' (trans. ibid., p. 71).

[20] See Clare Downham, *Medieval Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 319; Marie Therese Flanagan, *The Transformation of the Irish Church in the Twelfth Century* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2010), pp. xi, 243.

[21] David Wyatt, *Slaves and Warriors in Medieval Britain and Ireland, 800–1200* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), p. 389.

king of England for abolishing previous wickednesses.[22] Gerald, once more, is our only source for this proclamation. Of course, perhaps ironically, it was the wealth of the Hiberno-Scandinavian towns and Dublin in particular, presumably partly derived from the slave trade, which attracted the king.[23]

A 'VIKING' STEREOTYPE

Medieval perceptions of those involved in the taking and trading of slaves have inevitably influenced the texts upon which we rely for the evidence of slavery, but the views of modern historians have also contributed to how this topic has been discussed. Scholars have tended to focus on vikings raiding and taking slaves, rather than on other population groups, and have also assumed that when other population groups did take part in these activities it was encouraged by the vikings. For example, in an early survey of the slave trade in medieval Wales, Bromberg asserted that the infrequent references to Welsh slaves on the continent meant that they could not have been traded by the Welsh themselves but by the Anglo-Saxons after border skirmishes. Ultimately 'it was probably the Viking trader-raider

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[22] Gerald of Wales, *Expugnatio Hibernica*, ch. 35 (ed. by Scott and Martin, p. 100): 'both the realm and the church of Ireland are indebted' (trans. ibid., p. 101).

[23] Like William the Conqueror, though, Henry does seem to have outlawed slavery, projecting a pious image (see Wyatt, *Slaves*, p. 390).

who turned the attention of the Welshman to the slave trade'.[24] The state of slavery was familiar in early Britain and Ireland, though. Most slaves would probably have been taken as prisoners of war or had entered into debt-bondage. The use of slave labour was presumably also quite common.[25] There were several words for slaves in Old Irish and one of them, *cumal* ('a female slave'), even became a legal unit of value in Ireland.[26] Crucially, though, we have no clear evidence of the actual sale and trade of slaves in Ireland before the Viking Age.[27] The same cannot be said, though, of Anglo-Saxon England and the continent. Since raiding and warfare was probably the main source of slaves, Woolf suggests that 'most slaves were probably allocated to the households of those who had engaged in the fighting or distributed by the local kings and lords as part of the practice of redistributive chieftaincy that characterised the Irish political system'.[28]

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[24] Erik I. Bromberg, 'Wales and the mediaeval slave trade', *Speculum*, 18.2 (1942), 263–9 (p. 263).

[25] Donnchadh Ó Corráin, *Ireland before the Normans* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1972), p. 45

[26] Ibid., p. 46.

[27] Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland, 400–1200*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2017) p. 273; Alex Woolf, 'The Scandinavian Intervention', in *The Cambridge History of Ireland, Volume I: 600–1550*, ed. by Brendan Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 104–130 (p. 129).

[28] Woolf, p. 129.

Despite this lack of definitive evidence for a pre–viking trade, this does not mean that the later trade in Ireland was exclusively Hiberno-Scandinavian. Wyatt notes that the annalistic evidence of native Irish slave raiding in the eleventh century 'would appear to undermine the argument that the medieval slave trade may be explained away by the external exploitation of the small community of Hiberno–Norse raiders and traders'.[29]   That community would have been rather overstretched to be able to supply and run the slave markets entirely without contributions from other population groups. Indeed, Woolf suggests that while a single warrior was capable of taking slaves or was owed their share of the spoils from a larger venture 'it is unlikely that these individuals would carry through the entire exportation process themselves'.[30]

The Scandinavian incomers might have changed the way that the Irish viewed slavery or its scale.[31] Holm argues that Irish kings learnt how useful slavery as a tactic of warfare could be and that it is certainly conceivable 'that the Vikings were punished by their own weapon in the 10th century and later', suggested by annal entries of 942 and after.[32] This passage of the Irish text *Cogadh Gaedel re Gallaib* ('The War of the Irish against

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[29] Wyatt, *Slaves*, p. 341.

[30] Woolf, p. 128.

[31] Woolf suggests a comparison 'to the trans–Atlantic and trans–Saharan slave trade of more recent centuries which transformed the endemic and localised West African slavery, very similar to early Irish slavery, into something far less humane' (p. 139).

[32] Holm, p. 338.

the Foreigners') shows pleasure, at least on the part of a twelfth-century author, at Hiberno-Scandinavians across Ireland being enslaved by Brian Bóruma: 'Cona rabí cáthlech …gan gall indairi fair, ocus narab bro gan gaillsig'.[33] Ó Cróinín admits that the Irish 'show signs of having adopted the practice themselves' but argues that they 'appear to have restricted its use to Viking prisoners of war, "an act of defiance and humiliation" visited only on their Viking enemies'.[34] Since vikings were increasingly allied with Irish factions, one wonders whether such a restriction could have been practically applied when a defeated army might have contained both Hiberno-Scandinavians and Irishmen. Moreover, those involved in the slave trade may not have had such qualms; before viking raids, the Irish had evidently had no qualms about raiding other kingdoms, including the wealthy monasteries they contained. It seems probable, in fact, that slave-taking was not just deliberately used by the Irish as a weapon against Hiberno-Scandinavian forces, but it was used against other Irish factions too. There are occasional annalistic references to Irish royals taking captives (sometimes alongside cattle) in warfare against Irish kingdoms in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. For example, it is recorded that in 1011 Murchad mac Briain of

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[33] *Cogadh*, ch. 70: 'So that there was not a winnowing sheet… that had not a foreigner in bondage in it, nor was there a quern without a foreign woman' (ed. and trans. by James Henthorn Todd, *Cogadh Gaedhel re Gallaibh: The war of the Gaedhil with the Gaill, or, The invasions of Ireland by the Danes and other Norsemen* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1867), pp. 116–17).

[34] Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland*, p. 282.

Munster and his allies 'do innredh Ceniuil Conaill co tuc .ccc. do brait & bú imda'.[35] The following year Flaithbertach ua Néill, king of Ailech, attacked Ard Ulad and 'co tuc gabhala is moamh tuc ri riam eter brait & innile, ce nach n-arimter'.[36] The fate and destination of these captives is not specified, but perhaps some were sold on to Hiberno-Scandinavian markets. There is not a noticeable difference in vocabulary for those captives taken by vikings or Hiberno-Scandinavians compared to those taken by their fellow Irishmen.[37] Slave-taking was clearly not just the preserve of the vikings; it was expected to happen to a defeated army, and perhaps to their wider community too.

It is particularly instructive that slave raiding in Ireland actually escalated in the latter half of the eleventh century, after Dublin has been taken over by native Irish rulers.[38] Indeed, the latest known attacks by Dublin forces acting alone, without allies,

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[35] AU 1012.2 (*The Annals of Ulster (to A.D. 1131)*, ed. and trans. by Seán Mac Airt and Gearóid Mac Niocaill (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1983), p. 440 (online revised version, Corpus of Electronic Texts, Cork, 2008 <https://celt.ucc.ie//published/G100001A/index.html> [accessed May 10, 2018]): 'invaded Cenél Conaill and took 300 captives and many cows' (trans. ibid., p. 443).

[36] AU 1012.2 (p. 440): 'took the greatest spoils, both in captives and cattle, that a king ever took, though they are not counted' (trans. p. 443).

[37] For example AU 895.6 and AU 1031.4.

[38] Wyatt, *Slaves*, pp. 340–1.

are in 1037.[39] While the intensification of slave raiding might partly be due to an economic boom, it also possible that Dublin's political decline meant that warriors shifted their raiding activity to areas outwith Dublin: they might then provide slaves for the Dublin market who 'had not been taken as a result of political complications, but simply for profit'.[40] Thus, it seems that the nature and extent of slavery and slave-taking in Ireland had been altered due to the increasing economic development spearheaded by the Hiberno–Scandinavian towns; slavery cannot, though, be blamed on the Scandinavian incomers alone.

INSULAR SLAVE-TAKING

Slave-taking not only shows the connections of the Hiberno-Scandinavians to the rest of Ireland but also to the wider Insular world. It seems that native Irish rulers were not alone in supplying Dublin's slave market. This is seen in the actions of

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[39] AFM 1037.10 (*Annala Rioghachta Eireann: Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters, from the Earliest Period to the Year 1616*, ed. and trans. by John O'Donovan, 2nd edn, 7 vols (Dublin: Hodges, Smith, 1856), II, p. 373 (online revised version, Corpus of Electronic Texts, Cork, 2002 <https://celt.ucc.ie//published/G100005B/index.html> [accessed 10 March 2018]): assaults on the monasteries of Skreen and Duleek. Bhreathnach suggests that this was a response to Dublin's decreasing power in Brega (Edel Bheathnach, 'Columban Churches in Brega and Leinster: Relations with the Norse and the Anglo-Normans', *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 129 (1999), 5–18 (p. 13)).
[40] Holm, p. 331.

Welsh and Scottish rulers in particular. An entry in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for 1055 provides an interesting window into slave-taking. Ælfgar the earl of Mercia, the son of the previous earl of Mercia, Leofric, and of the famous Lady Godiva, had a troubled relationship with the king of England, Edward the Confessor, and was outlawed in 1055. The Chronicle records Earl Ælfgar's attack on Hereford following his banishment, with the forces he had gathered to his cause, including Gruffudd ap Llewelyn, king of Gwynedd. In this attack 'þæt folc slogan 7 sume on weg læddan'.[41] Holm claims that this incident 'shows that the Welsh practiced slaving expeditions against Anglo-Saxon territories with the help of English outlaws', referring to Ælfgar.[42] But Holm neglects to mention that the Hiberno-Scandinavians may actually have been involved in this expedition directly, since the same chronicle entries relate that Ælfgar had gone 'to Irlande 7 begeat him ðær lið' and then turned to Gruffudd ap Llewelyn and the Welsh.[43] While it is of course still plausible that the Welsh would have taken slaves without direct Hiberno-Scandinavian involvement, in this instance one wonders if their presence increased the likelihood of slave-taking;

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[41] ASC C 1055 (*The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle MS C*, ed. by Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe, The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: a Collaborative Edition, 5; series ed. by David Dumville and Simon Keynes (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2001), p. 116): 'they killed the people and some they carried off' (*EHD II,* p. 134).

[42] Holm, p. 341.

[43] ASC C 1055 (ed. by O'Brien O'Keefe, pp. 115–6): 'to Ireland and there got himself a fleet' (*EHD II*, p. 133).

it could even have been part of the bargain when they agreed to be Ælfgar's mercenaries.

It seems significant that it was the later reign of Gruffudd ap Cynan, who had longstanding ties to the Dublin area, which 'was to be the culmination of slaving' in Wales.[44] Gruffudd, described by Griffiths as 'the ultimate Irish Sea hybrid Viking',[45] was born and grew up around Dublin, near Swords. His father Cynan ab Iago had fled to Ireland after his own father's death in 1039 and married a daughter of Óláfr Sitricson, providing a direct connection to the Hiberno–Scandinavian dynasty, which perhaps hoped to reinforce Dublin's influence in north Wales.[46] Like Ælfgar, Gruffudd attempted to restore his rightful position with the help of Hiberno–Scandinavian mercenaries which may have increased the likelihood of slaving in his reign.

Scottish kings are also recorded as taking captives during raids on Northumbria in 1058, 1061, 1065, 1070, 1079 and in 1138.[47] The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle account of king Máel

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[44] Holm, p. 341.

[45] David Griffiths, *Vikings of the Irish Sea* (Stroud: History, 2010), p. 158.

[46] According to Duffy, 'there seems to be no sensible reason for doubting this' marriage as 'Gruffudd's son, Owain Gwynedd, also looked to Ireland for a wife, and the fact that Gruffudd gave the Scandinavian forename Ragnhildr to one of his own daughters is a point that should not be overlooked' (Seán Duffy, 'Ostmen, Irish and Welsh in the Eleventh Century', *Peritia*, 9 (1995), 378–96 (p. 390)).

[47] See Pelteret, p. 73: King Máel Coluim III also made incursions into northern England in 1091 and 1093 (when he was killed near Alnwick) but there is no specific reference to him taking captives on these occasions.

Coluim harrying Northumbria in 1079 mentions that he took captives but without the exaggerated moral outrage of twelfth-century sources describing such conduct. Gillingham comments that in this period 'English observers, themselves members of a slave owning, slave raiding, slave trading society, would not have noticed anything peculiarly repellent in Celtic warfare'.[48] The *Historia Regum*'s account of Máel Coluim's raid in 1070 is not as neutral and brief as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle entry of a similar attack: after detailing the murder of babies, it claims that Máel Coluim had taken so many 'juvenes vel juvenculæ' that 'Repleta est ergo Scotia servis et ancilissi Anglici generis'.[49] The surviving version of the *Historia Regum* contains sections which were interpolated at Hexham in the mid twelfth century.[50] One of those interpolations, which are more impassioned and more hostile to the Scottish, is the description of Máel Coluim's

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[48] John Gillingham, *The English in the Twelfth Century: Imperialism, National Identity and Political Values* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2000), p. 47.

[49] *Historia Regum* (*Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia*, ed. by Thomas Arnold, 2 vols (London: Longman 1882–1885), II, pp. 190–192): 'youths and girls … Therefore Scotland was filled with slaves and handmaids of the English race' (*Scottish Annals from English Chroniclers*, trans. by Alan O. Anderson (London: D. Nutt, 1908), p. 93). The *Historia Regum* has traditionally been attributed to Symeon of Durham but other scholars prefer to simply refer to 'the Durham chronicler'.

[50] Hilary S. Offler, 'Hexham and the *Historia Regum*', *Transactions of the Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland*, 2 (1970): 51–62, esp. p. 53, 55.

attack.[51] Slavery was no longer acceptable in the author's own society and he may himself have gained greater experience of such horrors during the invasion of his region in 1138. Thus later developments had an influence on the reporting of events in the eleventh-century: 'this was 1070 seen through mid-twelfth-century eyes'.[52] The benefit of hindsight and evolving societal norms impacted perceptions of other cultures.

A 'CELTIC' STEREOTYPE

Slave-taking as a stereotype of Viking Scandinavians was noted earlier, but in the twelfth century it instead became associated with 'Celtic' peoples, particularly in disparaging accounts by Anglo-Norman writers, as has been emerging in the course of this discussion. While it has been observed that these peoples did become involved in the taking of slaves, this stereotype can be connected to the wider portrayal of Celtic peoples as barbarous in various sources, particularly chronicles. In this regard later writers followed in the footsteps William of Malmesbury; Gillingham contends that it was one of William's 'most creative and influential achievements … to introduce this imperialist perception of Celtic peoples into history'.[53] While it may be a

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[51] Gillingham, p. 47.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Gillingham, p. 9, see also pp. 27–9. He notes that while earlier English kings might have claimed imperial rule 'they were not imperialists' and that 'the culture of Celtic peoples was not disparaged' (p. 9, see also p. 43).

little simplistic to credit this development to one writer,[54] this perception of Celtic peoples spread rapidly. Previously there had been a clear division between Christian and non-Christian but 'William also used a non-religious system of classification, dividing them into the "civilised" and the "barbarians"', with the Celtic-speaking peoples falling into the latter category.[55] Along with their rustic laziness and their improper sexual (and marital) practices, conduct in war was one of the key aspects of this perception.

Perhaps the most famous example of this depiction of martial behaviour is in descriptions of the Scottish forces at the Battle of the Standard, fought between Scots and English, in 1138 near

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[54] Indeed, relations between the English church, namely Canterbury, and the Irish church in this period have often been viewed as aggressively expansionist and a form of ecclesiastical imperialism, as Canterbury tried to increase its suffragans and claimed primacy over Ireland. For example, James F. Kenney referred to the 'imperialism of Canterbury' (*The Sources for the Early History of Ireland* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1929), p. 758), while Aubrey Gwynn described archbishop Lanfranc's 'wellplanned campaign of ecclesiastical imperialism' ('The first bishops of Dublin', *Reportorium Novum*, 1 (1955) 1–26 (p. 8)). This historiographical interpretation seems tinged with Irish nationalist sentiment, whereas English scholars have seen Canterbury's involvement as merely 'incidental to the main issue of Canterbury's assertion of primatial authority over the see of York' (Marie Therese Flanagan, *Irish Society, Anglo-Norman Settlers, Angevin Kingship: Interactions in Ireland in the Late Twelfth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 54).
[55] Gillingham, p. 43.

Northallerton, north Yorkshire.[56] For example, Henry of Huntingdon refers to 'hii qui in hac patria templa Dei uiolarunt, altaria cruentauerunt, presbiteros occiderunt, nec pueris nec pregnantibus pepercerunt, in eadem condignas sui facinoris luant penas'.[57] This speech is put into the mouth of Ralph bishop of the Orkneys (deputising for Thurstan, archbishop of York, who was too ill to be present), egging on the English and Normans just before the clash. Considering the further context of this battle is useful at this juncture. Our sources tell us that Thurstan had been instrumental in raising the English army, preaching that to go to war against the Scots was to do God's work. Ailred of Rievaulx relates that Thurstan issued an episcopal edict throughout his diocese, enjoining people 'ecclesiasm Christi contra barbaros defensuri'.[58] A holy cause of course requires a heinous enemy to

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[56] Gillingham claims that the writers of the time portrayed the Battle of the Standard 'not just as a battle between Scots and English but as a titanic and ferocious struggle between two opposing cultures, the civilised and the savage' (*English*, pp. 14 and 48).

[57] Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, Book X, Chapter 8 (*Histora Anglorum: The history of the English people*, ed. and trans. by Diana Greenway (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002) pp. 714–15) '… those who in this land have violated the temples of God in this country, have spilt blood on altars, have murdered priests, have spared neither children nor pregnant women, shall in this same country undergo their deserved punishment for their villainy'.

[58] Ailred of Rievaulx, *Relatio De Standardo*, in Richard of Hexham, *De Gestis Regis Stephani* in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, ed. by R. Howlett, 4 vols (Rolls Series, London: Longman, 1884–

rally against, providing another reason to portray their Celtic foes as primitive and uncivilised. Even in instances of conflict without explicit church backing, the religious dimension is more broadly pertinent to interpreting the Anglo-Norman sources. While admitting that there might be some truth to these accounts, Wyatt suggests that the emphasis on the Scottish forces indiscriminately attacking ecclesiastical centres and personnel was an attempt 'to dehumanise and "de-Christianize" their Scottish foes by portraying them as sub-human heathens'.[59] Previously there had been a concern that pagans might own Christian slaves, but now the perception of Celtic peoples as deficient in their Christianity (also seen in the dismissive accounts of the Irish church, noted earlier) seems to have gone hand-in-hand with the perception of their propensity to slave-taking and barbaric conduct in warfare.

SCOTLAND AND GALLOWAY

The Scottish case is particularly interesting as regards the 'Celtic' stereotype. In some sources, the Scots are viewed as uniformly barbarous in comparison to the English. However, there were also tensions within Scotland between more traditional Gaelic lords and coastal areas of Scandinavian settlement on the one hand and the core of Alba with its Norman leanings on the other

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1889), III, p. 182: 'to defend the church of Christ against the barbarians' (*Scottish Annals*, p. 191).

[59] Wyatt, *Slaves*, p. 375.

hand. This is exemplified by the succession dispute on the death of Máel Coluim III in 1093. Máel Coluim's brother, Domnall (Donald) Bán seized the kingship, adhering to a more traditional succession pattern, and 'ealle þa Englisce út adræfon' who had been in Máel Coluim's court.[60] His nephew Donnchadh mac Máel Coluim (Duncan II) successfully invaded with the aid of Northumbrians and Anglo-Normans, but shortly after a Scottish uprising killed most of his followers and only allowed him to continue as king on the condition that he should 'næfre eft Englisce ne Frencisce into þam lande ne ge logige'.[61] The French and English influence would win out in the end in Scotland, under Donnchadh's half-brothers, who were Máel Coluim's sons by Margaret from the West Saxon dynasty.[62] These sons, Edgar, Alexander and particularly the long-reigning David (1124–53) are often credited with strengthening, and even forming, the Scottish kingdom. David had grown up in the court of Henry I and continued his associations with the Anglo-Normans during his reign over Scotland.

Some Anglo-Norman writers praise David I for being a civilising influence in Scotland; William of Malmesbury claimed

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[60] ASC E 1094. *Two Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, ed. by C. Plummer and J. Earle (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1892–1899), p. 288: 'drove out all the English' (*Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, trans. by Michael J. Swanton (London: Dent, 1996), p. 228).

[61] ASC E 1094. *Two Saxon Chronicles Parallel*, p. 288: 'never again introduce English or French into the land' (trans. by Swanton, p. 228).

[62] The daughter of Edward the Exile and sister of Edgar *ætheling*, she was born in Hungary.

that he was more courtly due to his time in England which 'omnem rubiginem Scotticæ barbariei deterserat'.[63] William of Newburgh even called David 'rex non barbarus barbarae gentis'.[64] Margaret's hagiographer, Turgot, is also unsurprisingly positive about the queen and her family. This more selective view of the Scots contrasts to the more blanket approach taken by writers such as Henry of Huntingdon, whose account of Scottish conduct leading up to the Battle of Standard was quoted above. Richard of Hexham's account of the Battle of Clitheroe, an earlier engagement in the campaign which culminated in the Battle of the Standard, is similarly sensationalist about the actions of the Scottish forces in the north of England, relating that they carried away widows and maidens:

> … illi bestiales homines, adulterium et incestum ac cetera scelera pro nichilo ducentes, postquam more brutorum animalium illis miserrimus abuti pertæsi sunt, eas vel sibi ancillas fecerunt, vel pro vaccis aliis barbaris vendiderunt.[65]

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[63] William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum* (*Gesta Regum Anglorum, The History of the English Kings*, ed. and trans. by Roger A. B. Mynors et al. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), pp. 726–7: 'rubbed off the barbarian gaucherie of Scottish manners'.

[64] William of Newburgh, *The History of English Affairs, Book I*, ed. and trans. by Peter G. Walsh and M. J. Kennedy (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1988), pp. 102–3: 'a civilised king of an uncivilised race'.

[65] Richard of Hexham, *De Gestis Regis Stephani*, in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, III, p. 157: '… these bestial men, who regard as nothing adultery and incest and the other crimes, after they were

This description features most aspects of the Celtic stereotype, include the taking and selling of slaves. David I had been loyal to Henry's daughter Matilda and opposed to her rival contender for the English throne, Stephen, so sources which are pro-Stephen are likely to also be anti-David.[66] Other sources treat David as an exception to their portrayal of the Scots more generally.[67]

Ailred of Rievaulx narrows and focuses the Celtic barbarian stereotype onto the Galwegians, rather than all Scots. For instance, he claimed that during David's raid into Northumbria in 1136 that 'cum impiissima gens Galwensium inaudita crudelitate sævirent, nec sexui parcerent, nec ætati; nostrates, qui erant cum rege, pietate commoti, plures de eorum manibus ad Haugustaldunum quasi ad certum suæ salutis auxilium transposuerunt'.[68] David's retinue are presented as civilised in

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weary of abusing these most hapless creatures [the widows and maidens] after the manner of brute beasts, have made them their slaves or sold them to other barbarians for cows' (trans. by Anderson, *Scottish Annals*, p. 187).

[66] For instance the *Gesta Stephani* suggests that David I gave his forces free reign to act as despicably and savagely as they could (*Gesta Stephani*, ed. and trans. by Kenneth R.1 Potter and R. H. C. Davis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), pp. 54–55).

[67] John of Hexham remarked that in 1138 David set free some of the widows and maidens who had been taken as slaves by his troops, giving them to Robert, prior of Hexham, for safe-keeping (see *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia*, ed. by Thomas Arnold, 2 vols (London: Longman 1882–1885), II, p. 290).

[68] *De Sanctis Ecclesiæ Haugustaldensis*, p. 183: 'when the most cruel nation of the Galwegians raged with unheard brutality, and spared not sex nor

contrast to the Galwegians who still engage in slaving. Galloway's remote location on the western seaboard and its cultural makeup, originally Brittonic but undergoing Gaelic-Scandinavian settlement, set it apart from the main kingdom of Scotland, with its Anglo-Norman leanings, and from England. It also maintained an uneasy political relationship with the kings of Scots, retaining relative independence under its own lords. These factors made Galloway the perfect target for dismissive Anglo-Norman commentators. Ailred's account of the Battle of the Standard also stresses that the forces from Galloway do not wear armour and are ill disciplined which contributes to the defeat of the Scottish forces.[69] According to Ailred the Galwegians, supported by earl of Strathearn, had claimed the right to form the army's vanguard, and David relented despite the opposition of his better-equipped men. This dispute is arguably reflective of 'tensions between David's Gaelic lords and English knights, with the former resentful of the influence enjoyed by the latter in his

age, our countrymen, who were with the king were moved by compassion and sent many rescued from their hands, to Hexham, as a sure defence of their safety' (*Scottish Annals*, p. 171).

[69] This version of events (for a summary see Ronan Toolis, '"Naked and Unarmoured": A Reassessment of the Role of the Galwegians at the Battle of the Standard', *Transactions of the Dumfriesshire and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society*, 78 (2004), 79–92 (pp. 80–2)) has been challenged by Toolis who argues that the Galwegians were intended to encounter their counterparts, the lightly-armoured English skirmishers, and that instead it was David's knights, under Earl Henry, and archers that failed to secure victory (p. 90).

counsels'.[70] While these tensions seem to have been real, it also suits Ailred's purposes. He had spent time at David's court and his monastic order was one of those who had received gifts of land in Scotland. As a result of his own conflicting ties, Ailred found a solution in the Galwegians that allowed him to praise the defenders of England and the Scottish king, while also decrying the attacks on Northumbria.[71]

AN INCREASE IN SLAVE-TAKING?

These descriptions of the taking of slaves in a number sources give the impression that there was a marked increase in 'Celtic' slave raiding during the twelfth century. Wyatt claims that such an increase was 'symptomatic of an equally powerful cultural antipathy evident within the more traditional elements of Welsh, Irish and Scottish society. This antipathy was directed against the increasingly invasive cultural and political influences exerted by the English elite within these communities'.[72] He further asserts that slave raiding campaigns were 'a defiant gesture of adherence to traditional warrior values in the face of an increasing infiltration of the external cultural norms of chivalry and

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[70] Richard D. Oram, *Domination and Lordship: Scotland 1070–1230* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), p. 94.

[71] Toolis, p. 89.

[72] David Wyatt, 'Slavery, Power and Cultural Identity in the Irish Sea Region, 1066–1171', in *Celtic-Norse relationships in the Irish Sea in the Middle Ages 800–1200*, ed. by Jón Viðar Sigurðsson and Timothy Bolton (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 97–108 (p. 108).

reform'.[73] The stereotypes and assumed divides of our source material can be difficult to escape completely in our historical analyses. Wyatt's implication here that Celtic peoples had internalised an external stereotype of themselves to such a degree is unconvincing. Certainly they might react to external pressure but would they consciously play into the stereotype rather than simply attack those who they saw as intruders? The increase in conflicts between Scots and English along the border might also have simply given greater opportunities for slave raiding.

This increase in slave raiding has been viewed as another symptom of the evident trend for 'Celtic peoples', supposedly on the 'fringes' or periphery, to reinforce their bonds mutually. This is particularly evident in Scotland where leaders and groups to the north and west looked to each other and to Ireland for alliances and dynastic marriages, and to a lesser extent to the lowlands and the Anglo-Norman world at large.[74] This strengthening of alliances was more likely to be responsible for a proliferation in slave raiding in Scotland by connecting these areas more firmly to the Irish Sea and the Dublin market, rather than cultural antipathy. Wyatt claims that 'the slave raiding and anti-ecclesiastical attacks that characterised the Scottish raids upon England may well have constituted a deliberate and symbolic

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[73] Ibid.

[74] See Geoffrey W. S. Barrow, *Kingship and Unity 1000–1306* (London: Edward Arnold, 1981), p. 107; R. A. McDonald, 'Matrimonial politics and core–periphery interactions in twelfth- and early thirteenth-century Scotland', *Journal of Medieval History*, 21 (1995), 227–247.

reaction against cultural infiltration'.[75] While the raids themselves were likely to be a reaction to external incursions, an impact on the behaviour of the raiders seems less feasible. It also assumes quite a high degree of reliability in the reports of Anglo-Norman commentators.

CONCLUSION

The Scandinavians did not bring slavery to Britain and Ireland, they simply gave it the international connections characteristic of their expansion during the so-called 'Viking Age'.[76] While the resultant trade network was economically sophisticated, from the overwhelmingly monastic, post-Conquest positions of Anglo-Norman commentators, slavery was perceived to be culturally backward. Interestingly, though, there seems to have been greater distaste for the trade in slaves than for the existence of slavery itself, even from the later Anglo-Saxon period, as seen in the writings of Wulfstan of York. This was particularly true if that trade brought Christians into the hands of heathens, or

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[75] Wyatt, *Slaves*, pp. 375–6.

[76] Holm's article on the slave trade can be seen as part of the revisionist interpretation of the vikings, which was initiated by Peter H. Saywer, *The Age of the Vikings* (London: Arnold, 1962). This interpretation can be stretched too far, implying that all vikings were merely wrongly vilified traders; indeed, their violence should also be acknowledged. It would be equally lacking in nuance, however, to suggest that their behaviour was unique and to thereby absolve other groups of people who were involved in the same sorts of activity.

rather, as time went on, into the hands of Christians deemed uncivilised.

This discussion has also reinforced the interconnected nature of the Insular world—both economically and politically. The slave trade in Ireland cannot be explained away merely as a viking imposition: Irish kings do seem to have provided Hiberno-Scandinavians towns with slaves to trade and certainly took their fellow Irishmen captive. Other Insular rulers also took slaves during military engagements and are likely to have been involved in supplying this trade in slaves. In terms of the slave trade, examining the reality behind cultural perceptions and ethnic stereotypes is hampered by the lack of evidence. It is apparent that cultural perceptions were constantly shifting and dependent on points of view: the Anglo-Saxon inhabitants of England were criticised for their involvement in the slave trade, particularly in Bristol, but later the English directed the same criticism at their Celtic neighbours. Similarly, the kings of Scotland and the lowland core of Alba were viewed by the largely Gaelic and Gaelic-Scandinavian peripheries around their kingdom as too foreign and Anglo-Norman, but, simultaneously, were sometimes viewed by the Anglo-Normans themselves as too Celtic and barbarous. In general the historian should be wary of drawing too hard and fast a distinction between the 'core' and the 'periphery', and of believing

disparaging accounts from the core of their backwards and barbaric opponent.[77]

It does seem, though, that the slave trade was one aspect which persisted in the so-called peripheries. By the twelfth century, there had been an apparent shift in tone in England, or the Anglo-Norman sphere, in the way that slave-taking was described and that slavery was deemed unacceptable in their culture, but, of course, reality may not always have met expectation.[78] Nevertheless, the extent to which the slave trade remained in Ireland, Scotland and the Irish Sea region has perhaps been overstated in the hyperbole of Anglo-Norman writers, or at least their accounts have been coloured by wider stereotypes and by cultural and political tensions.

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[77] As noted in terms of the church, it is overly simplistic to claim that in 'Celtic' areas the church was lagging behind the rest of Europe and had to be shown the light by the English or Normans.

[78] For instance the *Historia Gruffudd vab Kenan* notes that Hugh of Avranches, earl of Chester, bribed an Irish war fleet with promise of youthful female slaves (Wyatt, *Slaves*, p. 101). Hugh was one of William the Conqueror's most important Norman lords.