QVAESTIO INSVLARIS

*Selected Proceedings of
the Cambridge
Colloquium in
Anglo-Saxon,
Norse and Celtic*

Volume 9 · 2008

CONTENTS

ANS	*Anglo-Norman Studies*
AntJ	*Antiquaries Journal*
ArchJ	*Archaeological Journal*
ASE	*Anglo-Saxon England*
ASNSL	*Archiv für das Studium der neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*
ASPR	Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, ed. G. P. Krapp and E. V. K. Dobbie, 6 vols. (New York, 1931–42)
BAR	British Archaeological Reports (Oxford)
BNJ	*British Numismatic Journal*
CML	Corpus Medicorum Latinorum
CSASE	Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
EETS	Early English Text Society
HBS	Henry Bradshaw Society Publications
HZ	*Historische Zeitschrift*
JEGP	*Journal of English and Germanic Philology*
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
MÆ	*Medium Ævum*
NM	*Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*
OMT	Oxford Medieval Texts
OS	Original Series
RS	Rolls Series
SBVS	*Saga-Book of the Viking Society for Northern Research*
SCBI	Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles
SN	*Studia Neophilologica*
SS	Supplementary Series

This volume of the annual journal, *Quaestio Insularis*, is the ninth in a successful series initiated a decade ago and established and continued since then by the vibrant postgraduate community of the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic. The Colloquium, the edited proceedings of which *Quaestio* represents, is now firmly established as one of the leading graduate conferences in the field; the 2008 event was the largest to date. This and back numbers of the respected associated journal can be ordered directly from the Department's website (<www.asnc.cam.ac.uk>). The Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse, and Celtic continues to be proud of its long association with CCASNC and *Quaestio Insularis*; long may they flourish!

Dr Máire Ní Mhaonaigh
Head of the Department of ASNC
University of Cambridge

COLLOQUIUM REPORT

The 2008 Colloquium in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, held in Room G/R 06-7 of the English Faculty, was the biggest to date – a successful two-day event, Friday 16–Saturday 17 May.

Day 1 – Friday 16 May
Session I (*Chair: Conan Doyle*)
Denis Casey, 'Metamorphosis: the Fall and Rise of Tigernán Ua Ruairc, 1151–9'
Edward Carlsson Browne, 'Norwegian Laws of Succession from Haraldr hárfagri to Magnús Erlingsson'
Paul Gazzoli, 'Knud the Holy and the Metamorphosis of Danish Kingship'

Session II (*Chair: Betsie A. M. Cleworth*)
Conan Doyle, 'Metamorphosis and Mutability: from Supernatural to Natural Cause in Anglo-Saxon Disease Terminology'
Matthias Ammon, 'Piercing the *rihthamscyld* – a New Reading of Æthelberht 32'

Session III (*Chair: Natalia I. Petrovskaia*)
Angela Bennett Segler, 'Christianising and Queering Philosophy: a Look at the Transformation of Lady Philosophy into *se Wisdom* in Ælfred's Translation of Boethius'
Rosa Maria Fera, 'Men, Animals and More: Metamorphoses of the Five Senses'

Day 2 – Saturday 17 May
Session I (*Chair: Rosa Maria Fera*)
Helen Imhoff, 'A Change of Attitude: the Metamorphosis of Conchobar's Poem in *Aided Conchobair*'

Carolyn Twomey, 'From Nave to Chancel: the Metamorphic Implications of Anglo-Saxon Altar Placement'

Session II: Keynote Lecture (*Chair: Natalia I. Petrovskaia*)
Daniel Huws, 'From Song to Script in Late Medieval Wales'

Session III (*Chair: Helen Imhoff*)
Rory Naismith, 'MONITA S[an]C[t]ORUM: Church and Coinage in Early Anglo-Saxon England'
Andy Woods, 'Was There a Metamorphosis of the Economy of "Viking-age" Dublin?: the Beginnings of Minting in the Late Tenth-century'

Session IV (*Chair: Debbie Potts*)
Helen Leslie, 'Metamorphosis of Context: Generating Meaning in the Different Versions of *Völuspá*'
Eleanor Rosamund Barraclough, 'Fractured Fairytales: Transforming the Trolls of *Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss*'

Session V (*Chair: Matthias Ammon*)
Robert Gallagher, 'Textual Metamorphosis in *De abbatibus*'
Greg Williams, 'The Role of Early Medieval York in the Northumbrian Kingdom and Church'

Session VI (*Chair: Betsie A. M. Cleworth*)
Carrie Roy, 'Viewing and Re-viewing the Gripping Beast'
Juliana Dresvina, 'Anglo-Saxon Apokatastasis: Theory and Practice of Universal Resurrection'

The members of the colloquium committee for 2007–8 were: Natalia I. Petrovskaia, Debbie Potts, Betsie A. M. Cleworth.

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From Song to Script in Medieval Wales

Daniel Huws

My title is a tribute to a book published in 1945 that I came across when it was reprinted in paperback in 1966, at about the time that I became interested in such matters: *From Script to Print: an Introduction to Medieval Vernacular Literature*, by H. J. Chaytor.[1] Once I had grown accustomed to what to one of my generation was a quaintly old-fashioned air (Whitman, for instance, still served to exemplify the formlessness of 'modern' poetry), Chaytor offered a splendid introduction not only to the transmission from script to print but also that from song to script.

The period under our consideration is chiefly that from 1400 to 1550. By 1550 much medieval vernacular literature in some of the major languages of western Europe had found its way not only from song to script but from script to print. But Welsh literature had another three centuries to wait. Only in the three decades after 1773 did a corresponding migration from script to print occur.

To appreciate the changes in the mode of transmission of Welsh poetry in the period 1400–1550 we need to set the scene in 1400. Almost all known Welsh poetry from the earliest period – the body of poetry already in the fourteenth century known as *hengerdd* (lit.) 'ancient poetry' – and almost all surviving poetry of the *Gogynfeirdd* (lit.) 'quite early poets', including the Poets of the Princes (*c.* 1100–1283) and the subsequent poetry in the same tradition, survives by virtue of texts preserved in five books. These five books, written

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[1] Originally published in Cambridge (CUP); reprinted in London (Sidgwick and Jackson).

between the mid-thirteenth century and the late-fourteenth, are, in order: the Black Book of Carmarthen, the personal compilation of an unknown cleric; the Book of Aneirin, the antiquarian recovery by two scribes of an ancient, barely understood, iconic text; the Hendregadredd Manuscript, the product of an extraordinarily ambitious enterprise soon after 1282 to recover the court poetry of the Welsh princes; the Book of Taliesin, a fair copy of an antiquarian collection comparable to the Book of Aneirin; and the Red Book of Hergest, a huge book written by three scribes soon after 1382, evidently a compilation of Welsh literature reflecting the taste of its patron, Hopcyn ap Thomas of Ynysdawe. All five books are of parchment and well produced.[2]

Welsh poetry in 1400, such as is known to us, is represented by the contents of these five books. Strangely, perhaps, it is poetry whose written transmission more or less ceased between the year 1400 and its rediscovery by renaissance scholars in the years after 1550 and of which only a very few poems seem to have been retained in oral tradition. The living poetry around the year 1400, the poetry that would have been heard in court or tavern, the poetry that would hold the stage for two centuries to come, was of a very different nature. It was the poetry of the *Cywyddwyr*, 'composed in *cywydd* metre'.

Around the year 1330 came the most clear-cut change in the whole course of Welsh poetry (the only comparison might be the outburst of hymn writing that came with Methodism just four centuries later, William Williams, Pantycelyn, taking the place of Dafydd ap Gwilym). The change turned on a new poetic form, the *cywydd deuair hirion*, in seven-syllable couplets, which soon came to be

called simply the *cywydd* (pl. *cywyddau*), and its exponents *Cywyddwyr*. The new form, more flexible and less demanding than the *awdl* (pl. *awdlau*) or *englyn* (pl. *englynion*), became associated with new subject matter – love poetry became a large ingredient – and with a readiness to accept a more colloquial vocabulary, including English loan words, and a new lightness of tone, often ironic. One poet above all was associated with this innovation, even during his lifetime: Dafydd ap Gwilym. It became, in the picture presented in mocking words by Dafydd's contemporary, Gruffudd Gryg, a craze. The venerable older forms of the *awdl*, always regarded as that of highest status, and *englyn* survived (and have done to this day), but for three hundred years the *cywydd* became the chief mode of Welsh poetry.[3]

Around the year 1400, *hengerdd* and the poems of the *Gogynfeirdd*, known to a few from books, known to bards from their training, were in general probably revered but seldom heard. The poetry that would be in demand at festive time from the *datgeiniaid*, the 'professional singers', had seldom even reached script, even though the *Cywyddwyr* of the first generation were mostly long dead. All that survives of this poetry in pre-1400 manuscripts is a small handful of poems occuring as added matter in two earlier manuscripts, the Hendregadredd Manuscript and the White Book of Rhydderch. Yet some 300 *cywyddau* from the fourteenth century, by some 25 poets, have come down to us in post-1400 manuscripts. How were these texts transmitted? By other manuscripts now lost, or by word of mouth? This is a question we shall return to.

In 1400 Owain Glyndŵr rose. The war that followed was protracted and the destruction, by both sides, great. The devastation of war and the harsh legislation which followed resulted in a long and

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[2] For a fuller account of the five books, see D. Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts* (Cardiff, 2000), ch. 5.

[3] An excellent introduction to the *cywydd* and its context can be found in E. I. Rowlands, *Poems of the Cywyddwyr* (Dublin, 1976).

profound depression. In the words of Sir John Wynn, the wars 'brought such desolation that green grass grew in the market-place of Llanrwst [...] and deer fed in the churchyard'.[4] It is hard not to attribute to this depression, this long disruption of normal life, the absence of any collection of Welsh poetry that can be dated to the period 1400-1440 (see Appendix I). The contrast with the period after the defeat of 1282 is instructive. That defeat seems to have acted as a stimulus to the recording of Welsh literature. It led to a safeguarding of her history: witness the creation of *Brut y Tywysogyon* 'the Chronicle of the Princes', the recording of the court poetry in the Hendregadredd Manuscript and the great vigour of vernacular manuscript production in the period between the Conquest and the Black Death.

There is a curious parallel. Richard Suggett, writing of Welsh timber-framed houses, has observed that 'the two most significant surviving expressions of material culture in late medieval Wales' are 'houses and the manuscript books which were kept in them'.[5] The surviving houses, with their magnificent woodwork, from the typically three-bay aristocratic hall-house to the smaller, typically two-bay, gentry houses and one-bay 'peasant' houses have been the subject of much recent investigation, and by means of dendrochronology their dating has often been possible.[6] One discovery has been that not one example survives from pre-Glyndŵr times; Wales had to rebuild. More surprising however is that no example survives from before 1430 while thereafter they come to

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[4] Sir John Wynn, *The History of the Gwydir Familyand Memoirs*, ed. J. Gwynfor Jones (Llandysul, 1990), p. 51.
[5] Richard Suggett, 'The Interpretation of Late Medieval Houses in Wales' in *From Medieval to Modern Wales*, ed. R. R. Davies & G. H. Jenkins (Cardiff, 2004), pp. 81–103, at 98.
[6] Suggett, op. cit.

abound, first among the aristocracy, then down the social scale. The chronology mirrors that of the manuscripts. And looking again at the poetry, poetry which celebrates those very people who built these houses, even poems datable to the years 1400-1440 appear few in number compared with those of the golden periods before and after this break.

So we come to look at the manuscripts of Welsh poetry that were eventually, in some numbers, produced after 1440 (Appendix I). They stand in marked contrast to the pre-1400 books, most obviously, viewed as artefacts, in the decline in standards of production. The books are small; many are of paper; with few exceptions, they are hurriedly written: the production of vernacular manuscripts had become a cottage industry. The contrast with contemporary England could not be starker. There, the traditional skills of the scriptorium, now to be found in London ateliers rather than in monasteries, were just beginning to produce the work of Chaucer and other English poets in de luxe books.

An exception among the Welsh scribes was the bard, Lewys Glyn Cothi, one who took pride in his good hand and one who, it was said, never wrote other than on parchment; three of his manuscripts survive. If, in their physical form, the fifteenth-century books stand in contrast to their fourteenth-century forerunners, so they do also in their contents. There was no copying of any of the five pre-1400 books. Examples of *hengerdd* and poetry of the *Gogynfeirdd* are scattered and few. The antiquarian spirit which had been largely responsible for the five books had evaporated. The great bulk of the contents of poetry manuscripts is now *cywyddau*, together with *awdlau* and *englynion* by the *cywydd* poets, much of it the poetry of Dafydd ap Gwilym and Iolo Goch and other fourteenth-century masters of the *cywydd*, but much of it also the work of contemporaries. This was the living poetry of the age. One earlier

stream of Welsh poetry did however have a kind of continuity: *canu brud*, 'songs of prophesy or vaticination', associated above all with Myrddin, poetry which in relation to other poetry stands rather like science fiction in relation to other fiction. After 1282, this poetry acquired new relevance. Early poems (some probably from oral tradition) together with a mass of more recent ones turn up in fifteenth-century manuscripts. Then, after 1485, *canu brud* fell quiet. The arrival of Henry Tudor had, it was thought, fulfilled the prophesies. But *canu brud* had an unexpected revival when the English Civil War brought its own new load of anxieties.

Who were the scribes of the post-1440 manuscripts? There is a clear answer. Until 1527: every identifiable scribe is a bard (see the third column in Appendix I). No doubt many if not most of the bards of earlier centuries had been able to write. Of the fourteenth-century *Cywyddwyr*, Dafydd ap Gwilym and Gruffudd Gryg were undoubtedly literate and had Latin: there are possibly autograph poems by each of them in the Hendregadredd Manuscript. But we have no evidence to suggest that either of them compiled collections of poetry, either of the work of others or of their own poems. Now, in the middle of the fifteenth century, there was a remarkable and sudden flowering of autograph poetry. Not only were collections of contemporary poetry being made, some poets were making collections of their own work. Lewys Glyn Cothi is the outstanding example; Hywel Dafi and Ieuan Brechfa are others whose collections survive. One conclusion that might be drawn is that professional scribes competent to write in Welsh were rare. There is probably truth in this, but that there were a few good scribes is shown by other contemporary manuscripts, notably some of the Welsh law texts. The law could always provide employment for scriveners.

The poet's personal collection of his work is one type of book; the household book, what in Irish is called a *duanaire*, a book to be added to at the wish of a patron, is another. The third stratum in the Hendregadredd Manuscript offers a rudimentary early Welsh example. The additions to Peniarth MS 10, with their poems to a late fifteenth-century patron, Dafydd Llwyd ap Gruffudd Fychan Deuddwr, provide a later one. Of exceptional interest as books reflecting one patron's taste (without reflecting any vainglory: his very name is uncertain) are three manuscripts, Peniarth 54 (written about 1480), Peniarth 55 (*c.* 1500) and Peniarth 60 (*c.* 1510–15), which came together from Breconshire into Robert Vaughan's library at Hengwrt by common descent. Each of the three manuscripts shows a large number of hands. What links them is a primitive cramped hand which crops up at intervals in all three, writing short stints, a hand which offers interesting variety: copies of poems, attempts at composing poetry, prayers, comment, and the earliest surviving lists of Welsh musical measures.[7] It can hardly be other than the hand of the patron, one who, like Charlemagne, came late to the skill and pleasures of writing.[8] The three manuscripts offer a range of poetry besides contemporary *cywyddau*, their main contents. Peniarth 54 includes a collection of 25 of Dafydd ap Gwilym's *cywyddau*, the largest known group up to that date, written in the hand of the bard Gwilym Tew, a few items of *hengerdd* and ample vaticination. A remarkable feature of the contemporary poetry is that a large proportion of it is autograph. There are in Peniarth 54 autograph poems by eight poets: Huw Cae Llwyd, Rhys Dyfnwal, Hywel Swrdwal, Dafydd Epynt, Gwilym Tew, Hywel Dafi, Rhys Fardd and Dafydd y Nant. Autograph poems by the first four named also occur in Peniarth 55, with others by Rhys

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[7] On this musical material, see S. Harper, *Music in Welsh Culture before 1650: a Study of the Principal Sources* (Aldershot, 2007), pp. 75–82.

[8] Peniarth 54 includes several poems, including *marwnadau* (elegies) to Ieuan ap Gwilym Fychan of Peutun, near Brecon, and his father. Ieuan died sometime after 1475. The cramped hand was probably of one close to this family.

Brychan, while Peniarth 60 contains autograph poems by Dafydd Epynt and Rhys Brychan. Poems by ten further poets in these three manuscripts have the appearance of autographs but we lack examples with which to compare them.

The sudden appearance of a mass of autograph poetry is a phenomenon. Croft in his *Autograph Poetry in the English Language* writes that there are 'only four identified authors of the medieval period for whom any significant quantity of verse has come down to us in their own handwriting'.[9] The four are William Herbert, John Shirley, Thomas Hoccleve and John Capgrave. Wales, in the fifteenth century alone, can offer at least twelve, along with a similar number of candidates for whom a *prima facie* case can be made.

A question which must arise is: were these post-1440 collections of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century poetry written by scribes copying from earlier manuscripts which have failed to survive? There is no evidence that this was so. Before the sixteenth century there are no pointers to lost common sources. There is no evidence that the work of any individual poet of the *Cywyddwyr* was collected, other than by the poet himself, before the sixteenth century, with the single exception of Dafydd ap Gwilym. Our conclusion has to be that the transmission up to this point had primarily been oral. What we witness in these disorderly poetry manuscripts of the fifteenth century is a process of random crystallisation from oral tradition.

Welsh praise poetry was skilfully woven, but in pattern, in the characteristics that called forth praise, and in much of the imagery, it is conventional. A man would commonly be praised for his breeding, courtesy, valour, generosity, probity, for his learning. Learning might simply be the Latin-based learning of a cleric or a lawyer. Sometimes however, a patron is praised for devotion to native learning, for

knowledge of chronicles, of *ystorya*, 'story', 'history' (a word which denoted written as opposed to oral narrative), of *hengerdd*, 'old poetry', of bardic art, of genealogy, all of them associated with books.[10] While a patron might be praised for his appreciation of *cywyddau*, never, before the latter part of the fifteenth century, are these poems associated with books. Lewys Glyn Cothi is the first to make the link, to imply that his poem will endure as a text. When he writes:

> Y geiriau a rof mewn ysgrifen
> tra fo gwir a thir a llythyren,
> hyd y try obry wybren – dros fryniau,
> hyd y bo geiriau mewn llyfrau llên.[11]

Lewys is placing his poems in the stream of literature that offered the patron (or lover) immortality through the written word, the stream that Shakespeare's sonnets were to join.

All Welsh poetry until after 1600, even *awdlau*, was composed to be sung (or perhaps chanted), to the accompaniment of the harp, or sometimes the *crwth*. Some bards might sing their own poems, even to their own accompaniment. Generally, however, the singing was by a *datgeiniad*. Sadly, the manner of singing is lost. We have one substantial collection of late medieval harp music, much of it purely instrumental, but nothing to help relate its music to words.[12] Penillion singing, that peculiarly Welsh art form, probably has some tenuous

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[9] P. J. Croft, *Autograph Poetry in the English Language*, 2 vols. (London, 1973).

[10] Rowlands, *Poems of the Cywyddwyr*, pp. xvi–xx; E. I. Rowlands, 'Bardic Art and Education', *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* 32 (1985), 143–55.

[11] *Gwaith Lewys Glyn Cothi*, ed. D. Johnston (Cardiff, 1995), p. 222. 'The words I put in writing / while truth and land and letters may last, / so long as the sky moves above hills, / so long as there are words in the books of literature.'

[12] The Robert ap Huw manuscript, BL Add. 14905, copied in 1613. For recent essays on the manuscript and its contents, see *Welsh Music History*, vols. 3 (1999) and 6 (2004).

link to the singing of medieval poetry: but all is speculation. The *datgeiniad* perforce would need to know his repertoire by heart and his reputation would in part depend on the extent of his repertoire. The *datgeiniad* would be the main channel of oral transmission of *cywyddau*. Recent editors of *cywyddau* have paid much more attention than those of earlier generations to the traits of oral transmission, none more than the editors of the new edition of Dafydd ap Gwilym, a poet whose work enjoyed extended transmission by word of mouth and a complex one in manuscripts.[13] Obvious traits are variation of line- or couplet-order and omissions of couplets in *cywyddau* or of *englynion*, for instance, in *awdlau*. Others are variation which can be explained as mishearing and verbal variation of words not structural with regard to sense or to *cynghanedd* (the rules of consonance and alliteration). It can be said that variation such as can be explained by oral transmission is, predictably, least common in praise poetry and most common in poetry of broader interest, in love poetry, in memorable satire, in *canu brud*.

The oral transmission of the poetry of the *Gogynfeirdd* and the *Cywyddwyr* cannot be regarded as a process of re-creation. In has to be viewed in different light from the transmission of poetry by the 'Singer of Tales', or in a British context, by the flux of the ballads. About 90% of Welsh poems from 1100 to 1500 are attributed in manuscript to an author (whether correctly so or not). Bards were of high standing and their names mattered; the poem could be expected to stand inviolate. But there was recognition that transmission could be faulty and the *datgeiniad* were expected to rectify what were

perceived as errors of *cynghanedd*. There might be a tinkering, for better or worse, but no substantial re-creation. This tinkering, even so, poses problems for editors. The progession of *cynghanedd* from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century was in the direction of a tightening of rules. What a fifteenth- or sixteenth-century *datgeiniad* might regard as faulty *cynghanedd* could have been acceptable in the fourteenth century.

The early high status of the Welsh bards is comparable with that of the troubadours over 85% of whose work is attributed.[14] In contrast, in the Sisam *Oxford Book of Medieval English Verse* (an anthology not altogether representative, dominated of course by short poems), little over 20% of the poems, from the period 1150-1500, are attributed, to 21 poets.[15]

So from about 1450, the writing down of poetry became widespread in the bardic community and among patrons. The sources, first, by necessity (as I see it), mainly oral, but, increasingly, as copying became common practice, written ones also. By about 1550, written transmission had become the norm. Such transmission begins to become evident from the textual history of some poetry; a stemma may point to common ancestry. It is strongly implied by sporadic comments which make explicit reference to copying from oral rendering (some are collected in Appendix II). These show that by the end of the sixteenth century to take a text taken from oral rendering was considered to be something exceptional.

There are sufficient surviving manuscripts from the period 1400-1550 to allow for some general observations. We have already noticed the lacuna from 1400 to 1440 and the subsequent productivity, the

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[13] See D. Johnston, 'Dafydd ap Gwilym and Oral Tradition', *Studia Celtica* 37 (2003), 143–61. The new edition of Dafydd ap Gwilym, edited by Dafydd Johnston and others, not yet in print, is accessible, with English translations and a bilingual apparatus, including transcripts and digitised images of the main manuscripts, see <http://www.dafyddapgwilym.net>.

[14] A figure based on A. Pillet & H. Carstens, *Bibliographie der Troubadours* (Halle, 1933).

[15] C. & K. Sisam, *The Oxford Book of Medieval English Verse* (Oxford, 1970).

switch from parchment to paper, and the preponderance of bards among the identifiable scribes. A glance at the fourth column in Appendix I, showing from which quarter of Wales the manuscripts appear to have come, reveals something else: that the transfer of contemporary poetry from song to script first became an established practice in the most anglicised part of Wales, the south-east; later in the north-east, and latest in the south-west and north-west. In the north-west, always a bastion of traditional Welsh culture, the oral tradition was no doubt so strong until around 1550 that written record still appeared to be superfluous. By 1600 however it had become, with north-east Wales, the chief area of manuscript production.

The period of transition from oral to written transmission of the poetry of the *Cywyddwyr* was from 1450 to 1550. The manuscripts from this period are listed below. The great proliferation of copying poetry into manuscripts (generally, by now, from script to script rather than song to script) came in the period 1550–1700. Some 450 poetry manuscripts survive from this century and a half. The year 1700 is a convenient one to mark the end of the bardic tradition. Siôn Dafydd Laes, who can be regarded as the last of the professional bards, a brilliant, careless, wayward poet, and a drunkard, died aged about 30 in 1695. By then, Wales had, in many respects, already moved into a new era.

APPENDIX I: WELSH POETRY MSS 1400-1550

Key: ( ) = additions only; [ ] = *canu brud*; italic type = lost MS;
 * = parchment MS

MS	Date	Scribe	Region
Peniarth 57i	*c.* 1440		SW
[Peniarth 50*]	1445		SE
[Peniarth 26*]	1456		NE
Llyfr Gwyn Hergest*	>1461	Lewys Glyn Cothi	SE
Peniarth 70*	1470s	Lewys Glyn Cothi	S
Peniarth 109*	1470s	Lewys Glyn Cothi	S
(Peniarth 40)*	1470s	Lewys Glyn Cothi	SE
Source of Llanstephan 7	1480s	[Lewys Glyn Cothi]	S
(Jesus 111*: addns)	1480s	Lewys Glyn Cothi	SE
Peniarth 48*	s.xv²		?SW
Peniarth 52*	s.xv²	Dafydd Nanmor *et al.*	NW
[BL Add. 19710*]	s.xv²		S
(Peniarth 51)	?1460×80	Gwilym Tew	SE
Peniarth 67	?>1483	Hywel Dafi	SE
Peniarth 54	*c.* 1480	Huw Cae Llwyd *et mult. al.*	SE
Peniarth 55	*c.* 1500	Huw Cae Llwyd *et mult. al.*	SE
Peniarth 189 (pp. 85-108)	?1460×80	Huw Cae Llwyd	SE
Peniarth 60	?1510–15	Dafydd Epynt *et mult. al.*	SE
Source of BL Add. 14967	s.xv⁴ᐟ⁴	[?Gutun Owain]	NE
[Peniarth 53]	*c.* 1485×1510		S
BL Add. 14997	s.xv/xvi		NE
Peniarth 59ii	s.xv/xvi		S
(Peniarth 10*: addns)	s.xv/xvi		NE
Llanstephan 7	1505–30	Ieuan Brechfa *et al.*	SW
(Peniarth 182)	*c.*1514	Huw Pennant	NE
Source of Peniarth 110	s.xvi¹ᐟ⁴	[?Tudur Aled]	NE
Llanstephan 6	*c.* 1505×30		SE
Peniarth 57ii	s.xvi¹ (<1536)		?
Vetustus Codex* (see Pen.49)	1526		?S
Cardiff 3.4	1527	Elis Gruffydd	NE
BL Add. 14967	>1526		NE

Source of Cwrtmawr 14	1509×47		?
Peniarth 110	s.xv²/⁴		NE
Source of Llanstephan 164ii	s.xv²/⁴	[?Lewys Morgannwg]	SE
Balliol 353	1540s	Sir John Prise	SE

Appendix II: Early References to Transcription from Oral Tradition

Explicit references in manuscripts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to the copying of poems directly from oral tradition. Note the term *Ar dafodlyferydd* (*dafodleferydd*), 'tongue-speech' = 'by word of mouth', 'by heart', 'from oral rendering'.

Cardiff 3.4 (=RMWL 5), p. 262 (written by Elis Gruffyth in 1527): 'Ni chlowais ganu o Dudur Aled ond y ddau hyn'
'only these two have I heard Tudur Aled sing'

Peniarth 72, p. 360 (written late sixteenth century): 'gwaith brys oddiar dafod lyferydd'
'hurried work from oral rendering'

BL Add. 14866 (=RMWL 29), fol. 262ᵛ (written by David Johns, 1587): 'Nis gwyddai'r dyn ai dyfod i mi ar dafod leferydd pwy ai cant'
'the man who recited it to me by heart did not know who had sung [composed] it'

Cardiff 2.83 (=RMWL 6), p. 131 (written *c.* 1600): 'Hyn o wawd yr hen brydydd . . . a ddyscais i ar y mynydd ar fynhafodlyferydd'
'This satire by the old poet . . . I learnt by heart on the mountain'

Peniarth 111, p. 77 (written by John Jones, *c.* 1600), repeated in Peniarth 98B, p. 51 (written by John Davies, early 17th cent.): 'Llyma

hynn a vedrais i ei gael o gowydd penn y baedd o waith Iolo Goch . . . ac ar dafod leferydd fy ewythur Wiliam Tomas o Bant y Llongdu y kefais i hynn'
'This is as much of the boar's head cywydd by Iolo Goch as I was able to obtain and it was from the oral rendering of my uncle Wiliam Tomas of Pant y Llongdy that I got this'

BL Add. 31058, fol. 96 (written mid-seventeenth century): 'kywydd yw hwn ysgrifenad ar dafod lyferydd'
'this is a cywydd written from oral rendering'

BL Add. 14898 (=RMWL 46), fol. 87 (written by Henry Hughes, *c.* 1660): 'Sion Brwynog ai kant ei wyr ai doedodd ai orwyr ai scrifenodd'
'Sion Brwynog sang [composed] it, his grandson recited it and his great-grandson wrote it down'

Early Awareness of Textual Problems Arising from Oral Transmission

BL Add. 14866, fol. 194ᵛ (written by David Johns, 1587): 'Dafydd ap Gwilym medd llawer copi. Gruffydd Lloyd ap Dafydd ap Einion medd ereill. Ef a allei i bob un o honynt ganu ir un destyn a bod yna rai o benillion or ddau gowydd. Hwy ydiw no chowyddau Dafydd, ond ir oedd ef yn i gwneythyr yn hwy nag ydynt. Achos am i mellyssed, fo dysgid ar dafod ag a goppiwyd llawer oddiwrth un ni fedrei mor cwbwl weithiau.'
'Dafydd ap Gwilym according to many copies. Gruffydd Llwyd ap Dafydd ap Einion according to others. It may be that they both sang on the same subject and that there are some verses from each cywydd. It is longer than Dafydd's cywyddau, unless he made this one longer

than usual. Because of its sweetness it was learnt by heart and often copied, sometimes from those who did not know all of it.'

Knud the Holy and the Metamorphosis of Danish Kingship

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Knud 'the Holy' (r. 1080–6) has sometimes been billed as the last 'viking' king of Denmark, due to his youthful activity on expeditions to England for his father, Svend Estridsen, and for his designs on the English Crown in his own reign. On the other hand, he has also been seen as a great moderniser who helped pave the way for the later strong kingship of Valdemar I and his successors from the mid-twelfth century.[1] In this paper I intend to critically examine the evidence for Knud's policies in the earliest sources, and assess to what extent Knud can genuinely have been said to have marked a metamorphosis of kingship in Denmark.

After the death of Cnut the Great in 1035, the Danish crown passed to his son Hardeknud, who in 1040 made good his ancestral claim to the English throne as well. On Hardeknud's death without issue in 1042, the control of England reverted to the line of Æthelred with Edward the Confessor, while Denmark fell to Magnus the Good of Norway. In 1047 Svend, the son of Cnut the Great's sister Estrid, managed to establish himself and reigned until his death in 1076. In 1069–70 and 1075 Svend launched expeditions aimed at taking advantage of the post-Norman Conquest rebellions to press his claim to the throne of England.

On Svend's death a dispute over the succession arose between his sons. Svend had left behind somewhere in the region of fourteen

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[1] E. Hoffmann, 'Knut der Heilige und die Wende der dänischen Geschichte im 11. Jahrhundert', *HZ* 218 (1974), 529–70, at 539.

sons and at this time there were no legally established principles for the regulation of the succession.[2] The candidates were Harald 'Hen' ('Whetstone', r. 1076–80) and Knud; Harald was elected because he promised a mild reign under which the Danes could choose for themselves which laws they wanted.[3] Knud seems to have gone into exile, and some sources indicate that he, and some of his brothers, attempted to force Harald to divide the kingdom with them.[4] Harald died in 1080, and Knud succeeded him to the throne. In 1085 he prepared a massive fleet with the purpose of conquering England. It was ready to embark from Limfjord, but Knud was detained at Hedeby by a threat from the German Emperor Heinrich IV, whose rival (*Gegenkönig*) Hermann von Salm had found refuge in Denmark, along with Archbishop Hartwig of Magdeburg and Bishop Burchard of Halberstadt.[5] The men of the fleet grew impatient as the summer drew on, and Knud was forced to allow them to disband. In the

following spring, a revolt resulted in his death at the hands of an angry mob inside St. Alban's Church in Odense. By 1095, reports of miracles worked by him led to his becoming Denmark's first royal saint.

Although our sources for this period are scant, we are fortunate in that it is the first time we have contemporary and near-contemporary written sources from within Denmark itself. In addition to the first preserved charter from Scandinavia, Knud's grant to Lund cathedral of 1085 (although the original is lost, we have several copies from the early twelfth century onwards),[6] we also have a wealth of hagiographic material produced by the monks who served Knud's cult at Odense. The monastery at Odense was established by Erik 'Ejegod' ('ever-good', r. 1095–1103, the second of Knud's brothers to succeed him) with monks from the English house of Evesham.[7] The corpus consists of four works: first the *Tabula Othiniensis*, a copper tablet with a short inscription composed for Knud's elevation in 1095 and originally placed in his sarcophagus, where it was discovered on its opening in 1592; although the tablets soon disappeared, the text was preserved in seventeenth-century Danish collections.[8] Second is the anonymous *Passio sancti Kanuti regis et martiris*, probably composed sometime between 1095 and 1101,

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[2] See E. Hoffmann, *Königserhebung und Thronfolgeordnung in Dänemark bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters*, Beiträge zur Geschichte und Quellenkunde des Mittelalters 5 (Berlin, 1976), 17–34.

[3] Ælnoth, *Gesta Suenomagni regis et filiorum eius et passio Sancti Kanuti regis et martiris* (hereafter *GS*) iv, in *Vitae sanctorum Danorum* (hereafter *VSD*), ed. M. C. Gertz (Copenhagen, 1908–12), pp. 90–1.

[4] A letter from Pope Gregory VII urges the Norwegian King Olav Kyrre not to offer any help to Harald's brothers who are attempting to enforce a division of the kingdom (*Diplomatarium Danicum, I. Række, 2. Bind: 1053–1169* (hereafter *DD*), ed. L. Weibull and N. Skyum-Nielsen (Copenhagen, 1963) I.2, no. 18, 37–9). An anonymous skaldic verse reports that Harald had to fight off eleven of his brothers after their father's death (Finnur Jónsson, ed., *Den norsk-islandske skjaldedigtning*, 4 vols. (Copenhagen, 1912–5), AI 427, BI 397).

[5] Hoffmann, 'Knut der Heilige', 545; R. Malmros, 'Kongemagt og leding i Norge og Danmark omkring 1100 belyst ud fra den tidige kristne fyrstedigtning', *(Dansk) Historisk Tidsskrift* 105 (2005), 321–80, at 367; *Annalista Saxo*, s.a. 1085, ed. G. Waitz, MGH SS, Folio 6 (Hanover, 1844), 542–777, at 723.

[6] B. Fritz, 'Knut den heliges gåvobrev av den 21 maj 1085 och dess öden under 900 år. En arkivhistorisk och diplomatarisk orientering', in *Gåvobrevet 1085. Föredrag och diskussioner vid Symposium kring Knut den heliges gåvobrevet 1085 och den tidiga medeltidens nordiska samhälle*, ed. S. Skansjö and H. Sundström (Lund, 1988), pp. 21-35, at 21–2.

[7] The founding is discussed in a charter from Evesham, given in *DD* I.2, no. 24, 55–6.

[8] A. E. Christensen, 'Tiden 1042–1241', in *Danmarks historie I: Tiden indtil 1340*, ed. A. E. Christensen, I. Skovgaard-Petersen and H. Paludan (Copenhagen, 1977), pp. 211–399, at 255. The works in question are Cornelius Hamsfort's chronicle of the bishops of Odense, and Ole Worm's *Fasti Danici* of 1625.

again by an English monk. It is preserved in its entirety only in a single late manuscript from Cologne, which contains material from breviaries from Odense and Lund, although fragments can be found elsewhere, mainly in Scandinavian breviaries.[9] Third is the *Epitaphium*, consisting of nine hexameters originally inscribed on a metal tablet, like the *Tabula Othiniensis* found in Knud's shrine upon its opening in 1592, and similarly vanished but preserved in the same sources.[10] The last and by far most extensive work, however, is Ælnoth's *Gesta Swenomagni regis et filiorum eius et passio glorissimi Canuti regis et martyris*, which contains a foreword to king Niels (r. 1103–34), a description of Scandinavia and its peoples, and a brief account of the reigns of Knud's predecessors Svend and Harald before its discussion of Knud's life, martyrdom, and elevation to sainthood. In the epilogue and the preface the author declares himself to be the priest Ælnoth, from Canterbury, who has lived in Denmark for twenty-four years.[11] Ælnoth might have come to Denmark at the time of the establishment of the monastery at Odense around 1095, or perhaps earlier, possibly at the time of Knud's translation of the relics of saints Alban and Oswald to Denmark.[12] Conjectures as to when he completed his work range from 1109 to 1122.[13] His work is preserved primarily in two Flemish manuscripts from the early thirteenth

century, the *Codex Audomariensis* from St. Omer,[14] and the *Codex Brugensis* from Bruges;[15] both are believed to be derived from a lost exemplar from Ter Doest.[16] Their presence in Flanders is explained by the fact that Knud married Adèle, daughter of Count Robert I 'The Frisian' of Flanders (r. 1071–93), and that the son born of this union was himself later count of Flanders as Charles I 'The Good' (r. 1119–27); Charles' life is also included in the *Codex Audomariensis*. Ælnoth's work and the entirety of the Odense corpus were most recently edited by the great scholar M. C. Gertz from 1908 to 1912 as *Vitae sanctorum Danorum*.[17]

The problem that has faced those who would use these sources for history, as pointed out by Gertz himself in the early years of the twentieth century,[18] is the seemingly obvious one, namely that they are hagiography, and thus the events recorded may be distorted, or even fabricated, to reflect theological ideas. Curt Weibull specifically argued that Ælnoth's text was influenced by the Augustinian notions of the *rex iustus* and the conflict of the *civitas dei* with the *civitas diaboli*: in other words, that it reflected what was considered necessary for a royal saint rather than any realities of Knud's reign.[19] Following on from this, his brother Lauritz Weibull developed a framework in which the Odense literature functioned as twelfth-century political

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[9] Christensen, 'Tiden 1042–1241', pp. 255–6; *VSD*, pp. 35–8. Cologne, Gymnasialbibliothek, Nr. 203, chartaceus (s. xvi).

[10] Christensen, 'Tiden 1042–1241', p. 256.

[11] *GS*, pp. 77, 135–6. I translate the title as 'The deeds of King Svend-Magnus (i.e. Svend Estridsen) and his sons and the passion of the most glorious king and martyr Knud'. There is no translation of the work into English, but there is one in Danish: E. Albrectsen, *Ælnods Krønike* (Odense, 1984). All translations of all texts in this article are my own.

[12] L. Abrams, 'Ailnoth', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* I (Oxford, 2004) 490–1.

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] St. Omer, Bibliothèque de l'agglomeration de Saint-Omer, MS Clarmarais 716 (Flanders, s. xiii).

[15] Bruges, Bibliothèque publique MS 403 (Flanders, s. xiii). Further versions of the text are preserved in early incunabula, and selections can be found in some later manuscripts: *VSD*, pp. 47–54.

[16] Christensen, 'Tiden 1042–1241', p. 256; *VSD*, pp. 45–7.

[17] 'Lives of Danish Saints'.

[18] *VSD*, p. 43.

[19] C. Weibull, *Saxo: kritiska undersökningar i Danmarks historia från Sven Estridsens död till Knut* VI (Lund, 1915), 51–86; 'just king', 'city of God', 'city of the Devil'.

propaganda in a struggle between an anti-Gregorian party (represented by the Odense literature and Saxo), which viewed Knud as a model king, and a party that was not only critical of Knud but sceptical of his sanctity (represented by the Roskilde Chronicle and *Knytlinga saga*).[20] More recently, Carsten Breengaard has attacked the views of both Weibulls, arguing that they were based on inaccurate assumptions about hagiography, namely a desire to separate the sacred and the secular in a modern way that was foreign to the medieval mind; and furthermore, that Lauritz Weibull's political interpretation of the earlier sources was entirely dependent on his reading of Saxo's (later) work.[21] Yet even if this means that the Odense literature may not be as unreliable as the Weibulls thought, it is still very difficult to separate the fact from the embellishment: if we wish to use this literature as a historical source, we have to tread carefully, and see if we can find independent evidence to support its claims.

Even before Breengaard, however, others had defended the Odense literature's reliability, arguing that while its portrayal reflects Christian ideals, these ideals dominated not only the literary, but also the political models of kingship.[22] This suggestion draws some support from the papal letters to the Danish kings preserved in Rome: although none of these letters were addressed to Knud, he

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[20] L. Weibull, 'Nekrologierna från Lund, Roskildekrönikan och Saxo', *Scandia* 1 (1928), 84–112.

[21] C. Breengaard, *Muren om Israels hus: Regnum og sacerdotium i Danmark 1050–1170* (Copenhagen, 1982), pp. 128–32.

[22] For eaxample, J. Steenstrup, 'Det danske Folk 1042–1241', in *Det danske Folks Historie* II, ed. A. Friis, A. Linvald and M. Mackeprang (Copenhagen, 1927), pp. 1–222, at 35ff. For a review of scholarship on the Odense literature's worth as historical sources, see Breengaard, *Muren om Israels hus*, pp. 122–28, and his own views in the pages that follow.

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would have been the recipient of the last one sent to his brother Harald, which is dated 19 April 1080, two days after Harald's death as recorded in the Lund Necrology.[23] Wolfgang Seegrün argued that Gregory's letter's exhortation to the *defensio ecclesiarum, sacerdotalis ordinis reuerentia, iustitia et misericordia* 'müssen … auf Knud einen nahezu programmatischen Eindruck gemacht haben, denn sein Leben und Werk … ist in mehr als einer Hinsicht Abglanz davon'.[24] Knud's objectives as recorded by Ælnoth do seem to reflect those of Gregory's letters. Ælnoth states:

> …religiosus princeps ueluti hactenus pietatis studiis inherere: diuini cultus reuerentiam extollere, cleri iura prouehere, dierum precipuorum legitimorum ieiuniorum obseruantias uindicta proposita regali edicto, quemadmodum per uniuersum christianum orbem habentur, statuere, et omnia admodum deo contraria pro posse suo cohercere studere.[25]

This would cover *defensio ecclesiarum* and *sacerdotalis ordinis reuerentia*, and Ælnoth elsewhere records Knud's concern for *iustitia et misericordia* by supporting the poor, widows and orphans, guaranteeing the rights of freed slaves, and ensuring that foreigners were treated with the same

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[23] *Necrologium lundense: Lunds domkyrkas nekrologium*, ed. L. Weibull (Lund, 1923), p. 46 n. 3, and p. 67; *DD* I.2, no. 20, 41–3; W. Seegrün, *Das Papsttum und Skandinavien bis zur Vollendung der nördlichen Kirchenorganisation (1164)*, Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte Schleswig-Holsteins 51 (Neumünster, 1967), 98.

[24] *Ibid.*: 'must have made a nearly programmatic impression on Knud, as his life and work are in more than one respect a reflection of them'. The Latin phrases translate as 'defence of the churches, reverence for the priestly order, justice and mercy'.

[25] *GS* xiv, p. 101: 'The religious king held to his long-held pious determinations: to promote the reverence of divine worship and justice for the clergy, to institute by royal edict the observance of the chief and legitimate days of fasting, just as they are held throughout the entire Christian world, and to the very limits of his power to strive to suppress all practices contrary to God.'

rights as natives.[26] Faced with this rosy picture, however, we might wonder just what made Knud so unpopular with his people if it is accurate. The answer may lie precisely in these reforms.

Niels Skyum-Nielsen believed that Knud's reforms in favour of foreigners and freedmen were perceived as a threat by the free farmers (*bønder*) who formed the most influential group in society. The traditional view of Knud, following Lauritz Weibull's work, had been one of a tyrant and oppressor of the people, but Skyum-Nielsen stood this on its head by arguing that Knud's reforms benefited the masses of the lower social orders to the detriment of the *élites* (who are represented to the exclusion of the poor in the sources, and consequently were identified as 'the people' by earlier scholars such as the Weibulls).[27] Breengaard has claimed that the anonymous *Passio* also reflects a social conflict between Knud, the clergy and the poor on one hand, and the nobles (*maiores*) on the other hand, whom the author explicitly states Knud strove to weaken alongside his work for the good of the clergy, foreigners and the poor. Similarly, the *Tabula Othiniensis* states that Knud was killed not only 'pro zelo christianę religionis' but also 'iustitię operibus', yet this statement is generic in the extreme.[28] More consequently, the statement that Knud sought to weaken the *maiores* is not linked with his protection of the poor in the text, but only with foreigners, particularly foreign clergy: rather it states that Knud punished the *maiores* because he found them lacking in enthusiasm for his agenda.[29]

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[26] *Ibid.*

[27] N. Skyum-Nielsen, *Kvinde og Slave*, Danmarkshistorie uden retouche 3 (Copenhagen, 1971), 4–5.

[28] Breengaard, *Muren om Israels hus*, pp. 134–6; *Tabula Othiniensis*, *VSD*, p. 60, 'for zeal for the Christian religion' and 'works of justice'.

[29] *Passio sancti Kanuti regis et martyris* iv, *VSD*, p. 66.

It is worth remembering that Ælnoth himself was an immigrant to Denmark, as was the author of the anonymous *Passio*, and thus this area touched on their first-hand experiences: the anonymous author describes Knud's measures as aiming to put an end to the Danes' practice of looking down on believing Christians as foreigners rather than embracing them as fellow-citizens of the city of God, and Ælnoth remarks that, 'quod, licet Danis inuisum et incommodum, deo, ut arbitramur, haud admodum contrarium'.[30] This seems to represent first-hand knowledge: the English clergymen who wrote the texts undoubtedly had to deal with hostile attitudes among the locals, and may well have heard of edicts made by Knud on the subject. But the persistence of the problem indicates that if Knud did take any such stance, it did not eliminate the problem completely, and whatever measures Knud took may not have outlived his reign.

In return, the English monks who produced the Odense literature did not make much effort to conceal their distaste at the state of Christianity among the Danes: the anonymous *Passio* of Knud states that 'stirpe igitur regali et ultra istius gentis [i.e. Danorum] naturam uel consuetudinem in christiana religione'.[31] Knud was very attracted to English spirituality, as evidenced by his devotion to the English 'national' saints Alban and Oswald, whose relics the *Tabula*

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[30] *GS* xiv, p. 101: 'as hateful and bothersome as this [i.e. Knud's edict] was to the Danes, we believe, rather, that it could hardly be at all contrary to God'; *Passio sancti Kanuti regis et martyris* iv, *VSD*, p. 66: 'ut [...] nullos fideles christianos quasi aduenas et peregrinos despicerent, sed tamquam ciues sanctorum et domesticos dei, ut pote in Christo fratres, haberent': 'that they should not despise faithful Christians as strangers, but rather recognise them as fellow-citizens of the [city of the] saints and servants of god, even as brothers in Christ'.

[31] *Passio sancti Kanuti regis et martyris* ii, *VSD*, p. 63: 'the royal house is well beyond that people's [i.e. Danes'] nature and custom as regards the Christian religion.'

Othiniensis records he translated himself to Odense.[32] Erik Ejegod, in addition to his arranging the importation of monks from Evesham, is commemorated with his wife Bodil in the *Liber vitae* of Durham,[33] reflecting an attachment to the English church on the part of the Danish royalty that stretched back at least to the days of Svend Forkbeard. By contrast, Ælnoth's assessment of the Danes' reaction to Knud's Christian reforms is hardly complementary:

> multa siquidem antiquitus tradita in presens obseruari sagaci industria perspiciebat, quae magis pro diuina essent iusticia corrigenda quam ob uulgi fauorem exequenda. quae sempiterni arbitris inspirante gratia cohercere disponebat; sed indomitae gentis *feritas et innata duricia* uoluntatis eius effectum in dies differebat.[34]

Intriguingly, Ælnoth earlier specifies the same traits (*feritas et innata duricia*) to explain why it took so long for Christianity to gain any footing among the other Scandinavian peoples, compared to the Danes who adopted the faith several decades earlier; in using it again here, he implies that the Danes share in this intractability that makes them almost by nature ill-disposed to Christianity.[35]

For a different view, we can turn to the *Roskilde Chronicle*, the next-earliest narrative source to be written in Denmark sometime shortly after 1138,[36] and also the first to be written by a native Dane, which does not share the Odense literature's positive assessment of Knud's kingship:

> hic cum populum quadam noua lege et inaudita ad tributum, quod nostrates 'nefgiald' uocant, coegit, a Iucia in Fiuniam fugatus Othinse in ecclesia sancti Albani martyris ante altare magna confessione cordis martyrizatus est... cuius corpus magnis miraculis illustratur, Christus in martyre glorificatur.[37]

Although not disputing his sainthood, it seems that the chronicler interpreted Knud's earthly rule as one of oppressive taxation, rather than of Christian reform. The precise nature of the *nefgiald* is not elaborated on in the sources and no entirely satisfactory explanation has ever been produced.[38] Some have identified it with the tithe, which we know was not paid in Denmark in Adam of Bremen's time,[39] but was introduced sometime before 1135, when it is first mentioned in a charter.[40] The anonymous *Passio* records that Knud

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[32] *Tabula Othiniensis*, *VSD*, p. 60. The medieval cathedral was dedicated to St. Alban, and the location retains the name of St. Alban's Square (*Albani Torv*) to this day.

[33] London, British Library, Cotton Domitian A VII f. 51b.

[34] *GS* viii, pp. 93–4: 'Furthermore, he examined with sagacious zeal many things handed down from ancient times still observed in the present, which are rather to be corrected for divine justice than to be practised for the favour of the masses. He determined to check these practices through the inspiring grace of the eternal judge; but the wildness of the savage people and their inborn hardness delayed the execution of his will in his days.'

[35] *GS* i, p. 82.

[36] Christensen, 'Tiden 1042–1241', p. 296; L. Weibull, 'Nekrologierna från Lund', p. 95.

[37] *Chronicon Roskildense* ix, in *Scriptores minores historiae Danicae medii aevi*, 2 vols., ed. M. C. Gertz (Copenhagen, 1917–18) I, 23–4: '[Knud] coerced the people to paying tax with a new and unheard-of law, which our ancestors called *nefgiald* ('the nose-tax'), and having fled from Jutland to Fyn, with a great confession of his heart was martyred in Odense before the altar in the church of St. Alban the martyr... his body is made famous by great miracles, and he is glorified as a martyr of Christ.'

[38] Although the term appears elsewhere in the Nordic world, with various, and often similarly unclear meanings: H. Bjørkvik, P. Nyquist Grøtvedt and B. Odén, 'Nefgildi', in *Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder* XII (Oslo, 1967), 278–82.

[39] *Magistri Adam Bremensis gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, III.lxxiv, IV.xxxi, ed. B. Schmiedler, 3rd ed., MGH SS rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi (Hanover, 1917) pp. 221, 264.

[40] *DD* I.2, no. 64, 124–8.

desired to introduce the tithe, but this is the only evidence we have explicitly associating it with Knud before Saxo.[41] Furthermore, it would be quite odd for the clergyman who produced the *Chronicle* to be opposed to tithing.

Niels Lund linked *nefgiald* to the *Leding*, the mandatory naval service which flourished in the time of Valdemar I and his successors: its origins are lost in the mist of time, and although some have argued for it being a very old institution, he suggests that it originated in the time of Knud.[42] The Lund charter gives three exceptions to the immunity granted to the church:

> quod autem ad regiam pertinet iusticiam ex quacunque causa fiat de prenominata terra. in potestate sit prepositi et cęterorum fratrum in hoc loco Deo seruiencium. tribus culpis exceptis. si extra pacem positus fuerit. emat pacem a rege. subsanciam illius tollat prepositus et fratres. si expeditionem neglexerit. erga regem emendet. reddarios equos non dent. nisi cum rex ipse uenerit.[43]

Niels Lund identifies the *nefgiald* with the payment to be made in lieu of military service: if, as the name suggests, it was a universal tax on each person ('nose-tax', 'head-tax') it could be tied to the mass fine Knud allegedly imposed on the *Leding* for disbanding without his permission.[44] Ælnoth, however, states that the fleet disbanded with Knud's permission on promising to assemble for the invasion in the spring.[45] Consequently, the 'fine' was more likely to be identified with payments which could be made in lieu of military service without any connotation of criminality, such as the Frankish *herebannus* or the English *fyrdwite*, rather than the penalty for desertion, which appears as *heresliz* in the Frankish sources and is punishable by death and confiscation of property.[46]

Lund notes that by 1140 the king could grant income from the *expeditio* to monasteries in charters,[47] and thus the institution was already in transition to the form it took in the thirteenth century, when fees in lieu of service entirely replaced the service itself.[48] Thus, he ties the revolt to the introduction of mandatory service in the *Leding* and the accompanying taxes which were imposed with such universality throughout Denmark that they could be derided as a tax on having a nose. For Lund, therefore, Knud was a king who attempted to modernise the taxation and public obligations in Denmark to raise the privileges of the Danish kingship to the level enjoyed in other European states.

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[41] *Passio sancti Kanuti regis et martyris* ii, *VSD*, p. 65; Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum*, XI.xiv.3, ed. K. Friis-Jensen, 2 vols. (Copenhagen, 2005), pp. 50–2. Breengaard believes that Ælnoth omitted Knud's attempt to introduce the tithe because it was still a controversial issue in the time when he was writing, and thus could have cast an unfavourable light on the king (*Muren om Israels hus*, p. 136).

[42] N. Lund, 'Knuts des Heiligen beabsichtigter Zug nach England im Jahre 1085', in *Mare Balticum: Beiträge zur Geschichte des Ostseeraums in Mittelalter und Neuzeit: Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von Erich Hoffmann*, Kieler historische Studien 36 (Sigmaringen, 1992), 101–10, at 108.

[43] *DD* I.2, no. 21, 51:
'1) If someone is outside of the peace, he must buy peace from the king; his property (*substancia*) shall go to the dean (*prepositus*) and the brothers.
2) If he has neglected the *Leding* (*expeditio*), he must make compensation to the king.
3') They are not required to provide post-horses (*reddarios equos*), unless the king himself comes'.

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[44] The earliest sources for this, however, are Svend Aggesen, *Breuis historia regum Dacie, Scriptores* I, ed. Gertz, 126–9; *Gesta Danorum* XI.xiv.2, p. 50.

[45] *GS* xiii, pp. 100–1.

[46] Lund, 'Knuts des Heiligen beabsichtigter Zug', p. 108.

[47] *Ibid.*; *DD* I.2, no. 78, 150–3.

[48] N. Lund, 'The Armies of Swein forkbeard and Cnut: *leding* or *lið*?', *ASE* 15 (1986), 105–18, at 109–10.

The obvious problem that arises from Lund's argument is that even though the charter provides us with evidence that institutions such as the *Leding/expeditio* were in existence in Knud's time, they do not tell us that they arose in Knud's time; the institutions are hardly treated as anything new or in need of explanation. Given the lack of documentary evidence for the reigns of previous kings, it is impossible to say how far back the institution went, although Skyum-Nielsen suggested an origin in the time of Svend Estridsen, on the basis of a later diploma's (of Erik Emune) claim that Svend granted immunity to Lund for the lands he had given them. Moreover, we cannot escape the fact that this diploma is from 1135, thus over half a century after Svend's death, and that, unlike the charter of 1085, it gives no details about the nature of these immunities.[49] An origin in Knud's earlier reign, before the Lund charter was issued, is just as possible – and although we cannot say that Knud created these institutions, they do make clear that he had an interest in using them, especially as a means of gathering money.

Another aspect where Knud has been seen as a would-be moderniser is in the sphere of succession. Erich Hoffmann attributed to Knud an attempt to establish a succession system based on primogeniture to replace the older, so-called 'Germanic' style of succession where the throne was open to any member of the royal family who could press his claim successfully, either in assembly or by arms.[50] Hoffmann believed that Knud attempted to restrict the succession to his own offspring, causing alarm to his numerous brothers who would thereby lose their own right to the throne. Hoffmann based this assertion on the name given by Knud to his

first-born son: Karl.[51] Not only had this name never been used in the Danish family before, but Knud's wife Adela, daughter of count Robert the Frisian of Flanders, was a descendant of Charlemagne, and thus Knud was attempting to tie his own progeny to the already quasi-mythic emperor.[52] One may well opt to remain sceptical about this claim of Hoffmann, especially given that Knud himself had brothers, such as Nicolaus (or Niels) and Benedict (who died at his side) whose names were not of the traditional naming-pool of the line of Harald Bluetooth (although admittedly Svend had so many sons he quite possibly ran out names, and his eldest children seem to have had more traditional names). It does however raise the point that if Knud was keen on bringing Danish government into line with other states in Europe, the succession rules were another thing that would need changing; and if nothing else, the choice of the name Karl rather than a typical Danish royal name may still show European cultural sympathies on Knud's part.

Even if a change in the rules of succession was Knud's objective, he failed to achieve it. From 1086 to 1095, his brother Oluf Hunger, who seems to have drawn support from free farmers who opposed Knud,[53] reigned for a period of which we know very little except that it was plagued by famine and bad harvests. This earned him his name, and gave rise to the myth that the hunger was divine retribution for the murder of Knud, who was proclaimed to be a saint shortly before Oluf's death. Ironically this may have tapped into a lingering pre-Christian belief in the connection between royalty and harvests, and the author of the *Roskilde Chronicle* chastised those who claimed that

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[49] Skyum-Nielsen, *Kvinde og Slave*, p. 8; *DD* I.2, no. 63, 119–24.
[50] Hoffmann, *Königserhebung*, p. 58.

[51] *Ibid.*
[52] *Ibid.*
[53] Skyum-Nielsen, *Kvinde og Slave*, pp. 11–2.

Oluf was responsible for the famine and his successor, Erik Ejegod (or 'Ever-good') for its end:

> Vtrum autem hec opulencia causa Herici et hec fames Olaui inciderit, cum neuter horum hoc meruit, penes illum est, qui omnia, antequam fiant, scit et, quando uult et quomodo uult, disponit.[54]

In this passage, the author clearly views this popular understanding as un-Christian.

Thus Knud seems to have failed in his objective to eliminate all practices and beliefs handed down from antiquity and correct them with Christian teaching.[55] Likewise, if he attempted to change the succession rules, he also failed, given that he was succeeded by three of his brothers (his wife fled with young Karl to Flanders). He also seemed to have little success, given the complaints of the Odense writers, in changing the Danes' attitudes to foreign clergy.

In fiscal matters, where we have firmer evidence, there are also problems with seeing Knud as a turning-point. Although we can see that he was interested in collecting fines, we lack the evidence to say that he introduced the institutions – the *Leding*, etc. – that gave rise to these fines. Some indication of a greedy nature may be drawn from his drastic debasement of Jutish coins,[56] to such an extent that Ælnoth recorded that the popular saying was that 'a *solidus* was scarcely worth a few *unciae*'.[57] Naturally, the exchange into and taxes

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[54] *Chronicon Roskildense* xi, ed. Gertz, p. 25: 'The prosperity is attributed to Erik and the hunger to Olaf, while neither merits this, but rather the responsibility is with him [i.e. God] who knows all before it happens, and arranges it when and how he desires'.

[55] See above, n. 34.

[56] J. S. Jensen, *Tusindtallets Danske Mønter fra Den kongelige Mønt- og Medaillesamling* (Copenhagen, 1995), p. 120.

[57] *GS* xvi, p. 102: 'ut uulgarieter edisseram, unciarum ualentiam uix solidi precio admittere'.

assessed in these coins meant a hefty gain for Knud's treasury.[58] Given that the weight of coins stayed much more stable in the rest of Denmark, it is hardly surprising that the revolt began in Jutland.[59] These two pieces of evidence indicate that Knud was very probably more keen to tax, fine, and generally exert royal power to maximise his resources than previous kings had been, or at least less restrained in doing so; but again, these practices, especially if they had led to the revolt, would have stopped or been curbed in the reign of Oluf (and indeed the coins returned to their normal weight).

In the end, Knud may have attempted to introduce important changes in Danish kingship, especially in his efforts at Christianising and Europeanising elements of Danish society. But although the policies attributed to him may have been revolutionary, they were discontinued in the reigns of his immediate successors. Erik Ejegod, did, however, succeed in capitalising on Knud's memory to strengthen the Danish church: on his visits to Rome he secured the Pope's approval for the Danish archbishopric in Lund and the canonisation of Knud, finally fulfilling two objectives – an archbishopric and a royal saint – that had eluded the Danish kings since at least the time of Cnut the Great. Much of his lasting significance may have been as a symbol and a model of kingship for later rulers and writers.

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[58] M. Venge, *Danmarks skatter i middelalderen indtil 1340*, Dansk Skattehistorie 1 (Copenhagen, 2002), p. 32.

[59] Ælnoth, *GS* xvii, *VSD*, pp. 104ff.

Piercing the *rihthamscyld* – a New Reading of Æthelberht 32

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The law-code of Æthelberht of Kent was in all likelihood the first official legal publication in textual form in Anglo-Saxon England, probably dating from the early seventh century.[1] It is preserved in a manuscript from the 1120s known as the *Textus Roffensis*.[2] While the law-code stands to a certain extent in the traditions of Continental Germanic laws such as those of the Burgundians or the Salian Franks, what sets it apart from these is the fact that it was written in the vernacular.[3] Bede tells us that Æthelberht decreed those laws *iuxta*

exempla Romanorum ('after the Roman manner'), a phrase that has kept commentators interested until the present day.[4] At any rate, the consensus among scholars is that Æthelberht's laws, even in their late manuscript form, do indeed look rather archaic and may for the most part reflect pre-Christian, pre-literate, orally transmitted, 'Germanic' law.[5] This view, taken for example by Patrick Wormald, is based on the perceived simplicity of their syntax, generally held to be indicative of an early stage in the tradition of the writing of legal prose.[6] Simpson argues for an influence by the penitentials which were so popular in the Celtic church and suggests that Kent in Æthelberht's time would still have been subject to the blood feud and retaliation as the main consequences of crime. Thus Æthelberht's laws would have

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[1] For a brief overview of Æthelberht's reign, see S. Kelly, 'Æthelberht', in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. M. Lapidge *et al.* (Oxford, 1999), p. 13; for a more detailed chronology, see N. Brooks, 'The Creation and Early Structure of the Kingdom of Kent', in *The Origins of the Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, ed. S. Bassett (Leicester, 1989), pp. 55–74, at 65–67.

[2] The manuscript, Rochester Cathedral Library A 3.5, is available in facsimile in P.H. Sawyer, ed., *Textus Roffensis*, 2 vols., Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile 7, 11 (Copenhagen, 1957-1962). On the *Textus Roffensis*, see M. P. Richards, *Texts and their Traditions in the Medieval Library of Rochester Cathedral Priory*, Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 78 (Philadelphia, 1988), esp. pp. 43–60; P. Wormald, '*Laga Eadwardi*: The *Textus Roffensis* and its Context', *ANS* 17 (1995), 243–66, reprinted in his *Legal Culture in the Early Medieval West. Law as Text, Image and Experience* (London and Rio Grande, 1999), pp. 115–37.

[3] On the so-called Barbarian *leges* in relation to the early Anglo-Saxon laws, see J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Germanic Kingship in England and on the Continent. The Ford Lectures Delivered in the University of Oxford in Hilary Term 1970* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 32–44; P. Wormald, '*Lex Scripta* and *Verbum Regis*: Legislation and Germanic Kingship from Euric to Cnut', in *Early Medieval Kingship*, ed. P. H.

Sawyer and I. N. Wood (Leeds, 1977), pp. 105–38, reprinted in and cited from his *Legal Culture*, pp. 1-43; and *idem*, *The Making of English Law: King Alfred to the Twelfth Century, Vol. 1: Legislation and its Limits* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 29–92.

[4] *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* ii. 5, ed. and trans. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, OMT (Oxford, 1969), pp. 150–1. Wormald discusses this in '"*Inter Cetera Bona Genti Suae*": Law-Making and Peace-Keeping in the Earliest English Kingdoms', *Settimano di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull' alto Medioevo* 42 (1995), 963–96, reprinted in and cited from his *Legal Culture*, pp. 179–99, at 180–3; *idem*, '*Exempla Romanorum*: the Earliest English Legislation in Context', in *Rome and the North*, ed. A. Ellegård and G. Akerström-Hougen, Studies in Mediterranean Archaeology and Literature 135 (Jonsered, 1996), 15–27; and *idem*, *Making*, p. 29.

[5] The first few clauses that deal with restitution after theft from the church and ecclesiastics may be a slightly later addition to the original code: see L. Oliver, *The Beginnings of English Law* (Toronto, ON, 2002), pp. 15–6.

[6] Wormald, *Making*, p. 95; see above all J. R. Schwyter, 'Syntax and Style in the Anglo-Saxon Law-Codes', in *Verschriftung – Verschriftlichung: Aspekte des Medienwechsels in verschiedenen Kulturen*, ed. C. Ehler and U. Schaefer, ScriptOralia (Tübingen, 1998), pp. 186–228; also R. Hiltunen, *Chapters on Legal English: Aspects Past and Present of the Language of the Law*, Suomalaisen Tiedeakatemian toimituksia. Sarja B, 251 (Helsinki, 1990), pp. 19–48.

constituted an attempt – influenced by the Christian missionaries – to introduce a less violent, more 'Christian' alternative. [7] Other commentators have essentially denied any kind of Christian influence on Æthelberht's laws, requiring them to posit, amongst other things, pre-Christian literacy in Kent. [8] Patrizia Lendinara argues that all Kentish law-codes might have had Latin models, though her evidence for this appears rather slim and no actual possible original model has been proposed. [9] She has also tried to show that it is reasonable to suppose changes to the lexicon of the laws in their transmission from a supposed original, dating to the time of Æthelberht, to the *Textus Roffensis*. [10] The exact dating of the laws is not particularly relevant for the present argument, so for the purposes of this article I accept the received assumptions that the law-code dates from after Æthelberht's conversion to Christianity, and that the transmission of law-codes left the laws largely unchanged, particularly in terms of vocabulary. [11] Æthelberht's code is noteworthy for the various *hapax legomena* it contains – which may itself attest to the archaic nature of its language

– and it is one of these words that is the concern of the present article. [12]

The word in question occurs in clause 32: *Gif man rihthamscyld þurh stinð, mid weorðe forgelde.* [13] Syntactically, this construction appears very straightforward: 'If a person pierces through the *rihthamscyld*, let him pay with [its] worth.' The difficulty, though, lies in the meaning of the word *rihthamscyld*. The most recent editor and translator of Æthelberht's laws, Lisi Oliver, leaves this word untranslated (it is her translation of the clause which I have used above). [14] It is from her brief commentary on this word in her edition that the paper from which this article derived took its cue. [15]

Examining the word in its components, it is a compound made up of three very common Old English words: *riht*, 'right' (normally taken as an adjective), *ham*, 'home' and *scyld*, 'shield'. Individually, none of these elements are problematic; in this compound form, however, the word becomes something of a mystery. Obviously the sparse context of the legal clause here does not provide us with much to go on, but I will argue in this article that the overall context and the placing of this clause within the law-code as a whole may give us an indication towards the meaning of the word.

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[7] A. W. B. Simpson, 'The Laws of Ethelbert', in *On the Laws and Customas of England. Essays in Honor of Samuel E. Thorne*, ed. M. S. Arnold *et al.* (Chapel Hill, 1981), pp. 3–17, esp. 13–17.

[8] H. G. Richardson and G. O. Sayles, *Law and Legislation from Æthelberht to Magna Carta* (Edinburgh, 1966), pp. 7–9.

[9] P. Lendinara, 'The Kentish Laws', in *The Anglo-Saxons from the Migration Period to the Eighth Century. An Ethnographic Perspective*, ed. J. Hines (San Marino, CA, 1997), pp. 211–43, at 219.

[10] *Ibid.*, pp. 217-9.

[11] M. Richards, 'Elements of a Written Standard in the Old English Laws', in *Standardizing English. Essays in the History of Language Change*, ed. J. B. Trahern, jr., Tennessee Studies in Literature 31 (Knoxville, TN, 1989), pp. 1–22; Wormald, "'*Inter Cetera Bona*'", pp. 183–4.

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[12] For a brief discussion of archaic traces in the language of Æthelberht's laws in general, see Oliver, *The Beginnings*, pp. 25–52.

[13] For ease of reference, particularly as regards earlier secondary literature, the numbering of the clauses of Æthelberht's law-code follows that of F. Liebermann, ed., *Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, 3 vols., (Halle 1903–16; repr. Aalen, 1960), though citations are from the more recent edition of Oliver, *The Beginnings*.

[14] Oliver, *The Beginnings*, p. 71.

[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 97–99, and notes on p. 222.

PREVIOUS TRANSLATIONS

It is necessary to start with the attempts of earlier translators of the laws to make sense of this obscure word, though I will restrict myself here to the more modern interpretations. Felix Liebermann initially translates it into German as *echtes Hoftor*, which we might render into English as 'the right [legal/proper] gate to the homestead'. Liebermann explains his translation in some detail in a note published in 1902, in which he also discusses some earlier translations, all of which he dismisses.[16] But it may be worth mentioning two nineteenth-century translations here, for reasons that will be discussed below. Benjamin Thorpe gives the translation 'the right 'shoulder blade', and Reinhold Schmid leaves the term untranslated in the main text, but connects *ham* to *hama* or *cildhama* ('uterus') in his glossary – with some scepticism, as he would find the component *riht* 'unexplainable' if this assumption were correct.[17]

The way Liebermann arrives at this translation is slightly complicated: citing his compatriot Heinrich Leo from 1842, he finds a parallel in the *Brokmer Letter*, an Old Frisian law-code of the thirteenth century from modern day East Frisia. The passage in question reads: *Al tha deda, ther skiath oppa houwe, inna **hemme** and binna **skelde**, thribete te betande.*[18] Liebermann does not really get into the meaning of this passage but cites correspondence from Professor Theodor Siebs who explains *hem* as derived from a Germanic root **hamjo*, corresponding to Old English *hæmm* and meaning 'enclosure' (related to Modern German *hemmen*, 'to impede, block, obstruct'). Siebs, as cited by Liebermann, also rejects the relation of *skelde* to 'shield' but connects the word to Frisian *skûl*, meaning 'cover'.[19] Liebermann does not commit himself to accepting these etymologies and leaves open the question of whether the last two elements of the compound are, as commonly accepted, *ham* and *scyld* or *hæmm* and **scyld* (which is otherwise unattested), as suggested by Siebs. The first part of the word he takes as the intensifying adjective *riht*, which serves to highlight the legal nature of the barrier and its breaking. Yet the most recent editors see nothing of the sort in the Frisian law: 'All the crimes that happen within the churchyard, in the ring [of the judicial duel], or under the shield [on a military expedition] shall be compensated threefold.'[20] At any rate, Liebermann appears certain that, whatever its etymology, the *hamscyld* is a wooden part of the entrance door to a homestead. The piercing or injuring of this is commonly punished with a fine (which may correspond to *mid weorðe* in Æthelberht's clause), for which Liebermann cites some parallels from other Germanic laws.[21]

In the commentary on Æthelberht's laws in the *Gesetze*, Liebermann rejects his earlier translation of 'door, gate' and now prefers *gesetzliche Hofeinfriedigung* ('legal enclosure of the homestead'), apparently also discarding his earlier explanation based on this

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[16] F. Liebermann, 'Ags. *rihthamscyld*: echtes Hoftor', *ASNSL* 115 (1905), 389–91.

[17] *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England*, 2 vols., ed. B. Thorpe (1840), at I, pp. 12–13; *Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, ed. R. Schmid (2nd ed., Leipzig, 1858), p. 6 and 606. For more references to earlier translations see Liebermann, 'Ags. *rihthamscyld*', p. 389; and for a brief note on the term [O.] Cockayne, 'On Some Passages of the Saxon Laws', *Journal of Philology* 1 (1868), 109-120, at 112–3.

[18] There is a modern edition by W. J. Buma and W. Ebel, *Das Brokmer Recht*, Alfriesische Rechtsquellen 2 (Göttingen, 1965); the quotation is at p. 44 (emphasis mine). See below for a translation.

[19] Cited by Liebermann, 'Ags. *rihthamscyld*', p. 390.

[20] The translation is mine, from the German translation of Buma and Ebel, *Brokmer Recht*, p. 45.

[21] Liebermann, 'Ags. *rihthamscyld*', p. 390, and references given there.

particular Frisian parallel. He does however reiterate parallels to other Germanic laws, though mostly taken from earlier secondary sources.[22]

But this pan-Germanic outlook is precisely what leaves his explanation on shaky ground: we know that Æthelberht's law-code is at least six centuries older than the Brokmer Letter originally adduced by Liebermann, and similarly removed from at least some of the other Germanic parallels he uses as evidence. Although Liebermann is right to point out that the manuscript in which Æthelberht's law survives dates from the twelfth century (and would thus be a lot closer in time to the younger Germanic laws), Mary Richards and indeed Patrick Wormald have argued for consistency in legal vocabulary and faithful transmission of legal texts, so if we accept the date of the composition of the law as the date of the use of *rihthamscyld*, it may be useful to look for parallels closer to home.[23]

It has been necessary to deal with Liebermann's translation of *rihthamscyld* in some detail, as his interpretation has proven to be the most influential: though later translators were uneasy with his rendering, they were generally unable to improve on it. In his supplement to Bosworth's *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, T. Northcote Toller emends the clause to read *Gif man on unriht ham oð ðe scyld [þurhstinð]...*[24] This would translate as 'If a person unjustly stabs through a garment or shield...' However, this, as pointed out by Oliver, would be a rather severe emendation of the manuscript reading, something not warranted by any other clause in the code.[25] Attenborough follows Liebermann and translates: 'If anyone damages the enclosure of a dwelling...' He does, however, note his lack of 'any confidence as to the translation of this passage.'[26] Dorothy Whitelock's translation 'If anyone thrusts through a true *hamscyld*...' hardly betrays more confidence: she, too, remarks that the meaning is 'obscure'.[27]

As already mentioned above, the most recent editor and translator of the laws, Oliver, finds herself understandably dissatisfied with the state of the explanation of *rihthamscyld*. She puts forward a connection to the term *rihthæmed*, 'legitimate matrimony'.[28] The first and obvious advantage of this suggestion is that the word *rihthæmed* actually exists; or to be more precise, it is attested elsewhere in the corpus of Old English. If we take the word *rihthamscyld*, neither of the two possible compounds which the tripartite construction could be split up into is found anywhere else: thus there is no *rihtham*, and no *hamscyld* (even though the latter is used as the headword in Bosworth's Anglo-Saxon Dictionary), so the derivation and meaning of the compound as we have it is quite hard to explain.[29]

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[22] Liebermann, *Gesetze* III, p. 10. See for example W. E. Wilda, *Das Strafrecht der Germanen* (Halle, 1842), in particular pp. 241–50 and 953. Wilda's examples range over the whole period of Germanic law, from Tacitus to the much later Scandinavian laws.

[23] See above, n. 11.

[24] *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Based on the Manuscript Collections of the Late Joseph Bosworth, Supplement by T. Northcote Toller* (Oxford, 1921), s.v. *rihthamscyld*.

[25] Oliver, *The Beginnings*, p. 98.

[26] *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, ed. and trans. F. L. Attenborough (Cambridge, 1922), pp. 8–9 and 177, n. 32.2.

[27] *English Historical Documents, Vol. 1: c. 500–1042*, ed. D. Whitelock, (2nd ed., London, 1979), p. 393 and n. 2.

[28] Oliver, *The Beginnings*, p. 98 and 222, n. 70.

[29] *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary Based on the Manuscript Collections of the Late Joseph Bosworth*, ed. T. N. Toller (Oxford, 1898), s.v. *hamscyld*. Note also the existence of a word *ham* ('dwelling, enclosure'), as posited by J. M. Kemble: *ibid.*, s.v. *ham*; but see J. M. Dodgson, 'Place-names from *hām*, distinguished from *hamm* names, in relation to the settlement of Kent, Surrey and Sussex', *ASE* 2 (1973), 1–50. A compound *rihthamsocn* which appears in the (mainly Latin) *Instituta Cnuti* of the twelfth century (III, 49, ed. Liebermann, *Gesetze* I, p. 614) is mentioned by Liebermann who assumes the existence of a noun *rihtham* (*Gesetze*

ETYMOLOGICAL BACKGROUND AND CONNECTION WITH *HÆMED*

It may also be necessary to point out that *rihthæmed* is not chosen at random by Oliver. There is an etymological connection between *ham* and *hæmed*, as evidenced, for example, by the Old English verb *hæman* and its Old Norse counterpart *heima* 'to take into one's home'.[30] The presumed origin is a Germanic verb *xaimjanan*, with the *–j* in the ending responsible for the i-mutation found in *hæmed*.[31] Semantically, Andreas Fischer has argued that *hæman* derives from *ham* via the meaning 'to take the bride home on the wedding day'.[32] The existence of other periphrastic expressions with a similar meaning, such as *forgifan to hame* ('to give away to the home of'), further strengthens this argument.[33]

In general, *hæmed* seems to refer to something that has mostly and somewhat euphemistically been described as 'matrimony' or 'cohabitation', when it is most likely to mean 'sexual intercourse'. Fischer has pointed out that the verb *hæman* means 'to marry' in less than ten per cent of cases, the far more frequent meaning being 'to have intercourse'.[34] Presumably this arises from the fact that there were a number of competing synonyms with the sense 'to marry' and it may thus have filled a gap in the lexicon as a neutral term referring to intercourse. Fischer also shows a similar distribution for *hæmed* (which, to complete the confusion, can sometimes also mean 'marriage').[35] *Hæmed* is indeed a neutral term in itself, but it is frequently qualified with the prefix *unriht*. This is in fact a lot more common than the prefix *riht*, but there are related compounds in terms such as *rihtæw* 'legal marriage'.[36] And there are a couple of instances of *rihthæmed*, one in a penitential and one in the Alfredian translation of Gregory the Great's *Pastoral Care*.[37] *Unrihthæmed* is a lot

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III, p. 10). See also Toller, *Supplement*, s.v. *rihthamsocn*. Note again though the difference in time to Æthelberht's laws. For the *Instituta Cnuti* see B. O'Brien, 'The *Instituta Cnuti* and the Translation of English Law', *ANS* 25 (2003), 177–197, esp. 189-90 for Old English terms in the *Instituta*; for a discussion of *hamsocn* see further R. V. Colman, 'Hamsocn: Its Meaning and Significance in Early English Law', *The American Journal of Legal History* 25 (1981), 95–110. Colman appears to follow Liebermann's original interpretation of *rihthamscyld*, with the usual caveat regarding the obscurity of the clause (*ibid.*, p. 98).

[30] F. Holthausen, *Altenglisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg, 1934), s.v. *hæman*; J. de Vries, *Altnordisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Leiden, 1957-61), s.v. *heima*.

[31] V. Orel, *Handbook of Germanic Etymology* (Leiden, 2003), s.v. *xaimjanan*.

[32] A. Fischer, *Engagement, Wedding and Marriage in Old English*, Anglistische Forschungen 176 (Heidelberg, 1986), p. 65.

[33] See F. Mezger, 'OE. *hāmweorðung, Beowulf* 2998', *JEGP* 50 (1951), 243–5.

[34] Fischer, *Engagement*, p. 67.

[35] *Ibid.*, pp. 73–4.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

[37] '*Gyf ænig wer oððe wif gehate þæt he mædenhad gehealdan wille, and æfter ðon wære in rihthæmed geðeoded, ne forlæte heora naper þæt he ne fæste ðreo winter.*' 'If any man or woman vows that they wish to keep his [or her] virginity, and afterwards they are joined in lawful marriage, do not permit either of them to not fast for three years.' Accessed through the online Old English Corpus of the *Dictionary of Old English Online* at <http://www.quod.lib.umich.edu/o/oec/> (viewed March 6, 2009), from the *Confessionale Pseudo-Egberti*, ed. R. Spindler, *Das altenglische Bussbuch (sog. Confessionale pseudo-Egberti): ein Beitrag zu den kirchlichen Gesetzen der Angelsachsen. Kritische Textausgabe nebst Nachweis der mittellateinischen Quellen, sprachlicher Untersuchung und Glossar* (Leipzig, 1934), pp. 176–94, lines. 115–6 (translation my own); '*Hæbbe ælc mon his wif, and ælc wif hiere ceorl, 7 do ðæt wif ðæm were ðæt hio him mid ryhte don sceal, 7 he hire swæ some, ðylæs hie on unryht hæmen. And hwene æfter he cuið: Ne untreowsige ge no eow betweoxn, buton huru ðæt ge eow gehæbben sume hwile, ærðæmpe ge eowru gebedu 7 eowra offrunga don willen, 7 eft sona cirrað to eowrum ryhthæm[e]de.*' "'Let each man have his wife, and each woman her husband; and let the woman do with the man what is lawful, and he with her in the same way, lest they commit fornication." And shortly after he [Paul] said: "Defraud not one another, unless ye abstain for some time before the day of

more common: it is one of those terms that occurs in the lists of sins so frequently employed by Anglo-Saxon homilists. Two examples may stand for many here; the first is from a homily by Wulfstan:

> And utan don, swa us mycel þearf ys, forbugan geornlice þa synleahtras, þe us forbodene synd, þæt is unrihthæmed and ærætas and oferdruncennessa and idel gylp and stala and reaflac and leasunga and mæne aþas and lyblac and ealle þa unþeawas, þe deoflu on mancynn gebringað.[38]

The second example is taken from a homily in the Vercelli Book:

> Ac uton beon gemyndige urra sawla þea[r]fa, 7 uton wyrcan god on þam þe we þurhteon magon, 7 uto forlætan morðor 7 man 7 oferhigdo 7 æfsta 7 idelne gylp 7 unrihtwisnessa 7 unrihthæmedo, ærætas 7 ealugalnessa, disignessa 7 gifernessa, gytsunga 7 leasunga, liccettunga 7 talnessa, niðas 7 nearuþancas 7 gedwollcræftas 7 twyspræcnessa 7 ealle þa þeawas þe deoflu on him astealdon.[39]

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the prayers and sacrifices, and return forthwith to your lawful intercourse.' Ed. and trans. H. Sweet, *King Alfred's West-Saxon Version of Gregory's Pastoral Care*, 2 vols., EETS 45, 50 (London, 1871, repr. 1958) [with some modifications by the author of the article]. The penitential also uses the expression *riht hæmed* with a declined article: '*Đa ðe in rihtum hæmede beoð, þreom nihtum ær ðam feowertiges nihta fæstenne hi ne gesamnigan heo, and swa þæt feowertig nihta ealle oð ða nigoðan niht in Eastron.*' 'Those who are in a lawful marriage should not be together for three nights before the forty nights fasting, and so for all of forty nights until the ninth night in Easter.' Ed. Spindler, loc. cit., lines 138–9 (translation my own).

[38] Ed. A. Napier, *Wulfstan: Sammlung der ihm zugeschriebenen Homilien nebst Untersuchungen über ihre Echtheit*, Sammlung englischer Denkmäler in kritischen Ausgaben 4 (Berlin, 1883), pp. 134–5. 'And let us do as there is great need for us to, refrain eagerly from those stains of sins that are forbidden to us, that is unlawful intercourse and untimely eating and drunkenness and idle boasting and theft and robbery and lying and false oaths and all those vices that the devils bring to mankind.' (Translation my own).

[39] *Homily XXI*, ed. D. G. Scragg, *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*, EETS OS 300 (Oxford, 1992), pp. 351–62, lines 219–224. 'And let us be mindful of the needs of our souls, and let us do good where we will be able to fulfil it, and let

In general, as has been stated by Margaret Clunies Ross and Shari Horner amongst others, *hæmed* is a neutral term, mostly referring to sexual intercourse, both licit and illicit.[40] It can be qualified with the prefixes *riht* or *unriht* to stress the lawful or, more often, unlawful nature of the intercourse in question. It is worth pointing out that *unrihthæmed* appears in the surviving law-code of Wihtred of Kent, dated to 695, i.e. a text of equivalent type from the same region of England, from about a century later:

> 3. Unrihthæmde mæn to rihtum life mid synna hreowe tofon oþþe of ciricean gemanan ascadene sien.
> Æltheodige mæn, gif hio hiora hæmed rihtan nyllað, of lande mid hiora æhtum & mid synnum gewiten; swæse mæn in leodum ciriclicæs gemanan ungestrodyne þoligen.
>
> 4. Gif ðæs geweorþe gesiþcundne mannan ofer þis gemot, þæt he unriht hæmed genime ofer cyngæs bebod & biscopes & boca dom, se þæt gebete his dryhtne C scillinga an ald reht.[41]

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us avoid murder and crime and pride and envy and idle boasts and iniquities and adultery, eating too early and drunkenness, foolishness and greed, avarice and deception, deceit and slander, enmities and wickednesses and magical arts and hypocrisy and all those sins the devils exemplify to them.' (Translation my own).

[40] M. Clunies Ross, 'Concubinage in Anglo-Saxon England', *Past and Present* 108 (1985), 3–34, esp. 11–22; S. Horner, 'The Vernacular Language of Rape in Old English Literature and Law: Views from the Anglo-Saxon(ist)s', in *Sex and Sexuality in Anglo-Saxon England. Studies in Honor of Daniel Calder*, ed. C. Pasternack and L. M. C. Weston (Tempe, AZ, 2004), pp. 149–81, esp. 154–8; also J. Coleman, 'Sexual Euphemism in Old English', *NM* 93 (1992), 93–98, esp. 94.

[41] 3. 'Men in an unlawful union shall take up a just life with repentance of sins, or be separated from the community of the church. Foreign men, if they will not set their union to right, must depart from the land with their possessions

The main argument to make here is that at least part of our compound, *rihthamscyld*, can be paralleled in an etymologically related construction, in which the word is used to refer to legal or illegal marriage, cohabitation and intercourse. It needs to be stated, however, that *hæmed* was common Old English and there is no philological reason why the word should be *ham* in this case.

STRUCTURE OF ÆTHELBERHT'S CODE

Next I wish to turn to the clause's placing within the code and the overall structure of the work. Wormald produces the following structure, ordered by clause numbers:

1	Compensation of church property in grades
2-12	Compensation of king's property and dependents
13-14	Compensation of *eorl*
15-25	Compensation of *ceorl*
26	Compensation for killing *læt*
27-29	Enclosures
33-72	Injury list
73-84	Women
85-90	*Esne*, slaves[42]

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and with [their] sins. Our own men among the people [i.e., native] shall suffer loss of the community of the church without forfeiture of goods.'
4. 'If after this assembly [something] of this [nature] befalls to a *gesiþ*-born man, that he should take up an unlawful union against the king's command and the bishop's and the decrees of the books, he should make restitution for that to his lord with 100 shillings, according to established right.' Ed. and trans. Oliver, *The Beginnings*, pp. 154–5.

[42] Adapted in abridged form from Wormald, *Making*, pp. 98–9, whose table compares the structure of Æthelbert's law-code to several continental ones.

Thus the model demonstrates that overall Æthelberht's code shows a rather orderly structure – which only breaks down precisely in the part we are investigating. Wormald follows Liebermann in assigning a meaning of 'breaking in' to the clause concerning the *rihthamscyld*, and connects it with clauses 28 and 29. The two intervening clauses he calls 'intrusive enough to be judgements included in the main body of codified custom'.[43] Yet let us take a closer look at the order of the law-code at this point:

28. Gif man inne feoh genimeþ, se man þrigelde gebete.

29. Gif friman edor gegangeð, IIII scillingum gebete.

30. Gif man mannan ofslea, agene scætte 7 unfacne feo gehwilce gelde.

31. Gif friman wið fries mannes wif geligeþ, his wergelde abicge 7 oðer wif his agenum scætte begete 7 ðæm oðrum æt þam gebrenge.

32. Gif man rihthamscyld þurh stinð, mid weorðe forgelde.

33. Gif feaxfang geweorð, L sceatta to bote.[44]

Thus we can see that while clause 30 may indeed be difficult – though it could be related to a killing during the course of the robbery – 31 does not look entirely out of place if we keep in mind the

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[43] Wormald, *Making*, p. 96, n. 335.
[44] '28. If a person takes property therein {the enclosure mentioned in the previous clause}, let that man pay 3[-fold] as compensation.
29. If a freeman enters an enclosure [?with intention to rob], let him pay with 4 shillings.
30. If a person should kill someone, let him pay [with] his own money or unblemished property, whichever.
31. If a freeman lies with a free man's wife, let him buy [him/her] off [with] his/her *wergild* and obtain another wife [for the husband] [with] his own money and bring her to the other man at home.
32. If a person pierces through the *rihthamscyld*, let him pay with [its] worth.
33.If seizing of hair occurs, 50 sceattas as restitution.' Ed. and trans. Oliver, *The Beginnings*, pp. 68–71.

proposed connection of *rihthamscyld* to marriage. Of course, the fact that divorce laws then occur later in the law-code would again seem to suggest a lack of logic in the structure. However, this need not be the case. Anglo-Saxon law-codes were not always fully logical in structure (at least to modern minds), yet there is usually a connection of some sort between the individual clauses.[45] This may be what is happening here: if it was possible to argue that the piercing of the *rihthamscyld* was a physical injury that was connected with marriage, the structure would to my mind make more sense, in that a law regulating the recompense for a very specific injury leads the author or compiler to include the detailed injury tariffs at this point in the code, before he returns to stipulations dealing with women and divorces again later on. The fact that the list of compensation for various injuries is organised from head to toe seems to imply that it was pre-planned and thus inserted as a block.[46]

In this context it may be worth examining the verb *þurhstingan* more closely. Its meaning is quite transparently 'to pierce through'. It is in fact not very common in Old English: it occurs only in a handful of other instances.[47] Interestingly enough, it occurs another three times in Æthelberht's law-code, all of these appear in the list of injuries referred to above:

> **53.** Se þe earm þurhstinð, VI scillingum gebete.

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[45] D. Korte, *Untersuchungen zu Inhalt, Stil und Technik angelsächsischer Gesetze und Rechtsbücher des 6. bis 12. Jahrhunderts,* Archiv für vergleichende Kulturwissenschaft 10 (Meisenheim am Glan, 1974), pp. 72–104; see also Wormald's comments on Alfred's law-code, *Making,* p. 270.

[46] It is a feature of almost all Germanic laws: see Wormald, '*Exempla Romanorum*', p. 20. The proximity to the list of injury tariffs was presumably one of the reasons that led Thorpe to adopt the translation 'right shoulder blade' for *rihthamscyld* (see above, p. 38).

[47] *Dictionary of Old English Online.*

> **64.1** Gif he þurhstinð, VI scill gebete.
>
> **67.** Gif man þeoh ðurhstingþ, stice gehwilce VI scillingas.[48]

Here, as in all other contexts in which the verb is found, it refers exclusively to 'piercing through the body or parts of the body' unlike other verbs formed with *þurh*.[49] Furthermore, if we compare the clauses on injuries with the *rihthamscyld* clause, we find that they are constructed in a very similar way.[50] So it is arguable that the clause is not out of place at all, even if it is not connected, as Wormald supposed, to the previous regulations on breaking and entering. Yet while such an interpretation may in fact produce a neater arrangement of Æthelberht's code, Occam's Razor may not be the most useful tool for the dissection of Anglo-Saxon laws, as they do not always conform to an order that would be immediately obvious to modern commentators.[51]

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[48] 53. 'He who stabs through an arm, let him pay with 6 shillings.'
64.1 If he stabs through [it] {the genital organ – *gekyndelice lim* – referred to in the previous clause}, let him pay [with] 6 shillings.
67. If a person stabs through a thigh, for each thrust 6 shillings.' Ed. and trans. Oliver, *ibid.*, pp. 72–3 and 76–7. The similarity to clause 32 has been noted by C. B. Pasternack, 'Negotiating Gender in Anglo-Saxon England' in *Gender and Difference in the Middle Ages,* ed. S. Farmer and C. B. Pasternack (Minneapolis, 2003), pp. 107–42, esp. 119 and 137, n. 51, who follows the interpretation of *rihthamscyld* as relating to 'entering the home proper' and calls it 'provocatively termed' in reference to the damage of a man's property, as *þurhstingan* is the same verb used for piercing through the penis.

[49] Cp. *þurhfaran, þurhfon* etc. For examples, see the respective entries in *Bosworth-Toller.* This restricted usage was presumably one of the reasons why Liebermann (*Gesetze* III, p. 10) argued for an interpretation of *rihthamscyld* as a physical object, but the meaning of *þurhstingan* is usually even more specific than that.

[50] The general simplicity of syntax in Æthelberht's code has been noted above, p. 35.

[51] Wormald, *Making,* p. 278, cautions his readers 'to be wary of appeals to logic when studying early medieval legislation.'

CONCLUSION

In summary, then, we have found some evidence that would support Oliver's connection of the word *rihthamscyld* to *hæmed* and related concepts. The argument put forward in this article points to a physical injury connected with legal marriage or intercourse, so a *rihthamscyld* might refer to a concept related to virginity. Thus, I originally proposed the translation 'hymen', but such an assumption is difficult to uphold as there is very little about physical virginity in the Anglo-Saxon laws, or indeed in Anglo-Saxon literature in general, so it is practically impossible to determine if the Anglo-Saxons were familiar with the hymen as a concept.[52] Anglo-Saxon writers mainly concerned themselves with 'spiritual' virginity, and this is reflected in the scholarship on the subject.[53] Words for female virginity are usually formed on *fæmn-* and *mægd-* (such as *fæmnhad* or *mægdenhad* 'maidenhood'), and refer to the state of being a virgin, yet again without any explicitly physical connotations.[54] There is one hint in the laws of Alfred that physical virginity had some special value before the law: the fine for forcibly having intercourse with a virgin is twice as high as for the same crime against a non-virgin (though it is not clear if and how the virginal state is to be determined). Interestingly

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[52] On the Anglo-Saxon dislike of talking about the physical aspects of sex, see H. Magennis, '"No Sex Please, We're Anglo-Saxons"? Attitudes to Sexuality in Old English Prose and Poetry', *Leeds Studies in English*, n.s. 26 (1995), 1–27; and the brief remarks by D. Lampe, 'Sex Roles and the Role of Sex in Medieval English Literature', in *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality*, ed. V. L. Bullough and J. A. Brundage (New York and London, 1996), pp. 401–26, esp. 401–5.

[53] On aspects of sexuality, including (mostly spiritual) virginity, see more recently the essays in *Sex and Sexuality*, ed. Pasternack and Weston; also C. Cubitt, 'Virginity and Misogyny in tenth- and eleventh-century England', *Gender and History* 12 (2000), 1–32.

[54] See the *Thesaurus of Old English*, ed. J. A. Roberts, C. Kay & L. Grundy, 2 vols. (2nd impression, Amsterdam, 2000), s.v. *Virginity*, 12.09.03, at Vol. I, p. 596–7.

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the word used here for the act of intercourse is in fact the verb *gehæman* (note, however, the difference in time between the laws of Æthelberht and Alfred):

> **11.** Gif mon on cirliscre fæmnan breost gefo, mid V scillingum hire gebete.
> **11.1** Gif he hie oferweorpe & mid ne gehæme, mid X scillingum gebete.
> **11.2** Gif he mid gehæme, mid LX scillingum gebete.[55]

Due to the overall lack of supporting material, any hypothesis of the kind advanced here remains ultimately unprovable, as the evidence, as set out above, can only be taken so far. However, I have tried to set out a new philological argument for the interpretation of this obscure Old English word, based on contextual semantic analyses of related terms, leaving aside parallels of legal nature with other Germanic law-codes – the latter of which undoubtedly exist for Æthelberht's code, but are the province of legal historians.[56]

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[55] '11. If a man touches the breast of a free virgin, let him pay 5 shillings compensation.

11.1 If he throws her down and does not have intercourse with her, let him pay 10 shillings.

11.2 If he has intercourse with her, let him pay 60 shillings.' (Translation my own).

Ed. Liebermann, *Gesetze*, I, pp. 56–7, (translation my own). See Liebermann, *Gesetze* II, *Rechts- und Sachglossar*, s.v. *Jungfrau*, esp. 3). Note also Schmid's interpretation of *rihthamscyld* mentioned above, p. 38.

[56] Wormald, *Making*, pp. 93–101.

Transforming the Trolls: the Metamorphosis of the Troll-Woman in *Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss*[1]

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Bárðar saga is an intriguing yet puzzling text, which chronicles the life of the *blendingr* (half-troll, half-giant) Bárðr Dumbsson and his family, from an exposition of his ancestry to the death of his son Gestr on the night of his conversion to Christianity. Beginning with the reign of Dumbr (Bárðr's troll-king father) in Norway, the saga tracks Bárðr's settlement at Snæfellsness in Iceland and his self-imposed exile following the disappearance of his daughter Helga. As he retreats into the mountains, Bárðr is cast in a new supernatural mould, embracing his giant heritage in order to become the guardian spirit of the district. Finally, the story turns to his son Gestr and his adventures at the court of King Óláfr Tryggvason. He converts to Christianity at the request of the king, but on the night of his baptism Bárðr appears, accusing Gestr of betraying his pagan ancestors before killing him.[2]

Bárðar saga follows many features of structure and plot typical to the *Íslendingasögur* (family sagas), the genre to which it is assigned, including the protagonists' settlement of Iceland, district feuds and conversions to Christianity.[3] However, the conventions of this socially realistic genre are fundamentally subverted when a pagan clan of monstrous descent takes centre stage as a set of unlikely protagonists. Consequently, *Bárðar saga* presents us with numerous difficulties in terms of its generic classification, thematic preoccupations and unusual characterisations. However, its rich manuscript transmission suggests continuing popularity almost to the present day, both in literary circles and in popular culture. Nevertheless, the saga's unconventional design has baffled modern scholars, who have found it particularly difficult to reconstruct a 'horizon of expectations' upon which to base an understanding of the piece.[4]

The present paper is concerned primarily with the characterisation of Helga Bárðardóttir, the enigmatic daughter of

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[1] For an extended version of this article see: 'Following the Trollish *Baton Sinistes*: Ludic Design in *Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss*', *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 4 (2008), 15–43.

[2] For details see *Bárðar saga*, ed. and trans. Jón Skaptason and P. Pulsiano, Garland Library of Medieval Literature 8 (New York, 1984), lxix–cix. Quotes will be taken from *Bárðar saga*, in *Harðar saga*, ed. Þórhallur Vilmundarson and Bjarni Vilhjálmsson, Íslenzk fornrit 13 (Reykjavík, 1991), 99–172. In the footnotes this will be represented as '*BS* (1991)', followed by the relevant page number. Unless otherwise indicated, the footnoted translations of *Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss* will be taken from the aforementioned *Bárðar saga*, ed. and trans. Jón Skaptason and P. Pulsiano (1984). In the footnotes this will be indicated by the

relevant page number in parenthesis, following '*BS* (1991)' and the page number from Íslenzk fornrit 13. When other scholarship from this edition is used, the text will be indicated by the abbreviation '*BS* (1984)'.

[3] P. Pulsiano, 'Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss', in his (ed.) *Medieval Scandinavia. An Encyclopedia* (New York and London, 1993), p. 35.

[4] The term 'horizon of expectations' was coined by H. Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. T. Bahti, (Minneapolis, 1982), p. 28. In a recent round-table discussion on the problem of genre in Old Norse literature, R. O'Connor stressed the necessity of exploring 'the expectations which a given text satisfies or frustrates' (J. Quinn, 'Interrogating Genre in the *Fornaldarsögur*: Round-table Discussion', *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 2 (2006), 275–96, at 292), while C. Phelpstead employed the term *vorverständis* to describe 'a set of preconceptions about what kind of text it is, how it will resemble other texts with which we are familiar, and consequently what kinds of meanings we may expect from [it]' (Quinn 'Interrogating Genre', 278).

Bárðr Dumbsson. It will concentrate on the metamorphosis of the conventional figure of the troll-woman, particularly focusing on the saga motif of the love affair between a mortal hero and a giantess. In sagas that feature characters such as trolls in a more conventional form, the figures tend to be presented somewhat two-dimensionally, fulfilling the function of a narrative vehicle for the heroic protagonist in his early rites of passage.[5] Thus, a troll-woman such as Helga would usually be a peripheral and underdeveloped figure in the saga, appearing briefly in the course of the hero's adventures before disappearing when he continues on to further expeditions or returns to human society. Yet in *Bárðar saga*, Helga is the focal point of this particular narrative set piece. This seems to be an intentional part of the saga's wider literary design, in which the shadowy figures who typically act along the dim edges of the saga stage are pushed into the spotlight, forcing more-orthodox protagonists out into the wings of the narrative. In her analysis of the relationships between heroes and giants, Riti Kroesen states, 'Whether [the hero] goes out to meet the giants in order to serve the community or to serve his own ends [...] the sympathies of the original audience must always have been on [his side]'.[6] Yet *Bárðar saga* entirely overturns the accepted convention that such stories are written to enhance the glory of the heroic protagonist.

Consequently, the following analysis of the role of Helga Bárðardóttir is based on the broader hypothesis that *Bárðar saga* was constructed as an intentional parody, which pastiches and subverts

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[5] See R. Kroesen, 'Ambiguity in the Relationship Between Heroes and Giants', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* 111 (1996), 57–71; H. R. E. Davidson, 'Fostering by Giants in Old Norse Saga Literature', *MÆ* 10 (1941), 70–85.

[6] Kroesen, 'Ambiguity', 69.

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literary conventions for the purpose of its unusual design.[7] The theory is speculative, and stands only as long as we accept the initial premise that saga compilers were conscious of generic categories divided along lines similar to our own, choosing to 'compose their narratives within generic hybrids not because they did not know what genres were, but because they knew all too well'.[8] It is unlikely that modern scholars can ever come to a secure conclusion regarding the position that such a saga occupied for its original medieval compiler and audience, since analysing the generic complexities of the literature produced by a dead culture involves some degree of circularity and artificial categorisation.[9] Consequently, despite the methodology's benefits, a motif-based analysis is limited by the artificial taxonomies that restrict most structuralist methodologies. While it is probable that thematic set pieces were recognised and manipulated by the original saga compilers, it is nevertheless unlikely that all modern distinctions reflect the precise literary preoccupations and groupings recognised by medieval Icelanders. On the other hand, the possibility that a literary form may stimulate such essentially playful reactions to

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[7] The literary design of *Bárðar saga* has a surprising amount in common with the genre of 'fractured fairy tales' of popular modern culture, in which stereotypical, minor characters are transformed into the central protagonists of the tale. Interestingly, the saga shares particular similarities with the recent film *Shrek*, which parodies and subverts literary conventions by placing an ogre at the heart of its unorthodox fairytale. For a more extensive survey of *Bárðar saga* and further discussion of the role of parody in *Bárðar saga Snæfellsáss*, see my article: 'Following the Trollish *Baton Sinister*', 15–43.

[8] E. A. Rowe, 'Generic Hybrids: Norwegian "Family" Sagas and Icelandic "Mythic-Heroic" Sagas', *Scandinavian Studies* 65 (1993), 539–54, at 553.

[9] For the debate surrounding this question see particularly J. Harris, 'Genre in Saga Literature: A Squib', *Scandinavian Studies* 47 (1975), 427–36; L. Lönnroth, 'Tesen om de två kulturerna. Kritiska studier i den isländska sagaskrivningens sociala förutsättningar', *Scripta Islandica* 15 (1964), 3–97.

its thematic and stylistic conventions is not such a remote one. Interpreting the peculiarities of a text's literary design in terms of such a ludic function has much in common with the work of the cultural theorist John Huizinga, whose classic theory of *Homo Ludens* ('Man the Player') emphasises the 'supreme importance to civilisation of the play factor'.[10] His belief that 'culture arises in the form of play'[11] resonates with Fowler's observation that prescriptive literary taxonomies can actively stimulate literary creativity, since genre 'offers a challenge by provoking a free spirit to transcend the limitations of previous examples'.[12]

Before turning to the example of Helga, it is worth noting that there are other examples of subverted literary motifs within *Bárðar saga* that might have been taken in order to support this hypothesis. These include the figure of the foster-father giant who acts as instructor to the young protagonist of the saga, as instantiated in the actions of Bárðr himself. Initially, Bárðr fulfils the role of youthful pupil under the tutelage of the giant Dofri (ch. 1). However, once Bárðr has retreated into the mountains, the configuration is turned on its head and, in a highly unorthodox narrative shift, the ostensibly human pupil takes upon himself the role of giant educator as Bárðr is cast in a new, supernatural mould. Of similar significance is the conversion-hero motif as it is presented in the ambiguous figure of Gestr, who not only straddles the worlds of giants and men, but is caught between the pagan and Christian spheres. Initially, his story resembles the conventional *páttr* trope in which the relationship between a young Icelandic protagonist and the Norwegian sovereign is key, with the Icelander's conversion to Christianity at the

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[10] J. Huizinga, *Homo Ludens* (London, 1949), 'Foreword'.

[11] J. Huizinga, *Homo Ludens*, p. 46.

[12] A. Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Oxford, 1982), p. 31.

Norwegian court at the heart of their affiliation.[13] Yet despite his outwardly human appearance and heroic career path, Gestr's supernatural heritage dictates that he must diminish within the human, increasingly Christianised sphere. Consequently, although he does convert, on the night of his baptism an enraged Bárðr appears in his chamber and causes his eyes to burst fatally out of his head (ch. 21).[14]

We shall now turn to focus on the giantess-hero love affair as typified by the relationship between Helga and her lover Miðfjarðar-Skeggi. Such love affairs often manifest themselves either in the form of a liaison that develops between the giant-educated hero and his foster-sister, or in the figure of a giantess who suckles, seduces, and assists the human in her care. In a wider survey of the encounters with the female 'other' that occur in Old Norse literature, John McKinnell undertakes a structural and thematic analysis of the sexual relationships formed between giantesses and 'Odinic' heroes (typically devotees, opponents or literary transformations of the god Óðinn).[15] This is part of a wider theory in Old Norse scholarship that counts such otherworldly figures – often gendered as female – among beings

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[13] J. Harris, 'Genre and Narrative Structure in some *Íslendinga þættir*', *Scandinavian Studies* 44 (1972), 1–27, at 3. Harris postulates a common narrative structure comprising of an introduction, a journey into Norway, alienation, reconciliation, a journey out to Iceland and a conclusion.

[14] For further discussion of the subversion of this conversion motif see E. A. Rowe, '*Sörla þáttr*: the Literary Adaptation of Myth and Legend', *SBVS* 26 (2002), 38–66; E. A. Rowe, '*Þorsteins þáttr úxafóts*, *Helga þáttr Þorissonar* and the Conversion *þættir*', *Scandinavian Studies* 76 (2004), 459–474; J. Quinn, 'The End of a Fantasy: *Sörla þáttr* and the Rewriting of the Revivification Myth', in *Pre-Print Papers of The Fantastic in Old Norse/Icelandic Literature: Thirteenth International Saga Conference, Durham and York, 6th-12th August 2006* II, ed. J. McKinnell *et al.* (Durham, 2006), 808–816.

[15] J. McKinnell, *Meeting the Other in Norse Myth and Legend* (Cambridge, 2005).

affiliated with the chthonic sphere. They dwell inertly beyond society in passive possession of otherworldly wisdom or goods, which are sought out by an active male adventurer.[16] Significantly, McKinnell identifies instances in which the theme of the hero-giantess love affair is adapted or parodied to produce genre hybrids or literary burlesques.[17] The possibility that such 'reversals show that the seductions of giantesses were still a recognised Odinic story type when the saga was composed' have important implications for the treatment of the set piece in *Bárðar saga*, suggesting contemporary recognition of a literary pattern capable of deliberate modification.[18]

Within his analysis, McKinnell identifies the affair between Bárðr and Þórdís (the liaison that produces Gestr) as an example of this Odinic pattern.[19] However, despite structural similarities, the episode is marked out from his other examples by role reversals typical of *Bárðar saga*. McKinnell ignores the fact that Bárðr takes the supernatural role while Þórdís is a human girl; within the scope of this current investigation, such a crucial fact must be acknowledged before the example can be allowed to stand alongside the others. A more appropriate manifestation of the giantess-hero love motif lies back a generation in the liaison between Skeggi (Þórdís' father) and Helga (chs. 5-8). Compared to the peripheral figure of Þórdís, Helga is also a more appropriate character to base this analysis on. As the chief catalyst in Bárðr's decision to exile himself from human society, Helga is, as Jón Skaptason and Phillip Pulsiano note, a 'key factor in the development of the saga'.[20]

Following an unfortunate encounter with an ice floe, Helga drifts to Greenland with ambiguous hints of her 'otherness' upon her: 'hon þótti ok með undarligu móti þar hafa komit, ok fyrir þat var hon tröll kölluð af sumum mönnum'.[21] In addition to her sexual relationship with Skeggi, she fulfils a recurring role that often appears throughout the saga corpus as a formidable protectress. The saga states that when 'kómu tröll ok óvættir [...] ok gerðu mönnum it mesta mein',[22] Skeggi is only able to defeat them 'með því, at Helga hjálpaði honum til ok gaf honum náliga líf'.[23] Thus, as the darker aspects of her father's heritage begin to emerge, Helga is growing simultaneously into her role as a 'giantess lover'. This image contrasts starkly with her initial presentation as a youngster at play among human children: 'Þorkelssynir ok Bárðardætr lögðu saman leika sína'.[24] In comparison, throughout her adulthood Helga's interaction with male humans is couched primarily in terms of her sexuality. For instance, whilst wintering at Hjalli, Helga is spied upon by a man named Hrafn: 'honum sýndist konan fríð mjök. Vildi hann upp í sængina ok undir klæðin hjá henni'.[25]

In his discussion of the hero-giantess narrative set piece, McKinnell reiterates the theory that giantesses are equated with the wilderness, arguing that because they represent the inert and the irrational they cannot function actively without the hero:

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[16] M. Clunies Ross, *Prolonged Echoes: Old Norse Myths in Medieval Northern Society*, 2 vols. (Odense, 1994-8) I, pp. 127–8.

[17] McKinnell, *Meeting the Other*, p. 177.

[18] McKinnell, *Meeting the Other*, p. 175.

[19] McKinnell, *Meeting the Other*, pp. 172–80.

[20] *BS* (1984), p. xviii.

[21] *BS* (1991), p. 115 (p. 25): 'the manner of her arrival was thought strange, and so by some she was called a troll'.

[22] *BS* (1991), p. 116 (p. 25): 'trolls and monsters came [...] and caused great trouble and damage'.

[23] *BS* (1991), p.116 (p. 27): 'with Helga's help, who virtually saved his life'.

[24] *BS* (1991), p. 114 (p. 23): 'Þorkell's sons and Bárðr's daughters played together'.

[25] *BS* (1991), p. 124 (p. 37): 'he thought the woman beautiful. He tried to get into bed [and under the bed-clothes] with her'.

Because the giant's daughter needs the initiative and sexuality of the protagonist, it is not surprising that she continues to love him even after he has abandoned her. But he *must* abandon her: using the powers of irrational nature is acceptable, but being controlled by them is not.[26]

This description of giantesses as embodiments of the 'powers of irrational nature' encapsulates the typically underdeveloped nature of their characterisations; they function primarily as narrative tools through which the hero may achieve heroic maturity. In conventional manifestations of the trope, the giant's daughter may be treated with some sympathy, but 'moral considerations do not arise'.[27]

In common with other manifestations of this motif, Skeggi does indeed leave Helga and marry another, and Helga continues to love him even after their separation: 'mornaði hon ok þornaði æ síðan'.[28] Where the pattern appears elsewhere, the aftermath of such a break-up is concerned entirely with the male protagonist and his career; sympathy for the giantess is brief at best. Yet the love affair as it appears in *Bárðar saga* involves structural subversions comparable to those found in its use of the wisdom-giver or the conversion-hero motifs. Once again the narrative throws in its lot with the *baton sinister* (the heraldic badge of illegitimacy), abandoning the hero to follow Helga into the wilderness.

The saga's interest in Helga is not only structural; such an upturning of narrative conventions results once again in the comprehensive delineation of a character whose typical saga function would be brief and perfunctory. Indeed, Helga's personal tragedy is conveyed with a degree of psychological complexity unusual in the portrayal of any saga character.[29] The repeated verb 'una'[30] provides access to her internalised emotions: 'engu undi hon sér, síðan er hon skildi við Skeggja',[31] and 'eigi undi Helga hjá föður sínum'.[32] Helga also speaks two of the six verses of the saga; this is significant in a literary medium in which poetry may be used 'to create psychological special effects within a narrative'.[33] The elegiac tone of these utterances highlights Helga's isolation and the hopelessness of her love:

> Braut vil ek bráðla leita;
> brestr eigi stríð í flestu
> mér fyrir menja rýri,
> mun ek dáliga kálast,
> því at ek auðspenni unnak
> alteitum sefa heitum;
> sorg má ek sízt því byrgja,
> sit ek ein; trega greinum.[34]

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[26] McKinnell, *Meeting the Other*, p. 179–80.

[27] McKinnell, *Meeting the Other*, p. 180.

[28] *BS* (1991), p. 122, (p 35): 'she grieved and faded away ever after'.

[29] As H. O'Donoghue states, 'in saga narrative, focalisation […] is typically wholly externalised, that is, events are seen from the perspective of a narrator who stands outside the world of the narrative' (*Old Norse-Icelandic Literature: A Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2002), p. 35).

[30] 'To be content, to enjoy'.

[31] *BS* (1991), p. 122 (p. 35): 'She had no joy after she left Skeggi'.

[32] *BS* (1991), p. 122 (p. 35): 'Helga did not want to be near her father' (own trans.).

[33] H. O'Donoghue, *Skaldic Verse and the Poetics of Saga Narrative* (Oxford, 2005), p. 9. This follows her earlier assertion that 'the expression of personal and deeply felt emotion in a […] strophe may provide a dimension to the men and women in a saga narrative which the saga prose, typically functioning as externally focalized narrative, does not' (p. 6).

[34] *BS* (1991), p. 122 (p. 35): 'Soon I shall seek to leave. / My passion abates not at all / for the spender of treasure. / I shall die pitifully. / For I loved the

Like a giantess she dwells 'í hreysum eða hólum', but her lifestyle is solitary, far removed from the brutal but companionable circles of troll society that Bárðr moves in.[35] In contrast to her father, Helga wanders alone – 'fór víða um Ísland ok festi hvergi yndi' – and she fades in and out of the narrative, compounding the impression of her aimlessness and abandonment.[36]

Thus, the saga uses the motif of the giantess-hero love affair to set up inversions of characterisation and structure similar to those discernable in the text's other narrative veins. Skeggi is relegated to a minor position within the plot: the reader is furnished with little more than a brief genealogy, and the information that he spends time in Norway and marries a woman named Hallbera (ch. 11). There is no question of a burgeoning *Skegga þáttr* developing in order to flesh out these bare bones, while in contrast, Helga is drawn with a complex inner life. *Bárðar saga*'s metamorphosis of the troll-woman motif is part of the text's larger literary design. It functions as a conscious parody in which deliberately cultivated paradoxes and tensions undercut precisely those audience expectations that modern scholars have struggled to identify. Time and again, *Bárðar saga* turns aside from the expected narrative path in order to trace the careers of less conventional characters such as Helga Bárðardóttir. With the motif upturned, the conventional protagonist is pushed to the tale's outermost peripheries, while new life is breathed into the transformed and animated narrative vehicle.

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treasure-embracer / with passionate, warm emotion. / So my sorrow I cannot hide, / I sit alone and recount my misery'.

[35] *BS* (1991), p. 122 (p. 35): 'in caves and mounds'.

[36] *BS* (1991), p. 124 (p. 37): '[Helga] travelled far and wide over Iceland, but found no happiness anywhere'.

Reinterpreting Metamorphic Analyses: Coinage and Minting in Viking-Age Ireland

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Under the authority of Sitric Silkenbeard, ruler of Dublin in the 990s, a mint was established and a silver coinage produced in Ireland for the first time.[1] The historical significance of this event probably passed the people of Dublin by. They had been familiar with Anglo-Saxon coinage for over fifty years. The historical significance has perhaps also been overlooked by modern historians who have tended to see minting in Dublin as inevitable. A metamorphic narrative of the change from 'bullion' to 'monetary' economy, concluding with minting in Dublin, has often been assumed.[2] While this is a welcome revision to the previous point of view, where coinage was seen as the exclusive preserve of the Scandinavian element in Ireland, it will be argued that it may also obscure much.[3]

Such a conclusion is not difficult to reach when the evidence for the economy of Ireland, predominantly silver and coin hoards, is

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[1] The coins tend to be minted with the regal signature of SIHTRIC REX or derivatives thereof. Examples can be found in *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles, 8: Hiberno-Norse coins in the British Museum*, ed. M. Dolley (British Museum, London, 1966), plate I–II, nos. 1–43.

[2] J. Sheehan, 'Social and Economic Integration in Viking-Age Ireland: the Evidence of the Hoards' in J. Hines, A. Lane and M. Redknap (eds.) *Land, Sea and Home* (Leeds, 2004), p. 180. E. Colgan, *For Want of Good Money: the Story of Ireland's Coinage* (Bray, 2003), p. 2.

[3] D. A. Binchy, 'The passing of the old order' in B. Ó Cuív (ed.), *Proceedings of the International Congress of Celtic Studies held in Dublin, 6-10 July, 1959*, (Dublin, 1962), pp. 119–132.

considered chronologically. A general paucity of silver in an early period is replaced by an increasing number of hoards and finds of non-numismatic silver in the late ninth century; the beginnings of a 'bullion economy'.[4] This 'bullion economy', where silver was valued according to its intrinsic metal or weight value, comes more sharply into focus in the tenth century. In the first half of the tenth century mixed hoards make up a significant percentage of the total which, when combined with the proportion of non-numismatic hoards that have been stylistically dated to this period, suggest a weight-value economy.[5] The importance of coins increases incrementally during the tenth century as mixed hoards form a lesser proportion of the whole, and the number of coin-only hoards increases.[6] Something more akin to a 'monetary economy', where silver was sometimes exchanged in terms of its face-value rather than intrinsic worth, evolved. At the end of this process, as the final stage of a monetary economy, was the beginning of minting in Dublin.

It is tempting to view the decision to mint coinage as the culmination of over a century's 'development' towards a coin economy. Indeed, considering the *longue durée* view of the economy

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[4] J. Sheehan, 'The Form and Structure of Viking-Age Silver Hoards: the Evidence from Ireland', *Silver economy in the Viking Age,* ed. J. Graham-Campbell and G. Williams (California, 2007), pp. 150–1. See also J. Sheehan, 'Ireland's Early Viking-Age silver hoards: components, structures and classification', *The Vikings in the West,* ed. S. Stunmann Hansen and K. Randsborg (Copenhagen, 2000), pp. 49–62, esp. 50–1.

[5] Sheehan, 'Viking-Age Silver Hoards'. Hoards that include mixed forms of silver include Dysart Island 4, Millockstown, Magheralaghan, Leggagh and Dunmore Cave. 7 of 18 hoards with coins are mixed hoards in the first half of the tenth century.

[6] 6 from 32 coin hoards of the second half of the tenth-century contain non-numismatic silver. Proportionately this is far less than the preceding 50 years. cf above, n. 5.

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this can appear logical. However, this paper will seek to challenge metamorphic narratives and will posit an alternative model. It will argue that the economy of the late tenth century must be understood in its immediate chronological context. It will suggest that minting can be viewed as a pragmatic decision, based upon economic problems and political expediency, rather than a metamorphic certainty.

COIN HOARDS

Historical knowledge of coinage and the related economy comes almost entirely from archaeological sources: the coins themselves. When working with archaeology of this type it is necessary to begin with several cautionary notes. The first of these is the question of why hoards – the historian's primary access to coinage – ended up buried in the ground. This is not a simple issue, as hoarding has been seen as a response to violence, an attempt to build-up wealth for exchange purposes, an offering to deities or accidental loss.[7] In the Irish context of this piece, due to a paucity of reliable written material, it is impossible to trace exactly why hoards were buried.[8]

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[7] M. Kenny, 'The Geographical Distribution of Irish Viking-Age Coin Hoards', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy,* 87C, no. 8 (1987), p. 515. Sheehan 'Viking-Age Silver Hoards', p. 55. R. Ó Floinn, 'The Archaeology of the Early Viking-Age in Ireland', *Ireland and Scandinavia in the Early Viking Age,* ed. H. B. Clarke, M. Ní Mhaonaigh and R. Ó Floinn (Dublin, 1998), pp. 155–7. M. Gaimster, 'Money and Media in Viking Age Scandinavia', *Social approaches to Viking Studies,* ed. R. Samson (Glasgow, 1991), p. 113. R. Samson, 'Fighting with Silver: Rethinking Trading, Raiding and Hoarding', *Social approaches to Viking Studies,* R. Samson (Glasgow, 1991), p. 128.

[8] M. Gerriets, 'Money Among the Irish: Coin Hoards in Viking Age Ireland', *Journal of the Royal Society of the Antiquaries of Ireland* 115 (1985), pp. 121–39. Gerriets attempts to link hoards with political events. The problems of accurate

Furthermore, due to Ireland's strict metal-detecting laws, single-finds and productive sites are rare.[9] The effect of this is that it is difficult to be entirely accurate when describing Ireland's early medieval economy. Any attempt to discover the potential use of coins before they were buried is greatly aided by a detailed record of their find context.[10] Unfortunately, the antiquarian nature of many of the excavations constrains this analysis. Many of the hoards that have been uncovered in Ireland were found pre-1900 and are poorly recorded, and often dispersed.[11]

In addition to these general points several more must be added on dealing with the metrology of coinage. Rediscovered coins will not weigh the same amount as they did before their burial. They may have been eroded or oxidised, altering their weight.[12] While attempts have been made to avoid using coins that are described as damaged, it is inevitable that the results will be influenced by this to a degree. This is best overcome by a large analysis so every attempt to include as many coins as possible has been made.

With these cautions in mind it must be remembered that coins are a crucial resource for understanding the early medieval economy of Ireland. While they may not make up a large amount of the total bullion value of Ireland they provide more diagnostic elements than the earlier bullion hoards.[13] Coins, as James Graham-Campbell has noted, must be an important part of the history of late tenth century

Ireland.[14] Even with their failings they still offer a huge amount to the careful historian.

If the initial assumption of coin production as the end of a 'development' narrative is rejected, then reasons must be sought in the contemporary monetary context. The historian is fortunate, as there have been 35 coin hoards recovered from Ireland that have been dated to the fifty years before the first millennium.[15] *Figure 1* illustrates this graphically and is based upon dates estimated by numismatists and archaeologists. The dates given are not the *terminus post quem* of the coins within the hoard but are estimates of actual deposition dates, based upon numismatic and archaeological criteria. Many of the dates ascribed rest upon the assumption that each coin hoard can be dated to a period shortly after the latest coin is found.[16] This is an interpretation that will be challenged below.

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dating of both hoards and other sources as well as the patchy nature of the archaeology make it difficult to be entirely comfortable in this approach.

[9] *National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1987*, section 2.

[10] Sheehan, 'Social and Economic Integration', p. 183.

[11] Sheehan, 'Early Viking-Age Silver Hoards', p. 57.

[12] H. B. A. Petersson, *Anglo-Saxon Currency: King Edgar's Reform to the Norman Conquest* (Lund, 1969), pp. 20–1.

[13] Sheehan, 'Early Viking-Age Silver Hoards', p. 57.

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[14] J. Graham-Campbell, 'Reflections on silver economy in the Viking Age', *Silver Economy in the Viking Age,* ed. J. Graham-Campbell and G. Williams (Walnut Creek, 2007), pp. 219–21.

[15] See Appendix A.

[16] This period between the last coin and the date of deposition is generally viewed as a quite short period in Anglo-Saxon England, with a managed economy, whereas Viking-Age Scotland is often seen as an area where hoards could be deposited some time after their strict *terminus post quem*. One specific example of this is the Skaill hoard which has a terminus post quem of 945 but is generally dated 950–70. J. Graham-Campbell, *The Viking-Age Gold and Silver of Scotland (AD 850-1100)* (Edinburgh, 1995), p. 34.
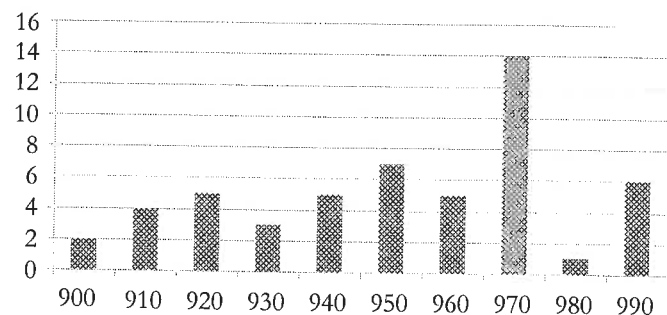
Irish Hoards per Decade

Figure 1: Irish coin hoards arranged according to estimated decade of deposition

If the minting of coinage is the final stage in a gradual alteration of the Irish economy, then it would be expected that coins would be increasingly prevalent in the period immediately preceding this. By considering *Figure 1*, it becomes clear that this was not the case; a large peak in the 970s is followed by a trough in the 980s.[17] While this may be a coincidence of recovery, it is worth considering more fully.

A traditional explanation is that the 970s peak in hoarding represents violence in Irish society, with internecine conflict providing the impetus to hoard, but the possibility remains that there is more of an economic explanation.[18] Such a view is reinforced

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[17] J. Graham-Campbell, 'The Viking-Age Silver Hoards of Ireland', *Proceedings of the Seventh Viking Congress, Dublin, 15-21 August 1973,* ed. B. Almqvist and D. Greene (London, 1974), p. 47. Graham-Campbell's graphical display of the number of hoards illustrates this point. There are 12 hoards from Ireland with a traditional deposition date of 970 and five that are dated to 965. See Appendix A.

[18] Kenny, 'Geographical Distribution', pp. 515–16.

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through a consideration of the Irish Sea context.[19] The hoards per decade for the Irish Sea Region as a whole, as illustrated in *Figure 2*, display a similar pattern to Ireland. Although this is less pronounced, the similarity perhaps suggests that factors other than violence in Ireland should be sought to explain why there was a pronounced peak in hoarding around 970. This is not to suggest that violence amongst internal Irish elements had no role in this pattern of hoards, but that it seems unlikely to have affected the hoarding patterns across the entirety of the Irish Sea Region.
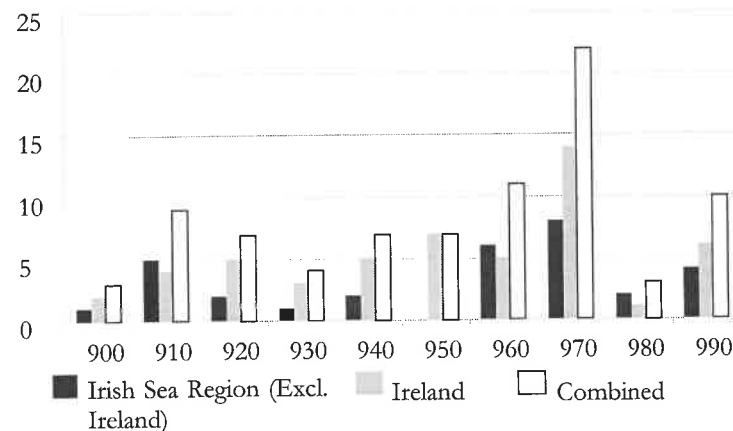
Irish Sea Hoards per Decade

Figure 2: Irish and Irish Sea Region hoards arranged according to estimated decade of deposition

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[19] The Irish Sea Region here comprises Man, Scotland, Wales and North-West England (as defined in the *Checklist of Coin Hoards from the British Isles, c. 450–1180,* <http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/dept/coins/projects/hoards/index.list.html>).

Both figures also reveal that there appears to be a major downturn in coin hoarding from the 970s until the 990s. There are sixteen Irish hoards that end with the pre-reform issues of Edgar.[20] This compares with only five hoards containing coins issued between 973 and the beginnings of minting in Dublin *circa* 997.[21] This pattern of hoarding is one that appears to argue against the idea of coinage becoming ever more prevalent until Dublin creates its own in the 990s. It suggests that to understand the economy of the late tenth century, a model must be adopted that contains periods of growth, contraction and shifting exchange patterns.

A potential explanation for this drop-off in the number of post-970 coins could be the reform of the coinage during the reign of Edgar. This would explain both the timing and also the geographical spread of the change, as Anglo-Saxon coinage was common throughout the Irish Sea region. The idea of a reform of coinage, originally proposed by Dolley and Metcalf, has achieved general acceptance in numismatic circles.[22] The reform was described by the later chronicler Roger of Wendover as occurring in 975.[23] Although he was writing in the thirteenth-century, he was potentially working

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[20] See Appendix B. The term 'pre-reform coinage' refers to the coins issued before *c.* 973.

[21] See Appendix A. The hoards that date from this period are Kildare, Mullingar, Werburgh Street, and the two Castle Street hoards. The last three of these have all been found within Dublin itself.

[22] R. H. M. Dolley and D. M. Metcalf, 'The Reform of the English Coinage under Edgar', *Anglo-Saxon Coins,* ed. R. H. M. Dolley (London, 1961), pp. 136-168. Petersson, *Anglo-Saxon Currency.* K. Jonsson, *The New Era: the Reformation of the Late Anglo-Saxon Coinage,* (London, 1987).

[23] *Rogeri de Wendover Chronica: sive Flores historiarum,* vol. 1, ed. H. O'Cox (London, 1841–2).

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from an earlier text.[24] He describes the achievements of Edgar and amongst these he gives a brief description of a reform of the coinage:

> Deinde per totam Angliam novam fieri praecepit monetam, quia vetus vitio tonsorum adeo erat corrupta, ut vix nummus obolum appenderet in statera.[25]

Historians have accepted the concept of reform, including the re-minting of the coinage described by Roger, but prefer to date it to the year 972 or 973.[26] The reform had several effects upon coinage in England. It probably marked the beginning of a more systematic system of re-minting in England with enforced maximum periods for each type of coinage.[27] This enforced re-coinage resulted in a diversification of minting as many new mints opened up to allow for local re-minting.[28] The reform of coinage had wide-ranging effects upon England and its coin economy. However its effects upon Ireland have been largely neglected despite the fact that Dublin was an Anglo-Saxon coin-using community until the late tenth-century.

None of the effects listed above would have had a direct impact upon Ireland as Dublin was beyond the authority of Edgar and his successors. They could not impose their coinage in these areas. The main way in which the reform could have affected the Dublin

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[24] Dolley and Metcalf 'Reform of the Coinage', p. 136.

[25] *Rogeri de Wendover,* p. 415. 'Throughout the whole of England he ordered new money to be made because the old had been ruined to such a degree by the damage of cutting that a penny scarcely weighed a halfpenny on scales'. [Author's translation].

[26] M. Dolley, 'Roger of Wendover's Date for Eadgar's Coinage Reform', *BNJ* 49 (1979), 1–11. Dolley, 'Coinage of Aethelred II', p. 117. Dolley and Metcalf 'Reform of the Coinage', p. 136. P. Spufford, *Money and its Use in Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 87.

[27] Dolley and Metcalf 'Reform of the Coinage', p. 152.

[28] Dolley and Metcalf 'Reform of the Coinage', p. 147. Jonsson, *New Era,* pp. 119-180. Spufford, *Money and its Use,* p. 87.

economy was that it was also accompanied by the issue of a new coin, the *reform small cross* type. This coin is very rare from finds in Ireland; one coin has been found at Disert, Co. Westmeath but none in hoards.[29] This contrasts with the pre-reform issues of Edgar which are found in many hoards.[30] Why there is such a disparity is an issue that has not really been considered in the past. I will argue that there is the possibility that it based upon the metrological change that accompanied the reform.

METROLOGICAL MODELS

Before this discussion it is worth briefly outlining the method that will be used here. The process of re-minting has been described in mathematical form by Petersson, based upon the work of Bolin.[31] He laid out a formula that can be used to conceptualise coin returns based upon the weights of issues and the total mint charges as follows:[32]

$$N_1 = \frac{N \times W \times (1-A)}{W_1}$$

N = Initial Number of Coins   W = Initial Weight standard
N_1 = New Number of Coins W_1 = New Weight Standard
A = Minting Charge

In the above model, the interactions between silver user, minter and minting authority are all visible. The 'initial weight standard' was the

weight of the non-contemporary coins that were being re-minted into current form. These current issues were minted to the 'new weight standard' which was arguably centrally policed.[33] Fluctuations in these relative weights would have affected the number of coins returned, as will be discussed below. In addition, the transaction also incurred a minting charge which was a cost claimed by the minting authority, generally the king. The precise size and nature of this charge has been a matter of some debate. Estimates vary greatly from Petersson's estimate of one third with some historians doubting the validity of viewing it as a fixed amount, preferring a view in which it varies from one issue to the next.[34] While accepting the possibility that there was some variation in the minting charge it is unlikely that this figure fluctuated widely. A constant is thus probably the most acceptable value to model this.[35]

This formula is perhaps best understood through an example. The Killyon Manor hoard, discovered 1876, is a good test case. It

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[29] M. Blackburn, `Presidential Address 2006. Currency under the Vikings. Part 3: Ireland, Wales, Isle of Man and Scotland in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries', *BNJ* 77 (2007), p. 145.

[30] Pre-reform issues of Edgar are the last issue in 15 hoards. See Appendix B.

[31] Petersson, *Anglo-Saxon Currency*, p. 29.

[32] *Ibid*, p. 19–43.

[33] The weight standards of coinage appear to have been controlled centrally to a certain extent. The weights of the coinages of York in the tenth-century were altered between an Anglian standard when Viking rulers were minting and a contemporary Wessex standard when the kings of Wessex controlled York. M. Blackburn, 'Presidential address 2005: Currency under the Vikings, part 2: the Two Scandinavian Kingdoms of the Danelaw, c. 895-954' in *BNJ* 76 (2006), p. 217. M. Blackburn, 'The Coinage of Anglo-Scandinavian York', *Aspects of Anglo-Scandinavian York*, ed. R. A. Hall (York, 2004), p. 335.

[34] Petersson, *Anglo-Saxon Currency*, p. 163. C. S. S. Lyon, 'Variations in Currency in Late Anglo-Saxon England', *Mints, Dies and Currency*, ed. R. A. G. Carson (London, 1971), pp. 103–6.

[35] This constant has been estimated as one-tenth in eighth-century Frankia. The Anglo-Saxon figure is perhaps somewhere between this and Petersson's figure of one-third. S. Coupland, 'Frankish Tribute Payments to the Vikings and their Consequences', *Francia* 26:1 (1999), p. 62.

includes 88 coins, 85 Anglo-Saxon and 3 Viking coins of York.[36] For simplicity, if the Anglo-Saxon coins of the post-Athelstan period are considered there are 68. These coins are broken down according to reign and weight standard in *Figure 3*.[37]

Killyon Manor Hoard, 1876		
	Number of coins	Weight Standard
Athelstan	26	23.8
Edmund	21	23
Edred	21	21.5

Figure 3: The Anglo-Saxon coins (post-Athelstan) from Killyon Manor hoard with weight standards

These coins, when considered in Bolin's formula can be rendered as such:

$$N_1 = \frac{((26 \times 23.8) + (21 \times 23) + (21 \times 21.5)) \times (1\text{-}A)}{W_1}$$

If a minting charge of 25% is assumed and the subsequent weight standard of Edgar, 19.5 grains, is applied then the formula becomes:

$$N_1 = \frac{((26 \times 23.8) + (21 \times 23) + (21 \times 21.5)) \times (1\text{-}0.25)}{19.5}$$

$$= 58 \text{ coins}$$

This gives an example of how the formula might be applied to actual hoards. It also shows potential losses involved, 58 'new' coins as opposed to 68 'old' coins, an issue that will be discussed in greater detail below.

This example highlights several cautionary points. Firstly, the reasons for excluding the Viking coins of York are that it seems doubtful whether these would have been treated the same way as old Anglo-Saxon coins. This presents a problem as the varying media of silver (Anglo-Saxon coin, Viking coin and non-numismatic silver) would perhaps have all been treated differently and subject to a variety of mint charges. Secondly, in comparing the number of coins, 68 to 58, an assumption is being made that the reduced weight coins would have had the same value, the same potential purchasing power, as the previous issue. While this is very difficult to conclude decisively it appears likely that this was broadly the case as the complaint of Roger of Wendover was of coins weighing significantly less than was acceptable.[38] If value was a fluid concept then it would be expected that these complaints would have been invalidated by a corresponding decrease in value alongside weight losses. Furthermore, in the Viking-Age, coins of differing issues and weights did circulate together suggesting that they were valued similarly.[39]

With these cautions in mind it is still possible to gain an insight into the costs associated with operating in the contemporary currency by analysing the metrology of the coins. Below is set out a graph of the average weight of coins under the various reigns of kings until the reform of 973 (*Figure 4*).

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[36] See Appendix A

[37] For weight standards, see Appendix D.

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[38] See above, p. 71.

[39] Of the numerous Viking-Age hoards from Ireland only 4 are exclusively composed of coins of the same weight standard.
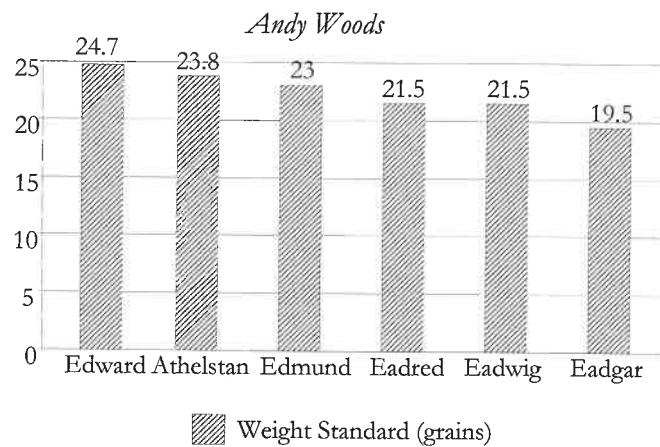
Figure 4: Weight standard of Anglo-Saxon coins to 973, based upon Appendix D

From this graph it becomes clear that that there was a gradual decline in the weight standard of Anglo-Saxon coins in the pre-reform period.[40] The effect of this in terms of re-minting of coinage was that it softened the effect of the minting charge. A decrease in weight standard meant that if a trader exchanged a number of coins they would, without a minting charge, have expected to receive a larger number of reduced weight coins in return. In the example of Killyon Manor above without the minting charge there would have been 72 new, lighter-weight coins produced from 68 older heavier coins. Presuming that the minting charge was extracted from this larger number of coins its effect was somewhat disguised. In the abstract, if the minting charge was one quarter and there was no weight change then a trader would have expected to receive 75 coins back from every 100 coins melted down. If the weight reduced from 23 to 21.5

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[40] These figures are general and, it should be noted, disguise considerable regional variation.

grains (as for Edmund to Edred) then the trader would have expected to receive 80 lighter-weight coins, a positive 5% difference in areas where coins were valued according to number not weight.

Change of Coinage			Potential Loss (various values of mint charge)				
			1/3	1/4	1/5	1/6	1/10
Edward	to	Athelstan	30.8	22.2	17.0	13.5	6.6
Athelstan	to	Edmund	31.0	22.4	17.2	13.8	6.9
Edmund	to	Eadred	28.7	19.8	14.4	10.9	3.7
Eadred	to	Eadwig	33.3	25.0	20.0	16.7	10.0
Eadwig	to	Eadgar	26.5	17.3	11.8	8.1	0.8
Eadgar	to	*Small Cross*	41.4	34.1	29.7	26.8	20.9
Small Cross	to	*Hand*	33.3	25.0	20.0	16.7	10.0
Hand	to	*Crux*	35.4	27.3	22.4	19.2	12.8
Crux	to	*Long Cross*	37.2	29.3	24.6	21.5	15.2
Long Cross	to	*Helmet*	22.9	13.2	7.4	3.6	-4.1
Helmet	to	*Last Small Cross*	31.4	22.8	17.6	14.2	7.4

Figure 5: Potential losses involved in re-minting process, per 100 coins melted down, based on Appendix D

While a reduction in weight reduced the re-minting cost upon the silver user it could also work the other way. A weight increase could amplify the cost of having coinage re-minted into the acceptable contemporary form. This can be illustrated by a table (*Figure 5*) where the number of coins that might be lost in the re-minting transaction is described. This models, in absolute mathematical terms, what is a far more human and analogue process and thus the figures are indicative rather than absolute. Various values of the minting charge are given and figures returned are the number of coins lost per 100 handed over for re-coinage.

What this table shows is how expensive operating in coinage was for those involved. It could be suggested that up to 40% of transitory silver wealth could be lost in a single transaction. While it is unlikely that wealth was entirely stored in silver form, loses on this scale nonetheless seem large. What is more important in the context of this argument is the variation in the costs of re-minting coinage. Changing the coinage of Eadwig to the pre-reform coinage of Edgar, his successor, may have cost a maximum of 26.5%, probably not more than 20%. This can be contrasted to a probable minimum of 20% cost, and possibly as much as double this, to re-mint coins from the pre-reform coins of Edgar to the new *Small Cross* type. This figure is based upon a weight value of 22.2 grains for the *Small Cross* types.[41] Petersson divides the *Small Cross* issues into *Reform, Normal* and *First* 'small cross' types.[42] The first of these, the *Reform Small Cross* type, was introduced directly after the reform of 973 and had a weight standard of 23.5 grains.[43] If this was the case then the result for Edgar (pre-reform) to *Reform Small Cross* is even more of a contrast to those that went before (*Figure 6*).

Change of coinage	% Loss				
	A = 1/3	A = 1/4	A = 1/5	A = 1/6	A = 1/10
Edgar (pre-reform) to *reform Small cross*	44.7	37.8	33.6	30.9	25.3

Figure 6: potential loss between Pre-reform coinages of Edgar and his *Reform Small Cross* type

A probable loss of over 35% and a possible loss of nearly 45% of coins in the re-minting process is a considerable financial burden.

[41] Petersson, *Anglo-Saxon Currency*, p. 195.
[42] *Ibid*, p. 101.
[43] *Ibid*, p. 195.

This is the cost that would have faced all those using Edgar's old currency in the aftermath of the reform. In Anglo-Saxon England, laws survive that insist upon the contemporary coinage, guarantee size and fineness of coinage and outlaw the counterfeiting of coinage.[44] These were effective throughout the country; those who wished to trade in the king's ports under a royal reeve would have needed to use the king's coinage. The ability to force the traders to use the newer coinage was how the king was able to pass on significant minting costs to traders. Essentially, they had no choice.

The ability to force a currency change upon the people of England was a substantial power of an Anglo-Saxon king. However, there was no such compulsion upon traders beyond the boundaries of England. If they wanted to trade in English ports then they would have needed contemporary English coins but not if they were operating beyond English political influence. To make Dublin traders re-mint their coins there would probably have needed to be an overwhelming economic reason to do so. Faced with a substantial charge to exchange their coinage it is possible to argue that there was a strong economic disincentive. Profit would have had to exceed this charge or the trader would have made a loss overall. In addition, the potential charge was probably double what it had been in the previous exchange of coinage between the reign of Eadwig and Edgar. This represented a sudden and exorbitant price increase for currency; a situation that would not have eased with the consistently high weight standard of Aethelred's reign. In this situation it is possible to explain why there are so few finds of post-reform coinage

[44] Petersson, *Anglo-Saxon Currency*, pp. 265–9. III Edgar 8, 'one coinage shall be current throughout the king's realm' and 'there shall be one system of measurement, and one weight standard.' VI Ethelred 32:1 'the coinage shall be improved by having one currency, free from adulteration, throughout all the country'.

in Ireland. With no political compulsion to change coins to the contemporary issue, and with a strong economic reason not to, the older issues of Edgar probably continued for a much longer period in Ireland than they did in England. In this situation the hoards that appear to be clustered around the year 970 may in fact belong to a slightly later period.

While this is only one potential model for coin hoards and re-minting – two processes that are difficult to conceptualise – it suggests that Anglo-Saxon minting policy might have had an effect in the Irish Sea. Consistent weight reductions would certainly have aided the silver user in the re-minting process. The reverse would also be possible with the high weight standard of the post-reform coinages of Edgar and Aethelred possibly providing a disincentive for Irish traders to use contemporary Anglo-Saxon silver.

EXCHANGE AND TRADE

Given the paucity of evidence that can be definitively dated to the period between 973 and the late 990s it is necessary to consider other sources. If the coinage reflects wider economic and exchange patterns then it would be expected that these would also appear to change in the period under question. Essentially if there was less willingness to re-mint silver then it would be expected that there would be a decline in traceable trade with Anglo-Saxon areas. This is because of the need to conduct trade in the contemporary coinage in Anglo-Saxon ports.[45] Such a decline is something that appears to occur in relation to Chester, the major Anglo-Saxon trading centre for the Irish Sea Region.[46] This is illustrated by the decline in the number of moneyers

that were needed in Chester. This figure was 20 during Edgar's reign with a minimum of 11 in Eadwig's reign.[47] This compares favourably with the major mints of London, 10, and Winchester, 7, in the reign of Edgar.[48] After the reform this number drops to 5 and Chester also stops supplying dies to other mints.[49] Furthermore, Chester-minted coins are found only sparingly in Ireland after 980.[50]

In addition to a decrease in coinage output, there was also a raid upon Cheshire in 980 recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.[51] This raid occurred after the coin-production downturn so it cannot have been its cause. It is perhaps indicative of Chester becoming a more acceptable raiding target due to its decrease in importance as a source of legitimately gained revenue. It is not difficult to imagine that if trade became unattractive, raiding might have taken its place. These two elements, less coin production and the acceptability of raiding, imply that from the 970s Chester had an altered role and was perhaps in decline.

Trade from Dublin did not just go through Chester. Dublin would have traded with other areas; there is evidence that they imported iron from Norway, amber from the Baltic and stone

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[45] See above, pp. 78–9.

[46] Jonsson, *The New Era*, pp. 128–9. A. T. Thacker, 'Early Medieval Chester: 400–1230', *A history of the county of Chester: The City of Chester; general history and topography*, ed. C. P. Lewis and A. T. Thacker, vol. 5:1 (Woodbridge, 2003), pp.

20-2. P. F. Wallace, 'The Economy and Commerce of Viking-Age Dublin', *Untersuch ungen zu Handel und verkehr der vor- und fruhgeschichtlichen zeit in mittel- und nord europa* (Gottingen, 1987), p. 217. There was a large amount of 'Chester ware' pottery found in the Dublin excavations. See also Graham-Campbell, 'Viking-Age Silver Hoards', pp. 47–8.

[47] Thacker, 'Early Medieval Chester', p. 20.

[48] *Ibid*, p. 20.

[49] *Ibid*, p. 22.

[50] See Appendix C.

[51] *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*, trans. M. Swanton (London, 2000), C Text, 980.

products from the Shetlands.[52] In addition the first coins of Dublin can be found in hoards all round the north of Europe suggesting eleventh-century trade with these areas.[53] These connections probably existed earlier. Unfortunately, in the tenth-century this trade is largely untraceable as silver found in Scandinavia or other areas is impossible to place in an Irish context if it does not contain diagnostic non-numismatic material. The Anglo-Saxon coin-using areas of Ireland were largely exclusive of non-numismatic material making it difficult to trace magnitude or precise patterns of trade between Ireland and

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[52] S. E. Kruse, 'Trade and Exchange Across Frontiers', *Silver Economy in the Viking Age*, ed. J. Graham-Campbell and G. Williams (Walnut Creek, 2007), pp. 165–6. Wallace, 'Economy and Commerce', p. 216.

[53] The coins of Sitric reached a wide variety of places. These include Russia, Sweden, Poland, Germany, Latvia, Denmark and Norway. This is based upon a survey of the following volumes: *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles, 5: Grosvenor Museum, Chester, Part 1; The Willoughby Gardner Collection of Coins with the Cheshire Mint-Signature*, ed. E. J. E. Pirie (Oxford, 1964). *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles, 7: Royal Collection of Coins and Metals, National Museum, Copenhagen: Part 2: Anglo-Saxon Coins, Aethelred II*, ed. G. Galaster (Oxford, 1966). *Sylloge, 8. Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles, 22: Royal Collection of Coins and Medals, National Museum Copenhagen. Part 5, Hiberno-Norse and Anglo-Irish Coins*, ed. G. Galster, M. Dolley and J. Steen Jensen (London, 1975). *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles, 25: the National Museum, Helsinki and other Public Collections in Finland: Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Norman and Hiberno-Norse Coins*, T. Talvio (London, 1979). *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles, 32: Ulster Museum: Belfast. Part 2, Hiberno-Norse coins*, ed. W. Seaby (London, 1984). *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles, 36: State Museum Berlin, Coin Cabinet: Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Norman and Hiberno-Norse Coins*, B. Kluge (Oxford, 1986). *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles, 37: Polish Museums: Anglo-Saxon and Later Medieval British Coins*, ed. A. Mikołajczyk (Oxford, 1987). *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles. 45, Latvian collections: Anglo-Saxon and Late British Coins*, ed. T. Berga (London, 1996). *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles, 51: Estonian Collections: Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Norman and Later British Coins*, ed. I. Leimus and A. Molvõgin (Oxford, 2001).

non-Anglo-Saxon areas.[54] In addition, other forms of exchange will probably not have survived in any form of historical record. Thus a short-term shift (growth, reduction or change) in exchange patterns will be beyond surviving historical record to discern. It is only possible to trace changes when there are surviving records in the form of durable silver. The effect of this in the current context is that Dublin's trade pattern may have shifted with greater emphasis on other areas without leaving an obvious record. However, it is unlikely that Scandinavia or other British areas could have matched the trade with Anglo-Saxon England, particularly Chester, as it was the most developed economically of any of these areas. From what is available to historians it seems possible, if unfortunately not provable, that there was less trade in Dublin after the mid-970s.

If coin reform in England did make exchange of coinage less viable and cause an economic downturn in Irish Sea trade then the effects of this would have been felt within Ireland. Precious metals were an important part of life in Dublin as they were used in exchange relationships.[55] These relationships saw Dublin potentially provide many of the goods that were used in the relationships between Irish 'over-kings' and their dependents. This can be glimpsed in the *Lebor na Cert*, an eleventh-century collection that appears to includes earlier elements.[56] It probably reflects, even if it doesn't directly record, exchange and tributary relationships of the earlier period. The text is a poem listing stipends and dues for many groups in relation to the king of Cashel, the occasional 'high-king' according

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[54] Sheehan, 'Form and Structure', pp. 159–60.

[55] C. Doherty, 'Exchange and Trade in Early Medieval Ireland', *Journal of the Royal Society of the Antiquaries of Ireland* 110 (1980), p. 74.

[56] *Lebor na Cert*, trans. M. Dillon (Dublin, 1962). C. Swift, 'Royal Fleets in Viking Ireland: the Evidence of the Lebor na Cert', *Land, Sea and Home*, ed. J. Hines, A. Lane and M. Redknap (Leeds, 2004), pp. 189–90.

to the poem. The king of Cashel was expected to give high prestige gifts, including swords, silver or horses in exchange for more mundane items such as sheep, cows and cloaks.[57] Dublin would appear the most likely point of entry for many of these high-status items. Indeed many of the items are listed as coming from 'overseas' or as 'foreign'.[58] Dublin was the foremost port in Ireland suggesting the possibility that many passed through there. The question of how they passed from Dublin to the Irish interior is beyond the scope of this enquiry. However, there is the potential for a relationship between Dublin and Irish over-kings where they provided high-status items for redistribution amongst followers, in exchange for the foodstuffs and raw materials required for Dublin's population of around 5000.[59] Thus any change to Dublin's status as a trading town with ready access to certain overseas goods and silver may well have had repercussions in its relationship with inland neighbours.

It must also be considered that precious metal was used as a tribute item. Here the *Lebor na Cert* gives an insight into the sort of goods that would have been exchanged even if it may not accurately reflect precise amounts. Dublin is listed as owing, 'a *screpall* of gold for each man'.[60] In exchange for this tribute Dublin is promised protection and security,

Dianam tora in cach bliadain
in chain sea lib ó Liamain
nochon fétfad fír thalman
bar ndún-si do díthfaglad

In dún I táid co dreaman
nos scér-sa fri duibdeman;
bid hé in treas teine nach tim
bias fa deiread I nÉrind [61]

The implication here is that the tribute of a *screpall* of gold was, amongst other things, for protection or aid in battle. While one must acknowledge that this text may reflect a later reality it can also highlight the potential for a tributary nature in the interaction between Irish leaders and Dublin. Such a relationship can also be glimpsed in the *Annals of Tigernach* where, after their defeat at the battle of Dublin, they are charged 'an ounce of gold for every garden (to be paid) on every Christmas Eve forever.'[62] What both of these examples highlight is the importance of precious metal, in these cases gold, to Dublin's relationship with the Irish interior.

Tributary and gift-exchange relationships would have been threatened by a curtailing of English trade as it would have altered the exchange relationships of Dublin with its inland neighbours. This change would have changed the ability of Dublin to provide gift goods or tribute payments.

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[57] Doherty, 'Exchange and Trade', pp. 73–4. See also 'Appendix B' in *Lebor na Cert*, pp. 179–89.

[58] B. Hudson, *Viking Pirates and Christian Princes: Dynasty, Religion, and Empire in the North Atlantic* (New York, 2005), p. 88. *Lebor na Cert*, p. 99.

[59] D. Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland: 400–1200* (London, 1995), p. 258. S. Geraghty, *Viking Dublin: Botanical Evidence from Fishamble Street* (Dublin, 1996), p. 59.

[60] *Lebor na Cert*, trans. M. Dillon, line 1729. The stanza in full is 'Ar sin adnagat dó in slog, screapall cach fir, unga d'ór, unga cacha sróna ar sin, is screball óir cach énfir'. A Screpall was a unit of weight measurement. The material is gold

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but silver may have been used at a ratio of between 10:1 and 20:1. Grierson & Blackburn, *MEC* I, p. 327. Hudson, *Viking pirates*, pp. 82–3.

[61] *Lebor na Cert*, trans. M. Dillon, lines 1737–1744. If this tax is paid me every year by you from Liamain, the men of the whole world will not be able to despoil your fortress.
The fortress you occupy in force I shall deliver from the black demon: it will be one of the three last surviving hearths in Ireland.

[62] *The Annals of Tigernach*, trans. W. Stokes (Lampeter, 1993). Annal for 988.

Altered economic circumstances can perhaps be glimpsed through the political written record that survives. With the accession of Mael Sechlainn to the kingship of the Clann Cholmáin in 975 positive interactions between Dublin and Meath dwindled.[63] During this period there was the battle of Tara, where precious metal was extracted as a tribute, as well as two raids upon Dublin itself.[64] This contrasts with the previous twenty years where there was little in the way of recorded conflict between Dublin and its neighbours.[65] While these events can be largely explained in relation to political and dynastic struggles, their coincidence with alterations in economic patterns suggests that these may also be a factor. A changing system of exchange may have contributed to a growth in violence.

What other sources can provide is a suggestion that the political economy of the late tenth century Irish Sea Region was altering. Dublin found itself in conflict with the interior in contrast to a previous period of peace while Chester had a dramatically altered role. While it is impossible to directly link these events to economic patterns they do allow the suggestion of the importance of economic dislocation as a factor.

DUBLIN'S COINAGE

It has been suggested above that rather than viewing the period immediately preceding the 990s, when Dublin first mints coinage, as

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[63] C. Downham, *Vikings Kings of Britain: the Dynasty of Ivarr to 1014* (Edinburgh, 2007), p. 51.

[64] *The Annals of Ulster,* trans. G. Mac Niocaill (Dublin, 1983), annal for 980. *The Annals of Clonmacnoise: Being Annals of Ireland from the Earliest Period to A.D. 1408,* trans. C. Mageoghagan, ed. D. Murphy (Lampeter, 1993), annal for 974. *Annals of Inisfallen,* trans. S. Mac Airt (Dublin, 1988), annal for 980. For the raids on Dublin see *Annals of Inisfallen,* annal for 984 and *Annals of Clonmacnoise,* annal for 988.

[65] Kenny, 'Geographical Distribution', p. 515.

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one in which coin-use became more prevalent the converse may in fact be true. It may have been a period of economic dislocation or stagnation with exchange with Anglo-Saxon areas adversely affected. In such a context the coinage of Dublin may be viewed as a reaction to economic adversity rather than the end of an economic metamorphosis.

The 'Phase 1' coins of Dublin are imitative and closely follow patterns from contemporary English equivalents.[66] The moneyers of Dublin changed their dies to mimic Anglo-Saxon types in line with those of England.[67] There are also a number of surviving 'mules' which combine a Dublin mint signature (DIFLMEI or derivative) with EDELRED REX and others combine SIHTRC RX with an English mint signature.[68] It has been hypothesized that these imitative coins were designed to be used in England.[69] There are relative few finds of Hiberno-Scandinavian coins in England making this suggestion appear unlikely, although half of those found in England are imitative 'phase 1' issues.[70] It can be more safely asserted that the similarity in style may have facilitated trade between the two areas. In this context it can perhaps be seen as an attempt to restart faltering trade links described above. Another element is the high weight standard of the 'phase 1' coins of Dublin. These were made to a

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[66] M. Dolley, 'Introduction', *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles, 8: Hiberno-Norse coins in the British Museum,* ed. M. Dolley (British Museum, London, 1966).

[67] *Sylloge 8,* plate I–III, no. 1–61. These can be compared to the English issues in *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles, 9: Ashmoleon Museum Oxford: Anglo-Saxon Pennies,* ed. J. D. A. Thompson (London, 1967), plate XVIII–XXVI, nos. 465–680. These mirror the issues of Anglo-Saxon England.

[68] *Ibid,* plate I, nos. 6–11.

[69] Wallace, 'Economy and Commerce', p. 208.

[70] M. Blackburn, 'Presidential Address 2007. Currency Under the Vikings. Part 4: The Dublin Coiange *c.* 995–1050', *BNJ* 78 (2008), p. 134.

standard that was similar to that of England.[71] The attempt to mimic the contemporary issues of England seems too coordinated to be coincidental. The aim was perhaps to improve trade with England through the issuing of coins of a similar weight and style. If this was so, it would have improved Sitric's potential profits and access to overseas material. Thus the imposition of coinage was perhaps a response, by the political authority, to an economic problem rather than as a culmination of a grand fiscal narrative.

In addition to a desire to restart trade Sitric was probably also aware that whoever minted coins, and was able to ensure they were used, was able to take a share of the profit via the mint charge. He would have been able to collect a large amount of silver by forcing the citizens of Dublin to conduct their business in his coinage. This would have been an attractive possibility at any point but placed in a context of declining trade and increased hostility with the Irish interior then it grows in value. Silver was a powerful resource that could be used to enter relationships with Irish kings or to finance conflict. The coinage can thus be seen as the imposition of an economic policy for the benefit of Sitric. The role of Sitric Silkenbeard in the minting of coins must be emphasized as he probably imposed the coinage for various economic reasons as well as for his own personal gain.

It must also be recognised that coinage was more than an economic expression. In the early medieval period, it was closely connected with royal authority. In the British Isles all coinage, apart from the coins with the inscription *Sihtric Comes* and a few early Archiepiscopal issues were minted with a king's name.[72] In the ninth-century the Scandinavian leader Guthrum minted coinage using the name of Aethelstan, his adopted Christian name.[73] It seems he was making an attempt to legitimise his authority in East Anglia, where the coins were minted. Similarly, early coinage in Denmark was minted in areas where the king wanted to project an image of authority rather than in areas with an economic need.[74]

The coins of Dublin were also a political expression. They were minted with the unambiguous message 'SIHTRIC REX'. This was a powerful symbol of the authority of Sitric, projecting an image of himself as king. The coins would have circulated in Dublin, where he would have wanted to establish authority in the face of general political instability. The coinage also reached a wider variety of places and it may also represent an attempt to present Sitric in a similar way to contemporary European and Anglo-Saxon rulers.[75] Its wide dispersal and stylistic similarity to Anglo-Saxon issues certainly points toward this. The first coinage of Dublin must be seen as a symbolic political piece as well as an economic token.

The political potential of the earliest Irish coinage can be emphasized by examining the near contemporary events. Sitric had gained control over Dublin following the death of Gluniairn in 989.[76]

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[71] R. Heslip and P. Northover, 'The Alloy of Hiberno-Norse Coinage', *Sigtuna Papaers: Proceddings of the Sigtuna Symposium of Viking-Age coinage, 1–4 June 1989,* ed. K. Jonsson and B. Malmer (Stockholm, 1990), p. 104.

[72] G. Williams, 'Kingship, Christianity and Coinage: Monetary and Political Perspectives on Silver Economy in the Viking Age', *Silver Economy in the Viking Age,* ed. J. Graham-Campbell and G. Williams (Walnut Creek, 2007), p. 180.

[73] *Ibid,* p. 180.

[74] M. Gaimster, 'Viking Economies: Evidence from the Silver Hoards', *Silver Economy in the Viking Age,* ed. J. Graham-Campbell and G. Williams (Walnut Creek, 2007), pp. 124–5.

[75] See above, n. 53.

[76] *Annals of Ulster,* annal for 989.

For the following years he was opposed by Ivarr of Waterford.[77] Ivarr was able to gain control over Dublin on two separate occasions in the 990s before being expelled for the last time in 995.[78] To Sitric in the late 990s it would have seemed his position was far from secure. He had gained control over Dublin only a few years previously and his hold was tenuous enough to be briefly removed in 999-1000.[79] In this context the coinage must be viewed as an attempt to assert a powerful claim to political control of Dublin in addition to providing immediate funds. In the uncertain politics of 990s Dublin a symbol of royal authority would have been very welcome to Sitric. He must be seen to have a central role in the beginning of minting in Dublin. Sitric probably imposed the coinage for his own profit but also as a symbol of his own authority at a time when this was far from certain.

CONCLUSIONS

What has been argued above is that a traditional analysis of coinage and what it reveals about the economy of early medieval Ireland is open to reinterpretation. Rejecting the *longue durée* approach that simplifies the economy of Ireland into a linear progression towards coin production, the above has instead suggested the possibility that short-term factors, economic dislocation or problems, can also be interpreted as important in the decision to begin minting in 990s Dublin. More specifically, it has been argued that Dublin's mint must be seen in its context as a part of an Anglo-Saxon coin-using community. The role of Anglo-Saxon coin reform and metrology, beyond the political authority of the issuing king, are important elements that are frequently overlooked. Their effect on Ireland was

possibly to make exchange in coinage unprofitable in the short-term, which then probably led to a dislocation of trade with England where coins were a necessary part of mercantile life. What was then suggested was that this dislocation of trade would have had effects within Ireland itself leading to an alteration of exchange and tributary relationships. This may have contributed to the growth in conflict in Ireland in the run up to the millennium. These are the long-term issues that would have influenced the decision to begin minting coinage in Dublin. In the shorter-term the coins were also perhaps an overt political manoeuvre designed to legitimise the rule of Sitric, and give him the currency to back up this claim.

While acknowledging that this is only one potential model for the economy of Viking Age Ireland it has highlighted the fact that there can be other approaches taken to its study. The beginnings of minting in Ireland can be seen as a reaction to an economic problem and a calculated political decision more than as the final point in a metamorphic progression towards coin use. Minting is perhaps better considered as a desire to maintain the status quo, in terms of trade relationships with England and dynastic control of Dublin, rather than as the final point of a metamorphic historical narrative.

ADDENDUM

This paper was written before the publication of Mark Blackburn's 2007 Presidential Address in the *British Numismatic Journal*.[80] This has published details of three Dublin excavation hoards, dated to the 990s; Castle Street (no. 1), Castle Street (no. 2) and Werburgh Street.

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[77] Downham, *Viking Kings*, p. 57.

[78] *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, annal for 988. *Annals of Inisfallen* annal for 990 and annal for 993.

[79] *Annals of Inisfallen* annal for 1000. *Annals of Ulster*, annal for 999.

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[80] M. Blackburn, 'Presidential Address 2007. Currency under the Vikings. Part 4: The Dublin Coinage *c.* 995–1050' *BNJ* 78 (2008), pp. 111–37.

These hoards provide further evidence for the period between the peak of hoarding in the 970s and the beginning of minting in the late 990s. They show that there continued to be contact between Irish areas and Anglo-Saxon coin-using areas up to the mid 990s. This does not fit readily with the possibility of economic dislocation presented above. However, the position of the hoards within Dublin itself is an important element. It would be highly unlikely that a downturn in trade would have halted all contact and central areas of Dublin is where it would be expected to occur. The chronological and geographical displacement of the hoards examined – central Dublin as opposed to Hinterland areas and 970s to 990s – mirrors the displacement of coins suggesting further analysis is needed to compare these datasets.

These hoards remind the historian and archaeologist of the benefit of further evidence and it is hoped that with further research into this area apparent contradictions can be examined and new light shed on old problems.

APPENDIX A: IRISH HOARDS *C.* 940–1010[81]

Hoard Name	County	Discovered	Deposited	Size	Non-Numismatic	Anglo-Saxon?	Danelaw?	Hiberno-Scandinavian?	Other?
Durrow	Offaly	1850	940	<20		yes	yes		
Co. Tipperary	Tipperary	1843	942	<20		yes			
Glendalough 2	Wicklow	Pre-1822	942	0–119		yes			
Fennor	Meath	Pre-1870	945	<20		yes			
Castle Freke (Rathberry)	Cork	1799	945	<20		yes			
Knowth	Meath	1969	950	2-3		yes			
Newtownlow	Westmeath	1982	953	<20		yes			
Macroom	Cork	1840	953	20–119		yes			
Monasterboice	Louth	1746	953	20–119	yes	yes			
Mungret	Limerick	1842	953	20–119	yes	yes	yes		
Killyon Manor	Meath	1876	955	20–119		yes	yes		
Oldcastle	Meath	1900	958	<20		yes	yes		
Armagh	Armagh	1831	965	<20		yes	yes		
Smarmore	Louth	1929	965	20–119		yes	yes		
Lough Lene	Westmeath	1843	965	20–119		yes	yes		yes
Ballitore	Kildare	1837	965	20–119		yes	yes		
Ireland		1862	965	20–119		yes	yes		
Rahan 2	Offaly	1828	970	20–119	yes	yes			
Glendalough 3	Wicklow	1835	970	<20		yes			
Derrykeighan	Antrim	1843	970	120–1199		yes	yes		yes

[81] This is based upon the *Checklist of Coin Hoards from the British Isles, c. 450–1180*, <http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/dept/coins/projects/hoards/index.list.html> and references therein.

Dalkey	Dublin	1840	970	20–119		yes			
Ballycastle (TF2)	Antrim	1890	970	20–119		yes			
Kilkenny West	Westmeath	pre-1824	970	20–119	yes	yes			
Moyvore	Westmeath	1986	970	<20		yes			
Co. Meath	Meath	1845	970	<20		yes			yes
Killincoole	Louth	1864	970	20–119	yes	yes			
Burt (Carrowen)	Donegal	1863	970	<20		yes			
Bullock 1	Dublin	1838	970	2–3		yes			
Rahan 1	Offaly	1820	970	20–119		yes			
Bullock 2	Dublin	1840?	970	20–119		yes			
Mullingar 1	Westmeath	1841	986	120–1199	yes	yes			
Castle Street 1	Dublin	1993	991	20–119		yes			
Kildare	Kildare	1923	991	20–119		yes			
Werburgh Street	Dublin	1994	995	120–1199		yes			
Dundalk	Louth	1980	995	<20		yes	yes		
Castle Street 2	Dublin	1993	995	120–1199		yes			
Clondalkin 2	Dublin	1830	997	120–1199			yes		
Knockmaon	Waterford	1912	1000	20–119	yes	yes	yes	yes	
Derrymore	Westmeath	1872	1000	<20		yes	yes		
Co. Westmeath	Westmeath	1984	1005	<20		yes	yes		

## APPENDIX B: ANGLO-SAXON COINS IN IRISH HOARDS

This Appendix details the Anglo-Saxon coins contained within Irish hoards. Those with none listed are unidentifiable or lost.

Hoard Name	Deposited	Pre-Athelstan	Athelstan	Edmund	Edred	Edwig	Eadgar	First Small Cross	Hand	CRVX	Long Cross
Durrow	940	2	8								
Co. Tipperary	942	5	9	4							
Glendalough 2	942		45	3							
Fennor	945		1	1							
Castle Freke (Rathberry)	945		1	1							
Knowth	950		1		1						
Mungret	953	4	3		1						
Newtownlow	953										
Macroom	953	1	1	5	8						
Monasterboice	953		1	1	1						
Killyon Manor	955	7	26	21	21						
Oldcastle	958			1	6						
Ballitore	965	4	4	8	12	3	4				
Ireland	965	3	18	3	6	4	6				
Lough Lene	965		5	3	8	3	2				
Smarmore	965	3	2	6	8	9	41				
Armagh	965		1				1				
Bullock 2	970						65				
Derrykeighan	970		2	1	15	8	92				
Dalkey	970	3	4	6	9	1	45				
Glendalough 3	970										
Ballycastle (TF2)	970										

Name	Year									
Kilkenny West	970					42				
Moyvore	970			2	1	2				
Killincoole	970	1		3	2	1				
Burt (Carrowen)	970					11				
Bullock 1	970					3				
Rahan 1	970									
Co. Meath	970			1		1				
Rahan 2	970									
Dunmore Cave 2	970		2	4	1	1				
Mullingar 1	986			1			95			
Castle Street 1	991									
Kildare	991						1	33		
Castle Street 2	995									
Werburgh Street	995									
Dundalk	995							2	4	
Clondalkin 2	997									
Knockmaon	1000					4				
Derrymore	1000									2
Co. Westmeath	1005									

APPENDIX C: ORIGIN MINTS FOR IRISH HOARDS

Mint of Origin for Coins from Irish Hoards					
Decade	Total number of coins	Unknown Mint	Known mint	Minted at Chester	% of known from Chester	% not from Chester
930s	29	26	3	1	33%	67%
940s	347	302	45	28	62%	38%
950s	112	74	38	20	53%	47%
960s	179	151	28	2	7%	93%
970s	324	271	53	12	23%	77%
980s	105	2	103	3	3%	97%
990s	40	0	40	0	0%	100%
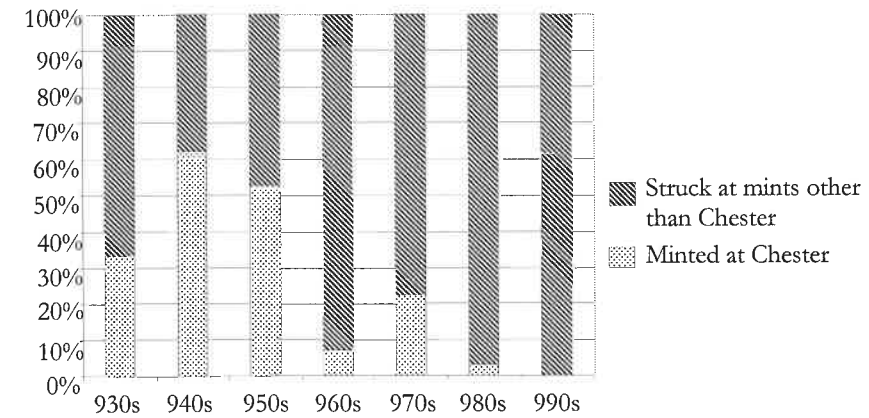
APPENDIX D: METROLOGY[82]

Coin type/king	Weight Standard	Next issue/issuer	Subsequent Weight Standard	Potential Losses (various values for A)				
				1/3	1/4	1/5	1/6	1/10
Edward	24.7	Athelstan	23.8	30.81	22.16	16.97	13.52	6.60
Athelstan	23.8	Edmund	23	31.01	22.39	17.22	13.77	6.87
Edmund	23	Edred	21.5	28.68	19.77	14.42	10.85	3.72
Edred	21.5	Edwig	21.5	33.33	25.00	20.00	16.67	10.00
Edwig	21.5	Edgar	19.5	26.50	17.31	11.79	8.12	0.77
Edgar	19.5	*Small Cross*	22.2	41.44	34.12	29.73	26.80	20.95
Small Cross	22.2	*Hand*	22.2	33.33	25.00	20.00	16.67	10.00
Hand	22.2	*Crux*	22.9	35.37	27.29	22.45	19.21	12.75
Crux	22.9	*Long Cross*	24.3	37.17	29.32	24.61	21.47	15.19
Long Cross	24.3	*Helmet*	21	22.86	13.21	7.43	3.57	-4.14
Helmet	21	*Last Small Cross*	20.4	31.37	22.79	17.65	14.22	7.35

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[82] The weights used are from C. E. Blunt, B. H. I. H. Stewart, C. S. S. Lyon, *Coinage in Tenth-Century England: From Edward the Elder to Edgar's Reform* (Oxford, 1989), p. 236. H. B. A. Petersson, *Anglo-Saxon Currency: King Edgar's Reform to the Norman Conquest* (Lund, 1969), pp. 195–210. The weights for Edgar are based upon my own calculations from 485 coins in the *SCBI* vols. 6, 27 and 34.

Dweorg in Old English: Aspects of Disease Terminology

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In the following paper I will examine a single Old English disease term, *dweorg*,[1] as an example of a word which would appear to have undergone a significant change of meaning in relation to its Germanic cognates, ON *dvergr*, MLG *dwerch* and OHG *twerg*, all meaning 'dwarf' according to Orel.[2] While the Germanic cognates, including OE *dweorg* stemming from the PGmc **dwerȝaʐ* are all said to mean 'dwarf' by Orel, Old English lexical evidence shows the word to indicate some sort of pathogenic condition or ailment, rather than a supernatural entity. On the other hand, Old English glossary evidence would suggest that the word does retain the meaning of a manlike creature of small stature, thus presenting an intriguing polyvalence, wherein the word appears to stand both for a pathology and a supernatural agent which may be somehow related to that pathology.

Although the recent Dictionary of Old English divides the word into two senses, *dweorg*(1) meaning 'dwarf' or 'pygmy,' and *dweorg* (2) meaning 'fever, perhaps high fever with delirium or convulsions' much of the literature on Old English medical texts containing *dweorg* make little or no distinction between these two senses. The grounds for this conflation of senses shall be examined in the following essay.

Given the apparent link between the disease pathology intended by the word *dweorg* (2) in medical texts and the more straightforward

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[1] I have adopted the citation form used by the *Dictionary of Old English Online*, ed. A. Cameron *et al.*, <http://www.doe.utoronto.ca> (viewed 9 February 2009).

[2] '**dwerȝaʐ*' in V. Orel, *A Handbook of Germanic Etymology* (Leiden, 2003), p. 81.

meaning of *dweorg*(1) in glossaries, it would be tempting to read into the disease term '*dweorg*' the survival of belief in supernatural forces in disease pathology in Anglo-Saxon medicine, yet this would be an inductive fallacy, as names for diseases can often be etymologically linked to long outdated ideas of causation that have no currency in the semantic field of the word as it survives. An example from modern medical parlance is *influenza,* or *flu*, the cause of which the majority of modern readers would associate with a microscopic organism known as a virus. Yet the word derives from the Italian word for 'influence,' denoting the perceived astrological cause for large scale rheumatic pestilences in sixteenth-century Italy.[3] Similarly, *hysteria* is no longer thought to be the result of a wandering or obstructed uterus, and in fact has ceased to have any clinical meaning at all, though it remains in common parlance with a transferred psychological meaning.[4] As noted by Traugott and Dasher, the referents of concepts of disease have changed considerably over time, 'hence the meanings attached to the words referring to them have changed in ways not subject to linguistic generalization [sic].'[5] Thus the meanings of medical terminology are especially prone to change in accordance to changes in the conceptualisation of disease causation.

It is the aim of this paper to suggest that the meaning of the Old English word *dweorg* underwent such a change, having once denoted a pathogenic cause of disease, to denoting the disease itself.

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[3] For an epidemiological history of the disease see A. Crosby, 'Influenza', ed. K. F. Kiple, *The Cambridge Historical Dictionary of Disease* (Cambridge, 2003). For the etymological definition, see 'influenza' in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. J. Simpson, <http://www.oed.com/> (viewed 24 April 2009).

[4] See 'hysteric' in the *Oxford English Dictionary*.

[5] E. C. Traugott and R. B. Dasher, *Regularity in Semantic Change* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 4.

OCCURRENCES IN OLD ENGLISH

The word *dweorg* is relatively rare, occurring in five medical recipes in three separate medical *compendia* and two glosses. The following instances were found initially through the Dictionary of Old English searchable corpus.[6] The number from Cameron's *Catalogue of Old English Texts* has been given in parentheses at the start of each entry to facilitate cross-referencing.[7]

1. Glossaries

The word appears in two glossaries, namely, Plantin Moretus 32 (D1.6) and Ælfric's Glossary (B1.9.2). Ælfric gives *dweorh* as a simple equivalence to the Latin *nanos*, which is a loanword from the Greek νᾶνος, meaning a small mythological manlike creature. The context of Ælfric's employment of the simplex is not a list of supernatural creatures, but a list of personal relationships and occupations, and in the immediate context of entertainers, including '*potens* mihtig. *gigans* ent, *nanus* dweorh, *fidis* streng, *citharista u*el *citharoedus* hearpere, *plectrum* hearpnægel.'[8] There is absolutely no sense that this *dweorh* could be considered a supernatural being here, given that the underlying connection between all of the words found in the section of Ælfric's Glossary titled 'Nomina membrorum' is that they pertain to the human body, or human affairs, such as familial and social relations. As such, it would seem that this instance of *dweorg* refers to a small person.

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[6] *Dictionary of Old English Online*.

[7] A. Cameron and R. Frank, ed., *A Plan for the Dictionary of Old English* (Toronto, ON, 1973).

[8] "powerful / mighty; giant / giant; dwarf / dwarf; (instrument) string / string; citharist or harper / harper; plectrum / harp-nail', J. Zupitza, ed., *Ælfrics Grammatik und Glossar*, Sammlung englischer Denkmäler 1 (Berlin, 1880), p. 302.

The Plantin-Moretus gloss[9] is more complex, listing three Latin equivalences for *dweorh*: *pygmaeus* (pigmy), being a member of a small African people described by Pliny; and *nanus* (nano) and *pumilio* (dwarf), being mythical anthropomorphic creatures of small stature. The main text of Plantin-Moretus Manuscript is the *Excerptiones de Prisciano*, to which the Latin-Old English glossaries have been added as marginalia. The *Excerptiones de Prisciano* is noted to be 'a work related in some way to Ælfric's Grammar' by Ker.[10] The glosses in question are on the headword *Pygmaeus*, to which the two Latin and one Old English interpretamenta have been added.

Given the limits of what can be inferred from glossary evidence it is thus fair to say that the word *dweorh* had the meaning of a small manlike creature. It may have had mythological status or have been attributed supernatural powers, but this is by no means certain.[11]

2. The 'Lacnunga' Remedies

The word appears three times in the *Lacnunga*, a miscellany containing medical recipes, protective charms and liturgical formulae[12] which also contains the Old English *Herbal* and *Medicina de quadrupedibus*.[13] The *Lacnunga* collection has been edited as a whole several times, the *editio princeps* by Cockayne,[14] having been superseded relatively early by Grattan and Singer's *Anglo-Saxon Magic*,[15] employed by the DOE, while the metrical sections of the compendium were edited separately by Dobbie.[16] The texts used here come from the most recent critical edition by Edward Pettit.[17]

The word occurs twice in two versions of the same written charm *wiþ dweorh*,[18] numbered lxxxi a–b by Pettit.[19] The word also appears once in the longer narrative charm lxxxvi as numbered by Pettit.[20] A further emendation of *deores* to *dweores* in line 5 of the charm is given by some editors but rejected here for reasons outlined below.

In both versions of the written charm, *Lacnunga* lxxxi a–b (below) the written text includes a number of characters with symbolic, rather than lexical significance, consisting of a number of crosses and letters in Greek and Latin script. The cross symbol is represented here by

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[9] Gretsch describes this as the 'Antwerp-London Glossary' M. Gretsch, *The Intellectual Foundations of the English Benedictine Reform*, CSASE 25 (Cambridge, 1999), p. 174. The glossary, from Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum 47, and London, British Library, Additional 32246 (Ker no. 2) has been edited only as an unpublished dissertation: L. Kindschi, 'The Latin-Old English Glossaries in Plantin Moretus MS 32 and British Museum MS Additional 32246' (Stanford, CA, 1955), p. 201–52.

[10] N. R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon*, (Oxford, 1957), p. 2.

[11] For an example of the tendency to read into Anglo-Saxon medical texts the fictional culture of the Norse Eddas, see 'Introduction', *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft of Early England. Being a Collection of Documents, for the Most Part Never Before Printed, Illustrating the History of Science in this Country Before the Norman Conquest*, ed. T. O. Cockayne, RS 35 (London, 1864–6), I., xxviii–xxxvii.

[12] London, British Library Harley 585, Ker no. 231, s. x/xi.

[13] *Medicina de quadrupedibus* (medicines from quadrupeds) is the title given by Cockayne to the Old English translation of Sextus Placitus' *Liber medicnae ex animalibus* (Book of medicine from animals).

[14] Cockayne, *Leechdoms*, III., 2–80.

[15] G. Grattan and C. Singer, ed., *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine Illustrated Specially from the Semi-Pagan Text 'Lacnunga'* (Oxford, 1952).

[16] E. V. K. Dobbie, ed., *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, ASPR 6 (London, 1942).

[17] E. Pettit, ed. *Anglo-Saxon Remedies, Charms and Prayers from BL MS Harley 585: the Lacnunga*, Mellen Critical Editions and Translations 6 (Lewiston, NY, 2001).

[18] Literally 'against a dwarf', probably denoting fever.

[19] The charms are numbered lxxxvii–lxxxviii by Grattan and Singer and 51 by Cockayne.

[20] The item is numbered 56 by Cockayne, designated Metrical Charm 3 by Dobbie.

the mathematical addition sign (+), while the letters are as close as possible to the manuscript forms as interpreted by Pettit.

Lacnunga lxxxi: (B21.3)

a] Writ ðis ondlang ða earmas wiþ dweorh:

  +T +ωA. & gnid cyleðenigean on ealað; *Sanctus* Macutus, *Sancte* Uictorici.

b] Writ þis ondlang ða earmas wið dweorh:

+T+þ+T+N+ ωA+T+UI+M+ ωA. & gnid cyleþenigean on ealað; *Sanctus* Macutus, *Sancte* Uictorici.[21]

Lacnunga lxxxvi, or Metrical Charm 3 (A43.3)

Wið dweorh: man sceal niman vii lytle oflætan swylce man mid ofrað, & writan þas naman on ælcre oflætan: Maximian*us*, Malchus, Iohannes, Martimianus, Dionisius, Constantinus, Serafion. Þænne eft þ*æt* galdor þ*æt* heræfter cweð man sceal singan, ærest on þ*æt* wynstre eare, þænne on þæt swiðre eare, þænne hufan þæs mannes moldan; & ga þænne an mædenman to & ho hit on his sweoran, & do man swa þry dagas; him bið sona sel.

Her com ingangan   inspidenwiht.
Hæfde him his haman on handa,   cwæð þæt þu his
                                    hæncgest wære.
Legde þe his teage an sweoran.   Ongunnan him of þæm
                                    lande liþan.
Sona swa hy of þæm lande coman   þa ongunnan him ða
                                    liþu colian.
Þa com ingangan   deores sweostar.
Þa geændade heo,   & aðas swor
ðæt næfre þis ðæm adlegan   derian ne moste,
ne þæm þe his galdor   begytan mihte,
oððe þe þis galdor   ongalan cuþe.
                                    Amen. Fiað.[22]

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[21] 'Write this along the arms against *dweorh*: (*a series of Greek and Latin characters separated by crosses*) and grind celandine in ale. St. Macutus, St. Victorici, ed. Pettit, *Lacnunga*, p. 71. All translations my own unless otherwise noted.

2.1 Textual Problems and Critical History of Lacnunga lxxxvi

The two recipes presented above have been edited and criticised in a number of different ways since their first appearance in print in 1866. The second, Metrical Charm 3 text contains the names of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, and a brief digression here explaining their relevance may be of some benefit.

The legend of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, who were sealed into a cave for refusing to renounce Christianity by the Emperor Decius but fell asleep to wake again several decades later, seems to have been relatively widely known in Anglo-Saxon England, and their names were widely used in narrative charms of this type either to secure sleep or to grant release from fever. A selection of six such charms from British sources is described by Wilfred Bonser.[23] The earliest known version is that of Jacobus Sarugiensis (d. 521), while it was transmitted by Gregory of Tours, and recurs in three separate Old English versions, two by Ælfric, and one anonymous version

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[22] 'Against *dweorh*: one shall take seven small wafers such as one makes offerings with (i.e. sacramental wafers), and write these names on each wafer: Maximianus, Malchus, Iohannes, Martimianus, Dionisius, Constantinus, Serafion. Then after that one shall sing the charm that it says hereafter, first in the left ear, then in the right ear, then above the crown of the person's head, and then let a virgin go to him and hang it upon his neck, and do so for three days, it will soon be better for him:

An *inspiden* creature came walking in. / It had its bridle in its hands, said you were its horse. / Bridled you with its reigns upon your neck. Then they began to ride him from the land. / As soon as they came from the land then his limbs began to cool. / Then the creature's sister came walking in. / Then she interceded, and swore oaths / that this would never harm the sick, /nor one who might obtain this charm, / nor one who knew how to chant this charm, / Amen. Let it be.'

Ibid., p. 72.

[23] W. Bonser, 'The Seven Sleepers of Ephesus in Anglo-Saxon and Later Recipes', *Folklore* 56 (1945), 254–6.

which appears in the manuscript of Ælfric's Lives of Sains.[24] Bonser suggests that 'an appeal to the Seven Sleepers is… appropriate for those suffering from insomnia or any disease in which sleep would be especially beneficial.'[25]

In Cockayne's edition of the text, he interprets the charms in a firmly medical context. His editorial intervention is intended to be both transparent and minimal, with interpretation of the texts being offered in the form of a parallel translation rather than textual notes. In the set of charms to be written along the arms (B21.3) he supplies an interpretive 'convulsions' parenthetically within his translation.[26] In the second instance, being the prose preface to 'Metrical Charm 3' he silently omits the 'd' from dweorh, possibly as the result of a misreading, producing weorh, which he translates as 'a warty eruption.'[27] This makes very little sense in the context of the invocation of the Seven Sleepers, who, as mentioned above, were normally invoked in cases of sleeplessness or fever. Cockayne's reading is however consistent with other texts in the same volume in which he published the Lacnunga, the first part of which included the Medicina de Quadrupedibus, in which wið dweorh translates ad verrucas

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[24] H. Magennis, 'Ælfric and the Legend of the Seven Sleepers', Holy Men and Holy Women: Old English Prose Saints' Lives and their Contexts, ed. P. E. Szarmach (New York, NY, 1996), pp. 317–32, at 317. The versions attributed to Ælfric appear in M. Godden, ed. Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: the Second Series Text, EETS SS 5 (Oxford, 1979), pp. 247–48 and W. W. Skeat, ed., Aelfric's Lives of Saints, EETS 76, 82, 94, 114 (London, 1881), I., 488–541. For the anonymous life see H. Magennis, ed., The Anonymous Old English Legend of the Seven Sleepers, Durham Medieval Texts (Durham, 1994).

[25] Bonser, 'Seven Sleepers', p. 256.

[26] Cockayne, Leechdoms, III., 39.

[27] Ibid., III.42–3.

tollendas.[28]. All subsequent editions read the opening of the Metrical Charm as 'wið dweorh,' while Dobbie and others also emend deores (wild beast's) in line 5 to dweores (dwarf's).

As rightly pointed out by Philip Shaw, the remedy in fact comprises two separate recipes which became assimilated at some point in their transmission history.[29] The first element is a prose recipe against dweorh, requiring the writing of the names of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus on Eucharistic wafers. The second element is the metrical narrative charm seeking to alleviate the harmful symptom by drawing parallels with a vocalised narrative. Somehow the prose rubric for the narrative charm became integrated into the Seven Sleepers remedy at some point in the transmission history of the text. Shaw suggests that the recipes were linked in the mind of their initial redactor by the existence of a reference to dweorh in the second charm element. Shaw consequently suggests that deores sweoster (beast's sister) in line 5 should be emended to dweores sweoster, (dwarf's sister) stating that it would be surprising for the prose and verse sections to have been combined unless the verse contained a reference to the dweorh which the seven sleepers are invoked to relieve. While Shaw is right in suggesting that there must have been something to link the two charms in the mind of their initial redactor, it is not necessarily the case that this word is retained in the text as we have it now. Deores sweoster makes perfect sense without any emendation. Furthermore, if we assume, as Shaw does, that dweorh means fever as a 'well established part of Anglo-Saxon disease terminology,' the emendation

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[28] 'for raised warts.' H. J. De Vriend, The Old English Herbarium and Medicina de Quadrupedibus, EETS OS 286 (London, 1984), p. 266; for a discussion of this occurrence of the word see section 3 below.

[29] P. A. Shaw, 'The Manuscript Texts of Against a Dwarf', Writing and Texts in Anglo-Saxon England, ed. A. R. Rumble (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 96–113, at 108–9.

of *deores* to *dweores* makes less sense, for a fever does not normally have a sister, while any wild beast may.[30]

The crux of the verse section is of course *inspidenwiht*[31] in line 1. Shaw's treatment of this crux cannot be improved upon in the current paper, but one of the most salient points he makes is that the most frequent emendation of this form is to *inspiderwiht*, to give the meaning 'spider-creature.' This is a highly problematic reading for a variety of reasons, not least the fact that, to quote Shaw himself, 'Old English has a number of other words for spiders, and the form spider is in any case unlikely to have been the form of the word in Old English if it did exist.'[32]

The problems with the emendation to *inspiderwiht* is that it further introduces a false association of the concept of spider with the notion of dwarves and that it is a reading that cannot be gleaned from the manuscript text itself, but only from the editorial tinkering of Cockayne and Grattan and Singer.

The charm does, however invoke a narrative of being ridden by the *inspidenwiht* and here intersects with some certain themes from the folklore surrounding nightmares and mystical creatures. Is the *inspidenwiht* thus a fantastical succubus-like creature which 'presses' one in the night? It is all too easy, however, to take this kind of analysis too far. In reading this passage we bring all of our pre-existing preconceptions or knowledge of folklore to the table, perhaps envisaging Queen Mab as described by Mercutio in *Romeo and*

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[30] *Ibid.*, p. 108.

[31] While *wiht* certainly means 'creature,' *inspiden* is difficult to translate, and Pettit leaves it untranslated in his edition, as I have above: see Pettit, *Lacnunga*, p. I.73. Pettit considers the word corrupt and does not attempt to construe it as a translatable sense unit in his analysis either: see *Ibid*, II., 174–5.

[32] Shaw, 'The Manuscript Texts of *Against a Dwarf*', p. 102.

Juliet I.iv: 55-97,[33] or Fuseli's *Nightmare*.[34] Commentators also often feel the need to draw parallels with the enigmatic recipe from the Leechbook III (B21.2.1.3.1) chapter lxi in London, British Library Royal 12 D xvii, which provides a salve against 'ælfcynne & nihtgengan & þam mannum þe deofol mid hæmð.'[35] Yet any such parallels we draw are coloured by our preconceptions, and in drawing such parallels we risk imposing upon the text a meaning which is extrinsic to it. Such scepticism is all the more necessary in a case such as this, where there is a semantic ambivalence surrounding the very words that make up the text.

Yet all is not lost to ambivalence if we can reign in our desire to see the text as a coherent narrative. What we do know of Metrical Charm 3 is this: within the prose introduction to the charm there is but one 'dwarf,' and it must be syntactically read as a disease name. It is not explicitly reiterated again in the narrative charm, although the DOE has accepted an emendation to that effect. Both the prose instructions for the creation of a phylactery, with its invocation of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus and the narrative charm support the

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[33] 'Romeo and Juliet', *The RSC Shakespeare Complete Works*, ed. J. Bate and E. Rasmussen (Basingstoke, 2007), pp. 1675—743, at 1690–1, lineation according to edition.

[34] Fuseli's Nightmare (1781) was exhibited in the Tate Britain Gallery between the 15th of February and 1st of May 2006. A catalogue of the images of this exhibition is available: M. Monroe, ed., *Gothic Nightmares: Fuseli, Blake and the Romantic Imagination* (London, 2006). A partial image of the painting in question, detailing a 'dwarf' sitting atop a sleeping maiden may be seen on the exhibitions home page: <http://www.tate.org.uk/britain/exhibitions/gothicnightmares/> (viewed 23 April 2009).

[35] 'Against elf-kin and night-goers and those people with whom the devil has sexual intercourse.' Cockayne, *Leechdoms*, II., 344.

reading that *dweorg* is either disturbed sleep or fever.[36] It is here that that we must draw the line and assume no more about the text than the text itself says.

It is tempting to agree unreservedly with Shaw's conclusions that 'the use of *dweorh* to refer to fever was a well-established element of the disease terminology of Anglo-Saxon England,' yet we have so far only looked at a small portion of the evidence.[37] To address the topic more thoroughly, the other instances of the word, all of which are medical, must also be examined.

3. Dweorh *in the Medicina de quadrupedibus*

Two other medical compilations independently contain the word *dweorh*, the *Medicina de quadrupedibus*, dealt with here, and the *Peri didaxeon*, discussed in section 4 below. In both instances it is translated from an identifiable Latin source, and both recipes lack contextual evidence of specific supernatural connotations of the term, such as liturgical elements or exorcism formulae in the cures offered.

> *Medicina de quadrupedibus* (B21.1.1.3)
>
> Chapter X.17 (De cane/ De lupo)
>
> **Dweorg** onweg to donne, hwites hundes þost gecnucadne to duste & gemengen wið meolowe & to cicle abacen syle etan þam untruman men ær þær tide hys tocymes, swa on dæge swa on nihte swæþer hyt sy, his togan bið ðearle strang; & æfter þam he lytlað & onweg gewiteþ.[38]

Luckily, as indicated above, this recipe is identifiable as a direct translation from a Latin text, namely the *Liber medicinae Sexti Placiti Papyriencis ex animalibus pecoribus et bestiis vel auibus.*[39] Unfortunately it is a recipe that survives only in one recension of the text, the α-recension, as §27 of Chapter IX (De cane) and the disease term, *verruca*, meaning a small wart or blemish of the skin, seems to make little sense in context:

> Ad verrucas tollendas.
>
> Stercus canis albi tunsum cum farina, turtulam factam ante horam accessionis dato aegro, manducet et sanatur. Si autem nocte ad eum accedunt, simili ratione dato ante accessionem, vehemens fit accessio, deinde minuitur et recedet.[40]

The early recession from which the Old English text stems seems to contain some confusion of the chapters regarding the wolf and the dog, as this chapter X is rubricated '*De lupo*' in the English tradition, and in De Vriend's Latin text, but most of the recipes are in actuality from the domestic dog (*De cane*), which is how Sigerist and Howald designate the same chapter of the α-recension of Chapter X of the

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[36] Pettit notes that 'the name of the putative dwarfish disease-demon had [possibly] come to denote the affliction itself [sc. fever]', Pettit, *Lacnunga*, II., 183.

[37] Shaw, 'The Manuscript Texts of *Against a Dwarf*, p. 108.

[38] 'To do away with *dweorh*, dung of a white dog ground to dust and mingled with flour and baked into a cake. Give to the sick man to eat before the time of *its* arrival, in the day just as in the night whichever it be. Its attack will be

exceedingly strong, and after that it diminishes and goes away.' De Vriend, *Herbarium*, p. 266.

[39] 'The book of medicine from animals, fish, beasts and birds of Sextus Placitus of Papyriensis', *Antonii Musae De herba uettonica liber. Pseudo-Apulei Herbarius. Anonymi De taxone liber. Sexti Placiti liber medicinae ex animalibus.*, ed. H. E. Sigerist and E. Howald, CML 4 (Leipzig, 1927). The relevant sections of Howald and Sigerist's text are reprinted in parallel to the Old English text in De Vriend, *Herbarium*.

[40] 'For doing away with *verruca*, dung of a white dog pounded with flour, made into a cake, given to the sick person before the hour of attack, let him chew it and it may be healed; if it is incident upon him at night, however, given similar measure before the attack, the attack is made vigorous, afterwards it diminishes and recedes.' Sigerist and Howald, eds. *Antonii Musae De herba*, p. 265.

Liber medicinae ex animalibus.[41] One can see that this translation is quite close, except insofar as '*Dweorg onweg to donne*' does not seem to neatly translate '*ad verrucas tollendas*' at all.

There are two possible resolutions. One is that the Latin recipe is indeed a recipe for warts or *verruca*, and that the translation *dweorh* is either a mistake, or an unusual sense for *dweorh*. It must be remembered, however, that skin lesions denoted by the Latin word *verruca* tend to be small chronic prominences, growths, or irregularities, not something that can come and go suddenly as the wording of the recipe suggests. The other possibility is that *dweorh* means fever or some other such acute symptom, and that the Latin tradition of the α-recension as edited by Sigerist and Howald is in fact corrupt. While it seems to me that the wording of the recipe is intended for a temporary acute condition, rather than a mild chronic one, it is beyond the scope of this paper to attempt an emendation of the Latin text.

4. Dweorh in the Peri didaxeon

The *Peri didaxeon* is a very late text; the single manuscript witness dates from the mid-twelfth century.[42] It is based on a known Latin medical compilation commonly referred to, albeit misleadingly, as the *Practica Petrocelli Salernitani;* Max Löweneck's edition of the *Peri*

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[41] *Ibid.*

[42] For the dating of the London, British Library Harley 6258B, and the *Peri didaxeon*, see D. Maion, 'The Fortune of the So-Called Practica Petrocelli Salernitani in England: New Evidence and some Considerations', *Form and Content of Instruction in Anglo-Saxon England in the Light of Contemporary Manuscript Evidence*, ed. P. Lendinara *et al.* (Turnhout, 2007), pp. 495–512.

didaxeon provides parallel readings from the Practica Petrocelli as found in the edition of de Renzi.[43]

> *Peri didaxeon* (B21.6)
>
> Chapter 51, *Ad strictum pectus, siue ad asmaticos*
>
> Þisne læcedon do þan manne, þa hym beoð on hyra brosten nearuwe, þat Greccas hæteð asmaticos, þæt ys nearunyss; and uneaþe mæg þane fnæst to do and ut abringan and hæfd hæte breost and byd innen mid micle nearnysse; and hwilan he blod hræcþ and hwylum mid blode gemenged, and hwile he riþaþ, swylce he on **dueorge** sy; and micel spatel on ceola wyxeþ and syhþ adun on þara lungane.[44]

The syntax of this passage simply does not allow us to read the dwarf as agent. It cannot mean 'as if dwarf were on him,' due to the nominative *he* and dative *dueorge*, rather it must mean 'as if he were in *dueorge*,' where *dweorg* is a state of being. The use of *dweorg* here is very different from its deployment in the other medical texts, being abstracted from a simple unexplained condition for which no explanatory nosology is deemed necessary, to a descriptive medical state used in the nosological and aetiological description of another

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[43] M. Löweneck, ed., *Peri Didaxeon: Eine Sammlung von Rezepten in Englischer Sprache aus dem 11./12. Jarhundert. Nach einer Handschrift des Britischen Museums*, Erlanger Beiträge sur Englischen Philologie und Vergleichenden Literaturgeschichte (Erlanger, 1896). The Latin text of the *Practica Petrocelli* is to be found in S. De Renzi, G. E. T. Henschel and C. Daremberg, ed., *Collectio Salernitana ossia documenti inediti e trattati di medicina appartenenti alla scuola medica salernitana, raccolti ed illustrati da G. E T. Henschel, C. Daremberg e S. de Renzi*, Biblioteca di storia della medicina 2 (Naples, 1852–1859).

[44] 'Give this leechdom to the person when there is tightness on their chest, that Greeks call *asmaticos*, which is "tightness"; and he may not easily make breath and bring it out, and he has a hot breast and he is [*afflicted*] with great tightness inside, and sometimes he coughs blood, and sometimes [*sputum*] mingled with blood, and sometimes he writhes as if he were in [a state of] *dweorge*, and much spittle develops in the throat and sinks down to the lungs.' Löweneck, ed. *Peri didaxeon*, pp. 30–1.

disease term. To interpret the sense of this passage further it will be necessary to examine the Latin source for this description of *asmaticos*. In the parallel Latin text provided by Löweneck; the list of symptoms runs thus:

> Ad asmaticos, quod Greci *edios* vocant, … qui cum labore anhelant, id est difficultas respirationis et calor pectoris circumdatur.... Set quod cesmate iacentes aliqui tussiunt, et subtile expuunt et narium sanguinem interdum, **et febriunt**; et sic intelligis: Ab arteriis defluit humor in pulmonibus.[45]

In this sequence of symptoms, the Old English phrase 'hwile he riþaþ, swylce he on dueorge sy' is a convoluted parallel for 'febriunt,' clearly showing that *dueorge* was associated with fever for the translator of the *Peri didaxeon* at least. The parallel is not entirely satisfactory however, as the Latin source provided by Löweneck is by no means a verbatim relation to its translation.

5. Dweorgedwostle

Dweorgedwostle is one of the Old English synonyms, along with *hyllwyrt* and the loan-word *polleie* for Latin *pulegium* as described in the pseudo Dioscoridean *Liber medicinae ex herbis feminis* and appearing as chapter XCIV of the Old English *Herbal* (B21.1.1.1–2), which can almost certainly be identified with *Mentha pulegium* L., or pennyroyal.[46] While it is important not to assume that the *Liber medicinae ex animalibus* and *Herbarium*, recipes reflect Anglo-Saxon beliefs and practices, being

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[45] 'For the asthmatic, which the Greeks call *edion*, who gasps with labour, that is breathing with difficulty, and heat is gathered around the chest. Yet that which they cough is broken, and they expectorate clear [*sputum*] and occasionally the blood of the nostrils, and they are fevered, and know this: liquid fills the lungs from the arteries.' Löweneck uses the edition of Salvatore di Renzi, *Collectio Salernitani* IV (Napoli, 1856).

[46] De Vriend, *Herbarium*, pp. 136–40; P. Bierbaumer, *Der botanische Wortschatz des Altenglischen* (Bern, 1975), I., 49.

late Antique medical compilations as they are, it is nonetheless a salient fact that these recipes were widely copied into different places, such as the recipe for the expulsion of a still-birth found also in Leechbook III.xxxvii.[47] In all, the plant is named in 21 medical recipes in the Old English Herbal, *Leechbook* of Bald and *Lacnunga*. It is prescribed mostly for pain in the stomach or intestines and for nausea, both on its own and in decoctions of multiple herbs. It is prescribed once for tertain fever, 'þam fefore þe þy ðryddan dæge on man becymeþ'[48] being a form of malaria, but it should be noted that this recipe (*Herbal* xciv.5) is one of the few recipes that do not involve the ingestion of an infusion of the plant, but rather a fumigant of its twigs wrapped in wool, a recipe deriving ultimately from the *Medicina Plinii*.[49] In sum, the majority of medical recipes involving the plant treat headache and pains or spasms of the stomach, and the use of the herb in cases of fever is limited to one prototypical recipe.

De Vriend sees the plant name in terms of the disease it is intended to treat, stating 'the first element of the OE plant name *dweorgedwostle* is probably used in the sense '(intermittent) fever'.[50] There is perhaps room to doubt this reading of the plant name, given that the plant's extant textual uses against fever all stem from one source, namely the *Medicina Plinii*.[51] More convincingly, Bierbaumer suggests that the dweorge- element merely means 'small', while the -

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[47] Cockayne, *Leechdoms*, II., 330.

[48] 'For a fever that one suffers every third day'.

[49] [Ad] tertianis: pulei ramus in lana inuolutus ante accessionem olfaciendus datur aut stratis subditur 'For tertian fever: he is given a sprig of pennyroyal wraped in wool as a fumigant placed under the bed before the onset,' Medica Plinii III., 16.2 A. Önnerfors, ed., *Plinii Secvndi Ivnioris qvi fervntvr de medicina libri tres*, CML 3 (Berlin, 1964), p. 79.

[50] De Vriend, *Herbarium*, p. 310.

[51] Önnerfors, *Medicina Plinii*, p. 79.

dwostle element is cognate with OHG *Tost* (German *Dost*), meaning marjoram.[52]

Ultimately the plant name evidence, though vast, adds little weight to any of the posited interpretations of *dweorh*. In using it to support the notion that *dweorh* actually denotes a fever far too much weight is given to what is in fact a single Ur-recipe from the *Medicina Plinii* which has been copied into various medical compendia in Old English and Latin more because of the authority afforded to the names of Pliny and Dioscorides than for the perceived efficacy of the recipe.

CONCLUSION

As is always the problem when attempting to conduct linguistic research on dead languages, there is no possible way to verify the precise meaning that *dweorh* possessed within any given Anglo-Saxon speech community. It is nevertheless apparent that the word *dweorh* seems to have had a specific medical meaning probably associated with disturbed sleep and fever. We can deduce this from the use of the Seven Sleepers in charms against *dweorh,* and from the other medical contexts in which it occurs, especially the *Peri didaxeon*. We may even posit that this medical meaning arose out of association of such conditions with an anthropomorphic supernatural creature, and that the meaning of the word then underwent a metamorphosis from cause to effect. Yet did the *asmaticos* patient in the *Peri didaxeon* writhe because he was being ridden by a dwarf? It is syntactically unlikely, and hermeneutically unknowable.

Ultimately we must remember that the OE word *dweorh* survives only in glosses for creatures from classical mythology and medical texts with origins dating back to the fourth-century AD at the earliest.

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[52] Bierbaumer, *Der botanische Wortschatz des Altenglischen*, I., 49.

Texts such as the *Lacnunga* are not repositories of Anglo-Saxon folklore, but rather points of linguistic and intellectual contact between Old English speakers and the tradition of pre-Salernitan medical literature that itself makes frequent use of charms and liturgical elements. When we attempt to find meaning in these charms, we must be ever cautious not to neglect the fact that they were recorded as functional medical recipes, not fairy tales. Of course the beliefs that these texts infer may be explored, but such endeavours have far too often lacked the necessary awareness of the context of the charms.

There is nonetheless a perceptible shift in the meaning of the Old English term *dweorg*, from a supernatural or magical creature that could cause disease, as fossilised in the narrative charms of the *Lacnunga*, to a term denoting the disease itself, with a wholly physical aetiology, as seen in the *Peri didaxeon* and the *Medicina de quadrupedibus*. It is not necessarily a temporal factor that denotes the shift in semantic sense, but rather a factor of the register of the text in which it occurs. As Pettit notes, 'the possibility that dweorg [in *Lacnunga* lxxxvi] denotes a disease-demon cannot be ruled out.'[53]

On the other hand, the translation of L. *febrem* by *dweorg* in the *Medicina de quadrupedibus* and *Peri didaxeon* would certainly indicate that the word denoted solely a medical condition, and not a supernatural pathogen. It is important to note however, that the *Medicina de quadrupedibus* predates the *Lacnunga* by at least a century, which is why we cannot assume a chronological shift in meaning within the historical Anglo-Saxon period, but must consider the semantic shift from demonic agent of disease, to disease itself, to be a factor of the register of the text in which the word occurs.

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[53] Pettit, *Lacnunga*, II., 183.

From Nave to Chancel: the Metamorphic Implications of Anglo-Saxon Altar Placement

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The altar in Anglo-Saxon England was the focal point for the ecclesiastical and lay participants of the Mass as both the physical and metaphorical centre of the church. The placement of this important site of worship changed dramatically throughout its history. In this study, the notable transition from a single altar position in the seventh-century nave to the later chancel is examined along with the development of multiple altars around the tenth century. This gradual metamorphosis in architecture reflects a metamorphosis in practice during the celebration of divine services. As the altar moved, so did the participants, and the physical and spiritual relationship of the congregation to the Mass changed. I will consider the material and literary evidence for this altar transition as well as suggest its implications for the direction in which the clergy faced during the Eucharist.

The existence of only a few textual sources which mention altar placement hampers any detailed study of the Mass in England before the tenth century. Outside the realm of textual evidence, however, there is considerable architectural material extant from this period, the analysis of which may help to illuminate liturgical activities. Physical evidence for the placement of the altar in the nave is found in a number of early churches such as the Old Minster at Winchester, St. Mary's at Reculver, and St. Paul-in-the-Bail at Lincoln. A substantial stone foundation at the east end of the seventh-century nave of the Old Minster at Winchester suggests the presence of a large altar near the chancel arch.[1] Four postholes located around the find are consistent with an interpretation of an accompanying canopy, or ciborium, over the altar. Martin Biddle concluded in the excavation that such prominent foundation stones placed along the main east-west axis of the building indicated the location of the principal altar of the early church.[2] The physical placement of a finished rectangular stone slab in the east end of the seventh-century nave at St. Mary's, a Reculver in Kent, centrally located in front of the triple arcade leading into the eastern apse, suggests use as an altar.[3] An altar may have existed at the seventh-century church of St. Paul-in-the-Bail, Lincoln, as indicated by the discovery of postholes and a grave site.[4] The postholes belonging to a screen between the nave and chancel favour the presence of a nave altar, as the alignment of the middle column of the screen would have blocked any chancel altar from view. The grave found west of the chancel arch supports the presence of an altar in the nave as the deceased were often laid purposefully near the sanctity of the altar.[5]

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[1] M. Biddle, 'Excavation at Winchester, 1969: Eighth Interim Report', *AntJ* 50 (1970), 277–326, at 315. Also discussed in H. M. Taylor, 'The Position of the Altar in Early Anglo-Saxon Churches', *AntJ* 53 (1973), 52–8, at 53.

[2] Biddle, 'Excavation at Winchester', p. 315.

[3] R. Gem 'How Much Can Anglo-Saxon Buildings Tell Us About Liturgy?', *Liturgy of the Late Anglo-Saxon Church*, ed. H. Gittos and M. Bedingfield, HBS 5 (2005), 271–90, at 277. Also discussed as possible foundation for a stone cross in Peers, 'Reculver: its Saxon Church and Cross', *Archaeologia* 77 (1927), 241–56, at 247 and 250–1.

[4] B. Gilmour 'The Anglo-Saxon Church at St. Paul-in-the-Bail, Lincoln', *Medieval Archaeology* 23 (1979), 214–8, at 214–5.

[5] For a discussion of the altar's funerary associations in Anglo-Saxon England, see C. Hahn, 'Seeing and Believing: 'The Construction of Sanctity in Early-Medieval Saints' Shrines', *Speculum* 72 (1997), 1079–1106, at 1080–1.

Another feature corroborating early Anglo-Saxon altar placement in the nave is the location of clergy seats in the chancel. The stone foundations of a long bench have been found in the chancel of St. Mary's, where officiating clergy would have sat for services.[6] The additional discoveries of likely seventh- and eighth-century stone clergy seats against the eastern walls of other churches like Hexham and Monkwearmouth also support the placement of the altar in the nave,[7] as there would not have been space enough for both clergy seats and an altar in the chancel.[8]

The examples from the early Anglo-Saxon archaeological fabric mentioned above suggest the presence of an altar in the nave with clergy space in the eastern chancel; this architectural plan also appears in passages from early textual sources. Æthelwulf's early ninth-century poem *De abbatibus* mentions the presence of a single central altar dedicated to St. Peter *medio sub aggere* of the church building.[9] Though a ninth-century poem, *De abbatibus* describes in this passage an older

likely eighth-century church built by Eanmund not unlike the plan of remaining Anglo-Saxon churches. A possible nave altar is again mentioned later in the poem during a vision of an ideal heavenly church in which, though alongside the presence of many altars, there is a prominent central altar: *ast pauimenta domus medii sub culmine temple / aurea mirifice portabant munera mense.*[10] The early eighth-century *Life of Ceolfrid* also indicates a certain degree of space between the altar and the eastern sanctuary as it describes Benedict Biscop's resting place *ad orientem altaris* at Monkwearmouth.[11] It would be fitting for this altar to be in the nave, providing plenty of space in the eastern chancel for a burial.

The placement of an altar in the nave suggests a particular position for the clergy and the direction in which they face around the altar. The material and textual evidence suggests that in early Anglo-Saxon churches divine services were celebrated with the celebrant facing the congregation west into the nave rather than east. In this manner of celebration, as hypothesised by David Parsons and Martin Biddle,[12] there is indeed a division of space between the officiating clergy and their congregation, and the altar is reached by the celebrant simply walking forward from the seats in the east. At

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[6] The similarity of Reculver to other churches in south-east England in, for example, architectural layout and the appearance of a triple-arcade, might also suggest the possibility of additional nave altars in such churches for which there are no existing foundation stones, e.g. St. Peter and Paul, Canterbury; St. Mary's, Canterbury; St. Pancras' Canterbury; St. Andrew, Rochester; St. Mary's, Lymigne; and St. Peter, Bradwell. Discussed in H. M. Taylor, 'Reculver Reconsidered', *ArchJ* 125 (1968), 291–6, at 296 and Peers, 'Reculver', pp. 246–7.

[7] A. Clapham, 'Two Carved Stones at Monkwearmouth', *Archaeologia Aeliana* 28 (1950), 1–6, at 3.

[8] R. Cramp, 'The Furnishing and Sculptural Decoration of Anglo-Saxon Churches', *The Anglo-Saxon Church: Papers on History, Architecture, and Archaeology in Honour of Dr H. M. Taylor*, ed. L. A. S. Butler and R. K. Morris, BAR 60 (1986), 101–4, at 102.

[9] 'in the centre of the pile.' Æthelwulf, *De abbatibus*, ed. A. Campbell (Oxford, 1967), pp. 14 and 15, line 146.

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[10] 'the floor of the building beneath the mid-point of the temple roof bore the weight of golden offerings on a wondrous table.' Æthelwulf, *De abbatibus*, pp. 56–57, lines 721–2.

[11] 'to the east of the altar.' C. Plummer *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica*, 2 Vols. (Oxford, 1896), at I, 394; D. Whitelock, *English Historical Documents, c. 500–1042*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1979), p. 763.

[12] D. Parsons '*Sacrarium*: Ablution Drains in Early Medieval Churches', *The Anglo-Saxon Church: Papers on History, Architecture, and Archaeology in Honour of Dr H. M. Taylor*, ed. Butler and Morris, BAR 60 (1986), 105–120, at 106; D. Parsons, *Liturgy and Architecture in the Middle Ages*, Deerhurst Lecture 3 (Deerhurst, 1989), pp. 13 and 20–1; and Biddle, 'Excavation at Winchester', p. 315.

churches such as the Old Minster, Winchester, and St. Mary's at Reculver, the altar and likely altar canopy occupy a great deal of space at the east end of the nave.[13] Indeed, at Winchester the location of possible subsidiary altars or standing memorial crosses in the nave would also have limited movement west of the altar.[14] Assuming the presence of a clergy bench located in the chancel of both churches, there would have been little space for the celebrant to manoeuvre his way westward around the chancel arch, altar, and altar canopy in order to then turn and face east for the service.[15] The likely presence of altar screens or rails would also have obstructed movement to the west, as would have other liturgical furnishings such as candles or crosses.[16] The only literary evidence for the west-facing celebration of the Mass is found in Eadmer's eleventh-century description of the altar in the west end of the Anglo-Saxon cathedral at Canterbury: *ad hoc altare cum sacerdos ageret diuina misteria, faciem ad populum qui deorsum stabat ad orientem uersam habebat.*[17] Though in this later source the celebrant himself is still facing east and not celebrating at a nave altar, it is nevertheless significant that he is facing the congregation.

Toward the end of the Anglo-Saxon period, the number of altars increased and the high altar shifted to the chancel; this metamorphosis was to have an effect on the direction in which the clergy celebrated divine services. The Old Minster at Winchester expanded in all directions in the tenth and eleventh centuries and contained many altars, most notably in the eastern chancel dedicated to St. Mary.[18] Additionally, St. Oswald's Minster in Gloucester had a western apse and eastern chancel, both possibly containing altars in the early tenth century.[19] Later additions to the original fabric of the eighth-century church at Deerhurst saw the complete rebuilding of the eastern chancel in a new style as well as the creation of a cross-wall in the nave that would have fittingly formed a new presbytery for the clergy relocated with the movement of the altar to the chancel.[20] St. Mary's at Reculver also expanded with the addition of surrounding porticoes, and the location of the Anglo-Saxon nave altar was, by the thirteenth century, displaced by a large, decorated stone cross.[21]

The increasing number of Anglo-Saxon porticoes as well as the location of crypts and their respective relics can be used to suggest chancel altar locations in addition to evidence in the archaeological fabric. Tenth-century developments at Deerhurst and Brixworth saw the creation of porticoes alongside the nave and indeed in upper floors of the church which were likely the locations for subsidiary altars.[22] Though nave or chancel altar placement cannot be determined by looking at the altar archaeology of the seventh-century church at Brixworth, the development of a small crypt and

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[13] Parsons, '*Sacrarium*', pp. 105–6.

[14] Biddle, 'Excavation at Winchester', p. 315.

[15] Parsons, '*Sacrarium*', p. 106.

[16] Cramp, 'Furnishing and Sculptural Decoration', pp. 101–2.

[17] 'When the priest performed the divine mysteries at this altar he had his face turned towards the east, towards the people who stood below.' H. M. Taylor, 'The Anglo-Saxon Cathedral Church at Canterbury', *ArchJ* 126 (1969), 101–30, at 129. I have cited Taylor's Latin text and English translation as Robert Willis' Latin text was unavailable.

[18] M. Biddle, 'Excavations at Winchester, 1968: Seventh Interim Report', *AntJ* 49 (1969), 317–8.

[19] Heighway and Bryant, *The Golden Minster: The Anglo-Saxon Minster and Later Medieval Priory of St. Oswald at Gloucester*, BAR 117 (1999), at 57.

[20] H. M. Taylor and J. Taylor, *Anglo-Saxon Architecture*, 2 Vols. (Cambridge, 1965) at I, 199 and 202–05.

[21] Parsons, *Liturgy and Architecture*, p. 20.

[22] Taylor and Taylor, *Anglo-Saxon Architecture*, I, 108–9, 200 and 204; W. H. Knowles, 'Deerhurst Priory Church: Including the Result of the Excavations Conducted During 1926', *Archaeologia* 77 (1928), 141–64, at 160.

ambulatory in the late eighth or early ninth century might suggest a corresponding altar above in the chancel.[23] The altar at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, located directly above the relics of St. Peter, provided a likely precedent for the location of altars above crypts in Anglo-Saxon England.[24] Tenth-century alterations to the earlier seventh-century confessio of the crypt at Wing created a central chamber further to the east, which might suggest the presence of an associated altar further east in the chancel.[25]

Though the movement of altars was gradual and hardly linear in the Anglo-Saxon period, there is less ambiguity about its placement in later centuries. The evidence provided by liturgical furnishings and fittings in and around the chancel all point to at least one placement in the east, often flush to the wall, by the end of the High Middle Ages.[26] Textual evidence for chancel altars, however, exists only in a few passages from Anglo-Saxon England. As mentioned above, Æthelwulf's heavenly vision from De abbatibus and the history of Canterbury Cathedral by Eadmer both describe multiple altars with, notably, an altar in the east end of both churches.[27] Alcuin provides

evidence for the early development of multiple altars in his Versus de patribus regibus et sanctis euboricensis ecclesiae as the poet counts thirty altars in the late eighth-century Alma Sophia at York.[28]

Placement within the chancel and the related movement of clerical seating to the west into a divided portion of the nave suggest a gradual change to eastward facing church services at the end of the Anglo-Saxon period. With the altar in the chancel, oftentimes elevated above the nave, the celebrant was able to walk eastward directly from his seat and celebrate facing east. It is evident at churches like the cathedral at Canterbury that the emphasis was in fact on east-facing worship: services at the west end altar were celebrated facing east and the memorial to St. Dunstan was too close to the matutinal altar for unimpeded westward celebration.[29] Also at Canterbury, the easternmost altar was right against the wall, eliminating the possibility of the celebrant facing west around it. Though the tenth-century Regularis concordia makes no mention of altar placement, its call for more private Masses—such as those for the soul of a departed brother—in the secretis oratorii locis[30] may suggest an eastward facing liturgy in a solitary context.

The change in altar placement and related direction of the clergy in early medieval England has far-reaching implications for how participants would have experienced the order of the Mass. The dramatic and visual power of the position of the celebrant at moments such as the consecration has tremendous dramatic and visual power. A change in the position of the clergy during such services at the altar would have affected the way in which the

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[23] Taylor and Taylor, Anglo-Saxon Architecture, I, 109.

[24] M. Biddle, 'Archaeology, Architecture, and the Cult of Saints in Anglo-Saxon England', The Anglo-Saxon Church: Papers on History, Architecture, and Archaeology in Honour of Dr H.M. Taylor, ed. Butler and Morris, BAR 60 (1986), 1–31, at 3 and 5.

[25] Taylor and Taylor, Anglo-Saxon Architecture, II, 668–9. Indeed, some Anglo-Saxon crypts such as those at Repton and Wing were not originally accessible from the interior of the church; later developments such as possibly the increase in veneration of saints' relics in the community caused the crypts to be linked to the structure above. Ibid.

[26] Such as Easter sepulchers, aumbries, squints, and piscinas. Parsons, 'Sacrarium', p. 108 and Parsons, 'Liturgy and Architecture', pp. 18–21.

[27] Æthelwulf, De abbatibus, pp. 14 and 15l, lines 146; pp. 58, 59, 60 and 61, lines 758–68; pp. 56 and 57, lines 721–2; Taylor, 'Anglo-Saxon Cathedral', pp. 105–6.

[28] Alcuin, The Bishops, Kings, and Saints of York, ed. P. Godman (Oxford, 1982), pp. 120 and 121, lines 1512–4.

[29] Taylor, 'Cathedral Church at Canterbury', pp. 105 and 129.

[30] 'secret places of the oratory': D. T. Symons, The Monastic Agreement of the Monks and Nuns of the English Nation (London, 1953), pp. 4 and 66.

congregation physically and symbolically witnessed the event of the Eucharist.[31] Debate over liturgical orientation in the Roman Catholic Church of the 1960s perhaps can provide a way of thinking about this metamorphosis of architecture and liturgy of the Early Middle Ages.

The issues raised surrounding the Second Vatican Council addressed the relationship of the congregation to the celebrant and celebration, a consideration that may offer cautious insight for the Anglo-Saxon participant. The Anglo-Saxon nave altar model with the celebrant facing west provides similarities with the *versus populum* model of the new Roman Catholic Missal which in 1969 began to replace the earlier Tridentine liturgy which featured the presiding priest turned east away from the congregation.[32] The change to facing the congregation developed as part of a debate regarding the participation of the congregation in the events of the Mass. Promulgators of west facing worship believed that the priest, face-to-face with the people, encouraged the dialogue and active participation of the congregation and acts as 'a conductor of a chorus or orchestra'[33] rather than a solitary performer. Opponents of Vatican II initiatives argued that when the celebrant faced east along with the congregation and physical church, the community celebrated the Mass as a united body directed toward God rather than a closed circle centered around the priest himself.[34] The theological and architectural importance of the East also featured in the discussion: eastward facing liturgy directs prayer to Christ, the rising sun at the Second

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[31] The effect of this change would remain even for those lay persons who infrequently attended Mass as well as for participating clergy.

[32] U. M. Lang, *Turning Towards the Lord: Orientation in Liturgical Prayer* (San Francisco, CA: 2004), p. 9.

[33] D., Smolarski, *Sacred Mysteries: Sacramental Principals and Liturgical Practice* (New Jersey, NY: 2005), p. 22.

[34] Lang, *Turning Towards the Lord*, pp. 32, 102 and 208.

Coming, and for centuries Christian places of worship had been built around that alignment.[35]

The modern debate over liturgical orientation offers an interesting opportunity to hypothesise the motivations behind the shift in Anglo-Saxon altar placement. The question of active participation in the liturgy discussed by the Second Vatican Council could be seen in the inclusive and participatory nature of ritual in the Anglo-Saxon Church, as explored by M. Bedingfield.[36] Bedingfield suggests that the dramatic element of west-facing services encourages the full, conscious involvement of those participating. In turning east, both celebrant and participant become one united body turned to Christ and any potential sense of drama in the person of the celebrant is subverted by the turning of his back.[37] The modern sense of communal participation, the importance of the eastern orientation, and the role of the celebrant are all factors that might have affected the medieval shift in altar placement. Ecclesiastical change associated with the proliferation of private Masses and the Benedictine Reform is also a possible means of influence. The increasing importance of local saints and their association with particular altars for relic worship played a role in the multiplication of the number of altars in individual churches.[38] In this way the association between the cult of saints, holy relics, and their dedicated altars might have been a factor in the growing importance of the chancel and eastward movement of the altar.

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[35] Lang, *Turning Towards the Lord*, pp. 97 and 100.

[36] M. Bedingfield, *The Dramatic Liturgy of Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, 2002), pp. 9—10.

[37] *Ibid.*

[38] Hahn, 'Seeing and Believing', pp. 1080–1. The Cult of Saints is also discussed in Biddle, 'Archaeology, Architecture, and the Cult of Saints', pp. 3 and 5.

During the transition discussed in this paper, there is always variation; yet it is apparent that a change, however gradual, in the placement of the altar from nave to chancel was occurring in the Anglo-Saxon period and into the High Middle Ages with potentially wide-ranging implications for the congregation's experience of the Mass. The debate on liturgical orientation in the modern Church provides a means of examining that metamorphosis and putting such architectural change into a more recent liturgical context. The shift in altar placement indeed suggests how the Anglo-Saxon community perceived and participated in the vital ceremony of the Eucharist.

Aediluulf's *De abbatibus*: a Soteriological Reading

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De abbatibus is an early ninth-century poem written by the Northumbrian monk Aediluulf. It is an account of the history of the poet's monastery, focusing predominantly on the abbots who governed the monastery, but also relating the spiritual achievements of other prominent members of the community. The poem has been frequently cited by scholars, often due to its detailed description of a monastery's physical layout and decoration.[1] There have, however, been few attempts to examine *De abbatibus* as a literary artefact. In this paper I will demonstrate one specific aspect of this poem's literary potential: its soteriological message, that is, its concern with salvation, which is expounded through recounting the good examples of the monastery's ancestors, and through what might be called a 'textual metamorphosis', in which the changing nature of the narrative embodies the very manner in which salvation may be achieved. This reading centres around a reinterpretation of the poem's longest and most cited chapter, chapter twenty-two, which has been dubbed 'Aediluulf's dream'. It has previously been proposed that this dream is a vision of heaven;[2] I will propose, through an examination of the vision's content, language and context within the wider narrative, that it is instead better understood as a vision of an idealised monastery.

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[1] For example, H. M. Taylor, 'The Architectural Interest of Æthelwulf's *De Abbatibus*', *ASE* 3 (1974), 163–74.

[2] J. McEnerney, 'The Dream of Aedilvulf', *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 23 (1988), 28–36.

In doing so, I will demonstrate the central importance that this chapter holds in understanding the poem's function and meaning.

First, I will give a brief summary of *De abbatibus*' content, structure and literary sources. The poem is 819 lines long and is split into twenty-three chapters.[3] It begins with a short prose address to an unnamed ecclesiast. Chapters one and twenty-three are in elegiac verse, while all other chapters are in hexameters. Structurally, it has often been considered a miniature version of Alcuin's *Versus de patribus regibus et sanctis Euboricensis ecclesiae* ('Verse concerning the fathers, kings and saints of the church of York' – otherwise known as his York poem), as both begin by describing the founders of their respective institutions, then the succession of abbots, and both end with a heaven-like scene.[4] David Howlett has demonstrated that the poem also adheres to a chiastic structure centring on the death of Eanmund (the monastery's founder),[5] and to what has been dubbed the 'Golden Section', a term traditionally associated with Virgil, and one that divides a text into two unequal parts.[6] The division here is at

[3] *De Abbatibus*, ed. A. Champbell (Oxford, 1967), pp. 1–65 (*DA* from hereon). All translations are taken from this edition.

[4] M. Lapidge, 'Aediluulf and the School of York', in his (ed.) *Anglo-Latin Literature 600–899* (London, 1996), pp. 381–98, at 387; Alcuin's poem can be found with a translation in P. Godman, *Alcuin: the Bishops, Kings and Saints of York* (Oxford, 1982).

[5] D. Howlett, 'The Provenance, Date, and Structure of *De Abbatibus*', *Archaeologica Aeliana* 3 (1975), 121–30, at 126.

[6] D. Howlett, 'The Structure of *Echasis Captivi*', *SN* 47 (1975), 3–6, at 6; Howlett, 'The Provenance', 29. The 'Golden Section' is a literary model in which the minor part of the text relates to the major part as the major part relates to the whole of the text, namely to the ratio 0.618 – the inverse of the 'golden ratio' of 1.618.

the end of chapter fifteen, just as Aediluulf's own life in the monastery begins.[7]

There are very few works with which to compare *De abbatibus*. However, Alistair Campbell, Michael Lapidge and Andy Orchard have all demonstrated that Aediluulf drew on the works of Alcuin, Aldhelm, Bede, Cyprianus Gallus (specifically his *Heptateuch*), Virgil and the anonymous metrical *Miracula Nynie episcopi* ('The Miracles of Bishop Ninian').[8] Aediluulf's poem has a particularly close metrical and stylistic relationship with Alcuin's York poem and the late eighth-century *Miracula Nynie episcopi*, which celebrates the life of the sixth-century Saint Ninian. Such are the similarities between these three Northumbrian poems that it is likely that they were influenced by the same school of teaching, namely the school of York, as has already been suggested by Michael Lapidge.[9] Arguably more influential on *De abbatibus* was the poetry of Aldhelm, in particular a third of his *Carmina ecclesiastica* (a titulus on Bugga's church), the phraseology of which, as demonstrated by Andy Orchard, is possibly echoed in as many as 150 of Aediluulf's 819 lines.[10] Therefore, it is perhaps

[7] *DA*, p. 41. The division is between lines 506 and 507.

[8] Campbell, *Aethelwulf: De Abbatibus*, pp. xliv–xlviii; Lapidge, 'Aediluulf and the School of York', pp. 388–9; A. Orchard, 'After Aldhelm: the Teaching and Transmission of the Anglo-Latin Hexameter', *Journal of Medieval Latin* 2 (1992), 96–133; A. Orchard, *The Poetic Art of Aldhelm*, CSASE 8 (Cambridge, 1994), 263. Cypianus Gallus' *Heptateuch* can be found in *Cypriani Galli poetae Heptateuchos*, ed. R. Peiper, CSEL 23 (Vienna, 1891); the anonymous *Miracula Nynie episcopi* can be found in *Poetae Latini Aevi Carolini* IV, ed. K. Strecker, MGH Poetae Latini aevi Carolini (Berlin, 1923), 943–62, and the translation by W. MacQueen in J. MacQueen, *St. Nynia* (Edinburgh, 2005), pp. 88–101. All translations are taken from MacQueen's edition.

[9] Lapidge, 'Aediluulf and the School of York', pp. 390–93.

[10] Orchard, 'After Aldhelm', 117. Aldhelm's *Carmina ecclesiastica* can be found in *Aldhelmi Opera Omnia*, ed. R. Ehwald, MGH Auctores antiquissimi 15 (Berlin,

appropriate to consider *De abbatibus* – a poem which celebrates the history of the poet's monastery – to be an elongated *titulus* of sorts, where Aediluulf desires to reaffirm the importance of his monastery and to commemorate it within the language of the scriptures. Indeed, the poet says in chapter one that these verses are *rustica dona* ('rustic gifts') which point out illustrious men so that one can admire how they are climbing the way of light.[11] Parallels with Aldhelm's work, however, are less apparent in chapter twenty-two, which lacks any detail concerning the monastery's history.

Chapter twenty-two is the longest chapter in *De abbatibus* and is entirely concerned with a vision experienced by Aediluulf.[12] This chapter begins as Aediluulf is resting at night. A shining being, described simply as a *ductor* ('leader'), suddenly appears before him.[13] He leads Aediluulf towards a shining city with lofty walls, within which there is a church that, like the walls of the city and the *ductor* beforehand, shines with a great light.[14] For Aediluulf, these scenes appear to have been overwhelming, as he describes himself as breaking down in fear, begging Christ to help him.[15] His plea is seemingly answered with the appearance of a venerable old man sitting before a flower-covered saint's tomb.[16] Aediluulf asks where his former teacher Hyglac is, to which the old man answers in direct speech:

1919), pp. 11–32, and a translation in M. Lapidge and J. L. Rosier, *Aldhelm: the Poetic Works* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 46–58.

[11] *DA*, line 14, p. 3.

[12] *DA*, ch. 22, lines 692–795, pp. 55–63.

[13] *DA*, ch. 22, line 695, p. 55.

[14] *DA*, ch. 22, lines 696–725, pp. 55–7.

[15] *DA*, ch. 22, lines 730–31, p. 57.

[16] *DA*, ch. 22, lines 732–34, p. 59.

> sedibus e summis oculos conferre memento,
> intereaque uidens Plaustrum quo labitur axem.[17]

Thus turning northwards, the poet sees firstly another former teacher Eadfrith praying, and then behind him Hyglac, who is dressed in white robes.[18] Eadfrith then guides the poet into the church. Another altar appears by which a chair stands, where Wulfsig, the sixth abbot of the monastery and the last to be documented in this poem, is enthroned.[19] Eadfrith guides Aediluulf further, this time to a table decked with food and drink, where the guide offers the poet a glass of wine, which he had blessed with pious prayers.[20] With this last act, Eadfrith speaks the following words in direct speech:

> haec domus est meritis animarum condita sanctis,
> quas deus omnipotens istic piaetate locabat.
> esuriem poenasque sitim per secula nullus
> sentiet, in domino sumunt sed gaudia longa,
> laudantes dominum caeli per secula cuncta,
> qui requiem lectis tribuet sine fine beatam. [21]

Aediluulf then wakes and begins to write what he has just witnessed.[22]

The focus of the poem thus moves from the realm of the past into the realm of the imagined with chapter twenty-two. In this

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[17] *DA*, ch. 22, lines 745–46, p. 59: 'Turn thine eyes from these lofty stations, and for the time being look at the north, where the Wain glides'.

[18] *DA*, ch. 22, lines 747–57, p. 59.

[19] *DA*, ch. 22, lines 769–71, p. 61.

[20] *DA*, ch. 22, lines 775–85, p. 61.

[21] *DA*, ch. 22, lines 789–94, p. 63: 'This home has been established because of the merits of blessed souls, which almighty God has placed here in their piety. Through the ages, not one of them shall feel hunger, pain, or thirst, but they have prolonged joy in the Lord, always praising the Lord of heaven, who will give blessed rest for ever to his elect'.

[22] *DA*, ch. 22, line 795, p. 63.

respect, the inclusion of this vision is somewhat surprising and appears disjointed from the preceding chapters. It is, however, considerably longer than any other chapter, suggesting that this vision should not simply be recognised as being different in tone, but that this vision is meaningful and significant; indeed, Aediluulf implies that this vision is the very reason for writing this poem, as he begins writing as soon as he awakens. This vision is, as this paper argues, the key to understanding the purpose of this poem.

Chapter twenty-two has previously been interpreted as a dream of heaven on account of its ethereal atmosphere, the use of superlatives, and the references to *meritus* ('merit') and *uisus* ('vision') which are typical notions of the heavenly city – the New Jerusalem – that is inhabited after the resurrection.[23] However, Aediluulf's vision does not fulfil the idea of heaven entirely. The expected appearances of Christ, the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Holy Spirit, Adam and Eve, the saints, angels, and Aediluulf's parents and ancestors are all missing; all we have is a venerable old man, Eadfrith, Hyglac and Wulfsig. Conversely, the presence of a tomb in heaven would be puzzling.[24]

Rather, Aediluulf's vision possesses closer parallels with visions that depict the 'interim paradise' – the place in which good souls reside before Judgement Day.[25] In particular, Aediluulf's vision shares a number of striking similarities with Bede's account of the vision of Dryhthelm. Within his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Bede describes how the Northumbrian layman Dryhthelm came back to life, having been led

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[23] McEnerney, 'The Dream of Aedilvulf', 29–30.

[24] Somewhat surprisingly, McEnerney undermines his own argument in highlighting this: McEnerney, 'The Dream of Aedilvulf', 35.

[25] See J. Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory* (London, 1984); A. J. Kabir, *Paradise, Death and Doomsday in Anglo-Saxon Literature*, CSASE 32 (Cambridge, 2001).

through an afterlife by a white-gowned *ductor*.[26] This afterlife is divided into four parts, two regions for the souls of the good and two regions for the souls of the bad. Beyond the shared presence of a shining *ductor*, it is when Dryhthelm recalls his approach to the first of the two regions of the good that parallels between this and Aediluulf's vision become markedly apparent. According to Bede, Dryhthelm recalled that:

> cumque me in luce aperta duceret, uidi ante nos murum permaximum, cuius neque longitudini hinc uel inde, neque altitudini ullus esse terminus uideretur[...]Cum ergo peruenissemus ad murum, statim nescio quo ordine fuimus in summitate eius. Et ecce ibi campus erat latissimus ac laetissimus, tantaque flagrantia uernantium flosculorum plenus, ut omnem mox fetorem tenebrosi fornacis, qui me persuaserat, effugaret admirandi huius suauitas odoris. Tanta autem lux cuncta ea loca perfuderat, ut omni splendore diei siue solis meridiani radiis uideretur esse praeclarior.[27]

Within both this and Aediluulf's vision, the subject is led to a wall of incredible proportions and to a field full of flowers. Furthermore, Bede and Aediluulf both emphasise that these visions were multi-

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[26] C. Plummer, *Venerabilis Baedae Opera Historica* (Oxford, 1896), pp. 303–10 (*HE* from hereon).

[27] *HE*, ch. 12, p. 307: 'As he led me on in open light, I saw a very great wall in front of us which seemed to be endlessly long and endlessly high everywhere[…]When we had reached the wall we suddenly found ourselves on top of it, by what means I know not. There was a very broad and pleasant plain, full of such a fragrance of growing flowers that the marvellous sweetness of the scent quickly dispelled the foul stench of the gloomy furnace which had hung around me. So great was the light that flooded all this place that it seemed to be clearer than the brightness of daylight or the rays of the noontide sun.' The translation is that of M. Colgrave and C. Mynors, reprinted with minor emendations in *Bede: the Ecclesiastical History of the English People, the Greater Chronicle, Bede's Letter to Egbert*, ed. J. McClure and R. Collins (Oxford, 1994), pp. 253–58.

sensory experiences: both place great emphasis on the dazzling appearance of these ethereal landscapes, as well as on the sweet fragrances of the flowers.[28] Undoubtedly Aediluulf would have been familiar with Bede's account of the vision of Dryhthelm.[29] The similarities between these visions suggest that Aediluulf may well have drawn inspiration from such a notion of an idealised space where good souls would wait for the arrival of the salvational Judgement Day.

Unlike Bede's vision, however, Aediluulf maintains a strong sense of the familiar in his account – a familiarity that suggests that the ethereal place the poet visits is a monastic space. The three named individuals that Aediluulf meets, all previously praised for their obedience to the monastic life, appear to be continuing with such a lifestyle: two are seated, presumably in contemplation, while the third, Eadfrith, is on his knees praying.[30] Meanwhile, the physical surroundings of the vision embody much of what characterises the monastic life. A great sense of solitude is established with the emphasis placed on the loftiness of the walls of the city.[31] Furthermore, Aediluulf states:

> sed domus exterius magnis minimisque per omne
> porticibus spatium muri subfulta manebat,

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[28] *HE*, ch. 12, pp. 307–8; *DA*, ch. 22, lines 699–700, p. 55.

[29] Lapidge argues convincingly that Aediluulf either directly or indirectly had knowledge of the library at York, which would have held a copy of Bede's *HE*: Lapidge, 'Aediluulf and the School of York', p. 398. Campbell previously demonstrated Aediluulf's knowledge of Bede's work through his verbal borrowings from Bede's metrical *Vita s. Cuthberhti* ('Life of St Cuthbert'): Campbell, *Aethelwulf: De Abbatibus*, p. xlv.

[30] *DA*, ch. 22, line 734, p. 59; ch. 22, lines 751–52, p. 59; ch. 22, lines 755–56, p. 59.

[31] *DA*, ch. 22, line 707, p. 57.

> e quibus inde plagas bis binae quattuor orbis
> aspiciunt, sursum spatientes edita muri
> inter quas modice uariantur in ordine celle.[32]

Here Aediluulf employs *aspicere* ('to look at') in both literal and metaphorical terms; not only does *aspicere* describe the physical layout of the structure, it also refers to the notion that the building (and thus the people that inhabit it) looks out onto and contemplates the world. Moreover, the poet states that between these walls was an *ordino celle* ('row of cells'). *Cella* is the most frequent word that Aediluulf uses to refer to his monastery;[33] its appearance in this chapter suggests that within this vision we should see a monastery. This is reinforced even further by the use of the words *urbs* ('city') and *domus* ('home') to describe this ethereal place, words the poet had used on previous occasions to describe his monastery.[34]

That we are within the confines of a monastery is additionally suggested by the words spoken by Eadfrith at the climax of this vision.[35] As Eadfrith passes Aediluulf a glass of wine and speaks his final words, a multitude of phrases and actions that the poet has recalled earlier in the poem are invoked. The action of Aediluulf

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[32] *DA*, ch. 22, lines 714–18, p. 57: 'Outside, the building was supported all the way round the wall by large and small porticoes. Of these, twice two looked towards the four corners of the world, and above touched the top of the wall. Between them in a row small cells were interspersed.'

[33] Aediluulf previously uses *cella* to describe his monastery at ch. 4, line 78, p. 9; ch. 6, line 123, p. 13; ch. 8, line 216, p. 19; ch. 11, line 321, p. 27; ch. 12, line 395, p. 33; ch. 14, line 432, p. 35; ch. 14, line 471, p. 39; ch. 15, line 473, p. 39; ch. 17, line 529, p. 43; ch. 18, line 548, p. 45; ch. 20, line 597, p. 49; ch. 20, line 606, p. 49; ch. 20, line 609, p. 49; ch. 20, line 618, p. 49; ch. 20, line 654, p. 53.

[34] Aediluulf previously uses *urbs* to describe his monastery at ch. 15, line 505, p. 41, and at ch. 20, line 609, p. 49; the poet similarly uses *domus* at ch. 18, line 550, p. 45, and ch. 20, line 620, p. 51.

[35] *DA*, ch. 22, lines 789–94, pp. 61–3.

drinking Eadfrith's wine echoes Eanmund drinking the pious words of Eadfrith in chapter five;[36] that this monastery was established by the merits of blessed souls echoes the establishment of the monastery by the work of *uenerandus* ('venerable') Eanmund chapter four;[37] that God sent people to the monastery echoes the description of Ultan as *deo electus* (elected by God) in chapter eight;[38] and that no one ever felt hunger echoes the statement:

> segetes per limina celle
> quam laete surgunt superi dulcedine roris.[39]

Such parallels suggest that Eadfrith is speaking about a place comparable with Aediluulf's own monastery. The heavenly sense of the vision should therefore not be seen as a sign that this is heaven itself, but should be interpreted as an idealisation of the poet's own monastery – a monastery not of the present, but an idealised blueprint that seeks to follow the examples of the community's ancestors.

But why would Aediluulf include such a vision of an idealised monastery within what appears previously to be a historical account? The answer, I believe, is that this idealised monastery provides significance for remembering the monastery's past and serves to promote the monastic life. It is a metaphor for salvation and acts as a destination for what is a textual and spiritual metamorphosis, from the outward contemplation of the monastery's history to an internalised narrative, from the past to the idealised, from damnation to salvation. The message is ultimately that the monastic life is the way to salvation and is, as Aediluulf says himself in chapter eight, the *perfecta uita* ('the perfect life').[40]

It is with the appearance of Eadfrith that the message of this vision and of the wider narrative emerges most clearly. As we have seen, Eadfrith states that in the ethereal place that Aediluulf is visiting everyone is in prolonged joy and lacks hunger, thirst or pain.[41] It is therefore a place of refuge and contentment – the perfect place in which to await Judgement Day. Eadfrith's speech is brief and succinct; its importance, however, should not be doubted. As Aediluulf approaches the table of food with Eadfrith, there is a significantly heightened use of literary devices. Alliteration is used to almost excess. This is accompanied by an adherence to the symmetrical golden rule in lines 763, 764 and 777:

> cerea flammigeris uenerans altaria donis
> porticibus cunctis ardebant lumina clara[42]

> plurima qua miris micuerunt uascula gemmis[43]

Furthermore, Aediluulf uses an envelope pattern in lines 736 and 768:

> ara dicata deo mittebat munera summo[44]

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[36] *DA*, ch. 5, line 104, p. 11; the poet reinforces the parallel between his drinking in the vision and Eanmund's drinking in chapter five with the exclusive use of *haurire* ('to drink in') at these two points in the poem.

[37] *DA*, ch. 12, line 399, p. 33.

[38] *DA*, ch. 8, line 223, p. 21.

[39] *DA*, ch. 20, lines 606–7, p. 49: 'crops sprang up within the confines of the monastery right gladly in the sweetness of the dew of heaven'.

[40] *DA*, ch. 8, line 206, p. 19.

[41] *DA*, ch. 22, lines 789–94, p.63.

[42] *DA*, ch. 22, lines 763–4, p. 61: 'In all the porticoes bright waxen lights were burning, honouring the altars with flaming donations'.

[43] *DA*, ch. 22, line 777, p. 61: 'There many vessels gleamed with wondrous gems'.

[44] *DA*, ch. 22, line 736, p. 59: 'An altar[...]sent dedicated gifts to God, the highest one'.

ara sacrata, deo mittit quae munera summo[45]

The use of a singular third person present form instead of the singular third person imperfect form, and the presence of *quae*, which creates a subordinate clause, distinguish line 768 from line 736. Otherwise, these two lines are identical. The intensity of these literary flourishes creates a crescendo in the narrative, suggesting that the climax is approaching. A grand stylistic fanfare therefore heralds Eadfrith's words.

The importance of Eadfrith's words is further emphasised by the fact that they are spoken directly; both Aediluulf and the audience are addressed. This interaction with the audience is, however, not new: it was initiated earlier on within the vision with the use of first person plural forms of the verbs *carpere* ('to advance'),[46] *conspicere* ('to see'),[47] and *properare* ('to hasten').[48] The poet creates a sense that the audience is on this visionary journey with him, and that, just as Aediluulf is led by his *ductor*, he in turn becomes the *ductor* for the audience. The audience is therefore encouraged to drink in Eadfrith's words, just as Aediluulf drank the wine. The words of Eadfrith are a direct message to the audience of the potential of the monastic life, spoken by a member of the monastery's past.

This praise for the monastic life is set within visually intense surroundings: the objects on the altars, the walls of the church, and even the people themselves, shine and dazzle. It is a sign of moral purity, an allegory for salvation. In particular, the use of the word *candor* ('light') to describe the church within this dream is entirely apt, as this is a word that can represent both physical brightness and moral purity.[49] In reference to the abbots and teachers of the monastery, this metaphor also implies that they have been heaven-sent. For example, the venerable old man, Hyglac and Eadfrith appear after Aediluulf calls out to Christ for help.[50] Their brightness within the vision also specifically invokes a notion promoted in the *Miracula Nynie episcopi* that the saints were sent from God as stars; Ninian is described as *lampas fulgesceret* ('shining like a light'),[51] and his mind is a *sideris ad speciem perfecta nitentia* ('a perfect splendour like a star').[52] It is when Aediluulf turns to the northern stars in his vision that he sees Eadfrith.[53] Hence light imagery attains a specifically celestial context; the notion of salvation is located within certain corporeal bodies. The ancestral teachers, therefore, are idealised in a monastic setting draped in allegorical imagery, implying that we must look to their past examples as guidance for salvation. Aediluulf's dream reminds the audience of the ideal of the monastic life, and is calling upon the audience to follow the examples of the community's ancestors. The vision therefore provides an explanation for why and how we should consider the monastery's past.

In such a way, chapter twenty-two should be seen as the destination for what has been a journey through the monastery's history. Indeed, not only has the poet been led, and has led us, on a physical journey within this dream, but he has also led us on a temporal and textual journey through the monastery's history.

There is, however, a further way in which this sense of movement, this textual change, can be seen within *De abbatibus*. From

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[45] *DA*, ch. 22, line 768, p. 61: 'A consecrated altar, which sent gifts to God, the highest one'.

[46] *DA*, ch. 22, line 705, p. 57.

[47] *DA*, ch. 22, line 706, p. 57.

[48] *DA*, ch. 22, line 765, p. 61.

[49] *DA*, ch. 22, line 712, p. 57.

[50] *DA*, ch. 22, lines 730–50, pp. 57–9.

[51] *Miracule Nynie epsicopi*, ch. 2, line 53, p. 947.

[52] *Miracule Nynie epsicopi*, ch. 4, line 87, p. 948.

[53] *DA*, ch. 22, lines 747–50, p. 59.

chapter sixteen onwards, the narrative becomes increasingly introspective in its style and content. There is an increased use of first person verbs and personal contemplative comments, while the content derives more and more from the poet's own personal observations and experiences. For example, Aediluulf adds in chapter seventeen that he believes that he will receive the gift of salvation through the prayers of the men he is discussing.[54] With these added personal comments, there is a sense that the poet is already beginning to contemplate the significance of the monastery's past. Furthermore, such is this shift in focus that by chapter twenty we are presented with a chapter that contains no events as such, but a description of the monastery's buildings;[55] this historical account now appears to be contemplating the present and the poet's surroundings. The narrative from chapter sixteen onwards therefore becomes more personalised, moving from retrospection to introspection. To an extent, these changes reflect the fact that the events now described have occurred within the poet's lifetime; he thus can give personal insight into what he narrates. However, that this process begins at chapter sixteen, respecting the division imposed by the 'Golden Section', suggests that the poet was aware of the dynamism of the narrative.

With this progression into introspection, chapter twenty-two once again acts as the climax. All events in this chapter occur within the mind of the poet; the narrative has thus arrived at a moment of complete introspection. This development further backs the poet's message that the monastic life is the way to salvation; the very narrative embodies how one may achieve salvation – through introspective thought and spiritual solitude. It is only when the poet is completely introspective that we arrive at the salvational moment.

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[54] *DA*, ch. 17, lines 533–34, p. 43.

[55] *DA*, ch. 20, lines 597–655, pp. 49–53.

In conclusion, it is fair to say that Aediluulf is true to his words: as stated at the beginning of the poem, he wants people to admire the monastic life.[56] This intention, however, is driven by a much stronger, soteriological message: the monastic way of life is the way to salvation. In such a context, the poet uses his vision in chapter twenty-two as a way of illustrating how he wants his audience to understand and use the monastery's past. Indeed, Aediluulf implies that this vision was the very reason why he wrote this poem, in that he began writing as soon as he awoke.[57] It is a climax to what is a textual journey, a metamorphosis from retrospection to introspection, with salvation as the destination. With such a sense of journeying towards salvation, *De abbatibus* is comparable to an allegorical reading of *Exodus*.[58] Aediluulf's possible use of Cyprianus Gallus' *Heptateuch* is thus particularly intriguing. This poem stands almost alone as an example of early ninth-century Anglo-Latin literature, yet it has much to say about at least one monk's view of the past and the world around him. I hope that this paper has revealed some of this potential, and demonstrated that these verses are far from what Aediluulf modestly claims, mere *rustica dona*.[59]

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[56] *DA*, ch. 1, lines 23–4, p. 5.

[57] *DA*, ch. 22, line 795, p. 63.

[58] M. Roberts, *Biblical Epic and Rhetorical Paraphrase in Late Antiquity* (Liverpool, 1985), p. 124.

[59] My thanks to Gabriella Corona, Mary Garrison and the editors of *Quaestio Insularis* for their comments and suggestions during varying stages of the development of this paper.