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Contents

Articles

Reviews

Obituaries

Crying Out for Two Lords: Sex and Supplication in *Wulf and Eadwacer*

Thomas Morcom

Abstract

This article provides a significant reinterpretation of *Wulf and Eadwacer*, departing from a new understanding of the function of the word *eadwacer* as an apt compound to refer to the Christian God. This is demonstrated through a survey of compounds that take *ead-* as their first element elsewhere in the Old English corpus, alongside a discussion of the possible pastoral implications of *wacer*. The concluding lines of the poem can, consequently, be understood more positively as a prayer of supplication on the part of the speaker, who repudiates her wretched relationship with the inconstant Wulf in favour of intimacy with God, providing the poem with a moment of consolation at its close, as is typical of the Old English elegies more generally. The article concludes with an extrapolation of the argument advanced up this point, in testing this soteriological reading's productivity in relation to *Wulf and Eadwacer*'s ambiguous opening lines.

In any article dedicated to *Wulf and Eadwacer*, it has practically reached the point of scholarly convention to acknowledge the extreme ambiguity of the poem and the diversity of critical responses it has spawned.[1] In terms of tone and form, the poem has traditionally been compared with both the Old English elegies and riddles, many of which also appear in the manuscript in which it is preserved, the Exeter Book (Exeter Cathedral Library MS 3501), although critics have also noted parallels in both the charms and a variety of Germanic legendary narratives.[2] Furthermore, alongside *Wulf and Eadwacer* having a greater number of potential 'solutions' than arguably any other Old English work, other scholars have been

[1] I am indebted to Heather O'Donoghue, Harriet Soper, Caroline Batten, and Rebecca Merkelbach for their support and comments on draft versions of this article, which were invaluable to it reaching its present form. I would also like to thank Rose Lyddon for the productive discussions of early-medieval theology in the early stages of the writing of this piece and Caitlin Kelly for her thoughtful reflections on the poem that first prompted my research direction in relation to the poem.

[2] C.f. John F. Adams, '*Wulf and Eadwacer*: An Interpretation', *Modern Language Notes*, 73.1 (1958), 1–5; Donald K. Fry, '*Wulf and Eadwacer*: A Wen Charm', *The Chaucer Review*, 5.4 (1971), 247–63; John M. Fanagan, '*Wulf and Eadwacer*: A Solution to the Critic's Riddle', *Neophilologus*, 60 (1976), 130–37; Anne L. Klinck, 'The Old English Elegy as a Genre', *English Studies in Canada*, 10.2 (1984), 129–40; Joseph Harris, 'Hadubrand's Lament: On the Origin and Age of Elegy in Germanic', in *Heldensage und Heldendichtung im Germanischen*,ed. by Heinrich Beck (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1988), pp. 81–144 (pp. 95–101).

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equally strident in their conviction that this poem lies beyond conclusive interpretation.[3] These issues arise, not from the absolute obscurity of the poem to a modern reader, but rather from the fact that our basic understanding of the text, in which a feminine speaker expresses extreme distress in relation to her isolation, provides a strong foundation from which a multiplicity of readings can extend. Simultaneously, the specifics of the poem, beyond this basic affective sketch, remain sufficiently ambiguous to preclude a critical consensus on anything further. *Wulf and Eadwacer* may only ever remain evocative to the modern reader and care should be taken to approach the text with this in mind: this article does not seek to repudiate or supersede previous approaches to this short and much-dissected poem. At the outset, it should instead be acknowledged that substantial divergence in interpretation between critics can stem from relatively minor differences in their given presuppositions concerning the content and logic of the poem. Such a claim is not made at the beginning of this article for the purposes of self-deprecation: the ensuing argument aims to advance a wholly original and highly productive perspective on *Wulf and Eadwacer*, particularly in aligning the poem more closely with other Old English elegies than has previously been suggested. I do wish to foreground, however, that when faced with an interpretative challenge on the scale of *Wulf and Eadwacer*, the best approach is that of collaborative bricolage, within which the following work constitutes another piece to be added to the ever-expanding collage of scholarly response.

In this article, the principal point of distinction made in the interpretation of the poem lies in the understanding of the term *eadwacer*. The word appears only once in the poem and is most commonly taken as a proper noun denoting one of the principal characters of the work, who is regularly proposed to be the speaker's estranged husband, in opposition to her lover Wulf. Interpretations both complementary and alternative to the word's significance as a proper noun have also been suggested, principally centring on the term's potential significance as a compound. The most commonly accepted of these is the assertion that the word is best taken as meaning or having the subtext of 'property watcher', either as a critique of this possessive husband figure by the female speaker or as a form of mockery of Wulf who has abandoned the speaker, in opposition to his expected role as her protector.[4] The less common interpretation, most notably suggested by Frese and Greenfield but more recently also supported, albeit as an implicit connotation of a proper name, by Osborn, is that of 'blessed guardian' or 'guardian of happiness'.[5] For Greenfield, the term is simply one of affection for Wulf, but in Frese's argument, which centres on the radical reinterpretation of the poem as a mother's lament for a lost son, the term *eadwacer* refers to a guardian spirit to whom the grieving speaker appeals, although Frese is equivocal whether this is an angelic figure

[3] See, by way of contrast, two notable treatments of the poem, the first offering a comprehensive and confident interpretation and the second stressing the irresolvable nature of the text's many issues: Stanley B. Greenfield, '*Wulf and Eadwacer*: All Passions Pent', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 15 (1986), 5–14; Peter S. Baker, 'The Ambiguity of *Wulf and Eadwacer*', *Studies in Philology*, 78.5 (1981), 39–51.

[4] See Adams, p. 1; Richard F. Giles, '*Wulf and Eadwacer*: A New Reading', *Neophilologus*, 65 (1981), 468–72, (pp. 469–70); Terrence Keough, 'The Tension of Separation in *Wulf and Eadwacer*', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 77.4 (1976), 552–60 (pp. 556–57); Peter Orton, 'An Approach to *Wulf and Eadwacer*', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: Archaeology, Culture, History, Literature*, 85.3 (1985), 223–58 (p. 230).

[5] Greenfield, 'All Passions Pent', p. 13; Dolores W. Frese, '*Wulf and* Eadwacer: The Adulterous Woman Reconsidered', *Notre Dame English Journal*, 15.1 (1983), 1–22 (p. 14); Marijane Osborn, 'Reading the "Animals" of *Wulf and Eadwacer*', *Medievalia et humanistica: Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Culture*, 29 (2003), 27–49 (p. 39). Osborn views the superficial outlaw narrative as concealing a 'biblical animal allegory' relating to the Christian contact with the pagan, based on her reading of the text in relation to the works of Carolingian scholar Hrabanus Maurus.

or a being more akin to the valkyries of Old Norse myth. While a similar understanding of the literal meaning of *eadwacer* to Frese and Greenfield will be adopted here, their overarching interpretations of *Wulf and Eadwacer* will not be supported in this article, nor will their resulting suggestions as to the identity of the *eadwacer* figure, although both constitute coherent readings of the poem. Rather, I shall discuss the possibility and productivity of considering *eadwacer* as an epithet for the Christian God, to whom the speaker makes a direct appeal at the poem's conclusion.[6] This investigation will begin with a systematic survey of the Old English corpus to establish a strong pattern of Christian significance in other compounds that take *ead* as their first component. This will be followed by the development of a distinct interpretation of the poem's conclusion, predicated on interpreting *eadwacer* as an epithet for God, wherein the speaker offers a prayer of supplication in relation to her miserable condition. Thirdly, a discussion of whether the highly ambiguous opening lines of the poem are compatible with the reading established up to that point in the article will be undertaken, to stress the impossibility of producing conclusive interpretative frameworks in relation to *Wulf and Eadwacer*.

Any such attempt to suggest a distinct alternative reading of a word central to the ambiguity of *Wulf and Eadwacer* must offer additional evidence to recommend it in comparison to more established interpretations. Fortunately, several novel arguments can be given to support the usage of *eadwacer* as a kenning for God. In the first place it is possible to significantly extend Frese's assertion that the term is 'an epithetic compound, the *ead* cognate with the well-attested *eadig* which commonly refers to the blessed or happy who enjoy the treasure or possession of Heaven.'[7] A systematic analysis of compound words which take *ead* as their first element, throughout the extant corpus of Old English poetry and prose, reveals a semantic field overwhelmingly associated with Christian figures and values.[8] By far the most common of these are the noun *ead-med* and the adjective *ead-mod*, occurring in the highest density, as one might expect, in the homiletic tradition.[9] To this can be added *ead-wela*, which, while constructed from two words relating to wealth, is employed predominately in a religious context and which Stanley previously translated as 'blessings and prosperity'.[10] The word *ead-hredig* also falls into this category; it is used

[6] The only other instance in which Eadwacer has elsewhere possibly been argued to refer to the Christian God is potentially by Henry Morley in 1888, although Morley's argument is brief, allegorical, and obscure. It consequently shares no other features with the argument of the present article; for a summary and critique of Morley's approach to the poem, see Henry Bradley, review of Henry Morley and William Hall Griffin, *English Writers: An Attempt Towards a History of English Literature*, 11 vols (London: Cassell, 1887–95), vol. 2: *From Caedmon to the Conquest*, by Henry Morley (1888), in *The Academy*, 33 (1888), 197–98 (p. 198).

[7] Frese, p. 14. For full discussion of the word's sense, see *Eadig* in *Dictionary of Old English: A to I*, ed. by Angus Cameron, Ashley Crandell Amos, Antonette diPaolo Healey et al. (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English Project, 2018), <https://tapor.library.utoronto.ca/doe/> [accessed 11/04/2022].

[8] See *Ead* in *Dictionary of Old English: A to I*. It is of note that the sense linked to prosperity is distinctly secondary to the more common meaning relating to happiness.

[9] 'Humility' and 'Humble', respectively. *Eadmed* and *eadmod*, in *Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus*, ed. by Antonette diPaolo Healey with John Price Wilkin and Xin Xiang (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English Project, 2018), <https://tapor.library.utoronto.ca/doecorpus/> [accessed 25/04/2021].

[10] *Andreas: An Edition*, ed. by Richard North and Michael Bintley (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2016), p. 161; *Cynewulf's Elene*, ed. by Pamela Gradon (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1977), 75; *The Guthlac Poems of the Exeter Book*, ed. by Jane Roberts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 115; 'Exeter Book: *Paternal Precepts* — An Edition, with Translation, and Comments', ed. by Eric G. Stanley, *Anglia*, 136.2 (2018), 277–95 (p. 282); *The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry: An Edition of Exeter Dean and Chapter MS 3501*, ed. by Bernard J. Muir (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1994), p. 249.

only in the description of the three holy women Judith, Juliana, and Elene in their respective poems, often being idiomatically rendered as 'triumphant.'[11] *Juliana* also features the phrase *ece eadlufan*, employed by Africanus while chastising Juliana for her unwillingness to marry Eleusius.[12] As Bjork has commented, however, this is one of the many examples within the poem where heathen rhetoric is undercut by an unwitting irony, as the audience is supposed to recognise that *ece eadlufan* can only be found with Christ.[13] Such a reading is corroborated by the use of the phrase *ece eadgiefe*, by the demon in his confrontation with Juliana, as one of the attributes lost by Adam and Eve during the Fall.[14] In all the cases above, it is significant to the ensuing argument to note that the presence of *ead* in these compounds has a consistent qualifying effect on the second element, in connoting the Christian spiritual quality of the compound as a whole, in contrast with the more general sense that the second component in isolation would confer. If *eadwacer* is intended to have a significance beyond that of a proper name, it would be highly unusual in the context of extant Old English poetry for *ead* to refer exclusively to secular wealth or property.

To the group of compounds discussed above can be added two yet more pertinent examples, which have not previously been considered in relation to *Wulf and Eadwacer*. The first is the phrase *engla eadgifa*, which occurs twice in *Andreas*, both times as a kenning for God.[15] The second is the word *eadfruma*, found once in *Andreas* and once in *Christ B*.[16] Depending on the meaning taken for *fruma* in this case, the compound can be translated as 'the origin of joy', 'the author of joy', or 'prince of joy', all of which are suitable given that the term is used of Christ upon his ascension to heaven to rule beside his Father. It is the argument of the present article that it is to this subset of compounds, beginning in *ead* and followed by a specific function or qualitiy, that *eadwacer* should be considered to belong. In the cases of *fruma* and *gifa*, *ead*'s connotations of spiritual happiness reinforce the more subtle divine connotations of the second stems, which while all having metonymic relationships to the Christian God, also have possible laic interpretations in isolation. The application of such a model to *eadwacer* is complicated, however, by the fact that, while *fruma* and *gifa* are both attested in isolation elsewhere in the Old English corpus, *wacer* is not. This necessarily adds an additional level of speculation to the interpretation of this epithet, but the general critical consensus has been towards interpreting the term as relating to the verb *wacian*,[17] and most closely, to the adjective *wacor*.[18]

It is worth noting here that *wacor* itself is a relatively uncommon word, having only five attestations. Two of these occurrences, along with the only two instances of the adverbial form *wacorlice*, are found in the Old English version of Gregory the Great's *Pastoral Care*, as

[11] Literally 'happy in victory'. See *Elene*, p. 58; *Juliana*, ed. by Rosemary Woolf (New York: Appleton, 1966), p. 32; *Judith*, in *The Cambridge Old English Reader*, ed. by Richard Marsden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 147–48. For discussions of how best to translate this term, see Patricia A. Belanoff, 'Judith: Sacred and Secular Heroine', *Studies in Medieval Culture*, 32 (1993), 247–64 (p. 249); Mary Dockray-Miller, 'Female Community in the Old English *Judith*', *Studia Neophilologica*, 70.2 (1998), 165–72 (p. 169).

[12] 'The eternal joy of love'. *Juliana*, l. 25.

[13] Robert E. Bjork, *Old English Verse Saints Lives* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), p. 57.

[14] 'The eternal gift of blessedness'. *Juliana*, l. 44.

[15] 'Bliss-giver of angels'. *Andreas*, ll. 121, 142.

[16] *Andreas*, l. 187; *The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry*, p. 69.

[17] 'To remain awake' or 'to guard'.

[18] 'Watchful' or 'vigilant'. See Jacqueline A. Tasioulas, 'The Mother's Lament: *Wulf and Eadwacer* Reconsidered', *Medium Ævum*, 65.1 (1996), 1–18 (p. 8); Fanagan, p. 132; Baker, 'The Ambiguity of *Wulf and Eadwacer*', p. 49.

translations of the Latin *vigilans*.[19] The other three are found in the writings of Wulfstan, once in Homily 10c, *Her Ongynð be Cristendome*, and twice, albeit in two near-identical formulations, in *The Institutes of Polity*. It is productive at this juncture to detail the context of both of Wulfstan's usages of *wacor*. The homiletic example proceeds from an exhortation of *leofan men* to swiftly turn towards the observance of God.[20] At this point, Wulfstan constructs an extended contrast between the hoped-for shift from negative to positive qualities occasioned by an increase in piety, of which the following is an extract:

> Se þe wære ofermod, weorðe se eadmod. Se þe wære scaðiende, weorðe se tiligende on rihtlicre tilðe. Se þe wære slapol, weorðe se ful wacor, se þe wære full slaw, weorðe se unslaw to cyrian gelome for agenre þearfe.[21]

Here the use of *wacor* in a metaphorical sense as an approbated Christian value, strikingly paralleled with an *ead-* compound, is clearly attested, with an implicit sense of spiritual attentiveness both towards God's law and against potential moral dangers. These connotations are expanded in *The Institutes of Polity*, wherein the following passage is found in Wulfstan's advice to bishops:

> Forðam wace bið þe hyrde funden to heorde, þe nele þa heorde, þe he healdan sceal, huru mid clypunge bewerian, butan he elles mæge, gif þær hwylc þeodsceaþa sceaþian onginneþ. Nis nan swa yfel sceaþa, swa is deofol sylf. He bið áá ymbe þæt án hu he on manna sawlum mæst gesceaþian mæge. Þonne motan þa hyrdas beon swiþe wacore and geornlice clypiende, þe wið þone þeodsceaðan folce scylan scyldan. Þæt syndon bisceopas and mæssepreostas, þe godcunde heorde gewarian and bewerian scylan mid wislican laran, þæt se wodfreca werewulf to swiðe ne toslite ne to fela ne abite of godcundre heorde.[22]

Here the term *wacor* is employed as one of the central qualities of the spiritual *hyrde*: the pastor who must guard against the threat of the Devil, here depicted in lupine terms. No direct connection need be drawn between *Wulf and Eadwacer* and the later writing of Wulfstan for the comparison of the poem to this passage to remain productive in situating *wacor* within a lexical context of religious vigilance and an anti-social wolf-figure.[23] To reinforce this connection, it is possible to look at the usage of the closely related adjective *wacol* in Ælfric's *Sermo de Natale Domini:* 'þam lareowe gedafenað þæt he symle wacol sy ofer godes eowede.

[19] *King Alfred's Old English Translation of Pope Gregory the Great's Regula Pastoralis and its Cultural Context: A Study and Partial Edition According to all Surviving Manuscripts based on Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 12*, ed. by Carolin Schreiber (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2003), ll. 339, 377, 443, 590.

[20] *The Homilies of Wulfstan*, ed. by Dorothy Bethurum (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 206.

[21] That one who was proud, may he become humble. That one who was stealing, may he toil in righteous labour. That one who was lethargic, may he become fully vigilant; that one who was slothful, may he become quick to reform for his own need.' *The Homilies of Wulfstan*, p. 207.

[22] 'Consequently, the shepherd is found weak by the herd, who will not guard that which he should, not even to protect with a cry when he cannot do anything else, if any despoiler of the community begins to do harm there. None is so evil a criminal as is the Devil himself; he is always concerned about this: how he may do the most harm to men's souls. In that case, the shepherds must be very vigilant and cry out with all their power, those who must defend people against that despoiler of the community. Those are the bishops and mass-priests, who must warn and protect the godly herd with wise instruction, that the werewolf, mad with hunger, does not rend too widely, nor too much, nor devour any from the godly herd.' *Die Institutes of Polity, Civil and Ecclesiastical*, ed. by Karl Jost (Bern: Francke, 1959), pp. 69–71.

[23] This lexical similarity is also noted by Victoria Blud, who further draws attention to the parallel usages of *toslite* in both cases, as an action typical of wolves, see; 'Wolves' Heads and Wolves' Tales: Women and Exile in *Bisclavret* and *Wulf and Eadwacer*', *Exemplaria*, 26.4 (2014), 328–46 (pp. 338–39).

Þæt se ungesewenenlica wulf godes shep ne tostence'.[24] If these attestations from the wider corpus are deemed pertinent and the close connection of *wacor* and *wacer* is accepted, we best understand *wacer* not in relation to neutral watchfulness but rather, more specifically, in the context of pastoral guardianship and alertness to the threat of sin, typically associated with the figure of the wolf. This is particularly the case if *wacer* is also taken to be an adjective, and consequently a side form of *wacor*, exhibiting the reduction of the unstressed vowel. When employed to form the second stem of *eadwacer*, it can, therefore, be taken as a substantive adjective to create an apposite epithet for God that could be interpreted along the lines of 'the one watchful over joy'. Such an interpretation is in keeping the stark contrast between wolf and shepherd that typifies the two figures to whom the speaker appeals within the poem.

A possible counter to the above argument, even if its tenets are accepted, is to reassert that as *eadwacer* is a personal name, such pastoral and spiritual connotations can only ever be secondary and latent. *Ead-* is a highly common constituent element to both masculine and feminine dithematic names in early medieval England and *eadwacer* itself is as attested as the name of: one or more moneyers in the late tenth and early eleventh century; a monk miraculously healed in Senatus Bravonius' late twelfth-century *The Life of St Oswald*; and two individuals mentioned in the Exeter manumissions dating to c. 1090.[25] In light of these extant attestations, it is reasonable to say that in relation to other Old English names with the *ead-* prefix, *eadwacer* appears infrequently and late in the record.[26] It is by no means definite that at the uncertain earlier historical point of the composition of *Wulf and Eadwacer*, the word would have had primary significance as a personal name. Furthermore, the potential function of an Old English compound as an individual's name does not necessitate its interpretation as such in all contexts, particularly when it appears in poetry. This is not merely an abstract assertion but can be corroborated with reference to the usage of *eadgife/eadgiefe* in the poem *Juliana*, as briefly mentioned above. The word appears three times in the poem, in each case referring to the gift of grace or happiness enjoyed by those favoured by God.[27] Yet the same word, *Eadgife/Eadgifu*, is also a popular early medieval English feminine name, with substantially more attestations than the uncommon *Eadwacer*.[28] There is no sense in *Juliana*, however, that *eadgife* loses any of its literal meaning as a compound with precise soteriological connotations, which clearly better fit its usage in this specific poetic context, despite its regular

[24] 'It is fitting for a teacher that he is continually vigilant over God's flock, that the invisible wolf does not destroy God's sheep.' *The Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church*, ed. by Benjamin Thorpe, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) I, pp. 29–44 (p. 36). This parallel was originally noted in *The Political Writing of Archbishop Wulfstan of York*, ed. and trans. by Andrew Rabin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), p. 109.

[25] 'Eadwacer', 1–3, Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England, <http://www.pase.ac.uk>[accessed 11.04.2022]; William G. Searle, *Onomasticon Anglo-Saxonicum: A List of Anglo-Saxon Proper Names from the Time of Beda to that of King John* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1897), p. 189; Frances Rose-Troup, 'Exeter Manumissions and Quittances of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', *Devonshire Association Transactions*, 64 (1937), 317–445 (p. 367).

[26] It is worth noting that in continental Europe, variants of the name Eadwacer (including Audovacar, Audovachrius, Odovacar, Odobacer, Odwaccar, and Odoacar) are attested as early as the fifth century: see Ernst Förstemann, *Altdeutsches Namenbuch*, 2 vols (Bonn: Hanstein, 1900–16), I, *Personennamen*, 2nd edn (1900), cols. 201–03. The extent to which such earlier attestations of the name elsewhere in Europe might have informed the original composition of the poem is hard to ascertain, although by the point of the tenth-century compilation of the Exeter Book, it seems unlikely that these parallels would have been primary to a reader of the poem in Old English.

[27] *Juliana*, ll. 33, 44, 48.

[28] Searle, pp. 180–81.

employment elsewhere as an appellation. So too, the infrequent use of *eadwacer* elsewhere as a personal name does not necessitate its primary poetic usage in *Wulf and Eadwacer* in this manner. Rather all interpretations should be tested as to their literary suitability and the productivity of the readings of the poem they catalyse.

Furthermore, the fact that *eadwacer* is used in the verb phrase *gehyrest þu*, a construction of direct address, by no means disqualifies it from being considered as a sobriquet for God. Indeed Osborn, in her convincing challenge to *gehyrest þu* being dismissive or hostile in tone, notes that the phrase is repeatedly used, in its contracted form of *georstu*, in the Vespasian Psalter as a translation of the exclamatory *O* in the Latin phrase *O Domine*.[29] In light of the argument advanced in this article, this association takes on further significance, as it can now reasonably be postulated that the formulation *gehyrest þu eadwacer* can be taken as a complete vernacular exclamation to God, with all the components having precedents or parallels elsewhere in the Old English corpus to support their usage in this manner. It is also fruitful to consider the densely referential quality of *wulf*, the other word commonly interpreted as a personal name in the poem. Here the range of possible meanings are more apparent, as is the play between them: in the most immediate sense trading on *wulf* as both a feared predator and a masculine name, but the word also has secondary associations with outlawry and Satan.[30] While the name Wulf itself was common throughout Germanic-speaking regions and did not have *de facto* negative connotations, the repeated usage of bestial language in the poem produces a subtextual characterisation of the masculine human figure who shares the lupine name through a web of negative animalistic and moral qualities.[31] In a more oblique manner, a similar interrelationship can be seen to exist here between the potential understandings of *eadwacer* as a man's personal name and as a kenning for God. It would be more in keeping with previous scholarship to read the relationship of these two senses as denoting a man whose role as the speaker's husband is implicitly approbated by the spiritual connotations of the name; I wish to make the case in the next section of this article, conversely, for the interpretative utility of considering *eadwacer* as referring primarily to God, with the word's simultaneous function as an uncommon Old English masculine name specifying the feminine speaker's relationship with the Lord as personal and intimate in a manner akin to a wife's relationship with her husband.

Sponsa Lupi, Sponsa Christi

With an argument for the interpretation of *eadwacer* as referring to God established, the potential for the productive reinterpretation of *Wulf and Eadwacer* based on such a reading may be tested. Most crucially, it provides an attractive rationale for the presence of a sudden appeal to a second named figure late in the poem, which, prior to this, appears to have otherwise been closely focused on the speaker's relationship with Wulf alone. To understand Eadwacer as another man familiar to the speaker and distinct from *Wulf* necessitates an

[29] Osborn, p. 34.

[30] See Sonja Daniëlli, '*Wulf, Min Wulf*: An Eclectic Analysis of the Wolf-Man', *Neophilologus*, 90 (2006), 135–54; Anne L. Klinck, 'Animal Imagery in *Wulf and Eadwacer* and the Possibilities of Interpretation', *Papers on Language and Literature*, 23.1 (1987), 4–13; Jean Abbott, 'Naming and Un-Naming in Old English Literature' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Stanford Univ., 2020), pp. 141–44.

[31] See Eric G. Stanley, 'Wolf, My Wolf!', in *Old English and New: Studies in Language and Linguistics in Honor of Frederic G. Cassidy*, ed. by Joan H. Hall, Nick Doane and Dick Ringler (New York: Garland, 1992), pp. 46–62.

explanation of the tripartite relationship of the three characters, with the suggestion of the speaker being married to *Eadwacer* but conducting an adulterous relationship with *Wulf* being the most common hypothesis since Bradley initially proposed this love-triangle interpretation in 1888.[32] Any argument for the speaker being involved in multiple relationships necessarily extends from the initial reading of *eadwacer* as a personal name, however, as outside of the twin appeals of *wulf, min wulf* and *gehyrest þu eadwacer*, no other lines in the poem conclusively demonstrate that the speaker engages with two distinct individuals. The specific charge of adultery seems largely unsupported in the remainder of the poem, although several critics have read lines 9–12 of the poem as suggesting the speaker's relationship with two men:

> Wulfes ic mines widlastum wenum dogode,
> þonne hit wæs renig weder ond ic reotugu sæt,
> þonne mec se beaducafa bogum bilegde,
> wæs me wyn to þon, wæs me hwæþre eac
> lað.[33]

The contention that two figures interact with the speaker hinges on the interpretation of *se beaducafa*, 'the battle-bold one', as a reference to *eadwacer*, who is the figure who embraces the speaker while *Wulf* is upon his *widlastas*. The unclear syntax of these four lines, however, means that this is by no means the only possible reading; indeed, straightforward and suitable readings can be supplied that take all four of these lines as referring to *Wulf*. One such explanation, that accounts for the speaker's *wen* in relationship to *Wulf's* wanderings, is that these *widlastas*, being in unspecified directions, have the potential to return *Wulf* to the speaker but also to prolong their separation. The emotionally painful results of both *Wulf*'s absence and presence to the speaker are then paralleled in the dual constructions beginning with *þonne*, with line 10 detailing her grief in isolation, and lines 11 and 12 depicting her conflicted feelings concerning their physical intimacy, which intermingles pleasure and sorrow. In this interpretation, there is no need to supply a figure other than *Wulf* to interact with the speaker to make sense of the minimal action described in the poem.[34] The presence of another figure is only necessitated in lines 9–12, tautologically, by the interpretation of *eadwacer* as a man addressed by the speaker, whose appearance must be retroactively incorporated into the preceding material.

If, conversely, *Wulf* is taken to be the only figure with whom the speaker is engaged in a physical, romantic relationship in the poem and *eadwacer* is understood as a compound for God, as argued for in the first section of this article, then a general reading of the poem can be offered that is apposite to both the tone and content of Old English elegiac poetry. Crucially, the interpretation offered below does not reduce the poem to a religious allegory

[32] Bradley, p. 98.

[33] 'I endured in expectation through my Wulf's wide travels. When it was rainy weather and I sat mournful, when the battle-bold one locked me in his arms: There was joy for me to a point, but there was also pain for me.' The hapax legomenon *dogode* is commonly amended to *hogode* to avoid a further complication in interpreting the poem in having to suggest a meaning for this unknown word: Baker, pp. 46–47. A number of scholars have noted that *dogode* fits neatly into the bestial lexical field that runs throughout the poem and the most suitable suggested definitions tend towards understanding the word along the lines of 'to suffer' or 'to bear'; see Ruth P. M. Lehmann, 'The Metrics and Structure of *Wulf and Eadwacer*', *Philological Quarterly*, 48.2 (1969), 155–65 (pp. 161–62); Klinck, 'Animal Imagery in *Wulf and Eadwacer*', pp. 8–9; Marijane Osborn, 'Dogode in *Wulf and Eadwacer* and King Alfred's Hunting Metaphors', *ANQ: A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes and Reviews*, 13.4 (2000), 3–9.

[34] Stanley B. Greenfield, *Hero and Exile: The Art of Old English Poetry* (London: Bloomsbury, 1989), pp. 189–90.

of the relationship between Christ and Church, for example, but nor does it entirely revoke the potential for a Christian significance as central to the poem, in favour of speculation as to uncertain Germanic legendary allusions.[35] The woman who is the speaker of the poem is in some way romantically attached to *Wulf*, an antisocial and reviled figure, whose hostile relationship with the unspecified community to which the speaker belongs factors into their separation from one another. The speaker's relationship with *Wulf* also informs her own self-identification as a figure likewise outcast from her society, albeit perhaps only on a mental level, with her shared alterity with *Wulf* suggested by the repetition of the near identical lines *ungelic is us*/*ungelice is us*, the former being an adjectival construction and the latter adverbial.[36] The poem is suffused with not only the speaker's painful longing for *Wulf* but, simultaneously, her sorrowful awareness of the dangers, both physical and moral, of sustained intimacy between them. She is trapped, therefore, in a state of abject isolation and the poem functions initially as a lament for her tortuously conflicted position. The speaker is abstracted from romantic and sexual joy as epitomised by her desire for *Wulf*, which correlates with the general stress on the ephemeral nature of the pleasures of the profane world in Old English elegiac poetry. Crucially, however, she is also unable to create the necessary emotional detachment from both her sorrow and her desire to enter into the types of productive spiritual reflection achieved by other dispossessed or vagrant figures elsewhere in the elegies. It is useful to consider the speaker's position in relation to the contrasting benefits and perils of an eremitic lifestyle, as depicted in the counsels of the angel and devil to St Guthlac in *Guthlac A*:

> oþer him þas eorþan ealle sægde
> læne under lyfte & þa longan gód
> herede on heofonum þær haligra
> salwa gesittað in sigorwuldre
> dryhtnes dreamas— he him dæda lean
> georne gieldeð þam þe his giefe willað
> þicgan to þonce & him þas woruld
> uttor lætan þonne þæt ece líf;
> oþer hyne scyhte þæt he sceaðena gemot
> nihtes sohte & þurh neþinge
> wunne æfter worulde swa doð wræcmægcas
> þa þe ne bimurnað monnes feore
> þæs þe him to honda huþe gelædeð
> butan hy þy reafe rædan
> motan.[37]

[35] Erin Sebo, 'Identifying the Narrator of *Wulf and Eadwacer*? Signy, the Heroides and the Adaptation of Classical Models in Old English Literature', *Neophilologus*, 105 (2021), 109–22.

[36] 'It is different for us'. For further discussion of the gendered quality of exile experienced by women in Old English poetry, see Helen T. Bennett, 'Exile and the Semiosis of Gender in Old English Elegies', in *Class and Gender in Early English Literature: Intersections*, ed. by Britton J. Harwood and Gillian R. Overing (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 43–58 (pp. 45–46). For analysis of the interpretative problems associated with *ungelic* and *ungelice* and why 'different' is a productive translation, see Carole Hough, '*Wulf and Eadwacer*: A note on *Ungelic*', *ANQ: A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes and Reviews*, 8.3 (1995), 3–6.

[37] 'One said to him that all of this earth under the heavens is transitory and praised those extensive benefits in heaven, where holy souls sit in the glory of victory and joy of the Lord – he readily renders rewards to them for their deeds, those who want to accept his grace with pleasure and altogether abandon this world instead of that eternal life. The other said that he should seek a gathering of criminals in the night and through recklessness struggle for

The speaker of *Wulf and Eadwacer* may be self-styled outcast rather than an *eardstapa* proper, but her relationship with *Wulf*, a reviled outsider to her community, has moved her closer to the debased moral state advocated for by the demon in the passage from *Guthlac A* above, as she seeks reckless pleasure in the company of an antisocial figure. As befitting a *Frauenlied*, sexual desire for an inconstant man is depicted as a feminine mode of exploring the key elegiac tenet of the simultaneous allure and fallibility of secular relationships,[38] in a manner that parallels the melancholy depictions of the masculine bond between lord and retainer in poems such as *Deor*. A central element of the artistry of *Wulf and Eadwacer*, however, is that the text never descends to extradiegetic moral condemnation of the speaker's non-normative relationships to both her lover and her community, instead remaining tightly trained on her own sorrowful awareness of the forlorn nature of her abandonment.

This affect-centred reading of the central relationship between the speaker and *Wulf* already conforms with the poem having an elegiac tone, in focusing on an agonised response to transitory pleasure, but the reading of *eadwacer* proposed in the first section of this article allows for an interpretation of *Wulf and Eadwacer* that incorporates another key component of Old English elegies: the anticipation of divine consolation to compensate for profane sorrow.[39] Poems such as *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer*, and, less distinctly, *The Wife's Lament* all feature extensive melancholic reflections on the fleeting nature of earthly comforts, qualified by an assertion of the comfort offered by the favour of God serving as a conclusion to the poem.[40] I suggest that the final section of *Wulf and Eadwacer* fulfils a similar purpose, which allows the poem to be understood as a more conventional member of the elegiac corpus. In the light of the argument made above, the lines in question can be understood as follows:

> Gehyrest þu, eadwacer? Uncerne earne hwelp
> wulf tō wuda.
> Þæt mon ēaþe tōslīteð þætte næfre gesomnad wæs,
> uncer giedd geador.[41]

These final lines of the poem can be taken together as a prayer of supplication in 'entreating God either directly or through the meditation on the saint(s) in order to be released from danger' and which the speaker offers to her deity in relation to the plight she has previously

worldly pleasures, such as wretches do, those who never care for a person's life, the one who brings plunder into their hands, as long as they may deprive them of loot.' *The Guthlac Poems*, ll. 86–87. For a study that draws a comparable parallel between the *Guthlac* poems and *Wulf and Eadwacer*, albeit mediated through the figure of St Bertellin, see Lindy Brady, 'An Analogue to *Wulf and Eadwacer* in the life of St Bertellin of Stafford,' *The Review of English Studies*, 67.278 (2016), 1–20 (p. 19).

[38] Kemp Malone, 'Two English *Frauenlieder*', *Comparative Literature*, 14.1 (1962), 106–17 (pp. 107–11).

[39] Stanley B. Greenfield, 'The Old English Elegies', in *Continuations and Beginnings: Studies in Old English Literature*, ed. by Eric G. Stanley (London: Nelson. 1966), pp. 142–75 (p. 143).

[40] Ida L. Gordon, 'Traditional Themes in The Wanderer and The Seafarer', *The Review of English Studies*, 5.17 (1954), 1–13 (p. 6); John D. Niles, 'The Problem of the Ending of the Wife's "Lament" ', *Speculum*, 78.4 (2003), 1107–50 (pp. 1141–50).

[41] 'Do you hear, one watchful over joy? Our wretched whelp, Wulf bears to the wood. That is easily torn asunder, which was never joined, our song together.' The preservation of the literal word order in this translation highlights the difficulty of interpreting the referents of the dual possessive pronoun *uncerne*, with the proximity of *eadwacer* in the previous clause making it a possible candidate alongside *wulf* as the nominative noun of the clause in which the pronoun appears. The balancing of the pronoun between the two appellations is perhaps intentionally ambiguous as to which figure the speaker is referring, although it seems more likely, although by no means certain, that the proximity of *wulf* and *whelp* at the end of the clause stresses their mutual relationship with the speaker.

lamented.[42] Following the moment of epicresis in *Gehyrest þu eadwacer*, the speaker describes the crisis-point of absolute alienation between her and Wulf when he, reduced to his most animalistic and predatory state as the father of a *hwelp*, flees with their child into the woods. There has been some critical debate as to whether the child in question, previously unmentioned in the poem, is an actual figure within the narrative or a metaphor relating to the relationship of the speaker and Wulf.[43] In either case, the father's flight with the child, a figure who, whether real or constructed, would have been understood as signifying the productive aspects of their relationship, signals the irreparable collapse of an intimacy previously balanced between desire and sorrow. If we are to take it that the child was raised by the speaker, rather than the hunted Wulf, then we could add to this that the separation of child and mother removes the central, persistent reminder of affection and commitment that remained between the two estranged figures, although this arrangement is by no means certain. If the emendation of the hapax *earne* to *eargne* is accepted to provide a convincing and attractive simplification of this line, then a further sense of the speaker's highly negative conception of her own child as the vile product of a failed relationship is provided.[44] Regardless, the next line adds a certain tone of finality to this departure by Wulf, with the bestial connontations of *tosliteð* making it an apposite term to encapsulate the violent and visceral quality of this separation.

Several critics have commented that the penultimate line of the poem appears to function as an inversion of Matthew 19:6: *Quod ergo Deus coniunxit, homo non separet*.[45] For most critics besides Spamer, this biblical resonance has proved largely incidental to their readings of the wider poem, but in the present interpretation, the line gains significance as an emphatic break from the established action and mood, in which the speaker has agonised between desire and despair. Following the speaker's desperate address of God and her outlining of her present plight in relation to *Wulf's* dramatic severance of their relationship, this inversion of Christ's own pronouncement on the immorality of divorce in the Gospel of Matthew stands at the heart of her moment of supplication that concludes the poem. The speaker appeals to God as the only figure capable of granting her emotional and spiritual separation from *Wulf* to match her physical condition following her desertion. This entreaty amounts to a prayer for the annulment of their relationship, a request that can be easily granted as, by the speaker's logic, their union is invalid. The exact logic of this declaration of the relationship as void can be debated: if *Wulf* and the speaker are in a dysfunctional marriage, this could be a request for permission to self-divorce due to both desertion and the criminal nature of the spouse. Otherwise it may function as a broader entreaty for spiritual closure on the immorality of unmarried intimacy.[46] Legal specificity is not the objective of these lines, however, but

[42] Godefridus J. C. Snoek, *Medieval Piety from Relics to the Eucharist: A Process of Mutual Interaction* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), p. 173. For further discussion of the prominence of supplication as a mode of communication with God in early medieval Europe, see Geoffrey Koziol, *Begging Pardon and Favor: Ritual and Political Order in Early Medieval France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), pp. 8–19.

[43] Fanagan, p. 135; Frese, p. 9.

[44] Baker, p. 50.

[45] 'Thus what God has joined together, let no man separate'. See James B. Spamer, 'The Marriage Concept in *Wulf and Eadwacer*', *Neophilologus*, 62.1 (1978), 143–44.

[46] Both annulment and divorce are commonly attested as methods of exiting dysfunctional relationships in early medieval England, although the exact mechanisms by which a wife could leave her husband and the consistency of this practice across the period are contested; see Theodore J. Rivers, 'Adultery in Early Anglo-Saxon Society: Æthelberht 31 in Comparison with Continental Germanic Law', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 20 (1991), 19–25; Carole A. Hough, 'The Early Kentish "Divorce Laws": A Reconsideration of Æthelberht, chs. 79 and 80', *Anglo-Saxon*

rather the conveyance of a moral repudiation of both sin and future temptation on the part of the speaker, by stressing her desire to sever her emotional connections with her lover. This imploration for separation concludes the poem and the relationship, both of which are linked by the speaker through the term *giedd*, with this unification of lyric and love life supporting the contention that the speaker conceives of the final four lines of the poem as being invested with perlocutionary force, as would be expected of a prayer of supplication.[47]

This, at last, leads to a reading of *Wulf and Eadwacer* that allows for the presence of elegiac consolation at the poem's close, which modifies and potentially supersedes the speaker's intense distress that has otherwise typified this short work. The speaker presents herself for the majority of the poem as almost wholly defined by her tortured relationship to *Wulf*, a dangerous and undependable figure. While care should be taken to not reduce the speaker's relationship to an allegorical level, a moral element clearly exists in the image of the speaker as the bride of the wolf, a figure deprived of community, happiness, and potentially salvation through intimacy with an outcast or demonic figure. It seems no coincidence, in addition, that *eadwacer*'s strong pastoral connotations means that the poem's central character is caught between figures associated with both the wolf and the shepherd, heightening the sense that a salvific struggle underlies her romantic woes. The speaker, in the desperation triggered by her abandonment, repudiates her relationship with *Wulf* and proclaims its invalidity before God. As touched upon in the previous section, by invoking God with a name that can also be understood as a masculine personal name, it is possible that the speaker is envisioning her relationship with her deity as that of wife and husband. This aligns with the wider *sponsa Christi* motif, regularly utilised as an approbated mode of piety for medieval women, but here the contrast between this form of feminine Christian devotion and the flawed nature of human relationships is stressed by the absolute degradation experienced by the speaker throughout the course of the poem.[48] To return to the moral dichotomy offered to those outcast from society presented in *Guthlac A*, as discussed above, in the reading offered in this article, the poem

England, 23 (1994), 19–34; Katherine Bullimore, 'Unpicking the Web: The Divorce of Ecgfrith and Æthelthryth', *European Review of History*, 16.6 (2009), 835–54; Elizabeth Van Houts, *Married Life in the Middle Ages, 900–1300* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 141–68. It should be noted that the contemporary law codes are primarily concerned with the dissolution of a marriage on the grounds of adultery, with divorce by a woman on the specific grounds suggested above not having a direct correlate in extant early medieval English legal or ecclesiastical evidence. It is perhaps more productive, however, in light of the theme of abandonment that pervades *Wulf and Eadwacer*, to consider these lines in relation to the less formal unions to lower-status wives conducted by the English kings of the period who engaged in serial marriages, relationships which are understood only reductively by the term 'concubinage': Sara McDougall, *Royal Bastards: The Birth of Illegitimacy 800–1230* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 108–15. Such women could be comparatively easily deserted in favour of a more promising match due to the slight legal protections they received, irrespective of the significance attached to the relationship by said women and their families, Ruth M. Karras, *Unmarriages: Women, Men, and Sexual Unions in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), pp. 38–45, 68–73; Ryan T. Goodman, '"In a Father's Place": Anglo-Saxon Kingship and Masculinity in the Long Tenth Century' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Univ. of Manchester, 2018), pp. 182–87. No specific royal parallel need be suggested to read *Wulf and Eadwacer*as a protest at a comparable practice of informal romantic union followed by desertion, in the voice of the victim herself.

[47] For a wider discussion of the utility of applying speech act theory to the construction of intercessory prayer, see Steven Mann, 'Ask and You Shall Intercede: The Peculiar Perlocutionary Power of Asking God Questions', *Bulletin for Biblical Research*, 29.2 (2019), 208–24.

[48] This argument extends from the concept that the use of *sponsa Christi* imagery stresses the contrast between the holy woman and her sinful enemies in Hugh Magennis, 'Occurrences of Nuptial Imagery in Old English Hagiographical Texts', *English Language Notes*, 33.4 (1996), 1–9. See also Philip Pulsiano, 'Blessed Bodies: The Vitae of Anglo-Saxon Female Saints', *Parergon*, 16.2 (1999), 1–42 (pp. 25–6, 32–4).

concludes with the speaker dedicating herself fully to God by renouncing her last attachment to the secular world and entering a state of pious, perfected seclusion. If the poem's final lines are read as a prayer of supplication, then it is tempting to imagine it as one that precedes the speaker's dedication to something akin to the lifestyle of an anchorite, as one who achieves intimacy with God in isolation.[49]

Lord of Hosts, Lord Against the Host

The above reading has a number of features that recommend it as a productive means of approaching *Wulf and Eadwacer*. In the first place, it simplifies the system of relationships necessary to make sense of the poem's action in removing the need to postulate an adulterous love triangle between the speakers and two men, while nevertheless maintaining romantic love as a central theme of the poem. It may seem no more straightforward to produce an interpretation that instead advocates for a moral contrast between two lords, one secular and one divine, but this reading ultimately provides a more conventionally elegiac structure to the poem. The bulk of the poem is devoted to the depiction of earthly sorrows, encapsulated by both the presence and absence of *Wulf*, while the final lines suggest the possibility of heavenly consolation through intimacy with God. This, in turn, allows us to develop a more complex emotional portrait of the speaker beyond her previous characterisation as an adulterer lamenting her miserable plight; the speaker conveys frank sexual desire, anguish in relation to her abandonment, and, most radically, hope as to her deliverance from her wretched situation. Such a reading also introduces a number of artful symmetries into the poem, most notably in the twin cries of *Wulf, min Wulf* and *Gehyrest þu, eadwacer*. Both cries to masculine protectors are depicted as agonised exclamations, but the emotional trajectories that extend from them are in clear contrast: the cry for Wulf builds towards the speaker's realisation of her abandonment, the cry to God towards her desire for absolution.

As mentioned at this article's outset, however, no single interpretation of *Wulf and Eadwacer* has satisfactorily accounted for the full range of ambiguities present in the poem, nor been able to refute possible alternative readings that place primary importance on other allusions generated by engagement with the poem. It is important, therefore, to also consider the elements of the poem that prove resistant to a given interpretative model as qualifiers on the conclusions that can be drawn concerning this obscure text. While the above reading proves highly productive in approaching lines 9–19 of the poem, lines 1–8 still contain a number of issues that make them more difficult to incorporate into a reading centred on a contrast between secular and spiritual husbands. Lines 4–5 are perhaps the most straightforward, establishing the inescapable isolation of the speaker and the irresolvable absence of Wulf. The presence of the *wælreowe* figures who accompany the speaker on the island on which she resides is more complex; on a basic level, the violent capability of these individuals suggests Wulf's enmity with the community within which the speaker resides, although the

[49] The practice of a range of anchoritic traditions, of differing degrees of asceticism, by women in early medieval England is well attested and women opting to retire into seclusion would have been considered an approbated expression of feminine piety: see Patricia A. Halpin, 'The Religious Experience of Women in Anglo-Saxon England' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Boston College, 2000), pp. 29–36. For the suitability of reading both *Wulf and Eadwacer* and *The Wife's Lament* in relation to the 'monastic ideology' of feminine enclosure, see Shari Horner, *The Discourse of Enclosure: Representing Women in Old English Literature* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2001), pp. 42–55.

highly negative connotations of the word do complicate the potential to see the poem as having a straightforward moral dimension by introducing a degree of sympathy for the hunted Wulf. A possible remedy for this issue is to suggest that the speaker's fearful description of those who reside alongside her on the island further implies her status as an outcast by establishing emotional distance between her and the community who surround her: these men are not presented as her guardians in a manner that would stand in parallel to the use of *eadwacer* later in the poem, but rather cruel figures motivated by a desire for violence rather than the safeguarding of the speaker. This in turn aligns them more closely with the predatory *Wulf* than the Christian God, stressing that the terrestrial world is exclusively populated by dangerous male presences. No masculine figure exists on earth, therefore, be they intracommunal or extracommunal, who can offer intimacy and care to the speaker, which correlates with her turn to spiritual comfort granted by a divine male ruler later in the poem.

Far more issues arise in how best to understand lines 1–2 of the poem, with line 2 repeated at line 7. The lines in question read: *Leodum is minum swylce him mon lac gife | willað hy hine aþecgan gif he on þreat cymeð.* The exact sense of these lines is obscured by both the significant interpretative difficulties in the vocabulary being used and uncertainty as to whom the pronouns in this line are referring to, as there is no preceding extant verse to clarify the actors. The translation of the first line is somewhat more straightforward, principally resting on how best to translate *lac*, with 'gift', 'offering', and 'sacrifice' all being potential candidates.[50] The sense of the second line is more unclear, with both *aþecgan* and *þreat* proving resistant to prior critical interpretation. *Aþecgan* is attested only once elsewhere in Old English, in a medical recipe in in which it either has the sense of 'to give' or 'to consume'.[51] This links to the looser connection the verb probably has with the more common *þecgan*, which often has a sense of taking food, leading by extension to the two dichotomous suggested translations of *aþecgan* as 'to receive' (as in to serve food) and 'to destroy' (as in to consume food).[52] While a number of more speculative suggestions have been offered have been offered for *þreat*, Klinck's defence of the well-attested basic sense of 'host' or 'troop' provides the most attractive and likely solution.[53] With these issues foregrounded, a potential reading of these lines can be offered that aligns with the wider interpretation previously advanced in this article and which plays upon the uncertainty of these lines to poetic effect, in establishing a contrast between the two lords with whom the speaker interacts within the poem, the secular *Wulf* and the sacred *eadwacer*. An important caveat to the following analysis, beyond those already proffered at the outset of this article, is that it relies to an extent on the uncertainty regarding the potential multiplicity of meanings of the words *lac*, *aþecgan*, and *þreat* being an original feature of the poem rather than the product of an obscuration of its sense to the modern critic.[54] There are good reasons to consider this as a possibility, however, both due to the

[50] Lehmann, p. 157; Baker, p. 40–41.

[51] Baker, p. 43.

[52] Klinck, 'Animal Imagery in *Wulf and Eadwacer*', pp. 5–6; Patricia Belanoff, '*Ides… geomrode giddum*: The Old English Female Lament', in *Medieval Woman's Song: Cross-Cultural Approaches*, ed. by Anne L. Klinck and Ann M. Rasmussen (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), pp. 29–46 (p. 40).

[53] Klinck, 'Animal Imagery in *Wulf and Eadwacer*', pp. 6–7. Klinck further notes that *þreat* may alternatively have its abstract sense of 'violence' in this context, with its accusative form necessitating a translation along the lines of 'come upon violence.' This possibility remains compatible with the wider interpretation of these lines offered in this article.

[54] This article is not alone in viewing the multiple senses of these ambiguous words as complementary rather than conflicting and potentially constituting an element of the poem's artistry: see Belanoff, '*Ides… geomrode giddum*',

potential riddling quality of the poem and due to the repetition of the formulation in line 2 at line 7 in what appears to be a substantially different context.

In the first two lines of the poem, the figure referred to by masculine singular pronouns is almost universally taken to be Wulf; in light of the interpretation previously offered in this article and the fact that *Wulf* appears to be more emphatically introduced in line 4, the possibility will be explored that the use of the masculine singular pronoun prior to the introduction of any others figures in the poem can be understood as a reference to Christ. Such a reading rests on the double nature of Christ and his Messianic sacrifice in relation to mankind, with the hostility and the violence of the crucifixion necessarily coexisting alongside the gift of salvation inherent in Christ's death. The use of the plural *leodum* suggests a large and non-specific body of people to which the speaker is affiliated, all of whom receive a *lac* from a singular masculine unnamed figure. The failure to clarify the nature of both the individual and the collective in the first line of the poem may suggest the universality of the image in question or, at least, direct the medieval Christian reader to consider the broadest applications in which the offering of a sacrifice by one for many can be understood, of which Christ's sacrifice on the cross for mankind would appear a prime candidate. The multiple senses of *lac* are productive in encapsulating the crucifixion as a moment of both the sacrifice of Christ on the part of mankind and a gift to mankind on the part of Christ, and the word is, consequently, attested elsewhere in the Old English corpus in relation to the crucifixion. In the prose life of St Andrew, for instance, a clear understanding is demonstrated of the senses of spiritual sacrifice and physical gift or offering both being contained within the word *lac:*

> Egeas sæde, "Buton ðu offrige lác urum ælmihtigum godum, on ðære ylcan rode ðe ðu herast ic ðe hate gewæhtne afæstnian." Andreas him cwæð to, "Dæghwomlice ic offrige mine lác ðam Ælmihtigan Gode, seðe ana is soð God. Na hlowendra fearra flæsc, oððe buccena blód, ac ic offrige dæghwomlice on weofode þære halgan rode þæt ungewemmede lamb, and hit ðurhwunað ansund and cucu syððan eal folc his flæsc et, and his blód drincð."[55]

St. Andrew's reference to partaking in the sacrifice of Christ daily on the altar is most likely a description of the ritual of the Eucharist, which in an early medieval context was commonly understood as as 'a sacrifice commemorating and re-presenting Christ's sacrifice and death on the cross.'[56] This connection has the potential to clarify line 2 of *Wulf and Eadwacer*, particularly in relation to the complex sense of *aþecgan*. As mentioned above, the literal root of the word appears to be connected to the physical act of consumption and the reading provided here stays truer to this sense than previous metaphorical suggestions of destruction or service, if we take it as a reference to the sacrament of eating and drinking of the body and blood of Christ. This interpretation is made more fruitful by the fact that the potential additional senses of *aþecgan* discussed by other critics, 'to receive' and 'to destroy', are both

pp. 39–41.

[55] 'Egeas said: "Unless you offer a sacrifice to our almighty gods, I will order you to be fastened and tormented on the same cross that you worship." Andreas said to him: "I daily offer my sacrifice to the Almighty God, who alone is the true God. Neither the meat of lowing bulls nor the blood of he-goats, instead I offer daily on the altar of the holy cross that immaculate lamb and it endures living and unharmed after all people eat its flesh and drink its blood." ' *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The First Series*, ed. by Peter Clemoes, Early English Text Society 17 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 583.

[56] Celia Chazelle, 'The Eucharist in Early Medieval Europe', in *A Companion to the Eucharist in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Ian Levy, Gary Macy, and Kristen Van Ausdall, Brills Companions to the Christian Tradition 26 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 205–49 (p. 227).

compatible with the complex ritual significance of the Eucharist, which perhaps uniquely, can simultaneously accommodate these two meanings that would elsewhere be contradictory.

The end of line 2, *gif hē on þrēat cymeð*, is similar to the preceding line in having the figure identified only by a masculine pronoun interacting with the indistinct collective body of people constituting the *þrēat*, taken here, as mentioned above, to have the general sense of 'host' or 'crowd'. The lack of specificity in this formulation at the outset of the poem again suggests that obfuscation and generality may be central features within the construction of the opening lines. If this absence of clarity is taken, at least at the poem's outset, to have a riddling quality in compelling the reader to apply their own experience to resolve obscure verse, it does not seem an overextension to connect these features to the mysticism and universalism that constitute theological properties of the eucharistic sacrament, particularly in the context of the prevalence of Christian poetry within the Exeter Book. This brings us to a basic translation of the first two lines of 'It is to my people as if someone gave them a gift/sacrifice, they will consume him if he comes into the host'. If, as argued above, this is a reference to the Holy Communion, then the third line, *ungelic is us* 'it is different for us', signals that the speaker and Wulf are more precisely *spiritual* outcasts, as apostates who are either unwilling or unable to participate in this central Christian sacrament. Indeed, the obscurity with which both Christ and the sacrament are depicted in these opening lines may function as an artful method of indicating this very detachment from Christian ritual on the part of the speaker. This interpretation aligns with that proffered in response to *Wulf and Eadwacer* more broadly in this article, in that the speaker's relationship with Wulf has left her in dangerous isolation from, and even opposition to, both her faith and her community.

Such a reading cannot be applied, however, to the reoccurrence of the formulation *willað hy hine āþecgan gif hē on þrēat cymeð* at line 7; the relatively straightforward lines 4–6 introduce Wulf, detail his separation from the speaker as necessitated by both the impassable terrain of the fens and the hostility of the *wælreowe weras* that dwell on one of the islands, most likely the one which is inhabited by the speaker. The figures referred to by the pronouns in line 7 are more certain, therefore, as is the violent implication of what the *weras* will do to Wulf if he comes into their company. The more apparent sense of the formulation in the context of line 7, before which specifics regarding actors and location have been supplied, does not, however, necessitate that an identical sense is being employed in line 2, particular as the sparse detail of line 1 does not obviously suggest that the speaker's people are about to engage in violence, particularly as their interaction with the unnamed individual seems only positive in his bestowing a gift upon them. A potential solution to this issue, if it is accepted that the poem draws a consistent contrast between the actions associated with the hateful Wulf on earth and those possible in the acceptance of the heavenly Lord, is that the meaning of the phrase is altered ironically depending on who is being referred to. This construction, which at first suggests the veneration of Christ by the Christian community, can also express the persecution of Wulf by the same collective; furthermore, the speaker's use of the same equivocal language to describe her community's interactions with Wulf and Christ, might serve as an attempt to represent her conflicted mindset as to her relationships with both figures as, at the outset of the poem, she is torn between moral duty and sexual desire. From these initial lines, therefore, it can be contended that the *ungelic* nature of the speaker's two potential husbands, the spiritual and the profane, is established, a condition that builds throughout the poem towards her divorce of Wulf and a full commitment to the Christian God.

Conclusion: Towards a Supplicatory Reading of *Wulf and Eadwacer*

This article has aimed to provide a new reading of *Wulf and Eadwacer* grounded within a Christian framework of despair in the postlapsarian nature of relationships in this world alongside an expectation of a perfected intimacy with God in the next. As noted at the outset of this piece, however, the above analysis should be considered complementary, rather than contradictory, to previous scholarship on this notoriously elusive poem and does not seek to provide an authoritative solution to the text. Rather, this interpretation demonstrates how plausible and innovative approaches to *Wulf and Eadwacer* can readily be generated by shifting the initial premises from which our engagement with the poem extends; the concurrent existence of numerous distinct understandings of *Wulf and Eadwacer* does not suggest the failure of critics but rather the enduring success of this short, rich poem, which can so readily sustain multiple divergent readings.

The primary difference in interpretation that initiates the reading offered in this article is in taking *eadwacer* not as the personal name of a man known to the speaker of the poem, but rather as a poetic compound with a sense approximate to 'the one watchful over joy' and which refers to the Christian God. This contention is supported by a systematic survey of other *ead-* compounds found in Old English poetry, wherein *ead-* consistently inflects the second stem with divine or spiritual significance. If the second stem *wacer* is taken as having the same meaning as the better attested adjective *wacor*, the latter term's overwhelming extant usage in connection with pastoral watchfulness elsewhere in the corpus should be taken as important evidence for a parallel being drawn in the poem between two opposing figures who are metonymically associated with the wolf and the shepherd. The poem as a whole rests on the speaker's conflicted emotions as she expounds on her self-identification as a figure outcast from her community and the Christian rituals which define it. This state is inextricable from her relationship with Wulf, who embodies all the danger and sorrow of a profane relationship but who is, simultaneously, the object of overt sexual pleasure and romantic desire on the speaker's part. The speaker is tormented by her self-awareness of the moral consequences of her desire for an inconstant and antisocial figure and an audience familiar with Old English elegy and hagiography might be expected to draw a contrast with the spiritual wisdom and ascetic holiness that pious characters achieve in isolation elsewhere in the poetic corpus. In this reading, *Wulf and Eadwacer* conforms more closely to the elegiac model, moving from a melancholy exploration of that which is ephemeral yet attractive in the terrestrial world, to the blissful consolation promised through faith in God. The comparative ambiguity of these sentiments in this poem, in comparison with elegies more generally, lies within their navigation through the limited scope of the speaker's relationship and in a mode that centres upon affect rather than exhortation.

The transition from lament to consolation occurs with the climactic line *gehyrest þu, eadwacer*, which can, therefore, be understood as a direct appeal to God that initiates the prayer of supplication that runs from line 16 to the poem's conclusion. The extent of the speaker's anguish as Wulf absconds with their child leads her to appeal to God for the divine dissolution of their relationship and her consequent deliverance from the wretched state that desire for an antisocial figure has reduced her to. The final lines of *Wulf and Eadwacer* provide something akin to closure for the speaker in allowing her to put voice to her permanent separation from Wulf at the very moment her declamation of the poem itself ends. Throughout this article, a number of potential rationales for adopting the reading proposed

here have been suggested, but the most critical, in my view, is its potential to complicate the character of the speaker beyond traditional portraits of simple misery occasioned by adultery, while also maintaining the romantic tension so central to the poem's tone. The speaker is a woman who is highly aware of the conflict between her sexual desire and her Christian faith and negotiates the fraught and complex nature of her dual commitment to two patriarchs. Her ultimate renunciation of Wulf functions as a broader rejection of melancholy lamentation as typifying the poem, as the speaker's sophisticated reaffirmation of her personal relationship with God ends *Wulf and Eadwacer* in a mood of pious hope.

The Animality of Work and Craft in Early Medieval English Literature

James Paz

Abstract

Does the ability to craft make us human? Some modern philosophers have seen humanity in its role of *homo faber* as distinct from and superior to other animals. They contend that human workers manufacture with a creativity that animals do not possess. However, other scholars have argued that animals can be understood as both workers and crafters. Recent scientific studies have even shown that animals can use tools to manipulate their environments in sophisticated ways. This article brings such findings and debates into conversation with the earliest English literature. It examines when, where and how animal *weorc* (painful, passive suffering) shades into animal *cræft* (purposeful, active making) in Old English and Anglo-Latin texts. A wide range of sources, from Ælfric's *Colloquy* to the riddles of the Exeter Book, represent animals as workers who labour for, with and alongside humans. But do these animals ever display technical skill? While some early medieval writers viewed craft as a quality that makes us human, there are also multiple examples of literary animals who can craft as well as work, create as well as labour. Ultimately, I argue that we should situate representations of early medieval *weorc* and *cræft* within a continuum that includes both human and nonhuman actors, from the drudgery of the ploughman and the ox to the artistry of the goldsmith and the phoenix.

Introduction

When confronted with the question of what makes us human, some philosophers have answered that it is the ability to craft.[1] That is, the very act of making makes us human. The political philosopher Hannah Arendt, for example, sees humanity in its role of *homo faber* as distinct from animals and divided from nature. Other scholars would disagree. The sociologist Jason Hribal and anthropologist Tim Ingold have proposed that nonhuman animals should be understood as both workers and crafters, while the philosopher of technology, Ashley Shew, has contended that animals possess technological knowledge.[2] Such debates did not begin with modernity. In an early medieval English context, the Alfredian translator of the Old

[1] I am grateful to the anonymous reviewers for *Leeds Medieval Studies* for their very helpful, constructive feedback on this article. My thanks, too, to Alaric Hall for additional editorial guidance and suggestions.

[2] See further Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd edn (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Jason

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English *Boethius* understands craft as a gift from God loaned to human beings, while the counsellor in Ælfric's *Colloquy* commands that young monks *esto quod es* or *beo þæt þu eart* by performing a craft. And yet, in other Old English literary texts, we find worms and bees whose skills surpass the metalcraft of the smith, birds whose songcraft is more heavenly than the sound of any musical instrument and whales whose devilish craft can overpower fishermen and trick seafarers.

This article contends that early medieval writers were fascinated, and occasionally vexed, by the question of whether humans alone possess the ability to not only labour but create. The article shows that these premodern writers were willing to imagine other-than-human work, craft and creativity and it uncovers a longer literary history of animals working and crafting than has previously been recognised. For modern and premodern authors alike, working and crafting are connected yet subtly different capabilities. In this article, I will survey and analyse moments where animal *weorc* (painful, passive suffering) shades into animal *cræft* (purposeful, active making) in early medieval literary sources. I will examine how the boundaries between nonhuman *weorc* and human *cræft* were constructed and crossed in these texts.

The article focuses on four case studies: first, the Old English *Boethius*; second, Ælfric's *Colloquy*; third, Aldhelm's enigmas and the Exeter Book riddles; fourth, the poems on *The Whale* and *The Phoenix* in the Exeter Book.[3] The Old English *Boethius* emphasises the concept of craft as an inner virtue that separates humans from nonhuman beings, but it also demonstrates that abandoning craft can cause human beings to lose their own humanity and abusing craft can threaten the humanity of others. The *Colloquy* shows how everyday experiences of work and craft are shaped by animals and it represents animals as fellow workers and crafters. Even as the young monks in this dialogue try to rise above animality through intellectual labour, they still model their work on animal work. The Old English and Anglo-Latin riddles invite us to adopt nonhuman perspectives and share in animal experiences of work and craft. These experiences vary from painful work that must be endured to purposeful craft that is more creative. The riddles reveal that work and craft are produced by human-nonhuman collaborations that are sometimes cooperative and sometimes competitive. Finally, *The Whale* and *The Phoenix* depict animals as possessing and performing craft while also revealing how the natural craft of animals reflects both divine creation and devilish anti-creation, with different consequences for the bodies, minds and souls of humankind.

Overall, this article argues for the animality of work and craft in early medieval English literature. While there is evidence that some early medieval writers viewed craft as a quality

C. Hribal, 'Animals are Part of the Working Class: A Challenge to Labor History', *Labor History*, 44 (2003), 435–53; Jason C. Hribal, 'Animals, Agency and Class: Writing the History of Animals from Below', *Human Ecology Review*, 14 (2007), 101–12; Jason C. Hribal, 'Animals are Part of the Working Class Reviewed', *Borderlands*, 11 (2012), 1–37; Tim Ingold, *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description* (London: Routledge, 2011); Tim Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2013); Tim Ingold, *Correspondences* (Cambridge: Polity, 2020); Ashley Shew, *Animal Constructions and Technological Knowledge* (London: Lexington Books, 2017).

[3] References to these works will be taken from: *The Old English Boethius with Verse Prologues and Epilogues Associated with King Alfred*, ed. and trans. by Susan Irvine and Malcolm R. Godden (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012); *Ælfric's Colloquy*, ed. by G.N. Garmonsway (London: Methuen, 1939); *The Old English and Anglo-Latin Riddle Tradition*, ed. and trans. by Andy Orchard (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2021); *Old English Shorter Poems: Religious and Didactic*, ed. and trans. by Christopher A. Jones (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012). All further references will be provided parenthetically in the main text. Translations, unless otherwise stated, are mine.

that makes us human, this concept of the 'human condition' is a precarious one because the misuse of craft can threaten the human self, turning men and women into wild beasts. What is more, there are multiple examples of animals who can craft as well as work in Old English and Anglo-Latin literature. The natural craft of animals even has implications for the afterlives of humans, lifting us to heaven or luring us into hell. In the earliest English literature, then, work and craft can be dehumanising and lead to the inhumane treatment of other beings. At the same time, work and craft are not inherently human attributes. They are more-than-human capabilities that can be taken up by hardworking, skilled and sometimes creative animals.

My focus in this article is primarily on literary, rather than historical or archaeological, evidence, but I resist reducing literary animals to nothing but metaphorical figures for human workers and crafters. This reading strategy is informed by developments in critical animal studies. These developments have problematised the tendency of literary criticism to dismiss textual animals as mere metaphors, whereby animals always signify something else and thus disappear from the text, rendered passive or silent while reproducing anthropocentric concepts of human complexity. An alternative reading strategy views literary animals as metonymic because, if metaphor functions according to difference, metonymy is characterised by closeness or likeness. Whereas metaphor has been accused of substituting the animal for something else, something other than itself, metonymy is understood as a call for self-signification. But, as Ann-Sofie Lönngren has argued, the literary animal is at once a material organism with its own phenomenological existence and a part of human epistemological systems. Lönngren therefore calls for a reading strategy that acknowledges that the literary animal is situated somewhere in between metaphor and metonymy. Literary animals are both self-signifying actors and saturated with symbolic connotations. It is in the tension between metaphor and metonymy that the 'meanings' of literary animals can be located.[4] In relation to early medieval literature, Megan Cavell argues that even highly metaphorical representations of animals — like those we encounter in Old English riddles and religious allegories — rely on an awareness of actual animal lives and those lives leave a trace in literary sources that might at first seem 'fantastical' to modern readers.[5] Accordingly, my readings of early medieval literature aim to uncover how human writers imagined the animality of work and craft *and* how the labours of actual animals have in turn shaped the human imagination, leaving their tracks in these texts for the reader to follow.

Animal Laborans and *Homo Faber*

Modern theories of craft have, understandably, focused on makers and materials. Richard Sennett and Tim Ingold have challenged models of making in which active, human makers impose preconceived forms upon passive, nonhuman matter. They argue that craft is a way of thinking through making in which the head and hand work together. For Ingold, the mind and body of the craftsperson correspond with tools and materials in the generation of form.[6] For Sennett, materials absorb our attention and shape our consciousness when we work closely

[4] Ann-Sofie Lönngren, 'Metaphor, Metonymy, More-Than-Anthropocentric. The Animal That Therefore I Read (and Follow)', in *The Palgrave Handbook of Animals and Literature*, ed. by Susan McHugh, Robert McKay and John Miller (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), pp. 37–50.

[5] Megan Cavell, 'A Community of Exiles: Whale and Human Domains in Old English Poetry', in *Handbook of Animals and Literature*, ed. by Susan McHugh, Robert McKay and John Miller, pp. 97–110 (p. 107).

[6] Ingold, *Making*, p. 31.

with them. Material resistance, and the human ability to deal with this resistance and learn through difficulty, is key to the practice of crafts.[7]

It is not always obvious where animals ought to be situated within these models of making. Are animals creative makers or are they aligned with materials and materiality? Are they a passive part of the environment or can animals actively shape their environments? On the one hand, animals could be considered 'matter' since their bodies are often used as materials and transformed by humans in crafts such as parchment-making or leather-making. On the other hand, animals could be considered 'makers' because they create their own products and structures such as bees making honey, spiders weaving webs, birds building nests or beavers constructing dams.

To accept that animals are makers is to undermine a crucial aspect of human exceptionalism. For instance, Hannah Arendt sees humanity in its role of *homo faber* as superior to other animals. In *The Human Condition*, Arendt draws a distinction between work that is laborious and work that is creative. Labour is any activity that is necessary for the maintenance of life itself. For Arendt, labour is never ending and creates nothing that lasts. Its efforts are quickly consumed and must be renewed perpetually to sustain life. This side of human existence is the closest to animal existence and so Arendt refers to humanity in this mode as *animal laborans*. Because it is bound by necessity, Arendt sees labour as characterised by a lack of freedom and the labouring human as enslaved. In contrast, creative work fabricates an artificial realm of things that endure beyond the act of creation and construct a world that is distinct from anything given in nature. Arendt names this mode of humanity as *homo faber*. The work of *homo faber* encompasses both *techne* (τέχνη) and *poiesis* (ποίησις) and its typical representatives range from the builder and architect to the craftsperson and artist. The work of *homo faber* separates humans from other animals and transforms nature according to human intentions. Whereas the work of *animal laborans* is unfree, the work of *homo faber* frees humanity from the demands of animality.[8]

Sennett picks up on the distinction that his former teacher, Arendt, draws between *homo faber* and *animal laborans*. *Animal laborans* is the human being akin to a beast of burden, a drudge condemned to routine. *Homo faber* is superior to *animal laborans* because, while *animal laborans* is completely absorbed in a task, *homo faber* stops producing and starts evaluating material labour and practice. *Animal laborans* asks 'how?' but *homo faber* asks 'why?' Sennett himself defines craft far more broadly than manual labour and takes issue with Arendt's theory that the human mind only engages once labour is done, arguing that thinking and feeling are contained within the process of making.[9] Nevertheless, Sennett follows Arendt in defining craft as an exceptionally human characteristic. He writes that craftsmanship 'names an enduring, basic human impulse' and that 'the craftsman represents the special human condition of being engaged'.[10] The figure of the craftsman that emerges from Sennett's study remains a human one.

Other scholars have gone further and argued that animals themselves should be understood as both workers and crafters. Jason Hribal, for instance, has posited animals as part of the working class. Hribal's focus is primarily on the role of animals in the development of capitalism in the modern world. But he calls into question the basic assumption that one needs

[7] Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (New Haven: Yale University Press), esp. pp. 119–46, 214–38.
[8] Arendt, *Human Condition*. Part III discusses *animal laborans* and Part IV discusses *homo faber*.
[9] Sennett, *Craftsman*, pp. 6–7.
[10] Sennett, *Craftsman*, pp. 9, 20.

to be a human to be a worker and expands the parameters of the historical 'working class' to include animals, showing that the animal-rights movement was part of the working-class movement by the early nineteenth century and that protest against the exploitation of animal labour was always bound up with class struggle.[11] Tim Ingold, meanwhile, has contended that human acts of making are simply one part in a series of transformations involving creatures of every kind, whereby humans very often take over from where nonhumans have left off. One example that Ingold points to is when humans extract the wax secreted by bees to make the cell walls of the honeycomb for further use in the manufacture of candles. Another is the production of silk, which starts with the consumption of mulberry leaves by the grubs of the moth. One of Ingold's more extended examples of human craft relying on and taking over from products of animal origin is the making of ink and parchment in medieval Europe.[12]

In certain respects, the claim that animals should be considered fellow workers might seem an uncontroversial one. Throughout history, including medieval history, animals have been central to agriculture and industry. Often, though, animal work is regarded as drudgery, the unthinking work of the body. Their labour is dismissed as simple, repetitive and directed by human masters (the ox drawing the plough, the horse pulling the cart, the sheep grazing in the field). They do not create with their minds, but their bodies provide useful products for human tasks and inventions (leather for gloves and shoes, bone for combs or handles, fat and wax for candles). Karl Marx is perhaps the best-known philosopher who subscribed to this view. For Marx, humans change the material form of nature and realise a purpose in this materialisation process. The human worker manufactures with a creativity that other animals do not possess and so, when a bird builds a nest or a beaver constructs a dam, it is instinct and not intelligence that guides their making. For Marx, labour is an exclusively human characteristic.[13]

However, when the drudgery of animal work is recognised as more thoughtful and skilful animal craft, then human-centred models of making come under pressure. The predominant philosophical model of making has long been the hylomorphic one. Hylomorphism supposes that human practitioners impose a form (*morphe*) that is internal to the mind upon external matter (*hyle*). The hylomorphic model tends to reinforce anthropocentrism or, in some iterations, theocentrism, with humans as secondary imitators of divine creation. Creativity begins in the mind of God or man rather than emerging from, or growing out of, the world. Ingold contends that the very notion of humanity 'epitomises the predicament of a creature that can know itself and the world of which it is inextricably a part only by taking itself out of that world and reinscribing itself on another level of being: mental rather than material, cultural rather than natural'.[14] This helps to explain why the hylomorphic model elevates human nature above that of all other creatures. Ingold counters hylomorphism with a morphogenic model of making which softens the distinction between organism and artefact and which sees human making not as the imposition of form but as participation in a form-generation process that is already underway in the nonhuman world around us.[15] Ingold's morphogenic model positions human crafts as dependent upon animal production, but there is also increasing evidence that

[11] Hribal, 'Animals are Part of the Working Class', pp. 436, 453.
[12] Ingold, *Being Alive*, pp. 24–26.
[13] Karl Marx, *Capital: Volume I* (London: Penguin Classics, 1990), pp. 283–84. For further, more recent critiques of the contention that animals should be considered workers and a response to these critiques, see Hribal, 'Animals are Part of the Working Class Reviewed', pp. 1–37.
[14] Ingold, *Making*, p. 27.
[15] Ingold, *Making*, p. 27.

animals can fabricate their own products and even display technical capabilities independently of humans.

A profound challenge to human-centred models of making has been put forward by Ashley Shew, who acknowledges that *homo faber* sits at the centre of traditional definitions of technology but counters this view by arguing that many animal constructions, inventions, buildings, tool-making and tool-use should be considered 'technological knowledge'. Shew bases this argument on scientific studies showing that animals can manipulate their environments in significant ways and that their use of tools is far more sophisticated than previously supposed.[16] Whales, for example, are capable of advanced cognition that includes intelligent, rational behaviour and an understanding of how things work and how to manipulate them. Birds, likewise, possess a cognitive sophistication that is demonstrated by their ability to craft and use a variety of tools in ways that involve planning, manufacturing and social learning.[17] The fact that other animals can use tools, convey techniques and make artefacts shows that humanity is coextensive with animality and troubles the human-animal binary upon which the case for *homo faber* depends. The very possibility of a creative animal — of purposeful nonhuman craft — problematises anthropocentric concepts of making.

Some of the theories highlighted above take a wide-ranging historical view of work and craft, but a more focused analysis of the earliest English literature will deepen, enrich and contest modern ideas about how work and craft define and delimit the human condition. This literature deploys the Old English equivalents of my key terms — work (*weorc*) and craft (*cræft*) — in ways that sometimes align with and sometimes challenge their more recent usages. This suggests that modern ideas about work and craft, and about what kinds of beings could be considered workers or crafters, started to take shape in the early medieval period and may still exert an influence on how we understand the humanity — or animality — of work and craft today. But it also suggests that early English literature can unsettle some of the assumptions we have inherited from postmedieval philosophies and political movements. Social reformers such as William Morris looked back to the idealised figure of the medieval craftsman as a way of advocating traditional handicrafts, positioning the beauty and pleasure of craftwork against the evils of mechanised industry.[18] Thanks in large part to Morris and the Arts and Crafts Movement, craft is still envisaged as the more pleasurable counterpart to work that must be endured. At its worst, the experience of work is dehumanising whereas craft is usually chosen as a pastime that allows the crafter to express creativity. Craft is imagined as an alternative to inhumane working conditions. This relationship between work as painful suffering and craft as purposeful making has some roots in the Old English language, long before the Arts and Crafts Movement.

What did the words *cræft* and *weorc* mean to Old English writers? In some ways, Old English *cræft* did align with the Modern English sense of *craft* as making things by hand with skill. The *Dictionary of Old English* notes that the most frequent Latin equivalent of Old English *cræft* is *ars* yet neither 'craft' nor 'art' conveys the wide range of meanings of *cræft*.[19]

[16] Shew, *Animal Constructions*, pp. 1–3.

[17] Shew, *Animal Constructions*, pp. 60–63; 67–89.

[18] See further David Matthews, *Medievalism: A Critical History* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2015), pp. 56–57, and Jan Marsh, 'William Morris and Medievalism', in *The Oxford Handbook of Victorian Medievalism*, ed. by Joanne Parker and Corinna Wagner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 507–22.

[19] *The Toronto Dictionary of Old English*, ed. by Angus Cameron, Ashley Crandell Amos, Antonette diPaolo Healey, et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986–), s.v. *cræft*. Henceforth abbreviated as the *TDOE*.

A useful translation is 'skill' but the word has many other senses. *Cræft* is a semantically rich term in Old English. Its definitions include: strength, power, might; physical skill, ability, dexterity; mental or spiritual talent; an art, skill or trade, an organised body of knowledge; craft of mind, cunning; knowledge.[20] Two doctoral theses from 2013 have carried out valuable studies of the Old English word *cræft*. Helen Price explores the semantic relationship between Old English *cræft* and Modern English *technology*, arguing that the Old and Modern English terms share many connotations, particularly in the way that they refer to both intellectual and material processes of creativity. In keeping with her larger ecocritical aims, Price argues that her analysis offers 'evidence to suggest a connection between humans and nonhumans conveyed by the technical processes denoted by Old English *cræft*'.[21] Price's conclusions help to decentre the figure of the human craftsman in Old English literature while also providing a linguistic bridge between the animal *cræft* of early medieval sources and modern studies of animal *technology*. Diane Alff notes the polysemous quality of Old English *cræft* but also traces the semantic changes that *cræft* undergoes through the pre-Conquest period. These semantic changes reflect broad cultural shifts in representations of craftsmanship and in perceptions of the craftsman. Alff observes a shift from the 'old usage' where *cræft* suggests magical craftsmanship to a 'new usage' where *cræft* suggests a Christianised understanding of craftsmanship as divine endowment. While Alff also carries out studies of the craft-related terms *searu* and *orþanc*, she excludes *weorc* from the remit of her thesis.[22] But *weorc* does appear in Old English sources that represent the labours of animals, sometimes in close proximity to *cræft*, and so the main definitions of *weorc* and the conceptual relationships between *weorc* and *cræft* are worth exploring a little further here. *Weorc* has a wide range of meanings in Old English. According to Bosworth-Toller, it can be defined as: work; working or doing; in a collective sense, doings or actions; labour, occupation; any form of sustained or habitual activity; a deed, any action; a work, what is wrought; pain, travail, grief.[23]

There are some important differences between *weorc* and *cræft* that loosely correspond with modern concepts of work and craft. Across both Old and Modern English, the word 'work' retains its most common usage as 'labour'. In Old English, 'work' has the more poetic meaning of 'pain, travail, grief'. Work can thus cause both physical and psychological suffering in the early medieval period, as in modernity. Old English 'work' connotes a sustained, habitual or repetitive activity, not necessarily requiring skill. In Old English, as in Modern English, 'craft' is skill or art, indicating a creative practice requiring more talent than simple 'work'. Craft can be a quality of, or a skill performed by, the body or the mind or spirit in Old English. Craft comprises both mental and physical power. It is not confined to the labour of the body. It is also the artistry of the mind, the 'craft' of making coupled with 'craftiness' of thought.

Despite these differences, *weorc* and *cræft* are not binary opposites but interrelated terms in Old English. Craft can be work, insofar as a 'craft' can be a trade, an everyday occupation that is learned and practiced repeatedly. Work can be craft, inasmuch as a 'work' is that which

[20] *TDOE*. See also *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary: Based on the Manuscript Collections of Joseph Bosworth Supplement,*ed. by Thomas Northcote Toller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), s.v. *cræft*. Henceforth abbreviated as Bosworth-Toller.

[21] Helen Price, 'Human and Nonhuman in Anglo-Saxon and British Postwar Poetry: Reshaping Literary Ecology' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leeds, 2013), pp. 41–82 (p. 79).

[22] Diane Alff, 'Workers and Artisans, the Binders and the Bound: Craftsmen and Notions of Craftsmanship in Old English Literature' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Oxford, 2013).

[23] Bosworth-Toller, s.v. *weorc*.

is wrought. In Riddle 26, work can describe smithcraft (*wrætlic weorc smiþa*, l. 14) and, in *Cædmon's Hymn*, work can refer to the divine act of creation (*weorc wuldor-fæder*, l. 3). Modern theories that conceive of craft as the more positive counterpart to painful, laborious work do not find straightforward correlation in Old English. There is evidence for the idea of work as a punishment that must be suffered by humankind. The postlapsarian labour with which God punishes Adam and Eve is described as *weorc*. Before the fall, the *Genesis* poet says of Adam and Eve that: 'ne hie sorge wiht / weorces wiston' ('they did not know anything at all of the sorrow of work', ll. 785–86).[24] But the relationship between bad work and good craft — where it is *weorc* that brings about suffering — could be reversed. Eve is said to be the 'geweorc Godes, þeah heo þa on deofles cræft bedroren wurde' ('the work of God, though she had been degraded by the craft of the devil', ll. 822–23). *Instructions for Christians* states that 'Sceal æghwylc man ælne swincan / on swylcum cræfte swa him Crist onlænð, / þæt willan his gewyrce georne' ('Everyone must always labour at whatever craft Christ loans to him, so that he eagerly carries out Christ's will', ll. 150–52).[25] This advice indicates that crafting is not simply about expressing creativity in a pleasurable way but about carrying out Christ's plan for us. It further suggests that *cræft* is not inherent in human beings but a gift that has been loaned (*onlænð*) to us by God and which must be fulfilled through hard labour (*swincan*). *Swincan* is a verb defined by Bosworth-Toller as: to toil, labour, work with effort; to be troubled, to be in difficulty or distress.[26] In this instance, then, crafting is akin to working with connotations of physical and psychological labour that can shade into suffering.

The conceptual overlap between *weorc* and *cræft* in Old English raises the possibility that, if early medieval animals could work, they could also craft. Work carries connotations of pain and pain is a kind of suffering that can lead to submissive passivity. Conversely, repetitive, painstaking work can turn into more skilful craft because repetition creates skill via the habitual practice of a craft over time. As Sennett contends in relation to human craft, once we have trained our bodies in repetition our minds become 'alert rather than bored because we have developed the skill of anticipation' and the 'person able to perform a duty again and again has acquired a technical skill, the rhythmic skill of a craftsman'.[27] Technique need not always be a mechanical activity, for craftworkers can feel fully and think deeply about what they are doing once they do it well.[28] Shew similarly challenges straightforward divisions between embodied, instinctive acts of making and intelligent, intentional acts of making in relation to animal craft. For Shew, some animal crafts demand a high level of cognitive skill or 'knowhow' on the part of the animal maker (e.g. crows crafting tools) whereas other animal crafts are extensions of the body into the world (e.g. spiders spinning webs). However, the artefacts produced by the latter still contain 'thing knowledge' that allows a web or dam or nest to work in a given environment and alter that environment in some way. Acts of animal making might differ in terms of how much 'knowhow' versus how much 'thing knowledge' they necessitate but this is a matter of degree rather than kind.[29] This suggests that the unthinking

[24] References to *Genesis* are taken from *Old Testament Narratives*, ed. and trans. by Daniel Anlezark (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011). All further references provided parenthetically. Translations mine.

[25] Reference to *Instructions for Christians* taken from *Old English Shorter Poems: Religious and Didactic*, ed. and trans. by Christopher A. Jones (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012). Translation mine.

[26] Bosworth-Toller, s.v. *swincan*.

[27] Sennett, *Craftsman*, pp. 177–78.

[28] Sennett, *Craftsman*, p. 20.

[29] Shew, *Animal Constructions*, pp. 116–19.

work of the body and the thoughtful craft of the mind form a continuum rather than two discrete categories that keep nonhuman labourers and human makers apart.

Modern craft movements often idealise the figure of the craftworker and draw on craft as both an idea and activity that lifts humans out of the dehumanising drudgery of mindless, mechanical labour that alienates the worker from his or her 'true' nature as a creative, self-conscious being.[30] It is in this way that 'craftsmanship' defines the human condition and reinforces human exceptionalism. Following Morris, this idealised view of the human craftsman tends to look back to the Middle Ages for inspiration. As we will see, though, the language of *weorc* and *cræft* occurs in early medieval texts about animals and Old English writers used the terms *weorc* and *cræft*to refer to the labour, suffering, strength, skill, cunning and creativity of a variety of beasts and birds. Animals can possess and perform *cræft* as well as *weorc*. Moreover, human experiences of *weorc* and *cræft* are inseparable from animal *weorc* and *cræft* in many Old English poems, riddles and narratives.

The Christian tradition that influenced these early English writers did not always lead to the assumption that craft makes us human. Rather, in biblical histories, knowledge of craft results from and causes inhumane actions and can reduce humans to animals. In the biblical Book of Genesis, it is Cain and his descendant Tubalcain who are responsible for the first human crafts. Genesis 4.1–18 states that Cain was a farmer who slew his brother, Abel, becoming the first murderer in biblical history. Cain was then cursed by God and condemned to wander the earth. As punishment, God declares that the earth itself shall refuse to yield to Cain's labours: 'Cum operatus fueris eam non dabit tibi fructos suos' ('When you shall till it, it shall not yield its fruits to you', Genesis 4.12).[31] Cain dwells as an exile on the east of Eden and builds the first city there. His descendent, Tubalcain, is the first biblical smith noted for his metalworking skill and said to be 'malleator et faber in cuncta opera aeris et ferri' ('a hammerer and artificer in every work of brass and iron', Genesis 4.22). A longstanding medieval tradition connected the two figures, observing that Cain invented murder and Tubalcain invented weapons for more widespread murder.[32] This tradition does not posit craft as a skill that improves or advances humankind but as a dark art that increases man's inhumanity to man.

As inheritors of these Christian traditions, Old English writers recognised Cain as the founder of murder which resulted in the craft of forging weapons for war. For instance, the Old English *Genesis* refers to Cain as the 'cwealmes wyrhta' ('maker of murder', l. 1004).[33] Similarly, Old English writers were aware that the founder of metalworking and inventor of the ploughshare was Tubalcain. The Old English *Genesis* identifies Tubalcain as a *smið-cræftega* who imparts his knowledge to *burh-sittende*, linking smithcraft to the civilisation of city-building and city-dwelling. The poet elaborates upon the biblical narrative and emphasises that smithcraft is an ingenious skill of the mind as much as the hand. Further, as the inventor of *sulhgeweorc*, Tubalcain technologically enhances the work of agriculture:

[30] As such, these craft movements are directly or indirectly influenced by the Marxist theory of alienation (*Entfremdung*) of human workers from their human nature or species-essence (*Gattungswesen*). The classic study is Norman Geras, *Marx and Human Nature: Refutation of a Legend*(London: Verso Books, 1983).

[31] References to the Latin Vulgate are taken from the Douay-Rheims Bible, online at <http://www.drbo.org>. All further references provided parenthetically. Translations mine.

[32] For discussion, see chapter 7 of Elizabeth Coatsworth and Michael Pinder, *The Art of the Anglo-Saxon Goldsmith* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002).

[33] See also lines 191–99 of 'Maxims I', in *Old English Shorter Poems: Wisdom and Lyric*, ed. and trans. by Robert E. Bjork (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014).

> Swylce on ðære mægðe maga wæs haten
> on þa ilcan tid Tubal Cain,
> se þurh snytro sped smið-cræftega wæs,
> and þurh modes gemynd monna ærest,
> sunu Lamehes, sulhgeweorces
> fruma wæs ofer foldan, siððan folca bearn
> æres cuðon and isernes,
> burh-sittende, brucan wide. (ll. 1082–89)
>
> [Also in that family at the same time there was a man called Tubalcain, son of Lamech, who through wise skill was a master of smith-craft and through his mind's intelligence was the inventor of plough-work, the first among men over the earth; afterwards the children of nations, the city-dwellers, have known widely how to make use of brass and iron.]

However, the role of Cain and his kin as originators of human craft goes hand in hand with their role as outcasts from civilisation, cursed and condemned to live like wild beasts. *Beowulf* describes how: 'Cain wearð / to ecg-banan angan breþer, fæderen-mæge; he ða fag gewat / morþre gemearcod man-dream fleon, / westen warode.' ('Cain became the sword-slayer of his only brother, his father's son. Then he departed, outlawed, marked by murder, fled from human society, dwelt in the wilderness', ll. 1261–65).[34] In some accounts, Cain had become so dehumanised that his own family hunted him like an animal. A popular apocryphal story told how Tubalcain caught sight of his grandfather, Cain, while out hunting and mistook him for a wild beast, advising his blind father Lamech to shoot Cain with an arrow.[35] The Old English *Genesis* alludes to this event when Lamech laments how: 'Ic on morðor ofsloh minra sumne / hylde-maga; honda gewemde / on Caines cwealme mine' ('I murderously killed my close kinsman, stained my hands through Cain's slaying', ll. 1093–95).

Thus, in the medieval Christian tradition, knowledge of craft is not always humanising. Conversely, craft is implicated in the origins of murder, feud and warfare and it can imperil and disrupt human communities. The kin of Cain who build the first city, invent the first plough and forge the first weapons are the same figures who must dwell apart from other humans and wander the wildernesses with beasts. The Christian tradition contrasts with other religions and mythologies where craft creates human community and civilisation. For instance, in the Qur'an, David originates material culture and is given the gift of working iron by God, who softens the iron for David and then tells him how to shape it into armour. William F. McCants observes that this is not something that early Jewish or Christian scripture would attribute to a biblical hero because, in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, those who 'originate smithcraft are sinful' and the 'application of this technology to the crafting of weapons and armour leads to bloodshed and ruin'.[36] In the Homeric hymn to Hephaestus, the god is praised for teaching glorious crafts to men who used to live in caves like wild beasts. Sennett highlights this hymn as an instance in which the 'civilising craftsman' has used tools and technical skills 'for a collective good, that of ending humanity's wandering existence as hunter gatherers or rootless warriors'.[37] Christianity provided early English writers with a more ambivalent, in

[34] References to *Beowulf* are taken from *The Beowulf Manuscript*, ed. and trans. by R. D. Fulk (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010). All further references provided parenthetically. Translations mine.

[35] Patrick J. Murphy, *Unriddling the Exeter Riddles* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2011), p. 146.

[36] William F. McCants, *Founding Gods, Inventing Nations: Conquest and Culture Myths from Antiquity to Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), p. 47.

[37] Sennett, *Craftsman*, p. 21. See the 'Homeric Hymn to Hephaestus', in *Hesiod, the Homeric Hymns, and Homerica*,

places sceptical, history of craft and with biblical craftsmen who are cast out from human society and whose labours work against the collective human good.

Humanising and Dehumanising Crafts in the Old English *Boethius*

A text that frequently features in discussions of craft as a concept is the Old English *Boethius.* This is a ninth-century translation and adaptation of the late antique Latin philosophical work, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, by Boethius.[38] The Old English translator makes several significant changes to the Boethian source text, including transforming a reference to the Roman hero Fabricius into a passage discussing the craft of the legendary Germanic smith, Weland. Previous studies of the Old English *Boethius* have highlighted the Alfredian translator's fondness for the word *cræft* and idiosyncratic usage of the term.[39]

Prose 29 of the *Boethius* provides evidence for what appears to be a hylomorphic model of divine craftsmanship in its explanation of the difference between providence and fate. God conceives of divine providence in the same way that a craftsperson plans their creation: 'swa swa ælc cræftega ðencð and mearcað his weorc on his mode aer aer he hit wyrce and wyrcð siððan eall' ('as every craftsman thinks and marks out his work in his mind before making it and afterwards makes the whole thing', Prose 29.6). This passage aligns divine and human craft and understands the work (*weorc*) of the craftsperson (*cræftega*) as originating in their mind (*mod*) before being realised in the material world. Immediately after this explanation, however, the translator describes how God effects fate or *wyrd* through good angels and devils, the stars, the souls of men and the lives of other creatures (Prose 29.7). Humans are ensouled yet not particularly separated from other beings, including animals, angels and the planets. We are all the tools and materials of the divine craftsman who uses our bodies and spirits to make his heavenly work manifest. Humans are not so much makers as instruments of making in this instance.

The Alfredian translator thinks of a good king as a craftsman, too. Like God, the king uses those below him in a cosmic and social hierarchy as tools and materials to carry out his *weorc*:

> Ðæt bið ælces cræftes andweorc þæt mon þone cræft butan wyrcan ne mæg. Þæt bið þonne cyninges andweorc and his tol mid to ricisianne þæt he hæbbe his lond fullmonnad. He sceal habban gebedmen and ferdmen and weorcmen. Hwæt þu wast þætte butan þissan tolan nan cyning his cræft ne mæg cyðan. (Prose 9.2)

trans. by H. G. Evelyn-White (Cambridge: Harvard Loeb Classical Library, 1914), p. 447.

[38] I occasionally refer to the translator as 'Alfredian' to indicate that the Old English *Boethius* has traditionally been associated with King Alfred and his court while acknowledging that the authorship is disputed and may not be attributable to the king himself. In favour of Alfred as author, see Janet M. Bately, 'Alfred as Author and Translator', in *A Companion to Alfred the Great*, ed. by Nicole Guenther Discenza and Paul E. Szarmach (Leiden: Brill, 2015) and Janet M. Bately, 'Did King Alfred Actually Translate Anything?', *Medium Ævum*, 78 (2009), 189–215. Against Alfred as author, see Malcolm R. Godden, 'Did King Alfred Write Anything?', *Medium Ævum*, 76 (2007), 1–23 and Malcolm R. Godden, 'The Player King: Identification and Self-Representation in King Alfred's Writings', in *Alfred the Great: Papers from the Eleventh-Centenary Conferences*, ed. by Timothy Reuter (Aldershot: Routledge, 2003), pp. 137–50.

[39] See especially Peter Clemoes, 'King Alfred's Debt to Vernacular Poetry: the Evidence of *Ellen* and *Cræft*', in *Words, Texts and Manuscripts: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Culture presented to Helmut Gneuss*, ed. by Michael Korhammer, Karl Reichl, and Hans Sauer (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1992), pp. 213–38; Nicole Guenther Discenza, 'Power, Skill and Virtue in the Old English *Boethius*', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 26 (1997), 81–108.

> [The material for any craft is that without which one cannot carry out that craft. Then the material for a king and his tools for ruling are that he has his land fully manned. He must have men who pray and men who fight and men who work. You should understand that without these tools no king can make his craft known.]

The translator's understanding of what it means to know and carry out a craft goes beyond the modern sense of skilful making. The Old English *Boethius* famously develops the concept of *cræft* as an inner virtue. Peter Clemoes shows that Alfred regularly translates the Latin *virtus* as Old English *cræft* and Nicole Guenther Discenza notes that, in doing so, he 'unites the concepts of power, skill and virtue in one word'.[40] For Clemoes, Alfred saw a craft as an inborn talent to serve a moral purpose. Discenza adds that Alfred treats labour as comparable to more spiritual strivings, in that both fulfil the responsibilities given one by God.

In some ways, this emphasis on *cræft* as virtue makes it a quality that is specific to humans. Understanding and reason are said to be the 'þa cræftas eoweres ingeðonces' ('crafts of your inner mind', Prose 9.12) and the virtuous *cræft* of reason is possessed by no animals except for humans alone: 'hit nænig hafað neat buton monnum' ('no animal but humans have it', Metre 20.189). Therefore, to abandon crafts — in the sense of virtues — is to lose humanity. From Prose 25 to Prose 26, *cræftas* (virtues) are contrasted with *unðeawas* (vices) and when unrighteous, earthly kings abandon the former and follow the latter, they lose their humanity and become beastlike. Even though these kings are outwardly adorned with the material products of craftwork — fine garments, glittering gems, decorated weapons — their inner minds are so inflamed with pride that they behave not like men but like mad dogs: 'ac he reðigmod ræst on gehwilcne, / wedehunde wuhta gelicost; bið to up ahæfen inne on mode' ('but fierce-minded he rushes at everyone, of all creatures most like a mad-hound; he is too puffed up within his mind', Metre 25.17–18).

Abandoning craft can cause someone to lose their own humanity, but abusing craft can deprive others of their humanity, turning men and women into wild beasts. Shortly after the description of the beastlike earthly kings, Metre 26 narrates the story of the sorceress Circe. Circe can perform *dry-cræftas* and with *balo-cræftum* she transforms Ulysses' men into animals, fettering them with chains and depriving them of both freedom and speech:

> Ða ongunnon wercan wer-ðeoda spell,
> sædon þæt hio sceolde mid hire scinlace
> beornas forbredan and mid balo-cræftum
> wraðum weorpan on wildra lic
> cyninges þegnas, cyspan siððan
> and mid racentan eac ræpan mænigne. (Metre 26.73–78)
>
> [Then the people started to produce stories, said that she changed the men with her magic and warped the king's thanes with baleful crafts into the likeness of wild beasts, and then fettered them and also tied many up with chains.]

Circe's magical crafts can quite literally dehumanise her victims. Yet the inner minds of these bestial men, even though they are bound by sorrow, remain human: 'Næfdon hi mare monnum gelices, / eorð-buendum, ðonne in-geþonc' ('They had nothing remaining similar to men, to earth-dwellers, but for their inner minds', Metre 26.93–94). The translator asserts that *dry-cræft* cannot change the human mind, only the body. The power (*mægen-cræft micel*) of the mind over the body is said to be wondrous and the skills and strengths (*listas and*

[40] Clemoes, 'King Alfred's Debt'; Discenza, 'Power, Skill and Virtue', p. 96.

cræftas) of the body come to everyone from the mind. The translator raises the disquieting possibility that magical crafts exist, crafts with the power to alter human nature, deprive men of their humanity, and turn them into animals, only to insist that such crafts are fictions or false stories (*leasum spellum*) and to reassert the superior, virtuous craft of the inner mind over the strengths and skills of the body. As Jennifer Lorden has recently shown, however, the Old English *Boethius* complicates the moral conclusion drawn by its Latin source text. Whereas the Latin simply observes that the power to control the body does not entail the power to influence the human heart, the Old English explains that each sailor was changed into the form of whatever animal he was most like previously in his life. As such, Circe's craft reveals and materialises 'the animalistic mental qualities' that each man already possessed within his inner self.[41] Virtuous craft might be able to raise human beings above animality but, equally, the unvirtuous abuse of craft can bring out the brutishness, the latent beast, lurking within our psyches.

Elsewhere, the *Boethius* alludes to another figure who abuses craft to dehumanise his victims. This is the figure of the pagan craftsman, Weland the Smith, this time from Germanic rather than Graeco-Roman myth. In his Old Norse incarnation as Vǫlundr, the smith is captured by King Níðuðr who severs the sinews behind his knees, hamstringing Vǫlundr to prevent him from escaping. King Níðuðr imprisons Vǫlundr on an island and enslaves him by forcing him to work as a royal craftsman. It is not long before Vǫlundr takes revenge on Níðuðr by killing the king's sons when they visit his forge. The smith then uses his craft skills to transform their skulls into goblets, their eyes into gems, their teeth into brooches, and sends these artefacts to their unsuspecting family members. Later, King Níðuðr's daughter, Böðvildr, brings Vǫlundr a golden ring to repair, but the smith gives her drugged beer and rapes her, impregnating her. Finally, Vǫlundr crafts a pair of wings from bird feathers, before rising into the air, boasting of his revenge to a distraught King Níðuðr, and flying free from his captor.[42]

As this narrative suggests, Vǫlundr or Weland abuses craft to commit inhumane acts of vengeance and change his victims into nonhuman forms. Whereas Circe turns the living bodies of her victims into animals, Weland turns the dead bodies of his victims into artefacts. Weland then uses his craft to transform his own body into a human-animal hybrid, becoming a birdman and flying away on handmade wings. The story of Weland could be read as a story of back-and-forth transitions between the modes of *animal laborans* and *homo faber*. To begin with, Weland is the archetypal *homo faber* whose craft fabricates an artificial world of things. Yet King Niðhad's enslavement of Weland turns the smith's craft into enforced labour and moves Weland into the mode of *animal laborans*, a drudge condemned to repetitive tasks and whose labour is characterised by unfreedom. The unfree labour of Weland may have had some basis in historical reality, if we consider the legal evidence that at least some early English

[41] Jennifer A. Lorden, 'Tale and Parable: Theorizing Fictions in the Old English *Boethius*', *PMLA*, 136 (2021), 340–55 (p. 352). For further discussion of how the Old English translator transforms the classical myth of Circe, see Susan Irvine, 'Ulysses and Circe in King Alfred's Boethius: A Classical Myth Transformed,' in *Studies in English Language and Literature: "Doubt Wisely": Papers in Honour of E.G. Stanley*, ed. by M. J. Toswell and E. M. Tyler (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 387–401.

[42] Summary based upon *Völundarkviða*, probably composed *c.* 900–1050. It is possible that *Völundarkviða* was produced in an area of early medieval England under Scandinavian influence. See John McKinnell, 'The Context of *Völundarkviða*', in *The Poetic Edda: Essays on Old Norse Mythology*, ed. by Paul Acker and Carolyne Larrington (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 198–212.

smiths were kept in compulsory service to their lords.[43] Weland continues to work and to craft things for the king but is unable to realise a purpose through these acts of making. Weland then reasserts his role as *homo faber* by reshaping the world according to his own desires. Weland materialises his inner desire for vengeance and combines the 'craft' of making with 'craftiness' of thought when he turns the body parts of the boys into artefacts, deceiving the king by craftily concealing a skull within a goblet, an eye within a gem, a tooth within a brooch. In doing so, though, and in crafting his own body into the form of a winged birdman, he violates ontological boundaries between the human, the animal and the artefactual. Weland may represent *homo faber* in certain respects, but ultimately his transformative crafts could not be said to raise humanity above animality or separate humans from the rest of nature. Rather, *Welandes geweorc* has the power to turn the human self into a nonhuman other.

The Old English *Boethius* retells the tale of Circe but leaves the tale of Weland untold. It is possible that the narrative of Weland, if recounted in full, would have posed problems for the Alfredian translator's Christian emphasis on *cræft* as a virtue that makes us human as well as for the role that *cræft* plays in his vision of a properly ordered human society, with the craftsman-king at its head. It is usually assumed that the name of Weland has replaced that of Fabricius because of a pun on the Latin *faber*. But this substitution also introduces a much more fraught king-craftsman dynamic to the Old English *Boethius*. As Isobel Rennie Robertson has noted, Fabricius, an early Roman consul, was known for his austere incorruptibility, famously declining gifts and bribes. Robertson suggests that Weland may have been seen as a fitting alternative to Fabricius due to the theme of greed that runs through the Germanic legend.[44] Indeed, the most powerful figure in the Weland story, King Niðhad, is quite the opposite of the incorruptible Fabricius. Niðhad, whose greed for material treasures motivates his enslavement of Weland, seems more like those animalistic kings of Metre 25 who abandon virtuous *cræftas* and lose their humanity in the pursuit of vices, even as they shimmer in fine garments and sparkle with gold and gems and decorated weapons. For this reason, Weland's rebellion might be thought of as legitimate vengeance against a corrupt earthly authority. Alternatively, Robertson points out that Weland's status as an enslaved smith complicates the rights and wrongs of his vengeance from a legal viewpoint. In the context of early medieval English and Scandinavian laws, Weland's revenge is 'an action forbidden by law' whereas Niðhad's cruelty 'becomes the legal right of a master to punish and exploit his property'[45] Either way, the complex subversive power of Weland never quite comes to the fore in the Old English *Boethius*. In the *Boethius*, Weland is mortalised, killed and buried. The translator asks:

> Hwær sint nu þæs wisan Welandes ban,
> þæs goldsmiðes, þe wæs geo mærost?
> Forþy ic cwæð þæs wisan Welandes ban,
> forðy ængum ne mæg eorðbuendra
> se cræft losian þe him Crist onlænð.
> Ne mæg mon æfre þy eð ænne wræccan
> his cræftes beniman, þe mon oncerran mæg

[43] David A. Hinton, 'Anglo-Saxon Smiths and Myths', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 80.1 (1998), 3–22 (p. 10).

[44] Isobel Rennie Robertson, 'Wayland Smith: A Cultural Historical Biography' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leeds, 2020), pp. 32–33.

[45] Robertson, 'Wayland Smith', p. 134.

> sunnan onswifan, and ðisne swiftan rodor
> of his rihtryne rinca ænig.
> Hwa wat nu þæs wisan Welandes ban,
> on hwelcum hlæwa hrusan þeccen? (Metre 10.33–43)
>
> [Where now are the bones of the wise Weland, the goldsmith, who was formerly very famous? I said the bones of wise Weland because the craft which Christ loans to any earth-dweller cannot be lost by him. Nor can anyone ever deprive a wretch of his craft more easily than any man can divert and turn aside the sun and this swift sky from its correct course. Who now knows in which mound the bones of wise Weland cover the earthen floor?]

Weland is referred to as a wise (*wisan*) goldsmith who was once famous (*geo mærost*). Yet he is fixed firmly in the past and reduced to bones in the present, bones that are buried and hidden within an earthen mound. The wisdom of Weland is linked to his *cræft* but the text gives no hint of the brutal ways in which Weland misused his talents in metalworking. Rather, the gift of *cræft* is attributed to Christ who loans (*onlænð*) skills to mortals. The cross alliteration of line 37 clearly links craft (*cræft*) to Christ (*Crist*) and reassures the reader that the gift of craft cannot be lost (*losian*) but also reminds us that craft is only ever loaned (*onlænð*) to earth-dwellers, including the renowned Weland. The heavenly gift of craft, granted by Christ, is contrasted with the earthly body of the pagan craftsman, Weland. The imagery of the sun (*sunnan*) and swift heavens (*swiftan rodor*) reinforces the divine quality of *cræft* and separates it from the dead bones (*ban*) of the human craftsman who now inhabits the ground (*hrusan*). The Alfredian translator inserts the name of Weland into the Old English *Boethius* only to repress the power of this smith, mortalising as opposed to immortalising him, and maintaining a social and cosmic order ruled over by the king as a regal craftsman and Christ as a holy craftsman. *Cræft* can thus retain its positive sense of an inner virtue that is loaned to us by the Christian God for a moral purpose, while the body of the less than virtuous goldsmith decays and the memory of his dreadful deeds begins to fade.

The Old English *Boethius* reveals what is at stake in literary representations of craft. Craft is an act of divine workmanship that can be imitated by human makers, but craft has a darker, inhumane side that can threaten our bodies, if not our minds and souls, and turn us into nonhuman animals or even artefacts. Although the *Boethius* develops a Christianised concept of *cræft* as an inner virtue that separates humans from other animals, there is a lingering anxiety about how the pagan crafts of characters such as Circe and Weland can disrupt human communities and have a dehumanising effect upon the self and others.

Working and Crafting with Animals in Ælfric's *Colloquy*

Where the Old English *Boethius* considers the philosophical implications of craft, Ælfric's *Colloquy* sheds light on more everyday experiences of working and crafting. We should not read the account of various occupations, trades and skills in the *Colloquy* as a straightforward social record. The text is a formal dialogue between a master and pupils for the purpose of learning Latin, and it has long been recognised that the pupils are playing the roles of secular workers rather than really belonging to those social orders.[46] The *Colloquy* has been ascribed

[46] Earl R. Anderson, 'Social Idealism in Ælfric's Colloquy', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3 (1974), 153–62 (pp. 158–59).

to the late tenth-century English abbot Ælfric of Eynsham. An Old English gloss was later added to Ælfric's Latin text, perhaps by a pupil of his.

Despite its primary function as a pedagogical tool, the *Colloquy* does give an imaginative glimpse into the working lives of ploughmen, shepherds, oxherds, hunters, fishermen, fowlers and others. The literary representations of these occupations, and the beasts and birds that are central to them, support the idea that human work is defined by and dependent upon animals. More than this, it demonstrates that animals are fellow workers who, as Hribal would put it, produce, resist and actively shape the world. Hribal has shown that, in the case of the modern world, advances in agriculture and industry relied heavily on the skilled labour of horses, cows, pigs, sheep and other beasts.[47] At the same time, resistance characterises animal labour and humans counter this resistance with painful, punishing methods of control. Animals might break, leap, climb or flee from enclosures, might charge, kick, bite or peck their handlers, or might stubbornly refuse to work. Human masters and owners of these labouring animals recognise this resistance as such and react by imprisoning 'their' workers within hedges or fences, mutilating them by cutting tendons or clipping wings, or controlling their behaviour with devices like the spur or whip.[48] Although the *Colloquy* is a premodern text, some of the same observations about animal labour apply. We find animals working but sometimes crafting in a more skilful way. We see animals assisting but sometimes resisting human work and craft.

The dialogue opens with an exchange between the master (*magister*) and pupils (*pueri*) in which the pupils ask to be taught how to speak correctly and claim that they would rather be beaten for the sake of learning than to not know it. The master asks the first student what work he pursues, and the pupil answers that he is a professed monk. The monk then introduces several companions, the first of whom is an enslaved ploughman. The master asks: 'Quid dicis tu, arator? Quomodo exerces opus tuum?' ('What do you say, ploughman? How do you keep busy at your work?', l. 22). The ploughman answers: 'O, mi domine, nimium laboro. Exeo diluculo minando boues ad campum, et iungo eos ad aratrum' ('Oh, my lord, I labour very hard. I go out at dawn, driving oxen to the field, and yoke them to a plough', ll. 23–24). The ploughman explains that, besides ploughing a full acre or more each day, he must fill the oxen's bins with hay, water them and carry out their dung. He complains, 'Etiam, magnus labor est, quia non sum liber' ('Indeed, it is a lot of work, because I am not free', l. 35). The shepherd describes a similar experience of work, driving sheep to the pasture and standing over them in heat and cold lest wolves devour them, leading them to their pens and milking them twice a day. The shepherd is followed by an oxherd who must lead the oxen to pasture, watch over them all night, then return them fed and watered to the ploughman in the morning.

The *weorc* of the ploughman, shepherd and oxherd is clearly inseparable from animals. The dialogue describes a very close relationship between human and nonhuman workers where it is not always clear who is working for whom or who is serving whom. The men feed, water, milk, clean, carry dung and watch over their beasts and they bemoan the fact that this leaves them with little free time. Their working lives are bound to and bound by the needs, wants, habits and threats experienced by beasts. They all describe their work as drudgery, with the glossator mainly using the Old English term *deorf* (labour, trouble, tribulation) to describe their lot. The ploughman exclaims, 'Eala, leof hlaford, þearle ic deorfe' ('Alas, dear lord, I

[47] Hribal, 'Animals are Part of the Working Class', p. 445.
[48] Hribal, 'Animals are Part of the Working Class', p. 448–49.

work very hard', l. 23) and 'micel gedeorf hit ys, forþam ic neom freoh' ('it is very hard work, because I am not free', l. 35) while the oxherd says, 'Eala, hlaford min, micel ic gedeorfe' ('Alas, my lord, I work very hard', l. 44). The first three figures carry out hard labour yet their work is characterised by endurance and hardship as opposed to skill or talent.

The *Colloquy* then moves on to the figures of the hunter, fisherman and fowler. Once more, the skills or crafts of these characters are defined by the animals they work with and against. In all three cases, the *cræft* that is practiced by the men is produced in cooperation and competition with beasts and birds. The hunter marks a turning point in the working relationship between men and beasts, since hunting asserts dominance over animals by seeking, capturing, taming or killing wild creatures. The craft of the hunter involves some skill in making nets, and the knowhow of setting them in the right spot, but the remainder of this craft is largely carried out by the dogs who chase game into the nets (ll. 56–64). The fisherman is a similarly skilled worker, who uses craft to catch fish by casting a net into the water and throwing in a hook or bait and baskets. But human craft meets its match in the power of the mighty whale, with the fisherman declaring that he would not dare to catch a whale, 'Quia carius est mihi capere piscem quem possum occidere, quam illum, qui non solum me sed etiam meos socios uno ictu potest mergere aut mortificare' ('Because I prefer to catch a fish that I can kill than a fish that can drown and destroy not only me but all of my companions with one blow', ll. 116–18). The whale therefore tests the limits of the fisherman's skills. The fisherman's inability to catch a whale contrasts with the skill of the fowler in taming hawks. The fowler is certainly a crafty character, using a range of skills to snare birds: 'Multis modis decipio aues: aliquando retibus, aliquando laqueis, aliquando glutino, aliquando sibilo, aliquando accipitre, aliquando decipula' ('I snare birds in a lot of ways: sometimes with nets, with nooses, with lime, with whistles, with a hawk, with a trap', ll. 124–26). However, the master fixates on the tame hawk that carries out the fowler's craft for him by snaring other birds. It would be more accurate to say that the hawk is semi-tame and semi-wild, participating in a partly dependent and partly independent relationship with the fowler. For example, the fowler explains how the hawk feeds him in winter and flies away to the woods in the spring: 'Ipsi pascunt se et me in hieme, et in uere dimitto eos auolare ad siluam' ('They feed themselves and me in the winter, and in spring I let them fly to the woods', ll. 138–39).

In the first half of the *Colloquy*, human experiences of *weorc* and *cræft* are shaped by the animals we labour alongside. Significantly, the Old English glossator uses the term *weorc* when discussing the labour of the ploughman and oxherd but switches to *cræft* when speaking to the hunter and fisherman about their skills. 'Hu begæst þu weorc þin?' ('How do you keep busy at your work?', l. 22) the master asks the ploughman, and to the oxherd: 'Eala, oxanhyrde, hwæt wyrcst þu?' ('So, oxherd, what work do you do?', l. 43). When the master turns to the hunter and asks 'Canst þu ænig þing?' ('Do you know anything?', l. 50), the hunter replies: 'Ænne cræft ic cann' ('I know one craft', l. 51). The master then enquires: 'Hu begæst þu cræft þinne?' ('How do you keep busy at your craft?', l. 56). Likewise, the master asks the fisherman: 'Hwylcne cræft canst þu?' ('What craft do you know?', l. 86).

This transition from *weorc* to *cræft* has implications for how the different characters reflect upon their working lives. The ploughman, shepherd and oxherd appear to be less free and more miserable, suffering more for their work when compared to the hunter, fisherman and fowler, all of whom appear somewhat happier in their crafts and to experience more freedom and rewards. Where the ploughman, shepherd and oxherd describe their labour in Old English

as *deorf* and complain that they are not *freoh*, the hunter explains that the king rewards him with food, clothes and horses 'þæt þe lustlicor cræft minne ic begancge' ('so that I'll perform my craft more happily', l. 85). Although the fisherman fears the might of the whale, he has the freedom to choose not to risk his life at sea: 'Forþam leofre ys me gefon fisc þæne ic mæg ofslean' ('Because I prefer to catch a fish that I can kill', l. 116).

The first three characters could be understood as workers and the following three as crafters, and the language of the Old English gloss reinforces this, but the distinction also depends upon on the natures, behaviours and habitats of the beasts, birds and fish that they work with. In this dialogue, then, animals determine whether humans define themselves as workers who passively endure hard labour or as crafters who actively carry out their tasks with skill. While the oxen and sheep that the ploughman and herders work with are domesticated, enslaved and servile, the hunter, fowler and fisherman rely upon and seek out wilder animals such as harts and boars, hawks and whales. These animals participate in work and craft with varying degrees of agency. Harriet Soper notes that animals, and cattle in particular, appear in Ælfrician texts as creatures who do not possess the power of choice.[49] This is true of domesticated *nytenu* but could the same always be said of wild *deor*? Cattle may not possess the power to choose nor, in turn, the ability to refuse a life of enforced drudgery. Yet some of the wilder animals represented in the *Colloquy*, like the hawk and whale, do display the skills required to resist, evade or even overpower human crafts that try to capture or tame or enslave them. The *Colloquy* aligns beasts that do not have the power of choice (e.g. oxen) with unfree, enslaved workers (e.g. ploughmen) whose work is laborious. Conversely, beasts and birds that are wilder (e.g. harts, hawks) are aligned with freer, more skilful craftsmen (e.g. huntsmen, fowlers). At the same time, the difficulty and risk of human work increases as the nature of our animal co-workers changes. The work of the ploughman or shepherd is harsh yet not particularly troubled by the servile oxen or sheep (only by the wild wolves that prey on their flocks) whereas the crafts of the hunter, fisherman and fowler exist in a more fraught relationship with the boars, hawks and whales that are able to flee, defy or attack them.

Towards the end of the *Colloquy*, the wise counsellor (*consiliarius*) declares in the words of the Old English gloss: 'And þis geþeaht ic sylle eallum wyrhtum, þæt anra gehwylc cræft his geornlice begange, forþam se þe cræft his forlæt, he byþ forlæten fram þam cræfte' ('And this counsel I offer to all workers, that each one go about his craft diligently, because he who neglects his craft will be forsaken by the craft', ll. 237–40). The counsellor tells his audience in Latin 'esto quod es' or in Old English 'beo þæt þu eart' ('be what you are') because 'micel hynð and sceamu hyt is menn nellan wesan þæt þæt he ys and þæt þe he wesan sceal' ('it is much humiliation and shame for a man not to want to be that which he is and that which he must be', ll. 242–43). As we have seen, that which each person 'is' or 'should be' is largely defined by, or against, their working relationship with birds and beasts. The phrasing of this speech further suggests that craft is not inherent in human beings. Craft cannot be taken for granted but must be continuously performed and, if not practised routinely and repeatedly, craft can forsake (*forlæt*) the craftsperson who neglects it. Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe observes that the consequence of not practising a craft is being abandoned by it, left incoherent and without substance.[50] This is because, in the *Colloquy*, doing an occupation produces being within

[49] Harriet Soper, 'Reading the Exeter Book Riddles as Life-Writing', *Review of English Studies*, 68 (2017), 841–65 (p. 858).

[50] Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, *Stealing Obedience: Narratives of Agency and Identity in Later Anglo-Saxon England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), p. 105.

an identity. She situates this reading in relation to a Benedictine monastic identity that was conferred but also naturalised through continuous labour. The phrase *esto quod es* called oblated children to the willed labour of becoming in life what they had been made by their gift.[51] In the *Colloquy*, the spirit of obedience upon which this 'willed labour' depends is reinforced by beating and whipping the boys. This monastic obedience finds an apt parallel in Ælfric's homily for the feast of St Paul. Saul is warned that if he does not choose to obey Christ, then he is kicking against the goad and, if the ox kicks against the goad, it hurts him.[52] Rebellion and resistance results in pain. This pain may be understood as psychological or spiritual in the case of St Paul, but it is physicalised for the boys in the *Colloquy*. Hence, the pupils are treated in the same way as the oxen that appear at the start of the dialogue. They are physically hurt to coerce them into obedience. As the ploughman says, 'Habeo quendam puerum minantem boues cum stimulo' ('I have a young boy driving the oxen with a goad', l. 29).

O'Brien O'Keeffe argues that the *Colloquy* awakens a dangerous desire to be other, even as it defends against this desire. The *Colloquy* arouses the desire to be someone or something else by providing an opportunity for the creative play, perhaps the temporary pleasure, of abandoning monastic identity and taking up the work or craft of a ploughman, hunter, fowler, cook or smith. Each of these characters 'opens an alternative world of identity' for the young monks.[53] What I would add is that the identities that the monks are not supposed to desire include those of the animals that the secular workers labour alongside. The young monks declare that they want to learn and be beaten for the sake of learning 'Quia nolumus esse sicut bruta animalia, que nihil sciunt, nisi herbam et aquam' ('Because we do not wish to be like the brute beasts, who know nothing but grass and water', ll. 250–51). Although the *Colloquy* shows how society is built upon animal bodies, animal labour and sometimes animal skill, the young monks ultimately resist this concept of work and craft. Their expressed desire is to rise above animality and gain their humanity through intellectual labour.

The narrative of the *Colloquy* reflects this steady progression from beastlike work to more skilful craft and eventually intellectual labour. It moves through different kinds of crafts, from those that rely heavily on animal labour towards those that are more dependent upon human skills that transform raw materials or that simply buy and sell manufactured products: the ploughman, shepherd, oxherd, hunter, fisherman and fowler are followed by the merchant, shoemaker, salter, baker, cook and smith. Yet this implied hierarchy is temporarily inverted. While the *consiliarius* states that the service of God is the superior work, he then declares that the work of the ploughman, with whom we began, is the most useful of the secular crafts. Why so? The explicit answer is that the tilling of the earth 'nos omnes pascit' ('feeds us all', l. 219). Perhaps a more implicit answer, however, is that the work of the enslaved ploughman and his oxen serves as the closest counterpart for the work of God, in which young monks perform the labour of obedience and bend their will to the authority of their monastic superiors. If they kick against the goad, it hurts them. Paradoxically, if the young monks do not wish to be like brute beasts, then their labour must resemble that of the oxen. And so, even as the monks attempt to rise above animality through their work, they seek to model their labours upon the labour of beasts.

[51] O'Keeffe, *Stealing Obedience*, p. 125.
[52] O'Keeffe, *Stealing Obedience*, p. 143.
[53] O'Keeffe, *Stealing Obedience*, p. 112.

All in all, the *Colloquy* shows how human experiences of work and craft are inseparable from the animals who act as our co-workers and co-crafters. In this dialogue, the agency of working and crafting is formed by animality as much as humanity. The work of unfree labourers is bound to and bound by enslaved beasts, while crafts such as hunting or fishing are at once assisted and resisted by the skills and strengths of wilder beasts and birds. The identities of human workers and crafters are similarly formed by animals. In the dialogue, performing an occupation produces an identity but many of these human identities are defined by, or against, a close working relationship with animals. The dialogue could be read as progressing from humanity in the mode of *animal laborans* to that of *homo faber*, from the drudgery of the ploughman to the skills of the smith, but this hierarchy is eventually subverted. Although the young monks in this dialogue try to rise above animality, defining their humanity against brutish beasts and focusing their minds on divinity through intellectual labour, they return to the labouring animal as the most apt parallel for performing the work of God. Where the *Colloquy* draws our attention to how human experiences of work and craft are shaped by animals, the Old English and Anglo-Latin riddles prompt an even deeper exploration of nonhuman experiences of work and craft in the early medieval period.

Animal Workers and Crafters in Old English and Anglo-Latin Riddles

Ælfric's *Colloquy* reminds us that, like humans, some animals experience more freedom and creativity in their work than others. Should we expect to find enslaved, domesticated beasts working and wild, free creatures crafting in early English sources? Old English did make a distinction between *nytencynn* and *deorcynn*, with a *nyten* as a domesticated animal and a *deor* as a wild beast.[54] The Old English and Anglo-Latin riddles do not shy away from the role of enforced labour, the servitude and slavery of both humans and animals. But the divide between domestic *nytenu* and wild *deor* is not always clear cut and does not always map neatly onto *weorc* and *cræft* respectively. We glimpse moments of creativity in riddles about oxen and sheep while riddles about birds and bees depict their skill as both dependent upon and independent from human craft.

Hribal contends that, under capitalism, animal labourers lose freedom, agency and autonomy. As the centuries progressed 'more animals than ever were plowing, drilling, mowing, and harvesting' but as the exploitation increased 'so did the resistance to it — both by laboring animals and concerned humans'.[55] Old English riddles offer imaginative, sympathetic insights into the working lives of animals before capitalism. Here, we find a similar tension between freedom and exploitation in animal work along with moments of resistance to, and protest against, that exploitation. The early medieval period did not see an organised animal rights (or indeed working class) movement but the plights of nonhuman workers did not go unacknowledged in the literature of the time.

The most obvious examples of animal *weorc* as painful suffering are provided by the ox, bull and leather riddles. Eusebius's Latin Enigma 12 (*bos*) portrays the bull as a long-suffering

[54] *TDOE*, s.v. *deor*; Bosworth-Toller, s.v. *niten*. For discussion, see Michael Raby, 'The Lives of *Nytenu*: Imagining the Animal in the Old English *Boethius* and *Soliloquies*', *New Medieval Literatures*, 17 (2017), 1–33 (p. 9). See also Michael D. J. Bintley, 'Where the Wild Things are in Old English Poetry', in *Representing Beasts in Early Medieval England and Scandinavia*, ed. by Michael D. J. Bintley and Thomas J. T. Williams (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2015), pp. 205–28.

[55] Hribal, 'Animals are Part of the Working Class', p. 452.

servant whose work wears it down: 'Nunc aro, nunc operor, consumor in omnibus annis' ('Now I plough, now I labour, worn down throughout the years', l. 1). The talking ox of Exeter Book Riddle 72 relates how it trudged across the moors, bound under a beam, with a ring around its neck: 'wean on laste weorc þrowade, / earfoða dæl' ('on a path of grief, enduring pain, a share of sorrows', ll. 14–15). The ox expresses the psychological sorrow of its work along with the physical pain caused by the goad: 'Oft mec isern scod / sare on sidan' ('Often iron struck me sorely in the side', ll. 15–16). This is the aspect of animal work that has received the most attention in recent years, with scholars such as Corinne Dale observing that oxen take part in the pain, misery and suffering of postlapsarian labour.[56] These ox riddles draw attention to the inhumane aspects of *weorc* and acknowledge that animals suffer and feel pain when they labour. However, *cræft* is not always the more pleasurable, creative counterpart to *weorc* in the riddles. Rather, the riddles recognise that human craft can also inflict pain upon nonhuman bodies in the process of making. Craft is akin to torture when experienced from the perspective of the animal that is acted upon rather than the human craftsperson. The speaking sheep, goat or cow of Riddle 26 describes in detail how it was brutally killed, soaked, dipped in water, deprived of its hairs, and cut up by a knife as part of parchment-making: 'Heard mec siþþan / snað seaxses ecg, sindrum begrunden' ('Afterwards the hard edge of a knife, its roughness ground away, slashed me', ll. 5–6).

The riddle, as a genre, encourages us to share in this painful experience of craft and to imagine what it feels like to be on the receiving end of torturous transformations. Where the *Colloquy* enabled young monks to imagine alternative human identities as workers and crafters, the riddles ask us to adopt the perspectives of nonhuman creatures.[57] As a result, working the land and crafting artefacts become sensuous, embodied activities that arise from the 'I' of human poets playing the roles of nonhuman beings. Instead of detached, rational minds planning out and then imposing form upon inert matter, material things are generated through the shared sentience and shared suffering of human and nonhuman bodies in the riddles. This appears less like the hylomorphic model of making that we find in the *Boethius* and more like morphogenic making. The riddles speak to Ingold's concept of craft as 'correspondence' whereby the flow of consciousness and flow of materials correspond. To make is to correspond with the world, mixing the movements of sentient awareness with the flows of animate life. Ingold writes that in the midst of making 'sentience and materials twine around one another on their double thread' until they become indistinguishable.[58] Early medieval riddles anticipate this concept of craft and connect it to compassion, to the sympathy that arises from the suffering-together of humans and nonhumans in the making and unmaking of artefacts.

In Riddle 12, sensuous and sensual making occurs through a collaboration between the Welsh slave woman, the speaking ox and its hide. Painful animal *weorc* and pleasurable human *cræft* fold into one another in this riddle. Like the oxen in similar riddles, the speaking ox

[56] Corinne Dale, *The Natural World in the Exeter Book Riddles* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2017), pp. 57–85. Cavell similarly observes that the ox of Riddle 72 participates in a discourse of slavery and enforced labour, in *Weaving Words and Binding Bodies: The Poetics of Human Experience in Old English Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), pp. 157–64. See also Soper, 'Riddles as Life-Writing', pp. 854–59.

[57] The nonhuman perspectives of the Exeter Book riddles have been explored more broadly in recent ecocritical studies of Old English literature. See especially Dale, *Natural World*, but also Chapter 5 of Heide Estes, *Anglo-Saxon Literary Landscapes* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017) and Chapter 3 of Courtney Catherine Barajas, *Old English Ecotheology* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021).

[58] Ingold, *Making*, p. 108.

endures the drudgery of tilling the earth during its life: 'Fotum ic fere, foldan slite, / grene wongas, þenden ic gæst bere' ('I go on foot, tear the earth, green fields, while I bear a soul', ll. 1–2). Intriguingly, the ox declares that it possesses an inner spirit (*gæst*) while it carries out its work, calling into question the assumption that animal labour is solely the labour of the body and not of the mind or soul. Longstanding human abuses of animals motivate us to conceive of animals in ways that are compatible with their continued mistreatment. We kill animals for food, exploit them as raw materials, put them to work. As such, if animals are 'conceived as intelligent, sensitive beings, these ways of treating them might seem monstrous'.[59] By attributing an inner spirit or even soul to the ox, and by exploring the psychology as well as the physicality of its painful labour, the riddle presents us with a beast that is much more than an unthinking body and confronts us with the inhumane conditions of its working life. After death, the ox undergoes a series of transformations as its hide is crafted into leather artefacts. The riddle plays on the relationship between binding and loosing when it describes how, 'Gif me feorh losað, fæste binde / swearte Wealas' ('If life gets loose from me, I bind fast dark Welshmen', ll. 3–4). The quickening spirit (*feorh*) is loosened from the body of the ox before that dead body, in the form of leather, binds Welshmen or foreign slaves (*wealas*) and turns human beings into workers as unfree as the living ox was.[60] For Riddle 12, though, enforced labour is not the end of the story. In the creative hands of the Welsh woman, the making of what might be a leather bottle subtly shades into the sexual satisfaction of a leather dildo.[61] Her grasp reshapes the body of the labouring ox for a different purpose, turning the pain of *weorc* into the pleasure of *cræft*:

> hwilum feorran broht
> won-feax Wale wegeð ond þyð,
> dol drunk-mennen deorcum nihtum,
> wæteð in wætre, wyrmeð hwilum,
> fægre to fyre; me on fæðme sticaþ
> hyge-galan hond, hwyrfeð geneahhe,
> swifeð me geond sweartne. (ll. 7–13)
>
> [sometimes a dark-haired Welsh woman, brought from afar, grips and grasps me, the dim drunken slave in dark nights wets me in water, sometimes warms me pleasantly by the fire; a lustful hand shoves me into a lap, turns around enough, and touches me throughout the dark.]

Other riddle creatures can craft through their own skill, without help from human hands. Riddle 27 describes the making of mead, starting with the production of honey by bees. The first five lines concentrate on the creativity of the bees:

> Ic eom weorð werum, wide funden,
> brungen of bearwum ond of burg-hleoþum,
> of denum ond of dunum. Dæges mec wægun

[59] James Rachels, *Created from Animals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 129.

[60] This wordplay is noted by Sarah L. Higley, 'The Wanton Hand: Reading and Reaching into Grammars and Bodies in Old English Riddle 12', in *Naked Before God: Uncovering the Body in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Benjamin C. Withers and Jonathan Wilcox (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2003), pp. 29–59 (p. 39).

[61] Nina Rulon-Miller, 'Sexual Humour and Fettered Desire Exeter Book Riddle 12', in *Humour in Anglo-Saxon Literature*, ed. by Jonathan Wilcox (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000), pp. 99–126. I follow Rulon-Miller's argument that the Welsh woman in Riddle 12 can be read as crafting a leather bottle but also using that leather bottle as a dildo.

> feþre on lifte, feredon mid liste
> under hrofes hleo. (ll. 1–5)
>
> [I am valuable to men, widely found, fetched from forests and mountain slopes, from dales and downs. By day, feathers brought me with skill, carried me in the air, under the shelter of a roof.]

The bees are said to carry the nectar with skill or craft (*mid liste*). *List* is defined by Bosworth-Toller as art, skill, craft, cunning or artifice.[62] Drawing on actor-network theory, Price contends that the 'bee acts as an important mediator' in the mead-making process by providing 'the means by which the nectar is transported from the rural environs into the domestic environment of a human settlement'. Price argues that the 'the bee remains a presence once the riddle has seemingly entered a description of what may be seen to be the social and human act of mead consuming'.[63] This presence is felt through the aggressive action of the bees overlapping with the painful effects of mead upon inebriated bodies, as the stinger becomes a binder and beater. In Riddle 27, then, the craft of making mead involves both human and nonhuman actors in a way that is at once collaborative and combative. The honey starts off as something valuable to men but, as soon as a man takes over from the work of the bees, bathing the speaker in a barrel, the mead turns violent and destructive: 'Nu ic eom bindere / ond swingere' ('Now I am a binder and beater', ll. 6–7). The mead inflicts bodily pain and deprives drinkers of their rational minds, muddling their words and binding them to the earth: 'strengo bistolen, strong on spræce, / mægene binumen, nah his modes geweald, / fota ne folma' ('stripped of strength, strident in speech, deprived of might, he has no control over his mind, feet or hands', ll. 13–15). Here we find another, more everyday instance of how the misuse of craft can threaten one's humanity and turn humans into animals. In this case, overconsuming the product of craftwork brings out the brutishness of the drunkard. Lacking reason, speech and knocked down on all fours, the drinker is reduced to the level of a beast by this bee-made beverage. Riddle 27 reveals that the violence of craft can work both ways, with human and nonhuman bodies alike suffering through the making of things. It also shows how 'insects are among the most prolific producers in the animal kingdom of materials subsequently taken up for human use'.[64] As such, 27 reverses the dynamic of other riddles where a nonhuman animal suffers at the hands of a human craftsperson. Now bees are the active, creative makers and men are the passive victims of their potent craft.

The riddles represent other kinds of creatures, besides bees, taking part in the creative processes of craft. In some instances, animal body parts continue to collaborate with human beings beyond the death of the beast or bird. This is evident in Old English and Anglo-Latin riddles on writing tools. Riddle 26 is spoken post-mortem by a sheep, goat or cow whose skin has been torturously transformed into parchment. But the suffering speaker also relates how feathers (*fugles wyn*) leave tracks on its surface, with the compound evoking the psychological pleasure or delight (*wyn*) once experienced by the living bird (*fugel*) in flight. Then a man (*hæleð*) adorns it with the wondrous work of smiths (*wrætlic weorcsmiþa*). The pain of the sheep or goat or cow, the pleasure of the bird, and the wonder of smithcraft come together in the making of this manuscript which is presented as an affective and affecting process for

[62] Bosworth-Toller, s.v. *list*.

[63] Helen Price, 'A Hive of Activity: Realigning the Figure of the Bee in the Mead-Making Network of Exeter Book Riddle 27', *Postmedieval*, 8 (2017), 444–62 (pp. 450–51).

[64] Ingold, *Being Alive*, p. 25.

humans and nonhumans alike. Aldhelm's Enigma 32 on writing tablets announces: 'Melligeris apibus mea prima processit origo, / sed pars exterior crescebat cetera silvis; / calciamenta mihi tradebant tergora dura' ('My main parts came from honey-laden bees, though my other part, the exterior one, grew in the woods; shoe-leather furnished my tough spine', ll. 1–3). In both riddles, the sentient agency of making is distributed across human and nonhuman, living and dead, actors: the parchment maker, the work of smiths, sheepskin, bird feathers, oak gall, wasps and bees, oxen and leather.

Aldhelm's other Latin enigmas likewise depict creative creatures, especially insects, fabricating products. Quite often in Aldhelm's enigmas, human-nonhuman cooperation in craft is framed as competition. In Enigma 12, the silkworm (*bombix*) explains that its innards overflow with hairy threads when the time for weaving resumes: 'Annua dum redeunt texendi tempora telas, / Lurida setigeris redundant viscera filis' (ll. 1–2). For this insect, the craft of weaving (*texendi telas*) exists in a symbiotic relationship with its own body which responds by spontaneously producing the material for its artwork. The silkworm then climbs leafy peaks of broom to craft small balls (*globulos fabricans*). The climb itself is laborious because the insect is weighed down by its overflowing (*replentur*) innards. Yet the physical rising of the silkworm leads this lowliest of creatures to metaphysical heights, the phrase *fati sorte* suggesting that the insect has fulfilled its creative destiny, aligning its artistry with the tapestry of fate. The textual craft of the silkworm parallels that of early English poets who wove the craft of words (*wordcræft wæf*). In a more material way, the craft of the silkworm would have been taken up by smiths and embroiderers in early medieval England. For example, silk was discovered in the seventh-century smith's grave at Tattershall Thorpe and the textiles found in St Cuthbert's coffin attest to the use of silk by embroiderers.[65]

In Enigma 20, the bee (*apis*) boasts of its technical skill (*ars*). Like the silkworm, the bee is at once a wonder of creation and a wondrous creator. It describes how: 'Mirificis formata modis, sine semine creta / dulcia florigeris onero praecordia praedis; / arte mea crocea flavescunt fercula regum' ('I was created in wondrous ways; produced without seed, I stock my sweet insides with what I plunder from flowers; by my craft the yellow plates of kings grow golden', ll. 1–3). In the next line, the creative bee turns combative: 'Semper acuta gero crudelis spicula belli' ('I always carry the sharp spears of cruel war', l. 4). Even without hands (*carens manibus*), the stinging blade of the bee surpasses the metalcraft of the smith (*fabrorum vinco metalla*). In its dual role as artisan and attacker, the bee troubles the human division of labour between those who work and those who fight. This insect can perform the craft of making and the art of battle together. The fact that the handless bee can outdo smithcraft poses a further challenge to anthropocentric concepts of craft, especially the idea that, standing upright with hands free for tool use, the human form is better suited to creative making. The bee appears as a crafter, and even as a kind of artist, elsewhere in the early medieval riddle tradition. In Bern Riddle 20, honey (*melle*) declares that 'Milia me quaerunt, ales sed invenit una / Aureamque mihi domum depingit ab ore' ('Thousands seek me, but only the flyer finds me and paints a golden home for me with its mouth', ll. 5–6). Once more, humans are depicted as passive consumers of bee-made products. While multitudes of men and women seek the sweet taste of honey, only the flying insect (*ales*) can actively find and use the substance to paint (*depingit*) a golden home. This observation is based on natural behaviour — bees create honeycomb cells using regurgitated wax — but figures the bee as

[65] Kevin Leahy, *Anglo-Saxon Crafts* (Stroud: Tempus, 2003), p. 62.

both artist and architect. As in Aldhelm's enigma, the bee can create without hands. This time, the insect uses its mouth (*ab ore*) to make art.[66]

These enigmatic descriptions of silkworms and bees speak to the point made at the outset of this article. Namely, that literary animals are both self-signifying actors and saturated with symbolic connotations and that, therefore, even highly metaphorical representations of animals rely on an awareness of actual animal lives. The silkworm may be figured as a kind of poet and the bee as an artist, but these figurations are not arbitrary; they emerge from the natural behaviours of these creative insects. Literary representations of craft are not simply imposed upon nonhuman actors but are formed, informed and transformed by their real qualities. What it means to be a smith, artist or poet in the early English imagination arises from a two-way conversation between human and nonhuman creatures and creators.

Aldhelm implicitly as well as explicitly compares the natural craft of insects with human craft and indicates that the former is superior, deflating anthropocentric pride in craftsmanship and setting up a sense of competition. Enigma 12 is directly preceded by Enigma 11 on the bellows (*poalum*) and Enigma 20 is followed by 21 on the file (*lima*). The file narrates how it smooths and polishes metal but describes itself as the roughest of things (*asperrima rerum*) whose labour produces a strident shriek: 'garrio voce carens rauco cum murmure stridens' (l. 5). In comparison to the creative creations of God, manmade machines come across as comically awkward, noisy and unwieldy. The bellows notes proudly that 'Ars mea gemmatis dedit ornamenta metallis' ('My skill ornaments bejewelled metals', l. 3). Even so, it receives no thanks 'sed capit alter honorem' ('but another steals the praise', l. 4). What is more, 'non est vita mihi, cum sint spiracula vitae' ('I have no life, although the air of life is in me', l. 2). Aldhelm implies that the crafted tools and artefacts of humans are inherently inferior to the handiwork of God, not least because God alone can provide the spirit that breathes life into his creations.

In early English riddles, animals are sometimes depicted as fellow workers who endure the pain of postlapsarian labour. Yet this is not their only role. Animals also take part in crafts. At times, they undergo torturous transformations. At times, they act as creative makers. Craft is not an exclusively human activity in these riddles. The creativity of craft results from a human-nonhuman relationship that is partly collaborative and partly competitive and combative. Furthermore, the theocentric concept of craft that is especially prominent in Aldhelm's enigmas inverts any hierarchy of creativity that would situate human makers above the rest of creation. By praising divine workmanship as superior, the natural craft of insects and animals outshines any artefacts that *homo faber* can produce. This might suggest that animal artefacts are actually the handiwork of God and that the agency of crafting belongs to God rather than to the insects or animals themselves. But the same might be said of human crafts, recalling the statement in *Instructions for Christians* that 'Sceal æghwylc man ælne swincan / on swylcum cræfte swa him Crist onlænð, / þæt willan his gewyrce georne' ('Everyone must always labour at whatever craft Christ loans to him, so that he eagerly carries out Christ's will', ll. 150–52). The Old English *Boethius* likewise states that Christ only loans (*onlænð*) crafts to earth-dwellers (Metre 10.36–37). *Cræft* is a gift loaned by God to

[66] See further Neville Mogford, 'Commentary for Bern Riddle 20', in *The Riddle Ages: Early Medieval Riddles, Translations and Commentaries*, ed. by Megan Cavell, with Matthias Ammon, Neville Mogford and Victoria Symons (28 January 2021), <https://theriddleages.bham.ac.uk/riddles/post/commentary-for-bern-riddle-20-de-melle>.

his creations, but that gift can be worked at and worked out in different ways by different creatures with varying degrees of strength, skill, cunning and creativity.

As Shew argues, technology is not an 'all-or-none' phenomenon that is the preserve of *homo faber* alone. Rather, technological behaviours exist on a spectrum that includes both human and nonhuman modes of making but that also allows for different levels of technical abilities among different groups of animals. For Shew, spiders spinning webs or beavers building dams should appear on the same spectrum as the technological behaviours of apes, whales, dolphins and crows even if they do not necessarily require the same level of technical skill, tool use or cognitive complexity.[67] As an example of the extended phenotype, a spiderweb should probably appear at the far end of a spectrum of technological behaviours because it does not seem to be the product of intention or require much innovation; but it is still an external artefact that aids its maker, alters its environment and demonstrates a significant level of complexity in its design.[68] Two of the animal groups — whales and birds — that do appear in Shew's case studies of more complex and cognitively demanding technological behaviours feature in the Old English sources I will turn to next. The poems on *The Whale* and *The Phoenix* go even further than the riddles in depicting animal crafts that are thoughtful and purposeful, a far cry from the unthinking labour of the body. While Old English poets therefore anticipate Shew's spectrum of technological behaviours — recognising that some animal crafts are more complex, and perhaps conscious, than others — their poems are situated within a very different cultural context. In particular, the whales and birds of Old English poetry are not only creative but created beings.

Animals as Artefactual Artisans in *The Whale* and *The Phoenix*

Like the Exeter Book riddles, the *Physiologus* poems in the same manuscript depict animals who possess and perform *cræft*. Just as human craft reflects divine craft, animal craft can be divine or devilish in nature. The original Greek *Physiologus* was known in the early medieval West through Latin prose versions. The Old English poet translated three chapters of the *Physiologus*, adapting them into poems on *The Panther*, *The Whale* and the fragmentary *Partridge*. Although these texts are usually categorised as religious allegories rather than scientific observations of nature, they are informed by ancient animal lore and reveal how early English authors imagined the behaviour of actual animals.

The Whale serves as an illuminating counterpart to the powerful whale that frightens the fisherman in Ælfric's *Colloquy*. The *Physiologus* whale is more than powerful, however, for it possesses a diabolical craft. The poet says that this *fisc* is skilled or crafty in guile (*facnes cræftig*) and attributes conscious yet malicious thought to the whale whose actions are likened to the ways of devils (*deofla wise*). The whale enacts this devilish craft by disguising itself as an island and, when it feels seafarers settling on its back, suddenly sinks to the seabed and drags both ships and sailors to their watery death. This is a crafty kind of craft, the wily ability to trick, mislead or deceive others that is considered evil but nonetheless artful. This is more than the unthinking work of an animal body. It is an intellectual cunning and a clever, albeit deadly, misuse of craft. Where the skill of the fisherman cannot overcome the bodily power of the whale in the *Colloquy*, it is the crafty mind of the creature that imperils seafarers in *The Whale*. Cavell notes that this deliberate deception on the part of the whale does not

[67] Shew, *Animal Constructions*, pp. 88, 93.
[68] Shew, *Animal Constructions*, p. 99.

appear in other versions of the *Physiologus* and attributes this to the interest in interiority that is particular to the Old English poetic form.[69] Thus, the Old English *Whale* represents animal craft as conscious, clever and cunning in a way that goes beyond Latin and Greek sources.

The whale's trickery is described by the Old English poet in terms of wondrous artifice: 'He hafað oþre gecynd, wæterþisa wlonc, wrætlicran gien' ('This proud water-rusher has a second habit, more wondrous still', ll. 49–50). This *wrætlic* artifice is alliteratively linked to the whale's inner pride or *wlonc*, further attributing the craft of animals to their psychology as much as their corporeality. The poet proceeds to explain that the whale opens its mouth, emitting a pleasant stench that deceives (*beswicen*) other fish who swim towards the sweet smell and are swallowed up. This craftiness aligns the whale with cunning craftsmen like Weland the Smith and maybe with the goldsmiths that the *Gifts of Men* alludes to as *searo-cræftig*.[70] *Searu* is defined by Bosworth-Toller as a device, design, contrivance, art, or that which is contrived with art, such as a machine or engine. *Searu* can be used in a good sense to suggest ingenious skill, but the term is often used in a negative sense to suggest craft, artifice, wile, deceit, treachery or plot. To be *searu-cræftig* is to be cunning of mind as well as of hand.[71] *Searu* represents a traditional expression of superlative craftsmanship associated primarily with the smith. However, an alternate negative usage of *searu* is part of a literary tradition which demonises craftsmen because their purpose of creation antagonises God's own purpose.[72] But it was not only *searo-cræftig* humans who were demonised in Old English literature. In the *Physiologus* poem, the whale is explicitly compared to Satan himself who is described by the poet as both *cræftig* and skilled in *searu*. Satan is 'bealwes cræftig' ('skilled in destruction', l. 72) and he snares human souls 'þurh sliþen searo' ('through a cruel trap', l. 42). The Old English *Genesis* portrays the devil as a skilful yet cunning angel who yearns to outshine the craft of God. Satan believes 'þæt he mægyn and cræft maran hæfde / þonne se halga God habban mihte' ('that he had greater power and skill than the holy God could have', ll. 269–70), desires to create a stronger throne 'þurh his anes cræft' (through his own craft', l. 272) and declares that he 'mæg mid handum swa fela / wundra gewyrcan' ('can work as many wonders with my hands', ll. 279–80). Alff remarks that this devilish craftsmanship shows that there is a fine line between creative ardour and sinful pride. She notes that many early English texts see the archetypal human craftsmen, smiths, as possessing a mental force that materialises a volition of the self through craft. But, where this mental force impinges on divine authority, it is expressed as pride.[73] The whale's *wlonc* in relation to its *wrætlic* artifice implies that a sinful, potentially devilish, pride in one's craft is not limited to humans.

However, like the devil, the whale does not really use its craft to create anything. It is not so much a creator as an anti-creator. It is an unmaker, an *unlond* that destroys the dwellings that seafarers build upon its back. The trick that the whale plays to lure the unwary into its hellish mouth, releasing a *wynsum stenc* from its innards, could be seen as an inversion of the divine logos, the creative power of the Word. In his *Sermo de initio creaturae*, Ælfric is eager

[69] Cavell, 'Community of Exiles', in *Handbook of Animals and Literature*, ed. by Susan McHugh, Robert McKay and John Miller, pp. 97–110 (p. 106). Cavell is drawing on Britt Mize, *Traditional Subjectivities: The Old English Poetics of Mentality* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).

[70] Reference to *Gifts of Men* taken from *Old English Shorter Poems: Wisdom and Lyric*, ed. and trans. by Robert E. Bjork (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014.

[71] Bosworth-Toller, s.v. *searu.*

[72] Alff, 'Workers and Artisans', p. 90. For an extended refinement and critique of the definitions of *searu* provided by Bosworth-Toller, see pp. 68–90 of this doctoral thesis.

[73] Alff, 'Workers and Artisans', pp. 40–42.

to correct anyone who believes that Satan is a creator, stressing that the only craft possessed by the devil is a deceitful and destructive one:

> Nu cwædon gedwolmen þæt deofol gesceope sume gesceafta, ac hi leogað; ne mæg he nane gesceafta gescyppan, forðan ðe he nis na scyppend, ac is atelic sceocca, and mid leasunge he wile beswican and fordon þone unwaran.
>
> [Now heretics say that the devil created some creatures, but they lie; he can create no creatures, for he is not a creator, but is a loathsome fiend, and with lying he will deceive and destroy the unwary.][74]

The devilish craft of the whale threatens human bodies but can also trick our minds and imperil our souls. The poet warns readers that the devil entraps the unwary in the same crafty manner as the whale, opening the doors of hell to receive after death those who have foolishly pursued the pleasures of the body over the rights of the soul. Then the deceiver (*se fæcna*) who is skilled in evil (*bealwes cræftig*) slams the jaws of hellmouth shut forever. Although the *balo-cræft* of Circe could not harm human minds, the *balo-cræft* of the Satanic whale endangers bodies, minds and souls alike.

Of course, the depiction of craft as devilish in nature reflects a broader context in which Christianity heavily influenced cultural perceptions of craft as well as the social roles of craftworkers such as smiths — the archetypal craftsmen in early English culture. Studies into the changing roles of smiths in early medieval England have shown that they were, to some degree, liminal figures whose technological powers of transformation could be seen as quasi-magical. With the conversion to Christianity, the mysterious craft of metalworking begins to become good or evil, either aligned with the work of God or the work of Satan. On the one hand, we have figures such as Billfrith the eight-century anchorite who adorned the Lindisfarne Gospels with gold and gems and whose metalworking skills were clearly turned to the service of the Church. On the other, we have Bede's condemnatory eighth-century account of a drunken metalworker who resided in a monastery but preferred to stay in his workhouse than to go to church, and whose body was buried in the remotest part of the monastery.[75] Examining the archaeological evidence, Duncan Wright argues that the influence of Christianity meant that 'skilled smiths remained to an extent a mistrusted and maligned group, and the forge viewed as a place where the devil could be foolhardily embraced or wisely exorcised'.[76] Focusing on the literary evidence, Alff identifies a 'stark division into positive and negative portrayals' where some texts portray smiths as the epitome of saintliness but many other texts speak to a darker tradition in which the smith is associated with hell. In particular, a literary emphasis on the 'mental force' with which a legendary smith like Weland went about his craft could signal wisdom but could easily be interpreted as devilish pride in a Christian context.[77] The wondrous craft of making could slide into the wicked craftiness of an overweening mind. And so, skills such as smithcraft could be divine or they could be devilish — but the craft of Satan was only ever a twisting or warping of the true craft of God. God creates through the divine logos in the Book of Genesis, but God was also represented

[74] Ælfric, *Sermo De Initio Creaturae*, in *The Homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church: Volume I*, ed. by Benjamin Thorpe (London: Ælfric Society, 1844). Translation mine.

[75] Book V.14 in Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. by Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969).

[76] Duncan W. Wright, 'Crafters of Kingship: Smiths, Elite Power, and Gender in Early Medieval Europe', *Medieval Archaeology*, 63 (2019), 271–97 (p. 291).

[77] Alff, 'Workers and Artisans', pp. 51–53.

by Old English poets as a craftsman who thinks and marks out his work in his mind before making it with his hands. For instance, Adam and Eve are described by the *Genesis* poet as the *hand-geweorc* of God (l. 241). Christ was likewise a craftsman, specifically a carpenter, and was sometimes referred to as a *smiþ* as well as *smiþes sunu* in Old English literature.[78]

Accordingly, the natural craft of animals could be divine as well as devilish. Another crafty creature found in the pages of the Exeter Book is *The Phoenix*, whose heavenly craft contrasts with the hellish cunning of *The Whale*. *The Phoenix* is an Old English translation that expands its Latin source poem, the *Carmen de ave phoenice*, attributed to Lactantius. *The Phoenix* describes the habitation, appearance and resurrection of the mythical bird that dies after a thousand-year life cycle before being reborn from its own ashes. The allegorical aspect of the poem, whereby the phoenix symbolises the resurrection of Christ, resembles that of the *Physiologus* poems. Yet, as recent ecocritical interpretations of the poem have shown, the phoenix can be read as both an allegorical symbol and an actual animal that interacts materially with its environment.[79]

After the opening description of the phoenix's paradisical homeland, the poet turns to the bird itself, paying careful attention its form, colours, hues and marvellous adornments. The phoenix is described in such a way that it shifts between animal and artefact: now a bird with bright feathers, gleaming eyes and shining beak; now an artwork sparkling in the sunlight and glittering with glass, gold and gems. Lines 291–304 describe the phoenix as a *wrætlic* work crafted with *smiþa orþoncum*:

> Is se fugel fæger forweard hiwe
> bleo-brygdum fag ymb þa breost foran.
> Is him þæt heafod hindan grene,
> wrætlice wrixled, wurman geblonden.
> Þonne is se finta fægre gedæled,
> sum brun, sum basu, sum blacum splottum
> searolice beseted. Sindon þa fiþru
> hwit hindanweard, ond se hals grene
> nioþoweard ond ufeweard, ond þæt nebb lixeð
> swa glæs oþþe gim, geaflas scyne
> innan ond utan. Is seo eag-gebyrd
> stearc ond hiwe stane gelicast,
> gladum gimme, þonne in goldfate
> smiþa orþoncum biseted weorþeð. (ll. 291–304)
>
> [The front of the bird is beautiful in appearance, coloured with various hues about its breast. Its head at the back is green blended with purple, marvellously mixed together. Then the tail is prettily parted, sometimes brown, sometimes red, sometimes skilfully displayed with dark spots. The feathers behind are white, the neck is green below and above, the beak shines like glass or gems, and the jaws are jewel-like inside and out. The

[78] Wright, 'Crafters of Kingship', p. 273, n. 8. References of this kind can be found in the gloss to Matthew 13. 55, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 140 (The Bath Old English Gospels). For discussion, see Eric G. Stanley, 'Wonder-Smiths and Others: *smið* Compounds in Old English Poetry — With an Excursus on *hleahtor*', *Neophilologus*, 101 (2017), 277–304 (p. 278) and James Bradley, 'St Joseph's Trade and Old English *Smiþ*', *Leeds Studies in English*, n.s. 22 (1991), 21–42.

[79] Donna Beth Ellard, 'Going Interspecies, Going Interlingual, and Flying Away with *The Phoenix*', *Exemplaria*, 23.3 (2011), 268–92. See also Daniel P. O'Donnell, 'Fish and Fowl: Generic Expectations and the Relationship between the Old English *Phoenix*-Poem and Lactantius's *De Ave Phoenice*', in *Germanic Texts and Latin Models: Medieval Reconstructions*, ed. by K. Olsen, A. Harbus and T. Hofstra (Leuven: Peeters, 2001), pp. 157–71.

> eye is dazzling and formed like a stone, similar to a glorious gem set in gold by the skill of smiths.]

The morphogenic model of making suggests that we ought to soften any distinction we might draw between organism and artefact.[80] The human maker does not stand apart from nature and impose plans or designs upon inert matter. Rather, the craftsperson intervenes in worldly processes that are always already creating the natural artefacts we see around us, from feathers and webs to rock formations and the shapes of clouds. It surely makes sense to soften the distinction between organisms and artefacts in our analyses of early medieval Christian culture. After all, every living thing was believed to be the handiwork of God, meaning that animals, plants and stones must also be artefacts shaped by heavenly hands. Humans are no exception. We are similarly presented by the poet of *The Phoenix* as works of divine craft, the artefacts of God. Hilary Fox observes that 'the same hand that made the phoenix made human bodies and souls' and contends that the *Phoenix* poet presents God as a divine *aurifex* whose role is twofold: 'first, as the maker or smith of the phoenix (and of all creation), and second, as the goldsmith whose refining fire purges the human soul and body of impurities in preparation for eternal life in heaven'.[81]

The phoenix is, in fact, both a work of art and an artist, a created and creative bird. It is not simply a passive reflection of divine *cræft* but an active performer who expresses its own *cræft* in verbal, visual and material ways. It sings, builds, fabricates and decorates. Additionally, its poetic art is inspired by its internal *breost-sefa* and it uses wisdom, reason and rational observation to know and understand its life course, in order to recreate itself. Its nonhuman creativity is therefore as intelligent as it is intuitive. Its craft is thoughtful.

Like the *Whale* poet, the *Phoenix* poet draws on the terminology of *cræft* to describe animal artistry. Only, this time, the creature does not emit a hellish stench but a heavenly song from its inner self. The phoenix is represented as a skilful poet who 'wrixleð woð-cræfte wundorlicor / beorhtan reorde þonne æfre byre monnes / hyrde under heofonum, siþþan heah-cyning, / wuldres wyrhta, woruld staþelode' ('varies its song-craft more wondrously than any human under heaven has heard since the high king, the worker of glory, made the world', ll. 127–30). The songcraft of the phoenix is not merely an instinct of the body, for it emerges from its inner heart or mind ('onbryrded breost-sefa', l. 126). Its singing represents a form of verbal artistry that outshines the poetical and musical arts of humans and is 'eallum song-craftum swetra ond wlitigra / ond wynsumra wrenca gehwylcum' ('sweeter and lovelier than all other song-crafts and more beautiful than every other melody', ll. 132–33). The songcraft of the phoenix is superior to any sound produced by musical artefacts such as horns and harps: 'Ne magon þam breahtme byman ne hornas, / ne hearpan hlyn' ('Neither trumpets nor horns, nor the tone of the harp, can match that sound', ll. 134–35). As such, this wondrous bird not only equals but surpasses human creativity — even when that creativity is enhanced by technical skills and artefacts. When its singing is done, the bird falls silent and is said to be 'þonces gleaw' ('wise of thought', l. 144). The wisdom of the phoenix is followed by a demonstration of its reason. It displays rationality by observing the course of the sun ('Se sceal þære sunnan sið behealdan', l. 90) and then continuously measuring the hours of day and night ('Symle he twelf siþum tida gemearcað / dæges ond nihtes', ll. 146–47) so that it can comprehend the duration of its own lifespan.

[80] Ingold, *Making*, p. 22.

[81] Hilary E. Fox, 'The Aesthetics of Resurrection: Goldwork, the Soul and the *Deus Aurifex* in *The Phoenix*', *Review*

As well as a creative and contemplative poet, the phoenix is a material maker. It can build a nest with skill: 'on þam telgan timbrum onginneð, / nest gearwian' ('the bird begins to make a nest in those branches', ll. 188–89). This creative act is driven by the bird's great longing ('neod micel') to renew its life, with the term *neod* encompassing meanings that range from an instinctual 'necessity' to a much more intentional 'eagerness', 'earnestness' or 'desire'.[82] The bird then gathers and assembles ('somnoð ond gædrað') leaves, herbs and spices from near and far. It carries bright treasures and builds a house:

> Þær he sylf biereð
> in þæt treow innan torhte frætwe;
> þær se wilda fugel in þam westenne
> ofer heanne beam hus getimbreð. (ll. 199–202)
>
> [There, by itself, the creature carries bright treasures into that tree; there, in that wilderness, the wild bird builds a house at the top of the tree.]

The phoenix is depicted as a free *wilda fugel* that actively *biereð* and *getimbreð* without human intervention. To construct its nest, it uses materials that are at once natural and artefactual, carrying *torhte frætwe*, with *frætwe* connoting ornaments, adornments, decorations or treasures.[83] This creativity sparks the recreation of the phoenix's own body and spirit. The nest burns. Fire consumes the flesh and bones of the bird. After a while, though, its ashes begin to bond back together: 'þa yslan eft onginnað / æfter ligþræce lucan togædre, / geclungne to cleowenne' ('after the tumult of flames, the ashes begin once again to bond together, clinging together into a ball', ll. 224–26). Soon after, the bird that constructed and decorated its nest is itself reconstructed and redecorated: 'and æfter þon / feþrum gefrætwad, swylc he æt frymðe wæs, beorht geblowen' ('and after that it is adorned with feathers, flourishing fabulously, in the same way it had been to begin with', ll. 238–40).

As with the hellish craft of the whale, the heavenly craft of the phoenix has profound implications for human bodies and souls. Yet where the cunning whale lured human souls to hell, the artistry of the bird offers hope of new life. The poet explains that the souls of the faithful suffer the pains of death so that they may rise again (ll. 381–92) and, in the same way that fire consumes the phoenix and its nest, so too the Last Judgement will purify and renew the bodies and souls of righteous Christian men and women (ll. 491–545).

Above, I asked whether animals should be categorised as 'matter' since their bodies are often used as materials in human crafts or whether animals could be considered 'makers' because they create their own products and structures. The dual role of the phoenix as artefact and artisan challenges this binary distinction. For in *The Phoenix*, the eponymous bird is an artefact of divine craft, as well as the craft of the human poet whose highly sensuous descriptions of this bird evoke the colours and patterns of metalwork with words. The richly crafted body of the phoenix is perceived by the senses of the reader and yet the reader also perceives the phoenix as an artisan with its own sensory apprehension of the world around it. This creative bird is described as a solitary being (*anhaga*) who is bold of heart (*deormod*), noble in mind (*heahmod*) and wise in thought (*þonces gleaw*). It beholds the rising sun (*þære sunnan sið behealdan*) and gazes eagerly (*locað georne*) across the water. Heather Maring has observed that the Old English *Phoenix* augments its Latin source by registering the bird's

of English Studies, 63 (2012), 1–19 (p. 19).

[82] Bosworth-Toller, s.v. *neod*.

[83] *TDOE*, s.v. *frætwe*.

feelings as well as its activities. Maring writes that whereas the Latin *Carmen* describes the bird 'from an objective, third-person perspective' the Old English *Phoenix* 'employs a semiomniscient form of narration that enables a traditional, multifaceted subjectivity'. This narrative mode provides the phoenix with a deeper 'interiority' than its Latin counterpart and invites 'empathetic identification' from the audience.[84] Thus, through the medium of poetry, readers can recognise this animal not only as an artefact that attracts our senses but as an intelligent, sentient crafter in its own right. The same is true of *The Whale* whose devilish craft is revealed to readers through the verbal artistry or *woð-cræft* of the poet (ll. 1–3). The craft of the whale involves first being seen by the eyes of the seafarers as a kind of natural artefact, a rough or scaly stone: 'Is þæs hiw gelic hreofum stane' ('Its form is like a rough stone', l. 8). The artifice of the whale fools the seafarers into believing that 'hy on ealond sum eagum wliten' ('they are gazing upon an island with their eyes', l. 12). Then, in return, the sentient whale itself feels (*gefeleð*) the men upon its back before seeking the sea bottom (*grund geseceð*).

In *The Whale* and *Phoenix*, craft is once again theocentric insofar as it originates with a divine craftsman; but when that craft is worked out within and through creation, it becomes a process that is reciprocal rather than strictly hierarchical. The craft of God, the craft of the devil, the craft of human poets, and the craft of nonhuman animals correspond with one another in acts of creation, recreation and anti-creation. Within this reciprocal process, the roles of sensuous artefact and sentient artisan are not fixed but fluid. When Ingold argues that in the midst of making 'sentience and materials twine around one another on their double thread' until they become indistinguishable, the sentience belongs to a human maker. However, in *The Whale* and *Phoenix*, this sentience can belong to artisanal animals who are conscious beings with the ability to think and feel through their craft. Therefore, while these creatures may appear before our senses as divinely and humanly constructed artefacts, they are far from inanimate objects — for they also perform as sentient subjects who can make or unmake the world.

This reciprocal model of craft offered by *The Whale* and *Phoenix* shares some affinities with the 'thing knowledge' discussed by Shew, whereby working knowledge is materially instantiated and demonstrated by the construction of artefacts that can be used by human or nonhuman creatures without the advanced knowledge of that artefact's creator. Knowledge is thus embedded within artefacts, including some animal artefacts, rather than always or only being embodied by the clever creators who make the artefacts work. Those creators play an important part in making their knowledge manifest through the things they create, but the knowledge encoded by the artefact can be understood, and used, in intelligent ways by other sentient beings. These 'things' that encode and engender knowledge cross the categories of organic and artefactual because the natural world also contains things that convey knowledge and these things can be acted upon by creatures who are capable of reshaping their environments.[85] Similarly, in *The Whale* and *Phoenix*, craft is not simply embodied in human makers and then enacted on nature unidirectionally, for it moves between and among human

[84] Heather Maring, 'Birds of Creation in the Old English Exeter Book', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 120.4 (2021), 429–64 (p. 461).

[85] The term 'thing knowledge' is developed by Shew in relation to animal artefacts in *Animal Constructions*, pp. 6–8, 30–33, but originates with Davis Baird, *Thing Knowledge: A Philosophy of Scientific Instruments* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2004). Shew counters Baird's contention that only human artefacts, and not animal artefacts like spider webs and beaver dams, can have thing knowledge. See especially pp. 113–15 of *Animal Constructions*.

and nonhuman makers, between and among the artefacts that they make and the artefacts that they become. The body of the phoenix is a material artefact, crafted by a divine goldsmith, but so too are human bodies and souls. The body of the phoenix can be perceived by the human poet and inspire that poet to recreate the phoenix with verbal craft; but the phoenix itself is able to perceive the divinely created cosmos and then create poetic and material artefacts of its own.

Conclusion

I opened this article by raising the question of whether the ability to craft makes us human and by highlighting some arguments for and against this claim within modern scholarly discourses. How would early English writers have responded to this question? Their answers would, of course, be as nuanced as those found in modernity and would vary depending on the author, text and context. But the evidence from the sources analysed in this article suggests that many early English writers understood craft to be a more-than-human quality and that some of these writers would accept the possibility of animal work, craft and creativity. As demonstrated, the Old English *Boethius* attempts to conceive of craft as a distinctly human attribute that separates us from and lifts us above animality, but this is accompanied by an anxiety about how the abuse of crafts can threaten the humanity of the self and others. Ælfric's *Colloquy* shows how human experiences of work and craft are inseparable from the animals who act as our co-workers and co-crafters. Even when we attempt to rise above animality through intellectual labour, we still model our work on that of animals, sometimes identifying with and sometimes defining ourselves against beasts and birds. Aldhelm's Latin enigmas and the Old English riddles of the Exeter Book provide further evidence for the roles that early medieval animals played as fellow workers and crafters. Rather than denying the nonhumanity of work and craft, these texts encourage us to share the experiences of animals, from the pain of work to the more creative pleasures of craft. *The Whale* and *Phoenix* go even further than the riddles in depicting animal crafts that are thoughtful and purposeful, a far cry from the unthinking labour of the body. These poems also remind us that animal crafts can be divine or devilish in nature and can affect human bodies, minds and souls in profound ways in this life and the next. Overall, in the Old English and Anglo-Latin literature analysed throughout this article, human work and craft cannot be disentangled from the animals that we labour and create with, for, alongside or against.

A key question for this article was whether animal *weorc* ever shades into animal *cræft* in early medieval literary sources. Or is the ability to craft an exclusive part of the human condition? The Old English and Anglo-Latin literature discussed in this article demonstrates that animals could craft creatively as well as work laboriously, but it also shows that some animal crafts were more complex, and perhaps conscious, than others. The same could be said about the creativity of human labour, which ranges from the drudgery of the ploughman and the hardships endured by the shepherd to the skills of the smith and the artistry of the poet. Thus, it would make sense to situate these representations of early medieval *weorc* and *cræft* within a continuum that includes both human and nonhuman actors. At one extreme, we might find the laborious work of the ploughman and the ox but, a little further on, we might find the more skilful craft of the fowler and indeed of the hawk who can snare other birds. While the production of the silkworm may be considered an extension of its body, the more conscious creativity of the phoenix is closer to the smithcraft of a figure like Tubalcain,

whose work was described as an ingenious skill of the mind as much as the body, and the cunning craft of the whale could be seen as analogous to the craftiness of Weland. As one would expect from a deeply Christian literary culture, many of our sources posit God as the supreme craftsman whose handiwork outshines any artefact made by mere mortals. Those sources suggest that *cræft* originates with God, but *cræft* is also a gift loaned by Christ to his earth-dwelling creations and the gifts of *cræft* can be worked at and worked out in different ways by different creatures with varying degrees of strength, skill, cunning and creativity.

The findings of this article have wider implications that reach beyond the field of early medieval studies. Although the medieval period predates the concept of a working class, the representations of animals at work in Old English texts support the idea that one does not need to be human to be a worker. I have shown that human labour relied upon animal bodies, efforts, techniques and talents long before the rise of capitalism. However, I have also complicated straightforward divisions between those who work and those who craft, showing how the former shades into the latter in both human and nonhuman experiences of labour. Old English texts can help us to grasp how and when human creativity is distinctive and where it overlaps with, or takes over from, the creative work of animals. These texts can help us to recognise how and when our tools and technologies go too far in their torturous transformations of animal bodies, turning the creaturely pain that results from sentience into inhumane harm. At the same time, this literature offers a more ethical way of understanding the animality of work and craft. For humans and nonhumans alike, creative pleasure can never be completely released from painful, painstaking labour. But these Old English texts ask us to think carefully about the relationship between compassion and sympathy in processes of working and crafting. That is, the compassion that emerges from suffering with our animal co-workers and co-crafters can give rise to a sympathetic awareness of, and attention to, their modes of making. Craft may not make us human, after all, but we can make the work of craft more humane.

Late-Medieval Prison Writing in Context: The Values of Confinement

Millicent-Rose Newis

Abstract

This article is concerned with writing in and about confinement in the Middle Ages. It considers different types of late-medieval cell — anchoritic, monastic, and carceral — and explores some of their shared contexts, characteristics, and values. Through a close analysis of literature concerned with confinement, this article suggests that there is a difference in the value of cellular space and living in early and late medieval texts. It suggests several reasons for this change and focuses, in particular, upon work and labour.

'Thus haue y told yow my poore ancre lijf
And what professioun that y am to bounde.
How thenke ye lo nys hit contemplatijf?'[1]

The word 'celle' could refer to a number of small, enclosed spaces in the Middle Ages.[2] The very real spaces of the anchorhold or the room of a monk or a nun in a monastery would be called 'celles', but so could more conceptual spaces. In 'How a Lover Praiseth His Lady' (anon., *c.* 1450), for instance, Mary's womb is a 'golden cloyster […] Naturys celle',[3] while in one of the N-Town Plays, the Devil threatens Herod with an altogether different, diabolical and prison-like cell: 'I xalle hem brynge on to my celle; I xal hem […] showe such myrthe as is in helle'.[4] The sheer number of medieval sources — both literary and otherwise — concerning prisons is impressive. Surprisingly, however, and even though it is now generally accepted that the 'birth' of the prison can be traced to the Early Middle Ages (and not,

[1] *Fortunes Stabilnes: Charles of Orleans' English Book of Love. A Critical Edition*, ed. by Mary-Jo Arn, Medieval & Renaissance Texts and Studies, 138 (New York: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1994), pp. 319–20 (ll. 4862–64). All further references are to this edition with line numbers in the text.

[2] I would like to thank Dr Alexandra da Costa and Professor Helen Cooper as well as the reviewers of *Leeds Medieval Studies* for their advice and support with this article.

[3] 'How a Lover Praiseth His Lady', ed. by Eleanor Prescott Hammond, *Modern Philology*, 21.4 (1924), 379–95 (ll. 433–34).

[4] 'The Death of Herod', in *The N-Town Plays: Cotton MS Vespasian D.8*, ed. by Stephen Spector, Early English Text Society, Supplemental Series, 11 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), ll. 234–36.

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as Michel Foucault suggests, the eighteenth century),[5] it is not until the eighteenth century that the word 'cell' was used to denote a prison space.[6] This semantic distinction, which separates the enclosed spiritual space and the enclosed penal space, is paralleled in traditional criticism concerned with medieval confinement. Until recently, scholars of secular prison writing have 'had almost nothing to say about the Christological and purgatorial precedents of imprisonment that abounded in the Middle Ages', explains Anthony Bale.[7] In the same vein, more often than not, traditional criticism of anchoritic and monastic writing overlooks the carceral precedent. In the Middle Ages, however, both spiritual and secular confinement were imbricated in the philosophy of the cell — be it monastic, anchoritic or carceral. It is this overlap of traditions that is encapsulated by the epigraph to this article, in which the secular prison writer Charles d'Orléans (1394–1465) draws meaning from the spiritual 'ancre lijf' of confinement.

This article aligns with a recent impulse in medieval studies; one which indicates that spiritual and secular confinement have a long and complicated history which needs to be explored.[8] This impulse has been chiefly motivated by the *Enfermement* group in France, and other contributions include Anthony Bale's study of the prison of Christ in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and Megan Cassidy-Welch's investigations of imprisonment in the medieval religious imagination.[9] This article builds on studies by a close analysis of literature concerned with confinement in monasteries, anchorholds and prisons. Starting with early medieval sources of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, this article explores Cassidy-Welch's claim that there is a positive relationship between imprisonment and 'the promise of eternal liberation through participation in the Christian devotional economy'.[10] It proposes literary examples which support this important idea, as well as some examples that suggest a distrust of the efficacy of this 'promise', even in this relatively early writing.

This study goes on to investigate some of the differences between the treatment of incarceration in early and late medieval texts. It argues that the devotional economy which underpins much earlier writing is more problematic in later-medieval writing, and the cell becomes a more contested space. This article suggests that one reason for the later, more overtly historicist developments might be found in the troubles of the fourteenth century, in which the very foundations of Western European society were shaken by plague, famine, revolt and religious reform. While the contained architecture and restrictive ideology of the

[5] See Guy Geltner, *The Medieval Prison: A Social History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (London: Penguin Books, 1991).

[6] There are no instances of this meaning in the *Middle English Dictionary* (hereafter *MED*), which lists the examples cited in this paragraph. Cf. *Middle English Dictionary* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1952–2001), s. n. *celle*, 5; *Oxford English Dictionary*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008–), s. n. *prison cell*, 1, and *cell* 4b (hereafter *OED*).

[7] Anthony Bale, 'God's Cell: Christ as Prisoner and Pilgrimage to the Prison of Christ', *Speculum*, 91 (2016), 1–35 (p. 6).

[8] *Enfermements: le cloître et la prison, VIe–XVIIIe siècle. Actes du colloque international organisé par le Centre d'Étude et de Recherche en Histoire Culturelle*, ed. by Julie Claustre, Isabelle Heullant-Donat and Élisabeth Lusset, Homme et société, 38 (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2011); *Enfermements II: règles et dérèglements en milieu clos (IVe–XIXe siècle)*, ed. by Claustre, Heullant-Donat, Élisabeth Lusset, and Bretschneider Falk, Homme et société, 49 (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2015); *Enfermements III: le genre enfermé: hommes et femmes en milieux clos (XIIIe siècle-XXe siècle)*, ed. by Claustre, Heullant-Donat, Élisabeth Lusset, and Bretschneider Falk (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2017).

[9] See Bale, 'God's Cell', p. 3; Megan Cassidy-Welch, *Imprisonment in the Medieval Religious Imagination, c. 1150–1400* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

[10] Cassidy-Welch, p. 4.

cell might invite the text-centred and insular methods of New Criticism (like the cell, the text becomes 'a small sheltered space, a sanctuary of and for the moment, and adoptable refuge, unusually intimate although often isolated'[11]), the same cannot be said for later confinement writing. These later texts, I argue, are less insular and better suited to a Historicist method; one with an eye to the social, political and historical milieux in which texts are produced. When justifying the Historicist approach of his own criticism, David Aers explains that 'historical communities, their economies and their social relations, their discourses and practices […] provide the collective practices, including language, out of which texts are made'.[12] This article argues that such communities, economies and social relations are conspicuous in later medieval confinement writing when compared with earlier writing. More specifically, in late-fourteenth- and fifteenth-century writing, anxieties concerning the value of the cell are prominent.

A Prisoner of Christ

Medieval references to the cell often carry associations with biblical stories and prisoners. There are countless references to prisons and prisoners in the Bible. Joseph, Samson, Jeremiah, Micaiah, Zedekiah, Daniel, John the Baptist, Peter, James, John, Silas, Paul, Epaphras, Arisarchus and Junia as well as Jesus himself all experienced periods of imprisonment.[13] Mark Olson argues that '[n]ever, ever, in any part of the Bible are prisons part of God's way. Always they are used to oppress. Always they are an affront to the divine'.[14] Indeed, Old and New Testament passages as well contemporary Roman authors attest to the terrible conditions of these cells, in which prisoners frequently died from illness, torture, execution or suicide.[15] Yet the uniformly negative commentary on prisons in the Bible is broken by one important figure. Paul the Apostle, the most renowned and reoffending prisoner in the Bible, endowed the prison cell with a very different kind of value. While Paul's imprisonments were certainly oppressive — he writes that he 'desire[s] to depart' (leaving it unclear whether prison or life is meant),[16] he nevertheless chose to stay, not flee, after an earthquake knocked the prison gates open (Acts 16. 25–40). Despite the circumstances in which he wrote, Paul's prison epistles are emphatically joyful: 'I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice', he proclaims, 'for I know that this shall fall out to me unto salvation' (Philippians 1. 19). Through suffering and constraint, Paul earned grace and hope as well as a kind of liberty. It is this economy of salvation that underpins the famous and paradoxical notion — one keenly felt in the medieval period — that a prisoner can be 'the prisoner of Jesus Christ' (Ephesians 3. 1, Philemon 1. 1, Philippians 1. 13).

While the prison space is clearly one of opportunity in the Pauline exemplar — and one metaphorically exploited by early Christian authorities such as the Desert Hermits — it was not

[11] Mark Jeffreys, 'Anecdotes of a Jar: The Dominion of Spatial Tropes in Recent Criticism of the Lyric', *Criticism*, 40 (1998), pp. 55–74 (p. 55).

[12] David Aers, *Community, Gender, and Individual Identity: English Writing 1360–1430* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 3.

[13] Christopher Marshall, 'Prison, Prisoners and the Bible', Breaking Down the Walls Conference, Matamata (2002) <http://restorativejustice.org> [Accessed 01/04/2020], p. 5.

[14] Mark Olson, 'No More Prisons, No Not One', *The Other Side*, 25 (1989), 24–25 (p. 24).

[15] Cf. Matthew 18. 34, Jeremiah 52. 11, Mark 6. 17–29; Marshall, p. 6; C. S. Wansink, *Chained in Christ: The Experience and Rhetoric of Paul's Imprisonments* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), pp. 27–95.

[16] Philippians 1. 23.

until the early-medieval period that self-imposed enclosure became a spiritual ideal that was more widely available and sought-after. The vocational eremitic retreat of monks and nuns into cloistered living flourished in the twelfth century. In this period of monastic renaissance, physical parameters were essential to monastic life: as Valerie Flint explains, '[s]pace, in framing the monk's activities, seems to sculp[t] and direct them too'.[17] The cloister might not appear to be confined and enclosed, but carceral spaces were central to the very idea of monastic retreat in the medieval imagination. At a semantic level, the word *claustrum* — the word used to denote one cell, the cloister, or the entire monastic space — also means 'enclosure'; it holds associations with 'the bolt, bar or key that secured the gate or door' and further, 'a confined space, the rampart or wall that surrounds a camp or city, a prison or whatever can be considered a prison'.[18] St Bernard was optimistic about the ability of the religious community to find comfort in the carceral space of Clairvaux Abbey in the early to mid-twelfth century:

> What is more miraculous than that so many youths, so many young adults, so many of noble birth, in fact all whom I see here, are held as it were in an open prison [*carcere aperto*] without chains, fixed by the fear of God alone, that they may persevere in such penitential torment, beyond human strength, above nature, and against custom. […] What are these [renunciations of the world] except the manifest proofs of the Holy Spirit dwelling in you?[19]

Bernard imagines the whole monastery as a prison of one's choosing. The carceral rhetoric acts as a reminder to novices in particular of the transformative experience of suffering and of the discipline that it has taken to access the liberation of contemplation. However, while St Bernard is able to stress the 'torment' and the 'miraculous' nature of the *carcer* simultaneously, these two disparate states are not so easily reconciled in all monastic writing. A contemporary of Bernard of Clairvaux, the Benedictine monk Peter of Celle, proposes that:

> A room [*cella*] has one of two qualities, depending on the way of life of those who dwell in it. It is a hard place for carnal people, but a pleasant one for spiritual people. It is a prison for the flesh, a paradise for the mind.[20]

As Hugh Feiss explains, the word 'cella' here might refer to an individual room in a monastery, to an entire small monastery, or, by a play on words, to Montier-la-Celle Abbey, near Troyes.[21] While there were certainly monks and nuns who were able to access a mental paradise through claustration, many contemporary sources show that many monastics were evidently unsuited to the cloistered life.[22] The twelfth-century miracle story, *The Nun of Watton* (generally believed

[17] Valerie Flint, 'Space and Discipline in Early Medieval Europe', in *Medieval Practices of Space*, ed. by Barbara Hanawalt and Michal Kobialka (Minneapolis: University of Minnisota Press, 2000), pp. 149–66 (p. 149). See also Paul Meyvaert, 'The Medieval Monastic Claustrum', *Gesta*, 12 (1973), 53–59; Joan Ferrante, 'Images of the Cloister: Haven or Prison?', *Mediaevalia*, 12 (1986), 57–66; Gregorio Penco, 'Monasterium-Carcer', *Studia Monastica*, 8 (1966), 133–43.

[18] Meyvaert, p. 53.

[19] *Bernard of Clairvaux: Sermons for the Autumn Season*, trans. by Irene Edmons and Rev. Mark Scott, Cistercian Father Series, 54 (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2016), p. 179. Cf. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sancti Bernardi Opera: Sermones II*, ed. by Jean Leclercq and H. M. Rochais, 8 vols (Rome: Editiones Cistercienses, 1957–77), v 371.

[20] *The Selected Works of Peter of Celle*, ed. and trans. by Hugh Feiss (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1987), p. 140.

[21] *Works of Peter of Celle*, p. 16.

[22] The Eynsham Customary, for example, lists faults such as carelessness, laziness, drunkenness, chattering, whining, swearing, impudence and offensive gestures as common within the cloister. *The Customary of the*

to be written by the Cistercian abbot Aelred of Rievaulx and based on real events at the Gilbertine nunnery) describes a nun who becomes pregnant within the cloister. She tries to escape, to no avail: '[t]he divine will prevented your effort to leave; you tried again but did not succeed'.[23] The powerful and restrictive 'divine will' here recalls St Bernard's vision of a prison in which people are 'fixed by the fear of God'. It also, however, betrays the fine line between the spiritual challenge of those committed to abiding in one place and the distressing sense of inescapable imprisonment when the individual's will is not totally committed to the *claustrum*.

A comparable idea can be found in a very different text. Doing away with any ambiguity, Jean de Meun (*c.* 1240–1305) imagines the horrors of the cloister through La Vieille in the *Romance of the Rose*. The old woman suggests that any and every person is ill-suited to the monastic life: she envisages that every monk, like the Nun of Watton, 'comes to repent [his entry into the cloister] afterwards'.[24] Even if the *claustrum* seems appealing initially, it will become a *carcer* — and not an open one — before long. La Vieille likens 'the man who goes into a religious order' to the:

> foolish fish who passed through the mouth of the trap-net and then, when he wanted to get back out, had to remain, in spite of himself within his prison forever, for there was no chance to go back.[25]

The analogy between enclosed monks and trapped fish is one from which Bernard of Clairvaux also draws, but in a very different way, perhaps evoking the fishponds which formed the midpoint of many cloisters:

> There are also clean fish in the ponds, who serve the Lord in cloisters, in spirit and power. It is right that monasteries should be compared to ponds, where the fish are to some extent enclosed [*incarcerati*] and have no freedom to wander but are always ready for the spiritual feast[.]"[26]

While La Vieille warns of the horrors of involuntary captivity, St Bernard stresses the value of the enclosed space, both for the contemplative life, and for the promise of eternal liberation to come. Even in this comparatively early period, it is evident that the cloister and prison were indeed equated, and that the relationship between sacred and secular imprisonment need not be viewed dichotomously.

Despite their differences, St Bernard, Aelred of Rievaulx, Peter of Celle and Jean de Meun all rely on metaphor to link the monastery and the prison. There is, however, strong evidence to suggest that the frequent carceral references in Cistercian literature might have taken on more sinister and literal senses for offending monastics. In addition to the daily struggles that any monk or nun might face with the strictures of enclosure in a monastery or convent, some were enclosed within certain spaces as punishment and by force. Guy Geltner and Megan Cassidy-Welch describe the practice of *detrusio* (penal cloistering) and the structural integration of

Benedictine Abbey of Eynsham in Oxfordshire, ed. by Antonia Granse (Siegburg: Schmitt, 1963), pp. 83–84; see also Flint, p. 152.

23 Aelred of Rievaulx, *The Nun of Watton*, trans. by John Boswell, in Boswell, *The Kindness of Strangers: The Abandonment of Children in Western Europe from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), pp. 452–58.

24 Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, trans. by Charles Dahlbergh (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971 [repr. 1995]), ll. 13995–14000.

25 de Lorris and de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, ll. 13949–76.

26 *Bernard of Clairvaux*, p. 252; cf. *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, v 429.

penal prison cells for both laymen and monastics into all Cistercian houses by the beginning of the thirteenth century: 'Cistercian monasteries *did* have locked doors and chained inmates […] some monks [and nuns, we should add], at least, did not voluntarily choose to remain in the monastery'.[27]

A strict and tangible enclosure is keenly felt in anchoritic literature. Aelred of Rievaulx's *De Institutione Inclusarum* (*c.* 1160), for example, carefully outlines the total enclosure of anchoritic women, as a wilful sacrifice which will facilitate unification with God.[28] Aelred's guide was a direct influence upon the anonymous thirteenth-century *Ancrene Wisse* in which carceral language proliferates.[29] The heart, for example, is an enclosure: '"Wið alles cunnes warde,"' ['with all kinds of guarding'], the author follows Proverbs 4. 23, '"wite wel þin heorte, for sawle lif is in hire" - ȝef ha is wel iloket' ['"keep your heart well, for the soul's life is in it", if it is well locked up'].[30] The words 'iloket' and 'warde' here evoke something of the prison, and 'warde' could even mean 'a guarded or fortified area' and further, 'a cell; a secured section of a prison'.[31] In addition to the enclosure of the heart, the author of *Ancrene Wisse* suggests the spirit is 'iput in a prisun, bitund [enclosed] in a cwalm-hus' (3.312), where 'cwalm-hus' has the sense of 'a prison; especially a prison for those about to be put to death'.[32]

The carceral imagery of this earlier anchoritic writing complies with the Pauline exemplar and Cassidy-Welch's suggestions that the cell offers 'the promise of eternal liberation through participation in the Christian devotional economy'. Often, in fact, this 'economy' is often described in monetary terms. One analogy in *Ancrene Wisse*, which likens a sinner to a prisoner in a debtor's prison is particularly apt. See this example:

> A mon þe leie i prisun [ant] ahte muche rancun ne o nane wise ne schulde ut, bute hit were to hongin, ear he hefde his rancun fulleliche ipaiet – nalde he cunne god þonc a mon the duste uppon him of peonehes a bigurdel for-te reimin him wið ant lesen him of

[27] Guy Geltner, 'Detrusio: Penal Cloistering in the Middle Ages', *Annali di Storia di Firenze*, 3 (2008), 9–30; Megan Cassidy-Welch, 'Incarceration and Liberation: Prisons in the Cistercian Monastery', *Viator*, 32 (2001), 23–42 (p. 24; emphasis mine). See also Cassidy-Welch, *Monastic Spaces and their Meanings: Thirteenth-Century English Cistercian Monasteries*, Medieval Church Studies, 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001).

[28] 'Voluntarium ho sacrificium est; *De Institutione Inclusarum*', ed. by C. H. Talbot, in Aelredus Rievallensis, *Opera Omnia*, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis, 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1971), 637–82 (p. 650).

[29] It is worth noting that in 1298, between the dates *De Institutione Inclusarum* and *Ancrene Wisse* were likely written, Pope Boniface VIII decreed the *Periculoso*. Written in response to an alleged growing licentiousness amongst nuns of all orders (and, it seems, an increasing misogyny more generally), this canon law ordered a new and more severe enclosure of religious women than had previously been demanded in the Western Church. 'Physical, rather than spiritual, claustration became the [female] monastic ideal', explain James Brundage and Elizabeth Makowski; it heralded an architecture of 'barred windows, locked doors, foreboding external walls': James A. Brundage and Elizabeth M. Makowski, 'Enclosure of Nuns: The Decretal *Periculoso* and its Commentators', *Journey of Medieval History*, 20 (1994), 143–55 (p. 153). While earlier claustration regulations had sought to provide a place of safety for contemplation, the *Periculoso*, Brundage and Makowski argue, was concerned above all with isolating nuns as punishment for their fallen nature, and with drawing them away from opportunities for fresh sin. In this way, the cell of the female monastic after the *Periculoso* is harder to separate from the type of strict enclosure that was specifically used for penal purposes in male monasteries. This movement towards a stricter enclosure helps to contextualise the increase in the language of enclosure in *Ancrene Wisse*.

[30] *Ancrene Wisse: A Corrected Edition of the Text in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 402 with Variants from other Manuscripts*, ed. by Bella Millett, Early English Text Society, original series, 325–26, 2 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 2005-2006), I part 2, ll. 3–5. Translations are from *Ancrene Wisse: Guide for Anchoresses*, ed. and trans. by Hugh White (London: Penguin, 1993), p. 27. All further references are to these editions of the texts, with chapter and line numbers, or page numbers, given in the text.

[31] *MED*, s. n. *warde*, 3a; 3d.

[32] *MED*, s. n. *qualm-hous*, 1d.

> pine, thah he wurpe hit ful hearde aȝeines his heorte? Al þe hur[t] were forȝeten for þe gleadnesse. O þis ilke wise we beoð alle i prisun her, ant ahen Godd greate deattes of sunne. (3.98–104)
>
> [A man who lay in prison and owed a great ransom and who was quite unable to get out, unless to be hanged, before he had paid the ransom in full – would he not be very grateful to a man who threw at him a purse of pennies with which to buy himself out and free himself from suffering? Even if he threw it very hard against his heart, all the hurt would be forgotten because of the gladness. In this same way we are all in prison here and owe God great debts for sin (p. 63)]

The ransom, the author explains, is to redeem ourselves and clear the spiritual — not material — debts we owe to God. Despite some inevitable painful suffering, a life of confined penance is shown to be a positive force and cause of gladness. In a similar vein, Julian of Norwich (*c.* 1342–1416) applies the notion of 'the profit of solitary liuyng' to the anchorhold: 'thi living is penance profitable. This place is prison, and this life is penance'.[33] In both these cases, points about the situation of all sinners, or even all of humanity, are given a specific poignance in the context of the prison-like anchorhold.

The points of tension concerning voluntary and involuntary incarceration that are evident in monastic writing are present in the anchoritic tradition, too. Like a monastic cell, an anchorhold could prove to be a haven or a *carcer*, depending on the state of mind of the occupant. One striking example comes from the letters concerning the enclosure of Christina Carpenter which were exchanged between the Bishop of Winchester and the Deacon of Guildford. In 1329, the 'pious' Christina chose 'to endure perpetual enclosure' 'in all sanctity and chastity'.[34] Yet a letter dated 1332 makes clear that Christina, 'wishing to return to her former place and established way of life', fled from her anchorhold.[35] Her actions compelled a startling shift in both Winchester's tone and his attitude towards the space of the cell. Where formerly Christina's anchorhold was a place of opportunity to 'serve Almighty God to greater profit', post-escape it is a place in which:

> Christina shall be thrust down into the said reclusory and that, with suitable care and competent diligence, duly reinstated she might know from your discretion how nefarious was that sin that she committed.[36]

For the regretful anchoress, like the ill-suited monk or nun, the cell sheds its metaphorical value and becomes a very real prison space in which she is enclosed and guarded for the rest of her life.

A pressure on the 'devotional economy'

Thus far, we have seen the overlap of anchoritic, monastic and prison spaces, and some of the tensions that surround the philosophy of the cell even in this relatively early writing. This

[33] *Julian of Norwich: Revelations of Divine Love: The Short Text and the Long Text*, ed. by Barry Windeatt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), Long Text, Chapter 77, ll. 29–30.

[34] 'The Letters Concerning the Enclosure of Christina Carpenter', in *Rhetoric of the Anchorhold: Space, Place and Body within the Discourses of Enclosure*, ed. by Liz Herbert McAvoy (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008), pp. 221–24 (pp. 221–22). The original letters are recorded in the register of Bishop John de Stratford (1323–1333), Hampshire Records Office, MS21M65/A1/5, f. 46v and f. 76r.

[35] 'Letters Concerning the Enclosure of Christina Carpenter', p. 223.

[36] 'Letters Concerning the Enclosure of Christina Carpenter', p. 224.

article now considers how these tensions manifest in later-medieval writing, in the time after about 1350. It argues that communities and social relations are more conspicuous parts of later-medieval writing. In particular, issues of work, productivity and purpose come to the fore of later-medieval writing in a way that puts pressure upon the Christian devotional economy which is conventional in earlier texts, and a key part of the ideals of confinement.

This article suggests that one reason for a general shift in the philosophy of the cell can be found in the troubles of the fourteenth century; it does not, however, draw a precise correlation between contemporary historical events and late-medieval confinement writing. In England (as well as in the rest of Europe), significant events including the Great Famine, the Great Cattle Plague, the Black Death, the Hundred Years' War and the Peasants' Revolt resulted in 'greatly changed circumstances': demographic collapse, political instabilities and religious upheaval.[37] Such events instigated a new interest in the age-old debate over what constitutes a positive engagement with the community, particularly in terms of labour.[38] Given the seriously decreased size of the workforce after the Black Death (estimates range from a 30% to 50% reduction), from the mid-fourteenth to the end of the fifteenth century, labour was much scarcer and consequently, it held an increased social value. This meant that, in the much-changed post-plague society, as Kellie Robertson and Michael Uebel explain, 'work arguably shaped social identity to a much greater extent than in earlier or later times'.[39] As many have noted, particularly in relation to what is conventionally known as the Peasants' Revolt, the hardships of the fourteenth century saw a rise in people who were aware of their increased social, political and financial power as individual players in a diminished workforce. Majorie McIntosh describes how there was an increase in the number of people who were 'ready to resist outside demand which might limit their autonomy and hence their prosperity'.[40] In juxtaposition to such independent and self-interested behaviour was a trend which stressed the importance of socially responsible living and the need to contribute — in a very material sense as well as a spiritual sense — to the community. A case in point is the eponymous character of William Langland's *Piers Plowman* (*c.* 1370–1386), who works for the 'commune profit'.[41] The numerous (and unsuccessful) post-plague labour ordinances, which had a great deal of influence over the contemporary debate, also engage with ideas of selfishness, by criticising people for acting 'in the interests of their own ease and greed', thus leading to the 'impoverishment of all members of the said commons' (1351 Statute of Labourers).[42] Within this general milieu, the solitary figure becomes noteworthy. Around 1405, the author of *Dives and Pauper* (1405–1410) complains of the man who 'wil ben his owyn man & folwynn his owyn fantasyys'. Such people:

[37] Aers, p. 9.

[38] For more information, see *The Problem of Labour in Fourteenth-Century England*, ed. by James Bothwell, P. J. P. Goldberg and W. M. Ormrod (York: York Medieval Press, 2000).

[39] 'Introduction', in *The Middle Ages at Work: Practicing Labour in Late Medieval England*, ed. by Michael Uebel and Kellie Robertson (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), pp. 1–15 (p. 1).

[40] Marjorie Keniston McIntosh, *Autonomy and Community: The Royal Manor of Havering 1200–1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 136–37; see also Aers, particularly pp. 1–19.

[41] The word appears a number of times across the A, B and C texts of *Piers Plowman* – see, for instance, *Piers Plowman: A New Annotated Edition of the C-text*, ed. by Derek Pearsall (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), Prologue ll. 169, 186 and 204; 4.119. While Langland criticises some, he does allow for *good* hermits. For context, see 'Piers Plowman and the Problem of Labour', in *The Problem of Labour*, pp. 101–22.

[42] R. B. Dobson, *The Peasants' Revolt of 1381* (London: Macmillan, 1986), p. 64.

> despysyn her souereynys, her doom & her gouernance ne ȝeuyn no tale of Goddis lawe ne of londys lawe ne of holy chirche ne han men of virtue ne of dignete in worchepe but for pride han hem in dispyt and ben besy to worchepyn himself in hyndryng of oþere.[43]

The rhetoric of 'Goddis lawe', 'holy churche' and 'worchepe' invites a comparison between the self-interested figure and religious figures who live in physical isolation from the wider community. Albeit for different reasons, both secular and spiritual individuals are 'ready to resist outside demand'.

Another element of contemporary social debate concerned the very nature of different kinds of work. The mid-fourteenth to the end of the fifteenth century saw a growing distrust over the extent to which contemplative, non-material labour such as preaching, praying and the hearing of confessions could be considered 'work' at all. Contemporary religious orders were not unaffected by this social climate. Late-medieval ecclesiastical satires condemn monks 'with a unified stereotype'; a 'distaste for work, whether manual or intellectual'.[44] There is a parallel between the criticism of the misanthropic figure in the passage above and the attack on Carmelite Friars in *Piers the Plowman's Creed* (anon., *c.* 1393–1401), for example. Carmelites supposedly had a particularly spiritual focus and their work of prayer, community and service was primarily contemplative, but in the eyes of the 'Menoure' (Franciscans), 'Carmes […] ben but jugulers and japers'.[45] Like the solitary entrepreneurs who 'ȝeuyn no tale of Goddis lawe', the Carmelites 'lyven more in lecherie and lieth in her tales | Than suen any god liife'.[46] The medieval Carmelite order had a complex relationship with confinement. The early Carmelites were hermits — like anchorites, they lived in separate cells and they observed vows of silence, seclusion, and devoted themselves to prayer and meditation[47] — but in England in 1247, the order was transformed into one of mendicant friars. While some aspects of eremitical life remained, such as living and praying in separate cells, the Carmelites could also leave their abodes and engage with society. In *Piers the Plowman's Creed*, it is the contemplative and confined work of the Carmelites that is attacked. The Franciscans suggest that this enclosure, which has lost its monastic ideal, has no real value to the community: furtively and slyly, the Carmelites 'lyrken in her selles, | And wynnen werldliche god, and wasten it in synne'.[48] A similar point is made in another Lollard text, *Jack Upland* (*c.* 1390), although this time, 'al the fyve ordris' are under scrutiny.[49] Jack castigates those 'idil men' — 'hidde Iopcritis' — who live 'closid […] as fro the world in wallis of stoon, cloistris, and sellis'

[43] *Dives and Pauper*, ed. by P. H. Barnum, Early English Text Society, Original Series, 275, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), i 357. For more information about the link between labour conditions and Lollard theology, see Chris Given-Wilson, 'The Problem of Labour in the Context of English Government, c. 1350–1450', in *The Problem of Labour*, pp. 85–100 and, for more context, Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

[44] Jill Mann, *Chaucer and Medieval Estates Satire: The Literature of Social Classes and the General Prologue to the Canterbury Tales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 26.

[45] 'Piers the Plowman's Creed', in *Six Ecclesiastical Satires*, ed. by James Dean, TEAMS Middle English Texts Series (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1991) <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/dean-six-ecclesiastical-satires-piers-the-plowmans-crede%3e [accessed 01/03/2020], l. 43.

[46] 'Piers the Plowman's Creed', ll. 83–84.

[47] Andrew Jotischky, *The Carmelites and Antiquity: Mendicants and their Pasts in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 10.

[48] Jotischky, ll. 84–85.

[49] 'Jack Upland', in *Six Ecclesiastical Satires*, ed. by James Dean, TEAMS Middle English Texts Series (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1991) <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/dean-six-ecclesiastical-satires-jack-upland> [accessed 01/03/2020], l. 68.

when they 'schulden have laboured in the world in help of alle thre partis of Cristis Chirche'.[50] Rather than a specific form of enclosure, the very idea of confinement itself which bolsters the antifraternal attack here. The particular use of enclosed spaces in these satires, as well as the pejorative way in which the cell is conflated with false work, is striking. Much more than in the the examples of earlier confinement writing, it indicates a departure from the ideal Pauline notion that spiritual imprisonment is 'fruitful labour' for others and part of a beneficial Christian economy of salvation.[51]

Perhaps the rhetoric of such Lollard criticism ought to be expected as it fits with many other Lollard tenets. The 'closid' cell and the type of devotion that it represents contradicts the 'open' Lollard ideal in which divine intervention and understanding are accessible 'for comoun profyt of Cristene soulis'.[52] The Lollard 'Sermon of Dead Men' alludes to this while using the cloister as a metaphor to argue against exclusive access to the Word of God; the Gospel is too important to be 'claspid vp, ne closed in no cloyster'.[53] Yet less intuitive, and certainly less publicised, were the internal critiques and changing ideals of the cell, work and the community from within spiritual traditions themselves. Within the monastic setting, monks and nuns were aware that after the worst plague years, monasteries and convents were not the strongholds of public support that they once were.[54] As James Clark argues, larger social doubts about the 'value of monasticism' forced monks and nuns to take 'both their messages and themselves outside into the lay community itself' in a startlingly new effort to 'win back' a public approval that they had previously enjoyed.[55] Whereas according to traditional eremitic ideals, the link between the monastery and the surrounding community would have been supported by faith alone, the later medieval tradition needed 'both visual' and 'verbal reminder[s] of the monastery's spiritual authority' through measures such as public sermons or processions (for which there is no evidence before 1350).[56] Monasteries 'adapted their buildings and forms of worship to better accommodate and appeal to the laity outside their walls'.[57]

A similar kind of changed social awareness is evident in the anchoritic tradition, too. Rather than an effort to 'win back' the community, however, a comparison of anchoretic guides from the Early and Late Middle Ages suggests a tangible alteration to the very philosophy of the cell, with implications for the value of enclosure within the anchoritic tradition. As I have explained previously, early-medieval guides like *De Institutione Inclusarum* and *Ancrene Wisse* prescribe complete enclosure and withdrawal from the world as the truest and most profitable means to connect with God. 'Hu god is to beon ane' ['How

[50] 'Jack Upland', ll. 34, 54, 48–50.

[51] Paul often describes his imprisonment as productive, as in Philippians 1. 19–24, for example.

[52] 'The Wycliffite Bible: From the Prologue', in *Medieval English Political Writings*, ed. by James Dean, TEAMS Middle English Texts Series (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1996), <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/publication/dean- medieval-english-political-writings> [accessed 01/03/2020], l. 276. For the Lollard use of 'opun', see Kantik Ghosh, *The Wycliffite Heresy: Authority and the Interpretation of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 131–41.

[53] 'The Sermon of Dead Men', in *Lollard Sermons*, ed. by Gloria Cigman, Early English Texts Society, Original Series, 294 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 207–40 (l. 1152).

[54] See James Clark, 'Selling the Holy Places: Monastic Efforts to Win Back the People in Fifteenth-century England', in *Social Attitudes and Political Structures in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. by Tim Thornton (Port Shroud: Sutton Publishing, 2000), pp. 13–32.

[55] Clark, p. 20.

[56] Clark, p. 20.

[57] Clark, p. 14.

good it is to be alone'] the writer of *Ancrene Wisse* exclaims confidently; 'Godd his dearne runes ant heovenliche privitez schawde his leoveste freond nawt i monne floc, ah dude ther ha weren ane bi ham-seolven' (3.480–01) ['God shows his hidden mysteries and heavenly scents to his dearest friends, not in the crowds of men, but when they were alone by themselves' (p. 75)]. The ideal anchoress must be '[b]lake ant unwurð to þe world wiðute' (2.23–24) ['black and worthless to the world outside' (p. 28)]: she cannot be a counsellor; she cannot give material alms (only spiritual ones); she cannot actively help the sick — even her own blood relatives.[58] These standards were not selfish but 'approved of across the community' as 'an act of love for one's neighbour, but also to the rendering to God of the debt of praise on behalf of society at large'.[59] Yet some guides from the late-fourteenth and fifteenth centuries suggest a different approach to confinement. In contrast to the examples above, Richard Rolle suggests to his recluse in the *Form of Perfect Living* (*c.* 1348–1349), that material alms-deeds will help to gain spiritual purity.[60] The fifteenth-century *Myrour of Recluses* (a Middle-English translation of the *Speculum Inclusarum*) suggests that it is 'vertuous & meritorie to releue' both 'ȝoure blood [relatives]' and 'an-oþer strange persone' in any way when they are ill.[61] In *The Scale of Perfection* (*c.* 1380–1396), Walter Hilton re-considers how an anchoress should relate to the outside world — 'hou an ankir schal have hir to hem that comen to hir'.[62] Hilton's philosophy of solitude is very different to the total enclosure we have explored in the earlier guides:

> though thou be in preiere or in devocioun, that thee thenketh looth for to breeke of, for thee thenketh thou schuldest not leve God for mannys speche, me thenketh it is not so in this caas; for yif thou be wise, thou schal not leve God, but thou schal fynde Hym and have Hym and see Him in thyn evene Cristene as wel as in praiere.[63]

For Hilton, it is this type of social consciousness that constitutes productive and enlightened labour: if one 'worche visili', 'comenynge with thyn evene Cristene is not moche agens thee, but helpith thee symtyme'.[64] Later anchoritic guides such as these suggest greater levels of acceptable — even useful — engagement with the community. In words that echo the changing ideals surrounding enclosure in the contemporary monastic tradition, Mari Hughes-Edwards describes this general shift in the treatment of anchoritic enclosure as a 'paradoxical reliance upon acceptable social interaction' as a necessity for the 'perpetuation' of the anchoritic tradition.[65] This comparison between earlier and later-medieval confinement

[58] For examples, see *Þe Wohunge of Ure Laured*, ed. by W. Meredith Thompson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), ll. 242–51; *Ancrene Wisse*, 1.197–211.

[59] Hugh White, p. xi. Such solitariness is, of course, an ideal that can be upheld in literature. In practice, writing such as *Ancrene Wisse* perhaps already gives an indication of how thirteenth-century parishes interacted with their anchorites.

[60] Richard Rolle, 'The Form of Perfect Living', in *The Form of Living and Other Prose Treatises by Richard Rolle of Hampole*, ed. and trans. by Geraldine Hodgson (London: Baker, 1910), VI.35.

[61] *The Myrour of Recluses*, ed. by Marta Powell Harley (Madison: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 1995), pp. 6–7.

[62] *Walter Hilton: The Scale of Perfection*, ed. by Thomas Bestul (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000), I.2368.

[63] *Walter Hilton*, I.2388–91.

[64] *Walter Hilton*, I.124.

[65] Mari Hughes-Edwards, '"How Good it is to be Alone"? Sociability, Solitude and Medieval English Anchoritism', *Mystics Quarterly*, 35 (2009), 31–61 (p. 32).

writing suggests a change in both monastic and anchoritic literature to do with the very philosophy of confinement and the way it is valued.[66]

Late-medieval prison writing

This article started by positing evidence to support the connectedness of secular prison cells and spiritual cells. The spiritual tradition drew from the prison cell in order to create meaning, and, as we shall see below, prison cells drew from eremitic cells in turn. It has also suggested that later-medieval literature seems to adopt a more socially-orientated and material value system, which complicates more traditional notions of the 'profit' or 'devotional economy' of contemplative confinement and solitude.

There is evidence that the secular prison space was also affected similar ideas within a shared contemporary social climate, albeit in different ways. To a greater extent than the spiritual material, the late-medieval prison cell often presents different, 'contrarious' philosophies of imprisonment which make the cell seem over-bearing and over-determined.[67] Through a consideration of different philosophies of imprisonment that are present in late-medieval writing, this article now discusses some of the 'ideological voices of the era' that Mikhael Bakhtin suggests are key to the formation of texts; 'each person's inner world and thought has its stabilised social audience that comprises the environment in which reasons, motives, values and so on are fashioned'.[68] Just as important, however, is a consideration of the extent to which the restrictive reality of the cell frustrates thinking about how an 'inner world' relates to the 'community'. Rather than a 'stabilised social audience', the late-medieval texts discussed below explore participation and exclusion from value systems more generally, whether it be the Christian devotional economy or something more material.

The least complex of the prison poems discussed, the anonymous *Complaint of a Prisoner Against Fortune* (IMEV 860) from around the mid fifteenth-century (hereafter *Complaint Against Fortune*), provides a useful foil against which to consider other, more problematic, prison poems.[69] In its entirety, the *Complaint Against Fortune* traces a broad movement from grief to consolation and critics have therefore characterised the poem as 'a Boethian one'.[70] But while Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* (AD 523) did indeed influence much medieval prison writing, even the relatively simple *Complaint Against Fortune* frustrates the Boethian model in such a way that brings into question its utility. Albeit written by a Christian, the earlier stoic work makes no reference to Christ's incarnation, Christian grace or the Christological or Pauline prison exemplars. In contrast, the *Complaint Against Fortune* moves from hopelessness to a distinctly Christian philosophy of the cell which more readily

[66] Of sixteenth-century anchorites, Mary Erler writes that they 'assumed a central role in the parish's life, making a significant contribution not only spiritually but economically'. Mary Erler, *Reading and Writing During the Dissolution: Monks, Friars, and Nuns 1530–1558* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 16.

[67] The word 'contrarious' is used by Thomas Usk; *Thomas Usk:The Testament of Love*, ed. by R. Allen Shoaf (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1998), 1.28; All further references are to this edition, with chapter and line numbers in the text.

[68] Michel Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel', in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. and trans. by Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson, 18th edn (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), pp. 259–422 (p. 417).

[69] *Complaint of a Prisoner Against Fortune*, in *The Kingis Quair and Other Prison Poems*, ed. by Linne R. Mooney and Mary-Jo Arn, TEAMS Middle English Texts Series (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2005), pp. 176–80. All further references are to this edition, with line numbers in the text.

[70] Joanna Summers, *Late Medieval Prison Writing and the Politics of Autobiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 146.

demonstrates traditional monastic and anchoritic ideologies than the Boethian model. Indeed, the poet pointedly negates important Boethian elements at times in favour of a pious Christian message. In the *Complaint*, the corresponding figure to Lady Philosophy would be the allegorical Fortune. Yet whereas Lady Philosophy guides Boethius through every nuance of his understanding in a complex and prolonged dialogue, Fortune appears only once in the *Complaint Against Fortune*, and the speaker finds his own way — one based on faith — to understand the spiritual value of the cell.

Even though the *Complaint Against Fortune* is the prison poem which partakes in the Pauline exemplar most readily, the prisoner's journey to Christian consolation is not easy, and the prisoner struggles to commit to the potential value of the situation. Immediately after he wilfully decides to 'betake' his 'soule to God and Seynt Marie' (l. 61), for example, the prisoner 'grievith' because his fame and his good reputation are lost (ll. 64–65). He is also troubled by the knowledge that he has 'no friende that wil [him] me now visite | In prison here' (ll. 85–86); they have forgotten the corporeal acts of mercy in Matthew 25. The spiritual potential of the cell is overshadowed by the true 'here' and 'now' of the speaker's incarceration.

Nonetheless, however arduous the progression may seem, the true movement of the *Complaint Against Fortune* is towards spiritual solace. The final seven rhyme royal stanzas are a sustained epiphanic realisation of the value of rejecting the world as 'fantasie' (l. 99) and of turning to the Church, Christ, God and Mary. In this way, the prisoner emerges like a contented anchorite or cloistered monk; no longer the reluctant prisoner who lies 'wrongfully […] thus in prisoun' (l. 23) and bemoans 'hem that accusen' (l. 94), the prisoner comes to trust in a sacred justice system in which 'God chastiseth whom He lovith' (l. 36).

The discomfort of the prison cell here can be read in terms of the devotional economy of eremitic ideals. Of early anchoritic guides, Hugh White writes that the 'practice fulfils the demands of self-denial and suffering [… it] constantly sees the sufferings of the anchorites in relation to the sufferings of Christ — the suffering *is* the following of Christ'.[71] The speaker of the *Complaint Against Fortune* even draws a parallel between Christ's suffering 'upon the Crosse' (l. 135) and his own suffering '[h]ere in this lif with meke and contrite hert' (l. 137) — something found in spiritual confinement texts too.[72] The speaker also, however, conceptualises the wider value of his suffering. Consider the homiletic tone of the passage:

> Than best is this world to sette at nought
> And mekely suffer al adversité
> That may us availe of synnes that we have wrought,
> In mede encresyng or relesyng, pardè,
> Of peynes whiche in Purgatory be. (ll. 106–10)

No longer a solitary 'I', the speaker writes himself into that community 'that wilbe saved' (l. 38): the faithful 'us' and 'we' that readily accepts punishment for the fallen nature of humanity. Like Part Four of *Ancrene Wisse*, for example (which explains how each enclosed anchoress is a soldier in the army against the devil), 'the Fiende' in the *Complaint Against Fortune* is shown to be something which 'our [collective] soulis […] trappe' (l. 132) — something that the private passionate effort of the enclosed penitent helps to combat for the greater good of the community. In this light, the personal adversity that characterises the earlier parts of

[71] White, p. xi (emphasis in original).

[72] Compare, for example, *Wohunge*, ll. 590–95.

the *Complaint* even comes to act as credit in the eventual and communal Christian devotional economy that the poem shares with more traditional monastic and anchoritic writing.

Yet the same cannot be said for George Ashby's *Complaint of a Prisoner in the Fleet 1463* (hereafter *Complaint in the Fleet*). The significance of this text lies in the way in which the poet draws on spiritual precedent but ultimately fails to trust in the value of spiritual imprisonment. Despite being very different texts, there are several significant parallels between the anonymous *Complaint Against Fortune* and Ashby's *Complaint in the Fleet* which suggest that Ashby was either aware of the earlier prison poem (which circulated in three manuscripts) or the tropes of the genre.[73] The lamentations in the *Complaint Against Fortune* that 'wrongfully I lye thus in prison' (l. 34) and 'I have no friende that wil me now visite' (l. 85) are paralleled when Ashby[74] complains that he is 'in pryson wrongfully, certeyn' (l. 52) and that his 'old acqueintaunce disdeyned [him] | To vysyte' (ll. 37–38), forgetting the 'werkes of mercy' (l. 41).[75] Indeed, the majority of the stanzas in Ashby's *Complaint in the Fleet* present the spiritual ideals that are seen in the *Complaint Against Fortune*. Ashby professes to turn to:

> […] obey Hym that ys eternall
> And to chaung my lyf to God greable
> Both in pacyence and in feyth stable.
> Knowyng in serteyn that my punysshyng
> Ys other whyle for my soule profytable. (ll. 103–07)

This 'profytable' imprisonment, which takes on purgatorial dimensions, implies a participation in the Pauline devotional economy of the cell. Ashby's rich and pious language of purgation is connected to his confinement: 'peraventyre within lytyll space' (l. 140), he suggests, will he 'at last comfort have trewleche' (l. 138). In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the primary meaning of 'space' is temporal, but it can also refer to an area or room,[76] as it does in Julian's awareness of the 'time and space' in which she beheld the revelations.[77] Ashby, too, seems to share in the absolute reliance on Christ within the cell that characterises early eremitic ideals. The reliance on Christ as the source and provider of all things in confinement is held in Ashby's notion that '[a]ll thynges com of Jhesu, | And nothing without Hym may avayle' (ll. 295–96). Ashby himself even takes on the characteristics of a spiritual guide when, from stanza 18, he turns outwards to address and advise others: '[y]ef thow to pryson or trouble be broght […] | Kepe pacience' (ll. 124–27). '[P]acience', from the Latin *patientia* meaning 'endurance of pain' or 'persistence', occurs fifteen times in the *Complaint in the Fleet*, which again reinforces the notion of the fruitful suffering of spiritual imprisonment.

[73] Mooney and Arn, p. 174.

[74] The poem is peppered with autobiographical detail, e.g. 'George Asshby ys my name, that is greved | By empryssonment a hole yere and more' (ll. 29–30). The extent to which the narrator ought to be identified with the historical author has attracted critical attention; see especially Summers, pp. 142–69. For the purposes of this essay, I treat the *Complaint in the Fleet* as more or less autobiographical with no notable ironic discrepancy between speaker and writer.

[75] 'George Ashby: *Complaint of a Prisoner in the Fleet 1463*', in *The Kingis Quair and Other Prison Poems*, ed. by Linne R. Mooney and Mary-Jo Arn, TEAMS Middle English Texts Series (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2005), pp. 153–63. All further references are to this edition, with line numbers in the text.

[76] *MED*, s. n. *space*, 8, 9, 12.

[77] *Shewings*, Long Text. 8.17.

While John Scattergood and Joanna Summers argue that the 'virtue and value of patience' is the 'main theme' of Ashby's poem however,[78] the *Complaint in the Fleet* should not be considered Boethian, or even a poem of 'repentant, Christological imprisonment'.[79] Ashby's *Complaint in the Fleet* is a polyphonic text: alongside the main theme, he also plays upon different and conflicting value systems which imbue the text with a discord that would be out of place in early anchoritic and monastic models. Consider the beginning of the work:

> Afore Myghelmas, that tyme of season,
> I was commytted geynst right and reason,
> Into a pryson, whos name the Flete hight,
> By a gret commaundment of a lord
> To whom I must obey for hys gret myght
> Though I cannat therto sadly accord;
> Yet I must hyt for a lesson record,
> Theryn abydyng without help singlere
> Sauf of God and Hys blessyd modyr there. (ll. 6–14)

The 'lord' who wields 'gret' command here could be secular — perhaps Edward IV himself — or perhaps divine. The latter option, in which Christ is both the enforcer of enclosure and the hope of liberation, recalls the kind of paradoxical spiritual imprisonment of the *carcer* in which devotees are 'fixed by the fear of God alone' (Bernard of Clairvaux) or prevented from escaping by '[d]ivine power' (Aelred of Rievaulx). If Ashby is to be seen as a figure of spiritual imprisonment, then the 'lesson' that he self-consciously refers to 'record' can, as Summers suggests, be seen as 'a form of sermon'.[80] On the other hand, the more worldly option marks the initiation of a prolonged rhetoric of opposition between Ashby and his wrongful accusers, in which the 'lesson' becomes 'a public discourse given as proof of legal knowledge during a person's examination'.[81] To their detriment, Ashby pitches the earthly commander and his supporters against 'God', 'Mary', himself and the reader. Consider the charged language in the following passage:

> But oth or other declaracion
> Coude at no season be herd ne takyn
> But not prayer ne exhortacion
> But of all pité and grace forsakyn,
> Myne enemyes on me awakyn,
> Takyng awey hors, money, and goodes,
> Pullyng myn houses downe and gret woodes. (ll. 15–21)

As Ashby casts his 'enemyes' outside the Christian values of 'prayer', 'pité' and 'grace', he also recruits rich and pious language to undermine the secular legal grounds upon which the prosecutors might stand. While the words 'oth' and 'exhortacion' both have specific spiritual meanings, they also have a specific, and separate, secular and legal meanings. An 'oth' can be 'a solemn invocation to God' or 'legal proof of someone's innocence'; an 'exhortation' — an emphatic address urging someone to do something — is used in both religious texts

[78] See, for example, Summers, p. 167 and p. 147, and John Scattergood, 'George Ashby's *Prisoner's Reflections* and the Virtue of Patience', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 37 (1993), 102–09.
[79] Summers, p. 147. See also Bale, p. 33.
[80] *MED*, s. n. *lessoun*, 1b.
[81] *OED*, s. n. *lesson*, 1c.

and charters.[82] It is both secular and spiritual values that are shown to be bypassed or even ignored — not 'herd ne takyn'. The mention of 'hors, money, and goodes' is unequivocally material, but Ashby later complains that '[t]he grettest peyne' that he suffers is that he is 'put to unpayable det' (ll. 48–49). He draws from the theological metaphor whereby sin and penance are considered debts to be discharged by God whilst also referring to the worldly value system that governs debtors' prisons. As such examples of counterutterance escalate, it becomes increasingly noticeable that Ashby embraces spiritual ideologies for two purposes: one which co-opts the eremitic precedent of imprisonment, and one which fuels his attack against his unjust imprisonment. The ambivalence at the core of Ashby's text suggests an awareness of, but necessarily partial participation in, the expectations of the genre and of the spiritual value of imprisonment.

Looking at Ashby's spiritual professions with an eye of scepticism betrays how 'feyth stable' or 'serteyn' is, in fact, only posited hypothetically *if* he were to 'chaung [his] lyf' to be whole-heartedly 'greable' within the spiritual tradition of imprisonment. Consider the final stanza of the *Complaint*:

> Pryson propurly ys a sepulture
> Of lyvyng men with strong lokkes thereon,
> Fortyfyed without any rupture,
> Of synners a gret castigacion,
> Of feythfull frendes a probacion,
> Of fre liberté a sharp abstinence,
> Lackyng volunté for theyre dew penaunce. (ll. 344–50)

Coming after two *Amen*s and a dedication to God, this explicit is not the culmination of a 'Boethian *gradus* of ascendence' but instead a cry of protest against the over-determined and emotionally over-bearing cell.[83] Signalling a relapse into the pessimism of the opening, the explicit evokes a cyclical, rather than linear, structure to both the poem and the speaker's attitude towards imprisonment. In the final three chapters of *De Institutione Inclusarum*, Aelred of Rievaulx suggests that a threefold meditation within the cell which progresses from the past, through the present and to the future will assist one's confidence in the spiritual value of imprisonment and grace. But unable to transcend his situation in such a way, the past comes back to 'remembre and revolve in [the] mynde' (l. 58) of the poet. Ashby also lacks 'fre liberté' and 'volunté' as well as the anticipation of transformation and resurrection that could transform the oppressive 'sepulture' into the kind advocated in *Ancrene Wisse*, in which the prisoner is 'with Jesu Crist bitund as i sepulcre, bibarret as he wes o the deore rode' (3.563) ['with Christ as in a sepulchre, confined as he was on the dear cross' (p. 82)]. Given Ashby's keen attention to his presence throughout the rest of the poem, the possessive pronoun 'theyre' aligns Ashby with the 'synners' for whom prison is a 'gret castigacion' instead of a faithful enclosed person who might participate in the spiritual value of the cell.

Ashby's attitude towards imprisonment shows an awareness of the world outside the cell and the value of labour in the community from which he is excluded. Again, it is useful to remember that in Ashby's contemporary society, work was particularly important; as Uebel and Robertson suggest, 'work arguably shaped social identity to a much greater extent than

[82] *MED*, s. n. *oth*, 1b, 1a; s. n. *exhortacioun*, 1a.
[83] Summers, p. 146.

in either earlier or later times'.[84] Ashby presents his literary identity as he carefully details his role as a clerk under the Lancastrian 'kyng' (Henry VI), 'quene' (Margaret of Anjou) and 'theyre uncle also, | The duk of Gloucetre' (ll. 60–61), by whom he was highly valued — 'cherysshed ryght well' (l. 62). He explains his 'servyce' in full:

> Wrytyng to theyre sygnet full fourty yere
> As well beyond the see as on thys syde,
> Doyng my servyce as well there as here,
> Nat sparyng for to go ne for to ryde,
> Havyng pen and inke evyr at my syde,
> As truly as I coude to theyre entent
> Redy to acomplysshe theyre commandment.
> And in theyr servyce I spendyd all my youth,
> And now in pryson throwen in myn age (ll. 64–72)

Ashby does not differentiate between the good 'servyce' of his youth and the imprisonment of his old age as a basis for faith in the Christian devotional economy. Instead, by expounding upon the difference between his good work and the malicious persecutors' work, Ashby's poem develops beyond a rhetoric of opposition and into a pointed self-justification, which contrasts valuable public service against unproductive and anti-social prosecution. A similar note is sounded by Thomas Usk's *Testament of Love* (1380s).[85] Entangled in, and imprisoned because of, turbulent politics London party politics, Usk describes how he worked to achieve 'commen profyte in comynaltie' (I. vi. 553) and that his service would be better employed outside of the cell: 'if me lyste to have grace of my lyfe and frenesse of that prison, I shulde openly confesse howe peace myght ben endused to enden al the firste rancours' (I.VI. 565–66). Despite the eighty years that separate Usk's *Testament* and Ashby's *Complaint*, both texts demonstrate self-exoneration, a keen awareness of different kinds of work, and an anxiety concerning the limited capacity for performing valuable public work from within the cell.

The prison writing of Charles, the Duke of Orléans (1394–1465), shares many of the concerns of the *Testament* and the *Complaint*. More than Usk and Ashby, however, Charles offers a conspicuous assessment of both spiritual and secular imprisonment, as well as an overt questioning of the value of the cell. Charles was seized at the battle of Agincourt and taken to England in 1415, aged twenty-one. Charles wrote both French and English poetry during his imprisonment. Almost all of his English poems are contained in a single manuscript: British Library MS Harley 682. While Charles was certainly not a victim of claustrophobic confinement — in some ways, Charles' time under arrest 'is hardly to be equated with imprisonment' at all,[86] and let alone within a cell — both real and metaphorical cellular spaces and solitary living play a crucial role in *Fortunes Stabilnes*. For the majority of the Harleian sequence, Charles' prison motif borrows from the courtly tradition in which the lover suffers in a metaphorical prison of love-longing: he is a 'caytijf', with Fortune as the guard (l. 1440); a 'martir […] for love and a prisonere' (l. 1442); the speaker lives in the 'prison of Grevous Displesaunce' (ll. 1012, 21, 30, 36) and the 'prison of Daunger' (l.

[84] Uebel and Robertson, p. 1.

[85] For more on Usk's text and imprisonment, see Joanna Summers, 'Thomas Usk and The Testament of Love', in *Late-Medieval Prison Writing and the Politics of Autobiography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 24–60. See also William Quinn, 'Thomas Usk's Imprisoned Voice', *Essays in Criticism*, 70 (2020), 275–301.

[86] *Fortunes Stabilnes*, p. 15.

4610).[87] Wounded through the eye and to the heart by Beauty, the speaker becomes a 'feudal vassal' whose 'bond' must be 'rent' (l. 2892) to Venus: 'lijk a prisonere, | [He] must abie the oth þat [he] swore' (l. 6280).[88] When the speaker's lover dies suddenly and prematurely (Ballade 55), however, he breaks away from the prison of love *topos* and begins a series of poems of mourning.

Ballade 59, which bears much resemblance to Christine de Pizan's short ballade 'Seulete sui' (after 1389), is a striking example of the importance of a very different kind of solitary retreat in this part of the sequence:

> Alone am y and wille to be alone
> Alone, withouten pleasure or gladnes
> Alone in care, to sighe and grone
> <Alone>, to wayle the deth of my maystres
> Alone, which sorrow will me neuyr cesse.
> Alone, y curse the lijf y do endure.
> Alone this fayntith me my gret distress,
> Alone y lyue, an ofcast creature. (ll. 2054–61)

Although voluntary, the philosophy behind this lonely impulse is clearly not spiritual and it shows nothing of a promise of liberation through the Christian devotional economy. Charles even inverts the contemporary mystical use of the word 'creature' (to refer to an inclusiveness that binds God and all of creation) into something that stresses his lack of ability to participate in a community. As the narrative continues, however, the theological resonances of the speaker's condition intensify and, significantly, they do so in parallel with a questioning of the value of his self-contained existence and the value of the type of work that a solitary figure can undertake. Charles articulates this questioning through a conversation with Venus at a pivotal moment in the Harleian sequence. '"But how lede ye yowre lijf?"' (l. 4799) Venus demands. Her question is more than polite inquiry: the goddess has come to challenge the speaker on his occupation since leaving her service.

Charles' answer to Venus' question is startling. Finding an analogous relationship between his uncertain condition and a spiritual one, the speaker posits himself '[a]s an ancre' (l. 4802). Like a good anchorite, the speaker wears penitential 'clothis blake' (l. 4802), undertakes daily devotions, 'dwelle[s] a-sondir' from others (l. 4821) and suffers the 'paynfulle' life patiently (l. 4855) — '[c]ertis, to wrappe me in a sepulture | Me suitteth bet, as wisely god me saue | Then in my armes a newe ladi haue!' (ll. 4894–96). Also like an anchorite, his choice is irrevocable:

> "Unto this paynfull, ded professioun
> Mi hert and y are swore vnto my last
> Withouten chaunge or newe opynyoun […].
>
> Thus have y told yow my poore ancre lijf
> And what professioun that y am bounde.
> How thenke ye lo nys hit contemplatijf?" (ll. 4855–64)

[87] Like Ashby, Charles plays with an imprisoned persona that has an oblique relationship to himself. For a discussion of the autobiographical nature of the text, see Summers, pp. 90–107.

[88] For a discussion of the feudal themes in *Fortunes Stabilnes*, see E. A. Jones, 'O Sely Ankir', in *Anchorites in Their Communities*, ed. by Cate Gunn and Liz Herbert McAvoy (Cambridge: Brewer, 2017), pp. 13–34 (p. 15).

True to character as the Goddess of Love, Venus is appalled, and she urges the speaker to 'chaunge' […] þat thought' (l. 4868) and 'chese […] a lady newe' (l. 4876). Yet her attitude speaks to more than the loss of a love narrative: both Venus and the speaker point towards the complicated nature of eremitic isolation within late-medieval society. Rather than a genuine claim to spiritual solitude, the speaker's alleged 'professioun' can be seen as a desperate attempt to justify a solipsistic practice. It shows a keen awareness — one which relates to the discussion of anchoritic and monastic spaces above — of the need to be 'bounde' to a community with a value system in which isolation is purposeful. To Venus, however, this 'contemplatijf' existence is deeply questionable: 'ye are not worth at all!' (l. 4898), she contends; 'yowre labour vaylith not' (l. 4961). Venus' rejection of the speaker's enthusiastic claim that he leads an 'ancre' life, which she assumes will be shared by 'folk in generall', signals a common lack of trust in the efficacy of 'contemplatijf' retreat as a licit and valuable 'professioun'.

The exchange between the speaker and Venus implicates the value of eremitic living in other ways, too. Charles twists the Boethian model of consolation when Venus advises the struggling 'contemplatijf' to remember 'that ye ar a man | And haue of nature als yowre lymys goode' (ll. 4869–70), with a possible pun on genitals. Aware of, but ultimately unconvinced by, the spiritual, Boethian or amatory precedents which could potentially validate his isolated existence, the speaker despairs: '"dwelle y so like a masid [distraught; troubled] man | That hath abidyng and wot no where"' (ll. 4814–15). '"Ye do yowre silf confound!"' (l. 4865) says Venus, in both a playful jab at the narrative persona and a nod to Charles' complicated notion of imprisonment.

Without a legitimate connection to any authenticating value system, the prison in *Fortunes Stabilnes* becomes psychologically significant. At moments in which the worth of his physical imprisonment is most at question, Charles suggests entrapment within a brain cell — 'one of the compartments into which the brain was believed divided'.[89] Anna McHugh explains how the imagery of the brain cell underpins the 'basic mental universe' of *Ancrene Wisse*: 'the human mind and its innate desire to know God are figured as an enclosed space, miming the containment of God's nature and providing an image of a place where the human seeks and finds the divine'.[90] The mental entrapment of *Fortunes Stabilnes*, however, is altogether more troubling. The speaker bemoans the closed 'windowes of [his] derkid eyne' (ll. 1608, 1616, 1624, 1628) which, if they were opened, would 'light' 'the chambir of [his] thoght trewly' (ll. 1609–10) and stir his 'fowle and sluggissh slogarde' (l. 1613). Implicitly, as Linne Mooney and Mary-Jo Arn explain, 'the logic of his poetry often seems to work against itself which leads the speaker to an impasse'; the resultant feeling of mental stasis that results 'is a perfect reflection of imprisonment, where a man of longing is by some power or other kept from that which he longs for and unable to effect changes that would ameliorate his suffering'.[91] The speaker is not only incapable of the desire for God,[92] but stuck in a torpor that makes any kind of lively spiritual seeking and finding, as described in *Ancrene Wisse*, impossible.

[89] *MED*, s. n. *celle*, 6.

[90] Anna McHugh, 'Inner Space as Speaking Space in *Ancrene Wisse*', in *Rhetoric of the Anchorhold*, pp. 83–95 (p. 85).

[91] Mooney and Arn, p. 121.

[92] See Sarah Stanbury for the link between sight and desire, in Sarah Stanbury, *The Visual Object of Desire in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

To a degree, this mental stasis presented by Charles can be likened to *acedia*. From the Greek, *ἀκηδία*, meaning indifference, listlessness, apathy; literally 'non-caring-state',[93] *acedia* refers to spiritual sloth or weariness. The state has a long and complex relationship with living and writing in confinement, and it is often warned against in early-medieval monastic and anchoritic writing. Bernard of Clairvaux, for example, is aware of the possibility for the 'waking sleep' (cf. Charles' 'waking dremys sad' (l. 4640)) of *acedia* within the *claustrum*.[94] Aelred of Rievaulx, too, talks of 'slouthe and ydelnesse' (l. 224), and the *Ancrene Wisse* of 'accidie' within the cell. Yet whereas these authorities prescribe spiritual remedies — 'lengthy Vigils',[95] a 'multitude of psalms in thy pryuat prayer' (Aelred, ll. 219–20), and 'gastelich gleadschipe ant frovre of gleadful hope' (*Ancrene Wisse*, 4.1320–01) ['spiritual gladness and the consolation of glad hope' (p. 133)] — to prevent *acedia* taking hold, Charles prescribes work that is much more manual. What emerges from Charles' treatment of *acedia* in the Harleian sequence is not a likeness to the spiritual ideals of the Early Middle Ages, but a harking back to a much older custom.

John Cassian, an early Desert Father who later became the founder of the Abbey of Saint-Victor at Marseille, describes the effects of *acedie* — a generalised abjection or 'weariness or distress of the heart' ('taedium sive anxietatem cordis') — in Book 10 of the *Institutes of the Monastic Life* (ll. 420–429).[96] He explains that this vice is especially dangerous to solitaries: when it has taken hold of some unhappy hermit, it produces 'dislike of the place [and] disgust with the cell' (*horrorem loci, fastidium cellae*, 2). Sounding much like Charles d'Orléans so many centuries later, the monk afflicted by *acedia*:

> often groans because he can do no good while he stays there, and complains and sighs because he can bear no spiritual fruit […]; he complains that he is cut off from spiritual gain, and is of no use in the place […]. He talks too about some dutiful and religious offices; […] that it would be a real work of piety to ['govern others and be useful to a great number of people']; and that he ought piously to devote his time to these things instead of staying uselessly and with no profit in his cell. (2)

In a metaphorical connection to the prison cell, Cassian extols Paul the Apostle (the renowned prisoner) who laboured with his own hands as a remedy to the idleness associated with *acedia*. In the Acts of the Apostles, Cassian explains, Paul not only taught this, but actually practised it himself (17), that he might set an example of good work (10). This material labour is shown not only to be beneficial on a personal level (an idle person will always be spiritually poor (21)), but also to have a tangible effect on the community: the labourer will not be a burden to others (9) because by working with his hands, he produce something useful (17).

Like Cassian, Charles d'Orléans prioritises manual labour over spiritual work, and he shows a deep-set desire to labour for communal profit. The speaker of *Fortunes Stabilnes* even posits his roundels as edifying 'swettist mete' (l. 3120) which are painstakingly crafted

[93] *OED*, s. n. *acedia*.

[94] See Jean Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God: A Study of Monastic Culture*, trans. by C. Misrahi (New York: Fordham University Press, 1982), p. 67.

[95] Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, p. 67.

[96] John Cassian, *Institutes*, in 'Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers', ed. and trans. by Philip Schaff and Henry Wace (New York: Christian Literature Publishing, 1894), revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/350710.htm> [accessed 01/03/21], X.i. All further English quotations are to this edition, with chapter numbers (which correspond to the Latin original) given in the text. For the Latin original, see John Cassian, *De institutis coenobiorum et de octo principalium uitiorum remediis*, Library of Latin Texts: Series A, Clavis Patrum Latinorum, 513 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010).

for other people: 'with laboure y haue it for hem bought' (l. 3132). It is in the same vein that Usk describes his *Testament* as 'swetande travayle' (Pr. 10), and Ashby describes the 'labour of thys werk' of the *Complaint* (l. 318). While they all posit conceits that appear to militate against *acedia*, however, Charles d'Orléans, Usk and Ashby alike appear unable to truly escape a depressed state. In a way that could feed into the contemporary climate in which the nature of labour itself is so important, these late-medieval prison writers are particularly dogged by a disbelief in their ability to contribute and produce in a way that they deem satisfactory. 'As he that no thing may profite, | What do y now but wayle and crie?' (ll. 4249–50, 4255–56, 4261–62), bemoans the speaker of *Fortunes Stabilnes*. Usk, too, complains of the unfruitful 'wytless, thoughtful, syghtlesse lokyng' that he 'endure[s] in this derke prisone, caytisned fro frendshippe and acquayntaunce' (1.1.11–12) in a way which articulates Ashby's relapse into sorrow at the end of the *Complaint in the Fleet*. While Ashby, Usk and Charles d'Orléans all try to justify their imprisonment, they also demonstrate what is at stake if a prisoner is unable to partake in any kind of value system — metaphorical or material — that will make sense of their confinement.

In conclusion, the wide range of sources in this article have been employed to suggest, firstly, that there is a relationship between the discourses of spiritual and secular imprisonment in the Middle Ages. Secondly, the broad comparison between the High and the Late Middle Ages has demonstrated that a positive and spiritual philosophy of the cell (in which imprisonment is divinely justified and beneficial both to the prisoner and the Christian community at large) is widely appreciated in early-medieval texts, but that this is affected by the changed circumstances of the late-fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. In late-medieval writing in confinement, wider social values — one of which is work and a material participation in the community — is felt prominently. The late-medieval prison writers Ashby, Usk and Charles D'Orléans draw on many different philosophies of confinement. Despite this, the complicated nature of imprisonment in their texts suggests that, although aware, they remain ultimately unconvinced by any of the precedents which have the potential to validate their confinement.

Sigvatr's Tears: The Phenomenology of Emotion in Skaldic Verse

Gareth Lloyd Evans

Abstract

This article suggests that skaldic verse — as a direct result of its famously complex formal features — is able to encode and convey complex, dynamic emotional interiorities in ways that move beyond the possibilities of saga prose. Through a close analysis of Sigvatr Þórðarson's *lausavísa* 20 that is attuned to the temporal nature of reading, it is shown that common features of skaldic poetics — including dislocated syntax, tmesis, and obscure and ambiguous diction — can function to stage the unfolding of emotion through time and to evoke the oscillation between, and synthesis of, varied emotional states.

Sigvatr, Skaldic Verse and Old Norse Emotion

In 1030, the poet Sigvatr Þórðarson hears that his beloved lord and patron, Ólafr *inn digri* (later *inn helgi*) Haraldsson, has fallen at the battle of Stiklarstaðir.[1] Like any good retainer, Sigvatr has feared his lord's death.[2] His reaction to the news of Óláfr's fall is narrated in *Heimskringla* and *Flateyjarbók* and, in both texts, we are given a series of *lausavísur* that express his emotional response.[3] These *lausavísur* have occasioned a number of comments acknowledging the poignancy of their emotional expression. The latest editor of the verses,

[1] I would like to thank Matthew Townend, Kate Heslop and the two anonymous reviewers for *Leeds Medieval Studies* for their comments on earlier drafts of this article. I have adopted many — although not all — of their suggestions. Any errors and limitations that remain are of course my own. This article is dedicated to Heather O'Donoghue. For a concise overview of Sigvatr's life and poetry, see Russell Poole, 'Sigvatr Þórðarson', in *Reallexikon der Germanischen Altertumskunde*, ed. by Heinrich Beck, Dieter Geuenich, and Heiko Steuer (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005), XXVIII, 382–86.

[2] In his *Vestrfaravísur* of a few years prior to the fall of Óláfr (*c.* 1025–1027), Sigvatr explicitly stated that 'konungs dauð munk kvíða' [I will dread the death of the king]. See Sigvatr Þórðarson, '*Vestrfararvísur* 3', ed. by Judith Jesch, in *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 1: From Mythical Times to c. 1035*, ed. by Diana Whaley, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages, 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), pp. 619–21 (p. 619).

[3] Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla II*, ed. by Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, Íslenzk fornrit, 27 (Reykjavik: Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag, 1945), pp. 441–42; Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla III*, ed. by Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, Íslenzk fornrit, 28 (Reykjavík: Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag, 1951), pp. 14–18. *Flateryjarbok: En samling af norske konge-sagaer med indskudte mindre fortællinger om begivenheder i og udenfor Norge samt annaler*, ed. by C. R. Unger and Guðbrandur Vigfússon, 3 vols (Christiania: Malling, 1860–68), II 371–72.

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R. D. Fulk, speaks of the 'inconsolable grief' that Sigvatr expresses;[4] Diana Whaley writes of the 'intense emotional responses' that these stanzas evidence;[5] Jón Skaptason suggests that the poems 'bear witness to genuine grief';[6] Judith Jesch refers to these verses by Sigvatr as 'remarkably personal stanzas expressing his grief at the death of King Óláfr' and has suggested that they 'reveal a deeply-felt and very personal grief';[7] Russell Poole refers to them as 'very eloquent and touching memorial *lausavísur*';[8] and Gabriel Turville-Petre has noted that these stanzas are 'rich in personal feeling'.[9] There is no shortage of scholars *identifying* the emotional content of these verses.

Such identifications are unsurprising given that skaldic verse has often been recognised as a vehicle for emotional expression, particularly when considered in comparison with the prose of much prosimetrical saga narrative.[10] The vast majority of discussions of emotion in skaldic verse do not go beyond the mere *identification* of verse as a vehicle for feeling, however, and even works that explicitly take Old Norse emotion as their focus do not fully engage with skaldic verse and so do not adequately explore how its peculiar literary features might contribute to our understanding of the staging of emotion in Old Norse verse. The most substantial contribution to the study of emotion in Old Norse literature has come in the form of Sif Rikhardsdottir's recent monograph, *Emotion in Old Norse Literature*.[11] Her work is vitally important in exploring how emotion is staged in Old Norse literature in general, but she explicitly avoids exploration of skaldic verse.[12] Likewise, Christopher Crocker's recent chapter on 'Emotions' in *The Routledge Research Companion to The Medieval Icelandic Sagas* is indicative in that it does not even mention skaldic verse and so does not entertain how verse

4 R. D. Fulk, '(Introduction to) Sigvatr Þórðarson, *Lausavísur*', in *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 1: From Mythical Times to c. 1035*, ed. by Diana Whaley, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), pp. 698–99 (p. 698).

5 Diana Whaley, 'Skalds and Situational Verses in *Heimskringla*', in *Snorri Sturluson: Kolloquium anläßlich der 750. Wiederkehr seines Todestages*, ed. by Alois Wolf (Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 1993), pp. 245–66 (p. 250).

6 Jón Skaptason, 'Material for an Edition and Translation of the Poems of Sigvat Þórðarson, Skáld' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, State University of New York, Stony Brook, 1983), p. 45.

7 Judith Jesch, '(Biography of) Sigvatr Þórðarson', in *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 1: From Mythical Times to c. 1035*, ed. by Diana Whaley, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages, 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), pp. 532–33 (p. 532); Judith Jesch, 'The Once and Future King: History and Memory in Sigvatr's Poetry on Óláfr Haraldsson', in *Along the Oral-Written Continuum: Types of Texts, Relations and their Implications*, ed. by Slavica Ranković, Leidulf Melve, and Else Mundal (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), pp. 103–17 (p. 104).

8 Russell Poole, 'Sighvatr Þórðarson', in *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, ed. by Phillip Pulsiano and Kirsten Wolf (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), pp. 580–81 (p. 580). See also: Russell Poole, 'Sigvatr Þórðarson', p. 384.

9 E. O. G. Turville-Petre, *Scaldic Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 77.

10 Heather O'Donoghue, *Skaldic Verse and the Poetics of Saga Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Sif Rikhardsdottir, *Emotion in Old Norse Literature: Translations, Voices, Contexts* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2017), esp. p. 20; Peter Foote and David M. Wilson, *The Viking Achievement: The Society and Culture of Early Medieval Scandinavia* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1970), p. 362; Carol J. Clover, 'Skaldic Sensibility', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, 93 (1978), 63–81 (p. 64); Guðrún Ingólfsdóttir, 'Um hlutverk vísna í Íslendinga sögum', *Skáldskaparmál*, 1 (1990), 226–40 (pp. 227–28, 231); Margaret Clunies Ross, *A History of Old Norse Poetry and Poetics* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2005), pp. 66–67; Vésteinn Olason, *Dialogues with the Viking Age: Narration and Representation in the Sagas of Icelanders*, trans. by Andrew Wawn (Reykjavk: Heimskringla, 1998), pp. 40 and 131; Roberta Frank, *Old Norse Court Poetry: The Dróttkvætt Stanza* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), p. 24.

11 Sif Rikhardsdottir, *Emotion in Old Norse Literature*.

12 Sif Rikhardsdottir, *Emotion in Old Norse Literature*, pp. 4–5. For further discussion of this work's contribution to the field of Old Norse emotion studies, see my review of the book in *Speculum*, 94 (2019), 1217–19.

constructs emotional interiorities.[13] While the study of emotion in Old Norse literature is now becoming relatively common, there is a significant lack of work on emotion in skaldic verse and, in particular, on how the complex verse form favoured by skaldic poets lends itself to emotional representation.[14]

Merely identifying skaldic verses as vehicles for emotion is akin to the simplifying, homogenising function of so-called 'emotion words' as described by much recent emotion theory (and the use of which we sometimes see in action in saga prose). Just as to give an emotion a convenient categorical label — love, hatred, grief, and so on — simplifies emotional complexity, to say that skaldic verse is 'emotional' without further analysis simplifies its literary complexity and function. William Reddy, for example, claims that each emotion that any one of us feels is '*sui generis*' and suggests that '[s]imple emotion labels are oversimplifications.'[15] Barbara H. Rosenwein and Riccardo Cristiani also point to the limitations of pigeon-holing emotions into single-word expressions.[16] Jerome Kagan, too, writes of 'the inadequacy of most languages to capture' human emotions,[17] suggesting that while '[f]eelings are dynamic […] semantic concepts freeze-frame these states into static categories'.[18] This last quotation from Kagan also highlights the temporal, ongoing nature of emotional states, and draws on the idea of emotion as a 'flow', a conceptualisation which suggests that emotion is better viewed as process than isolated object or discrete event.[19] Through a close analysis of a skaldic stanza, I here want to demonstrate *how* skaldic poets represent dynamic emotions, and also that an analysis of skaldic verse indicates — implicitly — that skaldic poets seem to have held an understanding of emotion as dynamic process. While dynamic emotions and their literary staging have been examined in Old English poetry, most notably by Antonina Harbus, Old Norse skaldic verse has not yet been explored as a form congenial to the representation of emotions in flux.[20] It is in this respect that this article seeks to make its contribution.

In many ways, skaldic verse goes further in exploring complex emotional interiorities than scholars who would simply *identify* Old Norse emotions, seemingly pre-empting Kagan's appeal that we should 'agree to a moratorium on the use of single words, such as *fear*, *anger*,

[13] Christopher Crocker, 'Emotions', in *The Routledge Research Companion to the Medieval Icelandic Sagas*, ed. by Ármann Jakobsson and Sverrir Jakobsson (London: Routledge, 2017), pp. 240–52.

[14] A partial exception to this general rule may be found in the discussions of emotion in *Sonatorrek*. See, for example: Joseph Harris, 'Sacrifice and Guilt in *Sonatorrek*', in *Studien zum Altgermanischen: Festschrift für Heinrich Bech*, ed. by Heiko Uecker (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1994), pp. 173–96; Sif Rikhardsdottir, 'Voice and Vocalisation: *Sonatorrek* and Eddic Poetry', in *Emotion in Old Norse Literature*, pp. 79–115; Pete Sandberg, '*Sonatorrek*: Egill Skallagrímsson's Critique of Death', *Saga-Book of the Viking Society for Northern Research*, 43 (2019), 103–24; and William Sayers, 'Guilt, Grief, Grievance, and the Encrypted Name in Egill Skallagrímsson's *Sonatorrek*', *Scandinavian Studies*, 92 (2020), 229–46.

[15] William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 102.

[16] Barbara H. Rosenwein and Riccardo Cristiani, *What is the History of Emotions?* (Cambridge: Polity, 2018), p. 119.

[17] Jerome Kagan, *What is Emotion? History, Measures, and Meanings* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 9.

[18] Kagan, *What is Emotion?*, p. 119. See also Jan Plamper's discussion of Kagan's approach to emotion in: Jan Plamper, *The History of Emotions: An Introduction*, trans. by Keith Tribe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 277.

[19] For the idea of emotion as flow, see Karl G. Heider, *Landscapes of Emotion: Mapping Three Cultures of Emotion in Indonesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 6–9. Heider relies perhaps too heavily on the flawed work of Paul Ekman, but his insight of emotion as 'flow' is an important one. Heider's work is discussed in Jan Plamper, *The History of Emotions*, pp. 141–46.

[20] Antonina Harbus, *Cognitive Approaches to Old English Poetry* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2012) — see esp. ch. 7.

joy, and *sad*, and write about emotional processes with full sentences rather than ambiguous naked concepts'.[21] Indeed, it is my contention that skaldic verse — as a direct result of its famously complex formal features — is able to encode and convey complex, dynamic emotional interiorities in ways that move beyond the possibilities of prose.[22]

Interpreting Skaldic Verse in Time

Before I continue on to primary analysis, it is necessary to consider ideas of the temporal nature of literary interpretation as this is fundamental to skaldic verse's mode of emotional representation. Here, in focussing on the temporal experience of interpreting Old Norse literature, I take my lead from Heather O'Donoghue. In her most recent monograph, *Narrative in the Icelandic Family Saga: Meanings of Time in Old Norse Literature*, O'Donoghue produces a masterful analysis of time in the sagas of Icelanders, not only of how time is represented within *Íslendingasaga* narrative but also — and of most relevance to my analysis here — of the audience's temporal experience of progressing through saga prose.[23] Drawing on Augustine's discussion of the paradox of time and Paul Ricoeur's notion of the 'double temporality' of narrative, O'Donoghue suggests that 'at the same time as viewing the text from the *totum simul* perspective, we also live through its narrative time'.[24] She moreover argues that, '[w]e are experiencing as we read or listen a sort of recreation of Augustine's human, impossible-to-define time — it's rather like following the ever-moving dot on a karaoke screen.'[25] The karaoke dot analogy is ingenious and captures perfectly the audience's constantly moving, dynamic focus, as they move from one narrative moment in saga prose to the next, with the current present continually receding into the now-remembered past and the audience moving forward into an as-yet-unknown-but-nevertheless-anticipated future that itself will shortly become the present moment of attention and subsequently the known past. Through this mode of analysis, O'Donoghue is able to discuss the literary effects of unfolding narrative with precision and to theorise an audience's phenomenological interaction with saga narrative, thereby making a significant contribution to our understanding of saga poetics. But O'Donoghue's analysis of temporal unfolding focuses on saga prose and — while she has considered the temporal effects that the inclusion of skaldic verse can have on the pacing of saga narrative — she has not explicitly considered the phenomenological and temporal experience of interpreting skaldic verse itself.[26] Here, I consider the phenomenological

[21] Kagan, *What is Emotion?*, p. 216. This approach also has resonances with that of Stephanie Downes and Stephanie Trigg who 'regard literary and dramatic texts as giving powerful form to emotions and feeling, as finding alternative ways of exploring affective states without merely naming them': 'Facing Up to the History of Emotions', *postmedieval*, 8 (2017), 3–11 (p. 8).

[22] For comments suggesting that skalds were fully aware of the stylistic effects that they produced through manipulation of the relatively free syntactical structures enabled by *dróttkvætt*, see: Hans Kuhn, 'Die Dróttkvættstrophe als Kunstwerk', in *Festschrift für Konstantin Reichardt*, ed. by Cristian Gellinek (Bern and Munich: Francke, 1969), pp. 63–72 (p. 72); Peter Hallberg, *Old Icelandic Poetry: Eddic Lay and Skaldic Verse* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), p. 20.

[23] Heather O'Donoghue, *Narrative in the Icelandic Family Saga: Meanings of Time in Old Norse Literature* (London: Bloomsbury, 2021).

[24] O'Donoghue, *Narrative in the Icelandic Family Saga*, p. 11.

[25] O'Donoghue, *Narrative in the Icelandic Family Saga*, p. 11.

[26] O'Donoghue, *Skaldic Verse and the Poetics of Saga Narrative*, p. 6; O'Donoghue, *Narrative in the Icelandic Family Saga*, p. 95. For similar considerations of incorporated verses' effect on narrative pacing, see Hallvard Magerøy, 'Skaldestrofer som retardasjonsmiddel i islendingesogene', in *Sjötíu ritgerðir helgaðar Jakobi Benediktssyni 20 júlí 1977*, ed. by Einar G. Pétursson and Jónas Kristjánsson, 2 vols (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar,

experience of reading or hearing skaldic verse, and suggest that an interpretation attuned to the temporal unfolding of skaldic poetry enables us to better understand the means by which skaldic artistry can construct and modulate emotion.

Skaldic verse is particularly appropriate to investigate in terms of how its appreciation is conditioned by the fundamentally temporal nature of the reading or listening process given that there is evidence that medieval Icelanders conceived of skaldic verse as a form intimately associated with time. *Vatnsdœla saga*, for example, recounts an episode that suggests that verses may have been recited according to a precise pace and that a verse could be used as a recognizable unit of time.[27] Moreover, although the poem under discussion in this article is not a *drápa*, poetic terms for the elements of the *drápa*, as Margaret Clunies Ross has noted, 'lay stress on time intervals': the word for a refrain, *stef*, literally means a 'fixed period of time', while *stefjamél*, means 'an interval of time between refrains'.[28] Both terms reinforce the idea that skaldic verse is understood as a temporal art – or, to use Lee Hollander's term, as one of the 'time-arts'.[29] My concern in this article with the phenomenological experience of reading or listening has clear affinities with Reuben A. Brower's method of 'reading in slow motion', in which he advocates 'slowing down the process of reading to observe what is happening, in order to attend very closely to the words, their uses, and their meanings' and also Stanley Fish's approach in 'Literature in the Reader', in which his method is to '*slow down* the reading experience so that "events" one does not notice in normal time, but which do occur, are brought before our analytical attentions'.[30] Fish, in particular, emphasizes the importance of paying attention to the '*temporal* flow of the reading experience'.[31] By slowing down — and critically reconstructing — the experience of interacting with a text in time we can make explicit the near-automatic interpretative moves that take place in a reader or listener's mind and so can consider how these mental processes condition our emotional experience of, and response to, a text.[32] It is this that I here undertake for a single skaldic stanza.

1977), II, 586–99 (p. 588); Bjarne Fidjestøl, 'Skaldenstrophen in der Sagaprosa: Bemerkungen zum Verhältnis zwischen Prosa und Poesie in der Heimskringla', in *Snorri Sturluson: Kolloquium anläßlich der 750. Wiederkehr seines Todestages*, ed. by Alois Wolf (Tuebingen: Gunter Narr, 1993), pp. 77–98 (p. 83); and Vésteinn Ólason, *Dialogues with the Viking Age*, p. 125. For more general discussion of the temporal nature of reading, and the phenomenological effects that this can produce, see: Wolfgang Iser, 'The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach', in *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), pp. 274–94; Roman Ingarden, *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art*, trans. by Ruth Ann Crowley and Kenneth R. Olson (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), esp. ch. 2 (pp. 94–145); Paul B. Armstrong, *How Literature Plays with the Brain: The Neuroscience of Reading and Art* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), esp. ch. 4 (pp. 91–130); and Stanley Fish, 'Literature in the Reader: Affective Stylistics', *New Literary History*, 2 (1970), 123–62.

27 *Vatnsdœla saga*, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson, Íslenzk fornrit, 8 (Reykjavík: Híð Íslenzka Fornritafélag, 1939), p. 68. The relevant scene is quoted in, and discussed by, Kari Ellen Gade, *The Structure of Old Norse Dróttkvætt Poetry* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), pp. 26–27 and 226.

28 Clunies Ross, A *History of Old Norse Poetry and Poetics*, pp. 36–37.

29 Lee M. Hollander, *The Skalds: A Selection of their Poems* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1945), p. 8.

30 Reuben A. Brower, 'Reading in Slow Motion', in *In Defense of Reading: A Reader's Approach to Literary Criticism*, ed. by Reuben A. Brower and Richard Poirier (New York, NY: Dutton, 1962), pp. 3–21 (p. 4); Fish, 'Literature in the Reader', p. 128.

31 Fish, 'Literature in the Reader', p. 128.

32 Throughout my discussion of the effects of skaldic verse on its audiences, I have used the somewhat ungainly phrase 'reader or listener'. I have adopted this phrasing to acknowledge skaldic verse's varied modes of reception — now, at its time of composition, and its time(s) of transmission — and also to suggest that the phenomenological arguments about the interpretation of skaldic verse that I develop in this article can be applied equally to verses that are read and those that are heard.

Sigvatr's *Lausavisa* 20

The features of skaldic verse that I here want to focus upon and which I suggest are able to encode complex and dynamic emotional states are largely untranslatable and can only be appreciated through an analysis of the text in the original Old Norse. This is partly as a result of the 'multiplicity of interpretative options' that my chosen stanza — like many others in the same mode — presents to its readers or listeners, but also because the often convoluted syntactical relationships between words and phrases, while permissible in a skaldic stanza, cannot be represented adequately in modern English while maintaining an analogous literary effect.[33] Giving a single translation for many skaldic verses thus imposes stasis upon poetry that — in the original — is dynamic and shifting. Providing a translation, then, is inimical to the argument I seek to make. But, with this caveat in mind, I here give Fulk's critical text of Sigvatr's *lausavísa* 20,[34] and — for the sake of comprehensibility — his rendering of the verse into modern English.

> Fúss læzk maðr, ef missir
> meyjar faðms, at deyja;
> -keypt es ǫ́st, ef eptir,
> of-, látinn skal gráta.
> En fullhugi fellir
> flóttstyggr, sás varð dróttin,
> várt torrek lízk verra,
> vígtǫ́r, konungs ǫ́rum.[35]
>
> A man claims he is ready to die if he misses the embrace of a maiden; love is too dearly bought if one must weep for the departed. But the flight-shunning man full of courage who has lost his lord sheds slaying-tears; our grievous loss seems worse to the servants of the king.[36]

The stanza — in translation, at least — appears quite straightforward. Sigvatr compares the emotion felt by a grieving man (who expresses his loss through weeping) to his own grief at the loss of his lord, which prompts the shedding of his own 'slaying-tears' (a compound to which I shall return shortly); Sigvatr's weighing up of the griefs emphasises that the loss of the king is felt as greater than the loss of a woman.[37] What follows is a close reading of the stanza that seeks to draw out and emphasise its emotional content, largely following the order in which ideas and words are presented to us in the verse. The stanza will thus be examined

[33] Whaley, 'Editorial methodology', *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 1: From Mythical Times to c. 1035*, ed. by Diana Whaley, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages, 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), pp. xxx–xxxv (p. xxxiv).

[34] The *lausavísa* is numbered 20 in the Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages series. It is numbered 22 in Finnur Jónsson (ed.), *Den Norsk-Islandske skjaldedigtning*, 4 vols (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1908–1915), B.I, 251. This verse is found in 18 manuscript witness (12 parchment, 6 paper) and there are thus a number a textual variants; I discuss these variants where relevant in the course of my analysis.

[35] Sigvatr Þórðarson, 'Lausavísur 20', ed. by R. D. Fulk, in *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 1: From Mythical Times to c. 1035*, ed. by Diana Whaley, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), pp. 725–26 (p. 725).

[36] Trans. by R. D. Fulk: 'Lausavísur 20', in *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 1*, p. 725.

[37] The prose context given in *Heimskringla* guides such a reading, although the basic situation is inherent in the stanza itself. Before this verse is spoken by Sigvatr, we are told that: 'Sigvatr gekk einn dag um þorp nǫkkut ok heyrði, at einn hverr húsbóndi veinaði mjǫk, er hann hafði misst konu sinnar, barði á brjóst sér ok reif klæði af sér, grét mjǫk, segir, at hann vildi gjarna deyja' (*Heimskringla III*, p. 15) [Sigvatr walked one day through a certain village and heard that some husband wailed loudly because he had lost his wife, beat his breast and tore

in the same order that — phenomenologically speaking — a reader or listener experiences it upon their first encounter with the text: this is essential for exploring how the verse represents emotions in flux and stages the change of emotions over time.

The First *Helmingr*

The more dazzling emotional representation is found in the second *helmingr*, but the entire verse is worthy of close analysis. Beginning with the first two lines of the first *helmingr*, we encounter the suggestion that:

> Fúss lækz maðr, ef missir
> meyjar faðms, at deyja.
>
> A man claims himself to be eager — if he misses a maiden's embrace — to die.[38]

The order in which we as readers or listeners receive these ideas conditions our affective response. We start with the emotional state of eagerness ascribed to an unnamed man. The state of eagerness is emphasised through the placement of the adjective *fúss* at the very beginning of the line; the capaciousness and indeterminacy of the eagerness is maintained when, two words later, we are then introduced to the subject modified by this adjective — *maðr* — translated above as 'man', but strictly speaking merely meaning 'person'. We begin this stanza, then, with the reader or listener's emotions being aroused, but without — temporarily at least — the eagerness or the desire introduced being given a target.[39] In this way, the stanza opens by signalling — and thus priming the reader or listener for — its emotional content but it momentarily keeps the reader or listener in a state of anticipation until the focus of this desire is revealed.

This revelation is delayed, however, by the incorporation of a sub-clause: *ef missir meyjar faðms* (if [he] misses the embrace of a maiden). This sub-clause introduces — with the use of *missir* — the idea of the loss of a person and so begins to narrow the hitherto unspecified emotional eagerness of the first clause.[40] The use of the conditional conjunction *ef* indicates that the emotional state being described is dependent upon this loss. The loss referenced — *meyjar faðms* (a maiden's embrace), metonymically functioning for the loss of the maiden herself — not only introduces the idea of interpersonal loss that recurs throughout the stanza, but also encourages us to read an element of denigration into this reference. In much Old Norse literature, men's sexual desire for, and activity with, women is considered a threat to masculine status (especially when contrasted to martial activity and homosocial bonds);[41] this idea seems to be drawn upon here in the particular focus on the loss of the woman's *embrace*,

his clothes from himself, says that he eagerly wanted to die].

38 This translation — unlike Fulk's above — attempts to maintain the effect of the parenthetical clause.

39 Here, we might draw links to the Schachter-Singer model of emotional arousal, in which it is possible to experience a generalised emotional arousal that takes on a specific emotional meaning only when there is an external context that determines the emotional valence and tone of the arousal. See Plamper, *The History of Emotions*, pp. 202–03.

40 While the saga prose encourages us to read the loss of the maiden's embrace as metonymic for her death, the stanza on its own does not explicitly suggest that the woman has died. It would also be possible, for example, to read a type of courtly lovesickness into the idea that the loss of a maiden's embrace causes emotional pain strong enough to produce desire for one's own death.

41 Gareth Lloyd Evans, *Men and Masculinities in the Sagas of Icelanders* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019),

rather than the woman herself, consigning the significance of this relationship to the physical realm alone.

Following this sub-clause we learn what it is that the man is eager to do as a result of the loss of the maiden's embrace — *at deyja* (to die) — and with this clarification the state of eagerness that opens the first line is given its definitive focus. We now have the completion of the stanza's first coherent emotional states: a desire for the death of the self, prompted by the loss of a loved one (on the part of the *maðr*), and also — implicitly — a distaste for the man's particular emotional response and its trigger, as suggested by the phrasing *meyjar faðms*.

Thus far, while the opening of the first *helmingr* indicates the stanza's concern with emotional expression, and the manipulation of word and clause order to condition this emotional response, it does not yet move beyond the possibilities of emotional representation afforded by prose. The second half of this first *helmingr*, however, begins to demonstrate the possibilities for emotional expression peculiar to skaldic poetry. In Old Norse, these two lines run thus:

> -keypt es ǫ́st, ef eptir,
> of-, látinn skal gráta.

Here we seem to be told — in Fulk's translation, at least — that 'love is too dearly bought if one must weep for the departed'. But such a translation obscures the complexity of the syntax, which must be understood as unfolding temporally through the process of reading or listening to be appreciated fully; a single translation also precludes the possibility of multiple, shifting interpretations. The half- *helmingr* begins with the idea that love comes at a price: *keypt es ǫ́st* (bought is love). At this point, it is unclear exactly what that price might be or whether this price is acceptable (although the content of the first half- *helmingr* might make us inclined to assume that the price will be regarded as too great). The next clause, beginning *ef eptir* (if for/if afterwards), establishes a conditional relationship: that love comes at a price *if* a condition (to be revealed in the next line) is met. The next line begins — at least in the standard edition of the skaldic corpus — with the prefix *of-* (excessively/overly/too much), which is taken, by the editor of this stanza for the Skaldic Poetry Project, R. D. Fulk, to form a compound with - *keypt* by tmesis, leading to *ofkeypt* (too dearly bought).[42] This reading of the formation of the compound by tmesis was also adopted by Finnur Jónsson and subsequently approved of by Jón Skaptason.[43] In this reading then, it is not until the reader or listener comes to the isolated prefix, *of-*, that they can clarify the emotional attitude to love here: not just that it has a price, but that that price is regarded too high.

It must be noted, however, that while Fulk's edition neatly separates off the elements that form the compound *ofkepyt* through the use of hyphens, this typographical convention does not accurately reflect word division as found in the majority of the manuscript witnesses. All manuscripts containing the stanza — with the exception of *Bæjarbók* — have *of* forming

pp. 98–99. See also David Ashurst, 'Male Bedpartners and the "Intimacies of a Wife": *rekkjufélagar* and *vífs rúnar*', in *Masculinities in Old Norse Literature*, ed. by Gareth Lloyd Evans and Jessica Clare Hancock (Cambridge: Brewer, 2020), pp. 183–202.

[42] Tmesis is a recognised device in skaldic poetics. Snorri possibly used the term *atriðsklauf* to refer to tmesis although this is not certain — see Snorri Sturluson, *Edda: Háttatal*, ed. by Anthony Faulkes (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2007), pp. 8 and 100. See also: Clunies Ross, *A History of Old Norse Poetry and Poetics*, pp. 110–11; and Faulkes, *Poetical Inspiration in Old Norse and Old English Poetry* (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1997), pp. 17 and 20.

[43] Finnur Jónsson (ed.), *Den Norsk-Islandske skjaldedigtning*, B.I, 251; Jón Skaptason, 'Material for an Edition and

a compound with the following word, *látinn*, giving *oflátinn*.[44] This does not preclude the possibility of the formation of *ofkeypt* by tmesis – as Anthony Faulkes has shown, transference of the first part of a compound to form a new compound with another word in spite of written word division is entirely permissible in skaldic poetry — but it might give us pause.[45] In a reading that accepts the formation of *ofkeypt* by tmesis, the reader or listener must mentally separate parts of a word and then rearrange them, a fact that points to the instability of any interpretation of this text. That the compound *ofkeypt* must be formed by tmesis through the interpretative action of the reader or listener means that two linked but nevertheless separate attitudes to love are possible here: 1) that love comes at a price, and 2) that the price of love is too great. We might also consider that the reader or listener is encouraged to move through these interpretations sequentially: first, to understand that love has a price and *then*, when reaching the next line, to recalibrate this attitude to one which understands love's price as excessively high. Such 'retrospective syntactical reanalysis' — that depends upon an understanding of reading or listening as a process taking place in and through time — has recently been shown by Eric Weiskott to be in operation in some Old English poems;[46] approaching skaldic poetry with a similar sensitivity to the reader or listener's phenomenological engagement with the text likewise indicates that syntactical reanalysis can reveal interpretative subtleties, and emotional ambivalences and fluctuations, in Old Norse poetry.

The opening of the last line of the first *helmingr*, *of-látinn*, can be treated in a number of ways.[47] *Oflátinn*, taken as a weak masculine compound noun, would mean something along the lines of 'the ostentatious/gaudy person'[48] (in which case it refers to the lamenting man) or, alternatively, taken as a past participle, it can mean 'the much lamented'.[49] If, however, we accept that the *of* of *oflátinn* is to form a compound with *-keypt* by tmesis, then we are left with *látinn* (meaning 'the deceased' or 'the departed').[50] The final two words of this first *helmingr* — *skal gráta* (must weep) — can be treated as unambiguous.

Bringing the various readings of the two lines together, we can see that there are a number of different possible interpretations. If we accept the tmesis of *ofkeypt* then the two lines would mean something like 'love is too dearly bought if one must weep for the departed'. Here, the identity of the *látinn* (departed) is not entirely clear. The context and the first two lines of the stanza may well lead us to assume that it refers specifically to the maiden who

Translation of the Poems of Sigvat Þórðarson, skáld', p. 325.

44 Jón Skaptason, 'Material for an Edition and Translation of the Poems of Sigvat Þórðarson, skáld', p. 325; Fulk (ed.), 'Lausavísur 20', in *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 1*, p. 726.

45 Faulkes, *Poetical Inspiration in Old Norse and Old English Poetry*, p. 20.

46 Eric Weiskott, 'Old English Poetry, Verse by Verse', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 44 (2015), 95–130 (p. 99).

47 It should be noted that since '[i]n general, cliticisation of the definite article does not occur until the thirteenth century' in skaldic verse (see: Kari Ellen Gade, 'Normalisation on Metrical Grounds', in Diana Whaley (ed.), *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 1: From Mythical Times to c. 1035*, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), pp. xlvi–xlviii (p. xlviii)), it is very unlikely that Sigvatr would have intended or expected the construals with *ofláti*. However, as the manuscript evidence (discussed above) indicates, construal with *ofláti* is common in the manuscripts that preserve this verse. So, while for Sigvatr and his immediate audience the readings with *ofláti* would unlikely have occurred to them, it is worth discussing them here as readers and listeners of the verse in later centuries (from the thirteenth century onwards) may have construed the verse as involving an enclitic definite article.

48 Fulk (ed.), 'Lausavísur 20', p. 726; Cleasby-Vigfusson, *s.v.* of-láti; *Lexicon Poeticum* (Svenbjörn Egilsson and Finnur Jónsson), *s.v.* ofláti; *Lexicon Poeticum* (Skaldic Project), *s.v.* ofláti.

49 Cleasby-Vigfusson, *s.v.* of-látinn.

50 Cleasby-Vigfusson, *s.v.* látinn.

has been lost. But if this were the case we would expect the feminine form (*látin*) rather than the masculine form (*látinn*), although it is true that in a minority of manuscripts (Holm. Perg. 1 fol., AM 63 fol^{x}, and AM 47 fol.) the feminine form is found. Given that, at the time of the poem's composition at least, *látinn* and *látin* would not have been homophonous, and that *látinn* occurs in the majority of manuscript witness, it seems that this form should be preferred. If the reading of the masculine form is indeed correct then it is difficult to reconcile this with a specific reference to the lost maiden. It could instead be a reference Sigvatr's lost lord (although its presence in the first *helmingr* makes this reading unlikely given the stanza's narrative trajectory), or — more likely — a generalisation of the situation of loss, with the gendered specifics of the first two lines developing into a universalizing comment upon loss and grief in the third and fourth.

If we do not accept the tmesis, however, then — depending on how we render *oflátinn* — the line would mean something like 'love has a price if the ostentatious one must weep for (his deceased wife)' or 'love has a price if one must weep for the much lamented'. As suggested earlier, however, this attempt to derive a 'correct' translation forces stasis upon a form that — arguably — is dependent for its aesthetic effects upon the ability to encourage the reader or listener to vacillate between different interpretations. Rather than viewing these interpretations as mutually exclusive, we can instead suggest that each has validity and that a reader or listener — during the process of interpretation — moves between them. The alternation between the readings 'love has a price' and 'love is too dearly bought', as suggested, stages an ambivalence over whether love is worth its cost. Similarly, the alternation between reading *oflátinn* as 'the ostentatious one' *or* 'the much lamented', enables a reader or listener's focus to move between the grieving person (through a term which seems here to carry implicit criticism) and the object of their grief, staging the duality of grief: that its objects are both the grieving self and the person who has been lost.

In arguing for the presence of multiple, equally valid interpretations, we could alternatively suggest that the *of* prefix exists in an *apo koinou* relation with both *keypt* and *látinn*.[51] Such an interpretation would be to suggest that a reader or listener could construe *of* with both *keypt* and *látinn* at the same time. Indeed, Roberta Frank suggests that, in such constructions, the shared word should be construed with the different clauses in which it participates 'simultaneously'.[52] However, following Eric Weiskott and in keeping with my stress on the phenomenological interpretation of skaldic verse in this article, I would suggest that we instead construe the different clauses sequentially and so focus on different aspects of the text in turn (thus producing different, sequential emotional responses).[53] In this instance, the argument is that (for the reader or listener) the *of* is *first* to be construed with *keypt*, and *then* with *látinn*. Such a temporally-aware reading enables and allows for the staging of ambivalence to love and the duality of grief.

The Second Helmingr

Now, to move on to the second half of the *lausavísa*:

[51] For discussion of *apo koinou* constructions in skaldic verse, see Roberta Frank, 'Skaldic Verse', in *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature: A Critical Guide*, ed. by Carol J. Clover and John Lindow (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell Univiersity Press, 1985), pp. 157–96, (pp. 168–69).

[52] Frank, 'Skaldic Verse', p. 169.

[53] Weiskott, 'Old English Poetry, Verse by Verse'.

En fullhugi fellir
flóttstyggr, sás varð dróttin,
várt torrek lízk verra,
vígtóʀ, konungs óʀum.

The first thing we encounter is the adversative conjunction — *en* — marking the movement into the second *helmingr* and signalling that the reader or listener is to expect some sort of contrast with the content of the first *helmingr*. As we will see, the opposition constructed, facilitated by the formal and typical division of the stanza into two syntactically-independent *helmingar*, is between an emotional other — the weeping man (who is implicitly derided) in the first *helmingr* and the personal emotion of the poet in the second *helmingr*, which, partially through this contrast, is validated.[54]

Following this, we come to the noun *fullhugi*, translated by Fulk as 'man full of courage'. This is a sensible rendering of the compound: Sveinbjörn Egilsson and Finnur Jónsson's *Lexicon Poeticum* gives 'uforfærdet, modig mand' (a fearless, courageous man) and similarly the Cleasby-Vigfusson dictionary gives 'a full gallant man, a hero without fear or blame'.[55] The compound also seems to be used in this way in a number of other skaldic stanzas.[56] But this is not the only way of construing its meaning. As Daniel Donoghue has noted, when modern day readers encounter a compound word, eye tracking studies have shown that they 'treat the constituents of compounds as if they were separate words' and he also notes that '[m]ore than a few experiments indicate that the semantic processing of a compound follows two pathways simultaneously: one that construes it as a single word […] and the other as two separate words.'[57] Which pathway is preferred dictates the dominant meaning of the compound.[58] Given that there is a space separating the compound's constituent parts in four of the manuscript witnesses,[59] that the compound is not all that common in the skaldic corpus,[60] and that a listener (rather than a reader) will not have a visual guide as to whether the words should be understood as two simplexes or a compound, not all readers or listeners will necessarily have construed the word as meaning 'a man full of courage' (pathway 1) but may instead have considered the relation between the two parts of the word in more detail (pathway 2). We cannot assume that the former of Donoghue's two pathways will be preferred consistently in construing *fullhugi*.

This paragraph, for sake of argument, interprets the compound preferring the latter of the two pathways. The second part of the compound, *hugi*, is the weak form of the strong

[54] See also: Finnbogi Guðmundsson, 'Frá Sighvati skáldi Þórðarsyni', *Andvari*, n. s. 12 (1970), 85–102 (p. 99), where he suggests that in this stanza 'mætast tveir ólíkir heimar' [two different worlds meet], and so draws attention to the contrast set up in this verse; Erin Goeres, *The Poetics of Commemoration: Skaldic Verse and Social Memory, c. 890–1070* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 132, where she also notes the importance of the connection and contrast between the *helmingar*; and Sven Aage Petersen, *Vikinger og vikingeaand: Sighvat Thordssøn og hans skjaldskab* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1946), p. 122, where he notes the movement and comparison set up between griefs in this 'overordentlig smukt opbygget Strofe' [extraordinarily beautifully-constructed stanza].

[55] *Lexicon Poeticum* (Sveinbjörn Egilsson and Finnur Jónsson), *s.v. fullhugi*; Cleasby-Vigfusson, *s.v. full-hugi*.

[56] *Lexicon Poeticum* (Sveinbjörn Egilsson and Finnur Jónsson), *s.v. fullhugi*.

[57] Daniel Donoghue, *How the Anglo Saxons Read Their Poems* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), p. 135.

[58] Donoghue, *How the Anglo Saxons Read Their Poems*, p. 135.

[59] AM 61 fol. (full hugum), AM 325 VII 4º (full huginn), GKS 1005 fol. (full huginn), and AM 45 fol. (fvll hugíN).

[60] *Lexicon Poeticum* (Sveinbjörn Egilsson and Finnur Jónsson), *s.v. fullhugi*.

masculine noun, *hugr*, with which it is used interchangeably in Old Norse sources.[61] *Hugr* has been the focus of much discussion. As Brynja Þorgeirsdóttir has noted, *hugr* encompasses the range of meanings covered by the modern English words ' "feeling" or "emotion" but exceeds those categories by including cognitive qualities, such as intelligence, will, and memory.'[62] This capaciousness makes the term difficult to translate, but also suggests the indeterminacy of the affect being activated in the reader or listener (and, likewise, present in the man being described): just as with *fúss* in the first *helmingr*, we are primed to expect an emotion but its specificity is withheld and so the emotional arousal remains — temporarily — free-floating and undirected. This effect is heightened when we consider the first part of the compound — *full* — which suggests a complexity, a fullness of *hugi*, perhaps even an excess of a for-now-unspecified affect. The non-specificity of *hugi* also allows for the possibility of mixed emotions or emotional blends. Like Brynja, Judy Quinn notes that it is 'difficult to condense the semantic range [of *hugr*] into anything more specific than "intense reactions" ' — which would likewise enable us to read *fullhugi* as priming the reader or listener for intense reaction (and to expect one from the 'man full of *hugr*') — but Quinn also further notes that '[t]he states of mind that constitute the full range of the word *hugr* do, however, seem to be those where cogitation can potentially turn into motivation, with action following' and, similarly, that it seems to be the 'zone where mental reaction prompts physical action'.[63] Thus, not only does the poet's use of *fullhugi*, when understood as being construed via the second of Donoghue's interpretive pathways, prime us to expect an affective response, but it might also encourage a reader or listener to anticipate a physical reaction from this subject.

The verb that follows — *fella*, here in its third-person singular present indicative form, *fellir* — helps us to begin to focus our interpretative efforts. Indeed, much linguistic and neurolinguistic research has indicated that when readers encounter a given verb they pre-emptively predict the verb's object based on information they know about that specific verb.[64] The information gleaned at the verb is dependent upon a reader's prior knowledge of how a verb can be used, in what senses and with which type and range of objects.[65] Knowing how to use a verb — and so how a contemporary reader or listener might have responded to *fellir* in Sigvatr's stanza — depends upon 'knowing its combinatory properties with other words'.[66] For verbs that have more than one sense, verbs often display a bias — known, simply

[61] Cleasby-Vigfusson, *s.v.* hugi.

[62] Brynja Þorgeirsdóttir, 'The Head, the Heart, and the Breast: Bodily Conceptions of Emotion and Cognition in Old Norse Skaldic Poetry', *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia*, 15 (2019), 29–64 (p. 40). The range of referents for *hugr* given by Snorri is testament to the complexity of this concept: see *Edda: Skáldskaparmál*, ed. by Anthony Faulkes (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1998), I, 108. This source is also cited by Brynja in her discussion of the complexity of *hugr* ('The Head, the Heart, and the Breast', p. 40).

[63] Judy Quinn, 'The "Wind of the Giantess": Snorri Sturluson, Rudolf Meissner, and the Interpretation of Mythological Kennings along Taxonomic Lines', *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia*, 8 (2012), 207–59 (pp. 230–31 and 254).

[64] Gerry T. M. Altmann and Yuki Kamide, 'Incremental Interpretation at Verbs: Restricting the Domain of Subsequent Reference', *Cognition*, 73 (1999), 247–64 (p. 247). Similarly, see Todd R. Feretti, Ken MacRae, and Andrea Hatherell, 'Integrating Verbs, Situation Schemas, and Thematic Role Concepts', *Journal of Memory and Language*, 44 (2001), 516–47 (esp. p. 537), and also Michael P. Wilson and Susan M. Garnsey, 'Making Simple Sentences Hard: Verb Bias Effects in Simple Direct Object Sentences', *Journal of Memory and Language*, 60 (2009), 368–92 (p. 369).

[65] Susan M. Garnsey, Neal J. Pearlmutter, Elizabeth Myers, and Melanie A. Lotocky, 'The Contributions of Verb Bias and Plausibility to the Comprehension of Temporarily Ambiguous Sentences', *Journal of Memory and Language*, 37 (1997), 58–93.

[66] Mary Hare, Ken McRae, and Jeffrey Elman, 'Sense and Structure: Meaning as a Determinant of Verb

enough, as 'verb bias' — toward one sense rather than another, and this bias can be affected by the context in which the verb occurs.[67] Such predictions have been shown to operate both in English and in case-marked Germanic languages.[68] In order to ascertain a verb's 'bias', and in particular the 'subcategorization biases for specific senses of verbs', Mary Hare, Ken McRae, and Jeffrey L. Elman suggest the use of corpora.[69] For the analysis of the biases of a verb occurring in skaldic verse, the most appropriate corpus is the database of *The Skaldic Project*.[70] The new *Lexicon Poeticum* associated with this project lists 31 instances of *fella* (in its various forms) in its database.[71] I list these in the appendix, and have separated the instances into different senses; the senses listed are of my devising as the entry for *fella* in the *Lexicon* has not yet been split into senses. I have augmented these with a small number of instances that are currently miscategorised in the new *Lexicon Poeticum* database, as detailed in the appendix. I am only here considering *fella*, and not the related verb *falla* (of which *fella* is the causative form).[72] This approach results in 34 instances of *fella* from the skaldic corpus to be considered in establishing the bias of this verb, i.e. what a reader or listener encountering this verb is likely to infer about its object. Table 1 shows the frequencies of each sense of fella in its 34 instances.[73]

The verbal bias is clearly towards 'to kill' and so, when encountering the verb *fella*, a reader or listener well-versed in skaldic diction is likely to predict that the verb is indicating that someone is going to be killed by the subject (this is the case in nearly two-thirds [22 out of 34] of the examples): that is, *fella* is likely to mean 'to kill' since the verb shows strong bias towards this meaning. A reader or listener may have a secondary prediction that the subject is going to 'destroy' or 'damage' something, given that this sense occurs in over a quarter of the examples listed. It is much less likely that a reader or listener will predict that the subject is merely going to 'attack' the as yet unknown object given the relative rarity of this sense. (It should also be noted that the first three senses listed in the above table do suggest some degree of conceptual overlap in their violent action against their grammatical object; grouping the first three senses listed in the table in this manner would likewise suggest a strong verb bias towards priming the reader or listener to expect violent action [31 out of 34 instances i.e. 91% of cases]. The senses 'to shed (tears)' [2 out of 34 instances] and 'to wrap' [1 out

Subcategorisation Preferences', *Journal of Memory and Language*, 48 (2003), 281–303 (p. 281).

67 Hare, McRae, and Elman, 'Sense and Structure', pp. 282 and 298; Garnsey, Pearlmutter, Myers, and Lotocky, 'The Contributions of Verb Bias and Plausibility to the Comprehension of Temporarily Ambiguous Sentences', p. 60.

68 Yuki Kamide, Christoph Scheepers, and Gerry T. M. Altmann, 'Integration of Syntactic and Semantic Information in Predictive Processing: Cross-Linguistic Evidence from German and English', *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 32.1 (2003), 37–55. For further, and more general, discussions of the how a reader's expectations can be set up (and subverted), see ch. 4. of Armstrong, *How Literature Plays with the Brain*, pp. 91–130. See also, Iser, 'The Reading Process', pp. 278–79; Ingarden, *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art*, esp. p. 103.

69 Hare, McRae, and Elman, 'Sense and Structure', p. 284.

70 The Skaldic Project's database can be accessed at https://skaldic.abdn.ac.uk.

71 The Skaldic Project's *Lexicon Poeticum* can be accessed at https://lexiconpoeticum.org/. It should be noted that the *Lexicon's* data is provisional as it is a work in progress, but it is nevertheless able to provide sufficient data to elucidate verb bias.

72 These are rightly separated, although the *Lexicon Poeticum*, 2nd edn., seems to occasionally elide them within the entry for *fella*: see *Lexicon Poeticum* (Sveinbjörn Egilsson and Finnur Jónsson), *s.v. fella*. For discussion of the verb *falla* and its use to describe the death of warriors in battle (including some usages by Sigvatr), see Judith Jesch, *Ships and Men in the Late Viking Age* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2001), p. 62.

73 In this table, the use of *fella* in Sigvatr's *lausavísa* 20 is categorised under the fourth sense, 'to shed (tears)'.

of 34 instances] are both rare: *fella* does not exhibit bias toward these senses and so it is unlikely that a reader or listener encountering *fellir* would predict that either of these senses are meant.[74]

Table 1: frequency of senses for the verb *fella*

TO KILL	22
TO DESTROY, TO DAMAGE	7
TO ATTACK	2
TO SHED (TEARS)	2
TO WRAP, TO PLEAT	1

In the context of the stanza under discussion here it seems likely that, as a result of the verb bias exhibited by *fellir*, a reader or listener would assume that the *fullhugi* ('man full of *hugr*') is going to take violent action of some kind — in fact, that he is very likely to kill someone.[75] Such an interpretation — and indeed, such a linguistic prediction — is strengthened when we take into account the context of the utterance given that linguistic predictions are conditioned by contextual information.[76] Sigvatr, of course, has just heard that his lord, King Óláfr, has been killed in battle and so it would be a reasonable prediction to assume that he will wish to seek vengeance for his fallen patron. The context here then helps to reinforce the verbal bias toward violent action. Such a prediction is further supported by the previous two words: *en* sets up a contrast with the emotional outpouring of the weeping man in the first *helmingr*, suggesting that Sigvatr will react differently (thus also, at this point, seemingly precluding the sense of 'to shed'), and *fullhugi*, as seen, either suggesting that the subject is brave (and therefore likely to take courageous action), or more broadly suggesting that 'mental reaction' will lead to 'physical action'.[77]

[74] It is also possible that — upon encountering the verb *fellir* — a reader or listener may momentarily mistake it for the masculine noun *fellir* ('slayer'). Such ambiguity would reinforce the reading of the *fullhugi* as likely to take violent action. See *Lexicon Poeticum* (Skaldic Project), *s.v.* fellir *(noun m.)*.

[75] The understanding of the verb's bias toward this meaning, although it has to be critically reconstructed by a modern reader through the use of corpora (as here), would — for a native speaker of Old Norse who was well-versed in skaldic poetics — form part of what Daniel Donoghue has called a kind of 'competence' or 'insider knowledge' that contemporary readers or listeners would have automatically brought to the interpretation of poetry — see Daniel Donoghue, *How the Anglo Saxons Read Their Poems*, p. 8. It is worth noting that a similar analysis is not possible for *fúss* in line 1; the new Lexicon Poeticum suggests that speakers in skaldic verse can be *fúss* for a very wide range of things, and it does not appear that there is clear or coherent association of the adjective with a particular object of desire. Unlike the narrowing of meaning that *fellir* achieves, as argued here, *fuss* — until it is explicitly clarified with a subject and object – evokes a capacious and indeterminate eagerness, as argued above.

[76] Hare, McRae, and Elman, 'Sense and Structure', pp. 282 and 298; Garnsey, Pearlmutter, Myers, and Lotocky, 'The Contributions of Verb Bias and Plausibility to the Comprehension of Temporarily Ambiguous Sentences', p. 60. Also see Lisa Feldman Barrett, *How Emotions are Made: The Secret Life of the Brain* (London: Pan Books, 2018), p. 28.

[77] Quinn, 'The "Wind of the Giantess" ', p. 254.

As well as constituting a linguistic prediction, we can simultaneously view this as an *emotional* prediction: the narrowing of our semantic predictions parallels, and is interdependent with, a narrowing of the range of our emotional expectations. Sif Rikhardsdottir has theorised that our ability to read emotion in literature is dependent upon what she terms the 'horizon of feeling', which 'indicates the pre-established readerly expectations of emotional behaviour'.[78] Sif's argument is that the 'horizon of feeling' sets up expectations for emotional expression based on generic commonplaces, but we might likewise see this 'horizon of feeling' being constructed on a more basic, verbal, level. Jerome Kagan, for example, explicitly links the experience of predicting the unknown ending of a sentence to the brain's tendency to predict emotional states.[79] Similar to Sif's 'horizon of feeling', Kagan introduces the term 'envelope of potential feelings': the range of potential feelings that may be evoked in a given context.[80] Here, once we have reached the end of the first line of the second *helmingr*, the envelope seems to narrow so that the reader or listener is led to expect a violent, retributive, emotional reaction when they encounter *fellir*. That *fellir* is in the present tense also suggests the ongoing nature of the emotional state as experienced within the lyric moment.[81]

The next two lines reinforce such a reading, but also serve to delay the ultimate disambiguation of *fellir*, which — as will be seen — only occurs in the final line of the stanza. After *fellir*, the reader or listener encounters *flótstyggr*, an adjective qualifying *fullhugi*, meaning 'to be flight-shy' i.e. 'brave', 'not one to run from a fight'. This qualification further reinforces the impression gained from the previous line that we can expect violent action from the *fullhugi*, and so strengthens the reader or listener's linguistic and emotional predictions.[82]

Following this, we have two clauses that serve to further delay the progression to the object of *fellir*. The first of these is *sás varð dróttin*, meaning 'that one who has lost his master', further qualifying the context for, and so conditioning our response to, the man in this *helmingr*. Noting that he has lost his lord sets up a link (but also a significant contrast) with the man who has lost the woman's embrace in the first *helmingr*. It also serves to further reinforce our prediction that the 'man full of *hugr*' is likely to take violent, vengeful action as a result of his loss. It is also worth noting that the usage of *varð* in this phrase to mean 'lost' rather 'became' is relatively rare;[83] I do not see that there is any other legitimate way to construe the phrase *sás varð dróttin* than that which has already been given, but the rarity of the sense might well give a reader or listener pause and so further contribute to the delay in apprehending the object of *fellir*.[84]

[78] Sif Rikhardsdottir, *Emotion in Old Norse Literature*, pp. 18-19.

[79] Kagan, *What is Emotion?*, p. 210.

[80] Kagan, *What is Emotion?*, p. 5. See also Feldman Barrett, *How Emotions are Made*, p. 26.

[81] As Ingarden has suggested, 'The present tense is often used […] to describe, for instance, things or people. This gives them a semblance of permanence, of being beyond time, as if they were not subject to change' (*The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art*, p. 125). Also see Annemari Ferreira's discussion of the 'presentness' of skaldic performance in her '*Tíð, Tíðindi*: Skaldic Verse as Performance Event', in *Performing Medieval Text*, ed. by Ardis Butterfield, Henry Hope and Pauline Souleau (Cambridge: Legenda, 2017), pp. 53–69 (esp. p. 57).

[82] In context, where Sigvatr was not present at the battle of Stiklarstaðir and was criticised for this absence (*Heimskringla II*, pp. 358, 362, 442; *Heimskringa III*, pp. 16–17; and *Flateyjarbok*, p. 372), his depiction of himself as *flóttstyggr* may be seen as an implicit rejection of these criticisms. His *lausavísa* 23 functions similarly — see Sigvatr Þórðarson, 'Lausavísur 23', ed. by R. D Fulk, in *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 1: From Mythical Times to c. 1035*, ed. by Diana Whaley, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages, 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), p. 728.

[83] See *Lexicon Poeticum* (Sveinbjörn Egilsson and Finnur Jónsson), *s.v. verða*.

[84] After *dróttin* (accusative) and *dróttinn* (nominative) became homophonous, it would be possible for a listener (but not a reader, of course) to construe the line as *sás varð dróttinn* (that one who became lord), but such a

Next we come to the phrase *várt torrek lízk verra* (our grievous loss seems worse). There are a number of elements to be noted here. The first, perhaps, is the collectivity of the emotional experience suggested: that while the man's grief in the first *helmingr* is constructed as individual, here the grief over the loss of a lord is figured as shared and capacious. The word used to describe the loss itself — *torrek* — is also worthy of comment: usually translated as 'grievous loss', it is unique in the skaldic corpus (although it does occur in prose and in the title of Egill Skallagrímsson's famed *Sonatorrek*). Its rarity in skaldic diction may give the reader or listener pause, causing the loss to be emphasised. We might also note that where the word *torrek* is used in prose, it seems to suggest not just a loss, but in particular a loss that is to be redressed, and so we may gloss *torrek* not simply as 'a grievous loss' but rather 'a grievous cause for redress'.[85] Such a reading would again further reinforce the reader or listener's prediction that the 'man full of *hugr*' in this *helmingr* is going to take violent retribution for the death of his lord. Finally, this phrase also offers the suggestion that this *torrek* is considered worse, presumably than that of the widower in the first *helmingr*, and so — through a hierarchisation of griefs — makes a claim for the primacy of the grief felt as a result of the loss of Óláfr.

It is only now, upon reaching the final line of the stanza, and having been delayed by the two clauses just discussed, that we reach the object of *fellir*. As I have been arguing, the stanza primes us — in multiple ways — to expect that the object will be an enemy on whom Sigvatr wreaks violent vengeance. But this is not at all what we get, and the stanza — I suggest — plays with our expectations to stage a complex emotional state in flux. The object we get is *vígtǫ́r*. Taken literally, the compound means 'slaying tears' or 'killing tears'. Upon encountering it, the reader or listener's first response would be to recalibrate their understanding of *fellir*. The predicted sense of 'to kill', which — as I have argued — the stanza is at pains to condition the reader or listener into expecting, is proved erroneous, and instead must be replaced with the sense 'to shed', as in 'to shed tears'. In terms of O'Donoghue's 'karaoke dot' analogy, the dislocated syntax upon which this effect depends disrupts, momentarily, the dot's onward

reading would be mitigated against by the narrative scenario constructed by the verse. Such a misunderstanding would not have been possible at the time of the poem's composition, at which point *dróttin* and *dróttinn* were not homophonous.

[85] Of the five instances of *torrek* listed by the Dictionary of Old Norse Prose (*s.v.* torrek), four are found in law-codes. In these, *torrek* refers to stolen property for which redress will be sought; Sigvatr's use of *torrek* may thus suggest that he has been 'robbed' of his lord. It may also prompt us to consider whether this verse, like Egill's *Sonatorrek*, 'kemur […] í hefndar stað' (comes to stand in for revenge) that is desired but cannot be achieved (see Hermann Pálsson, 'Fornfræði Egils sögu', *Skírnir*, 168 (1994), 37–72 (p. 67)). The remaining instance of *torrek* is found in *Hálfdanar saga svarta*. Here, Halfdanr is at a Yule feast when all the food and ale disappears from the tables. The king tortures a Saami man, whom the king seemingly believes will be able to tell him what has happened to his feast. The king's son, Haraldr, helps the Saami man escape and on their travels they encounter a nobleman hosting a banquet. The nobleman suggests to Haraldr that 'Furðu mikit torrek lætr faðir þinn sér at, er ek tók vist nǫkkura frá honum í vetr, en ek mun þér þat launa með feginsǫgu' (Your father brought about a greatly grievous loss for himself when I took some provisions from him in the winter, but I will compensate you with happy news) (Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla I*, ed. Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, Íslenzk fornrit, 26 (Reykjavík: Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag, 1941), p. 92). Here, the word *torrek* again seems to be bound up with ideas of seeking redress: the suggestion seems to be that the king treated the theft — a minor loss — as a *torrek*, a grievous loss to be avenged, through his actions aimed at punishing the responsible party. This reading of *torrek* as a loss requiring redress is reinforced by the nobleman's suggestion that he will *launa* (compensate) the son for it. There is also something of a double-edged nature to the nobleman's use of *torrek* here: the king inappropriately treated the minor theft as a *torrek*, but also — through his own death — experiences a truly grievous loss. Also see: Richard North, 'The Pagan Inheritance of Egill's *Sonatorrek*', in *Poetry in the Scandinavian Middle Ages: The Seventh International Saga Conference* (Spoleto, 1988), pp. 289–300 (p. 292). As North notes, the variant form *torræki* also suggests 'a loss not easily redeemed' (p. 292).

bounce. A reader or listener would at this point need to glance or think back to earlier in the stanza to confirm the presence, and reconsider the meaning, of *fellir*: in effect, to stretch the analogy, the karaoke dot of the moment of attention momentarily jumps back to land again on *fellir* before moving onwards.[86] This recalibration of our expectations stages a shift in our emotional response to the stanza and also even a momentary uncertainty over the emotion being constructed. Instead of the simulation of a vengeful wrath as we have been led to expect we instead seem to get — and progress, through uncertainty, to — a profound, and somatically-expressed, grief. The stanza, then, through the delaying of *vígtǫ́r*, stages a complex, dynamic emotional state in which anger turns into, and gives way, to grief — or perhaps, more precisely, stages a dynamic blend of grief *and* anger. It is because of the possibilities of a dislocated skaldic syntax — and the delaying of the verb's object — that the stanza is able to give form to and represent the temporal experience of emotion's dynamism. This, to my mind, is the most dazzling element of the stanza's emotional staging.[87]

The powerful effect of suspense and anticipation that can be produced by syntactical dislocation in skaldic verse has been noted by both medieval and modern commentators. Snorri, for example, discusses the form *langlokur* ('late conclusions') in *Háttatal*, where a sentence that is begun in the opening line of the first *helmingr* of a stanza is not completed until the last line of the second *helmingr*.[88] This is obviously more extreme than the dislocation we have here — in which a verb in the first line of a *helmingr* is not given its object until the last line of the same *helmingr* — but the term *langlokur* is testament to an awareness of the literary effects of syntactical dislocation. The Fourth Grammarian also recognised the rhetorical effects of delayed resolution, listing examples of syntactical dislocation under the figure of *antitheton*.[89] Hallvard Lie also wrote of the 'spesielle estetiske lystfølelse' (special aesthetic pleasure) produced by the late resolution of a clause in the last line of a stanza or *helmingr*.[90] Likewise, he mentions — following Konráð Gíslason — that word order can be manipulated to 'skape sensasjon' (shape sensation) but he does not explore precisely how this is achieved.[91] With specific reference to the *lausavísa* under discussion in this article, O. D. Macrae-Gibson speaks of 'the device of stress by suspension to emphasise […] 'vígtár' '.[92] To my knowledge,

[86] We might anticipate that, if we could carry out an eye-tracking study on a medieval Icelander encountering this stanza in manuscript, we would record, when they first encounter *vígtǫ́r*, a saccade — specifically a regression — back to fixate on *fellir* before moving onwards. See Daniel Donoghue, *How the Anglo-Saxons Read Their Poems*, esp. ch. 4, 'Eye Movement' (pp. 128–54).

[87] The other stanza listed by the Skaldic Project in which *fella* takes the sense of 'to shed', and collocates with *tár*, also evinces a similar delaying of the tears (and so perhaps a manipulation of audience response) — see Oddr kíkinaskáld, '*Poem about Magnús góði* 2', ed. by Kari Ellen Gade, in *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 2: From c. 1035 to c. 1300*, ed. by Kari Ellen Gade, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), p. 33. It is also instructive to note that the Cleasby-Vigfusson dictionary (s.v. *fella, B.II*), indicates that *fella* can be used in metaphorical constructions to denote a dynamic interior state e.g. 'falling in love', 'turning one's mind to something'. The use of *fella* here, then, might also function as a metapoetical recognition that the stanza stages a dynamic emotion.

[88] See Snorri Sturluson, *Edda: Háttatal*, ed. by Faulkes, p. 176.

[89] *The Fourth Grammatical Treatise*, ed. Margaret Clunies Ross and Jonas Wellendorf (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2014), pp. 24–25 and 107.

[90] Hallvard Lie, '*Natur' og 'Unatur' i Skaldekunsten* (Oslo, 1957), p. 33.

[91] Lie, *'Natur' og 'Unatur' i Skaldekunsten*, p. 3. See also Turville-Petre, *Skaldic Poetry*, pp. lx-lxi, where he notes the intentionality behind the effects produced by syntactical dislocation.

[92] O. D. Macrae-Gibson, 'Sagas, Snorri, and the Literary Criticism of Scaldic Verse', in *Úr Dölum til Dala: Guðbrandur Vigfússon Centenary Essays*, ed. by Rory McTurk and Andrew Wawn (Leeds, 1989), pp. 165–86 (p. 167).

this is the only comment published that mentions specifically the delayed placement of *vígtǫ́r* and its effects in this stanza. What is also noticeable here, however, is that the suspense identified is not explored in detail nor is consideration given to how this delay plays with readers' or listeners' expectations and, as a result, their emotions. The dependence of this literary effect upon the delayed grammatical object reinforces the importance of reading or interpreting the words in a skaldic verse in their original order rather than rearranged into an artificial construction of 'prose word order' as is often the case in editions of skaldic verse. Anthony Faulkes, for example, suggests that he 'prefer[s] not to re-order the words [of a skaldic stanza], since […] the word-order not only embodies the structure of the verse but also to a large extent the meaning' and Roberta Frank writes of '[t]he pernicious practice of rearranging the words of a verse in prose order before attempting translation — a habit of modern scholarship that is fatal to the poetry as poetry'.[93] These comments can be built upon by considering the effects produced by the delaying of *vígtǫ́r*: not only is rearrangement into 'prose word order' inimical to original meaning and poetry, but also to an appreciation of a stanza's emotionality.

The potential meanings of the compound *vígtǫ́r*, and how a reader or listener might respond to this word, must also be considered more fully. The compound has been — and can be — understood in a number of ways.[94] Finnur Jónsson understands the word to mean 'tårer over den dræbte' (tears for the slain).[95] Lee M. Hollander likewise suggests 'tears wept over one fallen in battle'.[96] Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, in his edition of *Heimskringla*, glosses the compound as 'tár, sprottið af vígahug' (tears, sprung from the killing-mood), calling to mind the emotional state of *víghugr* associated with Víga-Glúmr of *Víga-Glúms saga*, in which he displays multiple extreme emotional indicia (laughter, paleness, hailstone-sized tears) when he is inclined to kill; this link suggests that Bjarni reads Sigvatr's tears as likewise indicating his intent to kill.[97] Alison Finlay and Anthony Faulkes, in their translation of *Heimskringla* (which is based on Bjarni's edition), similarly give 'fierce tears', with a note suggesting ' "battle tears", i.e. tears of rage shed by a warrior in a murderous mood'.[98] Alternatively, Ernst A. Kock gives 'bitter tårar (blodstårar)' (bitter tears [tears of blood]).[99] Kristen Mills offers a

[93] Faulkes, *Poetical Inspiration in Old Norse and Old English Poetry*, p. 11; Frank, *Old Norse Court Poetry*, p. 11.

[94] For examples and discussion see R. D. Fulk's notes to his edition of the stanza: Sigvatr Þórðarson, 'Lausavísur 20', pp. 725–26. Also see the discussion of different possible readings for this word in Árni Davíð Magnússon's MA thesis 'Sem hagl er höfðingjans tár: Blóðrauð hagltár íslenskra miðaldabókmennta' (Háskóli Íslands, 2020), p. 21.

[95] Finnur Jónsson (ed.), *Den Norsk-Islandske skjaldedigtning*, B.I, 251.

[96] Lee M. Hollander, 'Sigvatr Thordson and his Poetry', *Scandinavian Studies and Notes*, 16.2 (1940), 43–67 (p. 57).

[97] Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson (ed.), *Heimskringla III*, p. 15; *Víga-Glúms saga*, in *Eyfirðinga sǫgur*, ed. by Jónas Kristjánsson, Íslenzk fornrit, 9 (Reykjavík: Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag, 1956), pp. 1–98 (p. 26).

[98] Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla: Volume II*, trans. by Alison Finlay and Anthony Faulkes (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2014), p. 300; Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla: Volume III*, trans. by Alison Finlay and Anthony Faulkes (London: Viking Society for Nothern Research, 2015), p. 10.

[99] Ernst A. Kock, *Notationes Norroenae*, §1120. Also see: Ernst A. Kock, 'Old West Germanic and Old Norse', in *Studies in Philology: A Miscellany in Honor of Frederick Klaeber*, ed. by Kemp Malone and Martin B. Ruud (Minneapolis, MN: The University of Minnesota Press, 1929), pp. 14–20 (p. 17). We might also be tempted to associate such a reading with 'blood rain', 'a widespread classical and medieval topos' that is 'portentous in family saga narrative' (O'Donoghue, *Narrative in the Icelandic Family Saga*, p. 123). Such a resonance would likely encourage a reader or listener to interpret the *vígtár* as an ill omen. We could further read the blood tears as a symptom of humoral excess, with the tears as a means of purging the body of this excess, following the 'hydraulic model' of emotion. For evidence that humoral thinking circulated in medieval Iceland, see Brynja Þorgeirsdóttir, 'Humoral Theory in the Medieval North: An Old Norse Translation of *Epistula Vindiciani* in Hauksbók', *Gripla*, 29 (2018), 35–66. For the idea of tears as purgative in some medical theories, see Rosenwein and Cristiani, *What is the History of Emotions?*, p. 73.

number of different readings and begins similarly to Kock in asserting that the compound refers to 'blood': in this reading, the 'killing tears' are drops of blood that Sigvatr will either cause his enemies to shed, presumably in seeking revenge for his dead lord, or will himself lose as he fights in memory of Óláfr.[100] She also suggests, however, that it is possible to read the tears as literal (salt) tears or 'perhaps as literal tears of blood brought forth by the most intense emotional distress', which — as she notes — is a motif present in Christian tradition.[101] Furthermore, we could also read *vígtǫ́r* as 'tears that threaten to kill or overcome the weeper'.

There does not seem to be a clear and unambiguous meaning for this word, as evidenced by the lack of critical consensus over an appropriate translation. The prose context of the stanza in *Flateyjarbók* is not much help in this regard in that it simply notes before the stanza that Sigvatr 'fellde tár' (shed tears) when he heard of the death of Óláfr (although it will clearly prime a reader of the stanza in *Flateyjarbók* to understand the verse's use of *fellir* in the sense of 'to shed (tears)' and so undercut some of the emotional complexity of the stanza for those encountering it in this prosimetrical context). Following the recitation of the stanza, which *Flateyjarbók* claims Sigvatr composed in response to his tears being seen as unmanly, Sigvatr suggests that: 'Uigtár kollum ver þat […] er ver fellum vid slik tidende' (We call it slaying tears […] which we shed at such news).[102] Sigvatr's explanation, rather than disambiguating the compound, further draws attention to the question of what precisely *vígtár* are. The narrator's inclusion of this attempted explanation might also suggest his own uncertainty over the compound's denotation.[103] Sigvatr's production of the verse in response to a suggestion that he behaves 'okallmanliga' (in an unmanly fashion) by crying might suggest to us that the tears are of the *víghugr* type, presaging violent action — or at least that that is how Sigvatr is presenting himself.[104] But the other men's reading of the tears as 'unmanly' suggests that they read them as 'ordinary' tears. Different, conflicting interpretations are presented within the text, and so the tears — for the reader or listener — are inevitably an ambiguous signifier. Our inability to arrive at a single, unitary gloss is telling of the word's inherent ambiguity and perhaps gestures towards the reason for the poet's use of a metaphorically-loaded compound.[105] The word is rare. In skaldic poetry it only occurs here in this verse, and in prose it is likewise only attested in this one example from *Flateyjarbók*. It is very likely, therefore, that this compound, when encountered by a reader or listener, would give them pause. Upon encountering this word, given its likely unfamiliarity, a reader or listener would be forced to try to puzzle out the meaning — but such attempts, given the polysemous nature of the compound, will likely leave a reader or listener with multiple possible readings to choose from (as is evidenced by the lack of consensus noted above). Such semantic instability, with the compound encompassing meanings ranging from 'bitter tears' to 'tears shed before vengeance', neatly encapsulates a state of emotional flux or, alternatively, what is sometimes

[100] Kristen Mills, 'Grief, Gender, and Genre: Male Weeping in Snorri's Account of Baldr's Death, Kings' Sagas, and *Gesta Danorum*', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 113 (2014), 472–96 (p. 484). Also see Goeres, *The Poetics of Commemoration*, p. 133.

[101] Mills, 'Grief, Gender, and Genre', p. 484.

[102] *Flateyjarbok*, II, 371 and 372.

[103] Goeres, *The Poetics of Commemoration*, pp. 133–34.

[104] *Flateyjarbok*, II, p. 371.

[105] Indeed, as Clover has suggested, '[t]hat skalds, with their well-known fondness for word-play, should also pursue deliberate ambiguities on the metaphoric level comes as no surprise' (Clover, 'Skaldic Sensibility', p. 73). Also see Armstrong, *How Literature Plays with the Brain*, p. 87, for discussion of the effects of metaphor on the reader.

known as a 'conceptual blend'. The word seems to suggest, at once, both intense grief and vengeful anger, or allows the movement or alternation between varied emotional states.

The unexpected collocation of *fellir* with *vígtǫ́r*, as discussed above, at first stages a movement from vengeful anger to grief and the compound *vígtǫ́r*, when then considered in more detail, prompts the reader or listener to consider the blending or alternation of these states. By availing himself of the possibilities of skaldic syntax and ambiguous compounds that the skaldic form afford, Sigvatr is able to stage effectively a conflicted emotional state: both grief at the loss of a lord and patron, and fury towards his killers. By resolving *fellir* with the ambiguous compound *vígtǫ́r*, this particular skaldic verse offers grammatical resolution but denies the sense of closure, of finality — ultimately of satisfaction — that the resolution and disentangling of a skaldic stanza is sometimes thought to produce.[106] In this, too, it perhaps constructs and reflects a salient aspect of the emotional state staged here: that the intense and complex emotions felt at the loss of a lord do not conclude or dissipate once the stanza comes to an end. Instead, they persist beyond it.[107]

The final two words of the stanza reinforce this reading. Here, *konungs ǫ́rum*, meaning 'to the king's servants' or 'to the king's messengers' reinforces the collectivity of the emotional

[106] Lie, '*Natur' og 'Unatur'*, p. 33; Frank, 'Skaldic Verse', p. 183; Macrae-Gibson, 'Sagas, Snorri, and the Literary Criticism of Scaldic Verse', p. 178.

[107] There is not space here to consider fully the complex temporal effects produced by the integration of this stanza into its prose contexts, but in this footnote I offer some preliminary thoughts. Heather O'Donoghue and others have considered the ability of skaldic verse within prosimetrical saga narrative to slow the pace of narrative progression (O'Donoghue, *Skaldic Verse and the Poetics of Saga Narrative*, p. 6; Magerøy, 'Skaldestrofer som retardasjonsmiddel i islendingesogene', p. 588; Fidjestøl, 'Skaldenstrophen in der Sagaprosa', p. 83; Vésteinn Ólason, *Dialogues with the Viking Age*, p. 125). We might also consider skaldic verse as an example of isochrony within saga narrative (a form in which there is normally 'disproportion […] between the time events would take in a real world, and the time the narrator takes to narrate them' (O'Donoghue, *Narrative in the Icelandic Family Saga*, p. 13); in isochrony, a narrative 'comes close to taking the same amount of time to relate — that is, to actually or mentally enunciate — as the events themselves might have taken to unfold' (O'Donoghue, *Narrative in the Icelandic Family Saga*, p. 64). As O'Donoghue notes, isochrony is a distinguishing feature of what Gérard Genette has termed a 'scene' (O'Donoghue, *Narrative in the Icelandic Family Saga*, p. 64). If we consider Sigvatr's *lausavísa* 20 in this way — as slowing the narrative progression and creating a scene, in which there is a noticeable temporal shift from the rest of the narrative — then we may consider that this stanza constructs and stages a relatively-prolonged moment of grief (or, more accurately, of the complex emotional blend produced by this verse), in which the emotion becomes more noticeable, more poignant, and more extended. In effect, as a result of the temporal shift from prose to verse, we are forced to dwell and linger within the emotion produced by the skaldic stanza. We might also consider the temporal complexity attendant upon the interpretation of skaldic verse. The inherent complexity of skaldic verse means that it is not always possible for comprehension of a verse to be immediate (or, indeed, ultimately conclusive) — for examples and discussion of delayed comprehension of skaldic verse, see Klaus von See, *Skaldendichtung*, p. 97; Gade, *The Structure of Old Norse Dróttkvætt Poetry*, pp. 23–24; and Clunies Ross, *A History of Old Norse Poetry and Poetics*, pp. 65–66. That interpretation and consideration of a verse can extend beyond the moment of first reading or hearing means that the emotion encoded in a given verse can be endowed with temporal extension beyond the isochronic moment of its telling, and can allow the emotion to resonate beyond the end of the stanza and into the surrounding narrative. In this regard, it is also worth noting that the verse appears twice in *Heimskringla* (*Heimskringla II*, pp. 441–42; Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla III*, pp. 14–18): encountering the verse upon its second occurrence means that the reader revisits the emotions of loss produced by the stanza, the repetition of which stages the lingering, reoccurring nature of grief and related emotions. It should also be noted that although the stanza stages a complex interior state encompassing, among other emotions, grief, the stanza is able produce in the reader or listener a concurrent emotion of aesthetic pleasure derived from the stanza's fine literary artistry. The former type of emotion is a 'Fiction-based emotion' — an emotion that represents the emotion of characters within the narrative world or a response to them; the latter is an 'Artefact-based emotion' — an emotional response to the textual construction of the scene and the reader's awareness of this construction. For this distinction, see Ed S.-H. Tan, 'Film-Induced Affect as a Witness Emotion', *Poetics*, 23 (1994), 7–32 (esp. p. 13).

response, by completing the thought begun in the previous line, and so giving: *várt torrek lízk verra […] konungs ǫrum* (our grievous loss seems worse to (*or*: among) the messengers of the king). The impact of the stanza's emotional representation is thus heightened, particularly when we consider the use of the word *ǫrum* (messengers), which suggests that the emotions recounted in this stanza will continue to be recounted.

Conclusion

Having reached the end of this single stanza, it is now possible to assess the work — in retrospect — as a whole, and so precisely articulate why this verse can be seen as 'et godt maal paa den følsomme digters sorg' (a good measure of the sensitive poet's grief).[108] Phenomenologically, it is only now that we can comprehend the stanza from the *totum simul* perspective,[109] given that — as Iser has noted — 'it is impossible to absorb even a short text in a single moment'.[110] From this perspective, we can appreciate the various techniques used by Sigvatr to construct emotion, particularly the dislocation of syntax, the manipulation of the audience's expectation at the level of grammar, the use of tmesis, and the deployment of ambiguous compounds. I have demonstrated that skaldic verse is a literary art form that, through its inherent formal complexity, is able to stage and represent complex emotional interiorities. Roberta Frank has suggested that the complexity of skaldic verse 'enables the divining of new and quite unexpected thoughts, the conjuring up of the unprecedented and the inexpressible';[111] Frank's appreciation of the representational possibilities of skaldic verse is perceptive and may be built upon by the argument presented in this article. Skaldic verse, as this analysis of Sigvatr's *lausavísa* 20 indicates, not only enables the exploration of new and unexpected *thoughts*, but also facilitates the consideration of complex, fluctuating *emotional* states. I have also suggested the utility of a phenomenological approach, which views the skaldic text as unfolding through time (along with the reader's or listener's engagement) as an effective and necessary means of analysing the techniques used by skaldic poets to produce and condition emotional response. Skaldic verse, and in particular skaldic verse's unique formal features, have hitherto not been a primary focus of studies of emotion in Old Norse literature. Although I have here had space to consider only one skaldic stanza in detail, and to explore how its poetic features enable it to stage its emotional content, this analysis demonstrates that skaldic verse should become a key focus for further work in Old Norse emotion studies.

[108] Fredrik Paasche, 'Sigvat Tordssøn: Et Skaldeportræt', *Edda*, 8 (1917), 57–86 (p. 77).

[109] For discussion of the Boethian *totum simul* perspective, see: O'Donoghue, *Narrative in the Icelandic Family Saga*, pp. 10–12.

[110] Iser, 'The Reading Process', p. 280. For a similar formulation to Iser's, that is specifically written in relation to saga prose (although not verse), see Carl Phelpstead, 'Time', in *The Routledge Research Companion to the Medieval Icelandic Sagas*, ed. by Ármann Jakobsson and Sverrir Jakobsson (London, 2017), pp. 187–97 (p. 190): 'There can be no narrative without time: no sequence of events to be told and no sequential telling of them.'

[111] Frank, *Old Norse Court Poetry*, p. 29.

Appendix

The following tables list instances of the verb *fella* in the new Lexicon Poeticum's database, separated into senses of my own devising.[112]

TO KILL

Glúmr Geirason, *Gráfeld-ardrápa* 3	felldi […] seggi	killed warriors
Úlfr Uggason, *Húsdrápa* 11	hjalmeldum mar felldu	killed the steed with helmet-fires [SWORDS]
Skúli Þorsteinsson, *Poem about Svǫlðr* 5	vér felldumsk	we felled one another
Þorfinnr munnr, Lausavísa 2	fellum Þrœndr í Þundar […] hreggi	let us fell the Þrœndr in the storm of Þundr <= Óðinn> [BATTLE])
Sigvatr Þórðarson, *Erfidrápa Óláfs helga* 20	slíkan gram sóknum sárelds viðir felldi […] sem Ǫleifr þótti	the trees of the wound-fire [SWORD > WARRIORS] could fell in the onslaught such a ruler as Óláfr was thought to be
Þjóðólfr Arnórsson, *Magnússflokkr* 6	Unði ótal Vinða […] at fella	relished cutting down countless Wends
Rǫgnvaldr jarl and Hallr Þórarinsson, *Háttalykill* 49	fella […] fǫrsnjǫll fira kyn	killed attack-clever kin of men
Einarr Skúlason, *Geisli* 17	felldu gram	killed the king
Nóregs konungatal 39	Felldu […] Óláfs bróður	killed Óláfr's brother
Nóregs konungatal 60	Hǫkon […] Inga felldi	Hákon killed Ingi
Nóregs konungatal 62	Magnús […] felldi Hǫkon	Magnús killed Hákon
Nóregs konungatal 63	frœkinn gram felldi Sverrir	Sverrir killed the bold ruler
Málsháttakvæði 7	herlið feldi Stǫrkuðr mart	Starkaðr felled a great troop
Hálfs saga ok Hálfsrekka 13 (Anonymous Lausavísa from *Hálfs saga ok Hálfsrekka* 3)	hvar Hera fellduð	where you slew Heri
Bjarni byskup Kolbeinsson, *Jómsvíkingadrápa* 28	Vagn felldi lið	Vagn felled the troop
Gríms saga loðinkinna 6 (Grímr loðinkinni, Lausavísa 4)	höfum fellt […] tírarlausa tólf berserki	we have felled twelve inglorious berserks
Breta saga 123 (Gunnlaugr Leifsson, *Merlínusspá I* 55)	Þeir munu sína sjalfir dolga fella eða fjǫtra	They will themselves kill or shackle their foes

[112] Quotations and translations in these tables are taken (and, in the case of the translations, occasionally slightly modified) from those published in the Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages series.

Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks 104 (Ormarr, Lausavísa 3)	Hafa Húnar hana felda	The Huns have felled her
Þorkell Gíslason, *Búadrápa* 12	Felldi Vagn virða	Vagn felled warriors

TO DESTROY, TO DAMAGE

Þórðr Særeksson (Sjáreksson), *Flokkr about Klœingr Brúsason* 1	eldr […] sal felldi	fire felled the hall
Grani skáld, *Fragment* 1	Glœðr hykk […] felldu[113]	I believe that glowing embers felled
Valgarðr á Velli, *Poem about Haraldr harðráði* 8	rǫnn lét ræsir nenninn reykvell ofan fella	the vigorous ruler caused smouldering buildings to collapse
Snorri Sturluson, *Háttatal* 25	þǫgn fellir brim bragna […] horna	the surf of horns [BEER] … removes (*destroys*?) people's silence
Sturla Þórðarson, *Hákonarflokkr* 4	hljóp eldr í sal feldan	flame leaped into the collapsed hall
Lilja 77	Vindi fult hefir veslan anda várn ofbeldið laungum feldan	Puffed-up [lit. full of wind] pride has long felled our [my] wretched soul
Breta saga 125 (Gunnlaugr Leifsson, *Merlínusspá I* 57)	foldar til fellir skóga	fell the forests to the ground

[113] As Kari Ellen Gade notes, 'the object of this verb is likely to have been some type of wooden structure that was destroyed by the fire' — see Grani skáld, ' *Fragment* 1', ed. by Kari Ellen Gade, in *Poetry from Treatises on Poetics*, ed. by Kari Ellen Gade and Edith Marold, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages, 3 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), p. 196.

TO ATTACK

Hallar-Steinn, *Rekstefja* 22	Randsíks remmilauka rógsvellir bað fella — styrr þreifsk — stœrri aska strangr á Orm inn langa[114]	The tough strife-sweller [WARRIOR = Eiríkr] ordered the forceful masts of the shield-whitefish [SWORD > WARRIORS] to make larger ash-timbers fall onto Ormr inn langi
Áns saga bogsveigis 1 (Án bogsveigir, Lausavísa 1)	feldum eldsmat nökkut[115]	we [I] felled fire-nourishment [FIRE-WOOD] in some way

TO SHED (TEARS)

Sigvatr Þórðarson, Lausavísa 20	fellir […] vígtǫ́r	sheds slaying-tears
Oddr kíkinaskáld, *Poem about Magnús góði* 2	Felldu menn […] mǫrg tǫ́r	Men shed many tears

[114] The precise sense of this stanza is somewhat elusive. See Rolf Stavnem's discussion in the notes to his edition of the text: Hallar-Steinn, '*Rekstefja* 22', ed. by Rolf Stavnem, in *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas 1: From Mythical Times to c. 1035*, ed. by Diana Whaley, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages, 1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), p. 922. It seems from the prose context that the saga author understood 'fella […] aska' to mean that Eiríkr was ordering timbers to be thrown at Ormr. The stanza's wording could also suggest attacking with spears or ships.

[115] The context here is that Án and his adversary, Bjǫrn inn sterki, wrestle and throw each other into a fire. See Beatrice La Farge's notes to her edition for further discussion: '*Áns saga bogsveigis* 1 (Án bogsveigir, Lausavísur 1)', ed. by Beatrice La Farge, in *Poetry in fornaldarsögur*, ed. by Margaret Clunies Ross, Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages, 8 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), p. 4.

TO WRAP, TO PLEAT

Rǫgnvaldr jarl Kali Kolsson, Lausavísa 6	feldu […] konur allar […] hǫfuðdúkum	all women wrapped themselves in headdresses

TO FALL (IN BATTLE) i.e. TO DIE

Sigvatr Þórðarson, *Víkingarvísur* 11	þars jǫfrar […] fellu	where princes fell

Of these, the final example listed — from Sigvatr's *Víkingarvísur*, stanza 11 — although entered in the Skaldic Project's *Lexicon Poeticum* under '*fella*' should instead clearly be listed under '*falla*', and so is discounted from my analysis.

There are three cases where an instance of *fella* has currently been miscategorised in the Skaldic Project as an instance of *falla*.[116] In each of the three cases, the sense of *fella* is to kill:

TO KILL (further instances, currently listed under *falla* instead of *fella* in Skaldic Project's *Lexicon Poeticum*)

Torf-Einarr Rǫgnvaldsson, Lausavísa 5	áðr mik hafi felldan	before they have killed me
Nefari, Lausavísa 1	Metumk […] at val felldan	Let's measure ourselves […] after the slain have been felled
Qrvar-Odds saga 46 (Qrvar-Oddr, Lausavísa 13)	feldak bræðr bölharða	I felled the harm-hard brothers

[116] I want to stress here again that the Skaldic Project's website is a work in progress, so such errors are inevitable. Even with the occasional error it is nevertheless a vital resource for the analysis of skaldic verse.

Leeds Studies in English: A History

Alaric Hall

Abstract

Despite the epistemological importance of the scholarly journal, few thorough histories of individual academic journals have been written, especially of journals in the arts and humanities. This article uses both archival material and oral histories to construct a multifaceted history of *Leeds Studies in English* (*LSE*) from the beginning of its 'new series' in 1967 to its merger with the *Bulletin of International Medieval Research* and transformation into *Leeds Medieval Studies* in 2021. Where appropriate, the article also examines *LSE*'s earlier incarnation, *Leeds Studies in English and Kindred Languages*, which ran from 1932 to 1952. By studying a journal embedded in a particular university department, the article develops a novel institution-based and intergenerational history of English Studies and Medieval Studies over the last century, distinct from histories that focus on the biographies of individual scholars, or on intellectual developments without regard to the quotidian institutional structures that shape and mediate intellectual life. The history of *LSE* provides nuanced perspectives on the fracturing of nineteenth-century philology into English Literature, English Language, and Linguistics during the twentieth century, and the internationalist reconfiguration of philological methods as Medieval Studies in the later twentieth century and early twenty-first. The article also lends time-depth to current debates about the place of voluntarism in journal editing and about how journals and libraries can best make research as widely available as possible. Moreover, it offers perspectives on these debates specific to the arts and humanities, which tend to be marginalised in discussions of academic publishing due to their focus on the natural sciences.

Introduction

Aims of this study

Leeds Medieval Studies is the successor to and continuation of two journals: *The Bulletin of International Medieval Research* (hereafter the *Bulletin*), founded in 1995, and *Leeds Studies in English and Kindred Languages* (hereafter *LSE&KL*), founded in 1932 and refounded as *Leeds Studies in English (new series)* (hereafter *LSE*) in 1967.[1] It also inherits the associated book

[1] I am grateful to Alan Murray, Catherine Batt, and Paul Hammond for commenting on drafts of this article, and to Iain Dyson, Harriet Allen, Lucy Guest and Sunny Page for assistance in identifying archival material.

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series Leeds Texts and Monographs (which ran 1935–40 and 1966–2009, hereafter LTM) and Leeds Texts and Monographs Facsimiles (which ran 1973–84). The present article is a history of *LSE* and to some extent LTM and LTM Facsimiles, thus addressing the period 1967–2019. The journal's earlier history entails quite a different historical moment and source-base, and will be addressed in a separate study.[2] The history of one relatively small academic journal is undeniably a niche concern, yet it offers a valuable perspective on the history of both Medieval and English Studies. The study of medievalism is now an integral part of academic Medieval Studies, and researchers have explored the cultural and political importance of medievalism outside the academy extensively.[3] Researchers have also traced in detail the emergence of what we currently call Medieval Studies as an academic field during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. But the history of academic Medieval Studies over the last century or so has received far less attention; moreover, those histories that move beyond surveying the research itself to examine the institutional structures that supported that research are mostly articulated as prosopographies or biographies of individual scholars.[4] Meanwhile, the general history of English Studies has — despite, or perhaps because of, the far greater number of departments and scholars inhabiting this field — probably attracted even less commentary than Medieval Studies. Again, the research that has been done on English Studies focuses on the early stages of the discipline, mostly prior to the First World War and certainly the Second.[5] And whereas the histories of English Studies that exist for the USA do frequently attend to the quotidian institutional structures through which university English Studies exist, research into English Studies in Britain is mostly more abstract, analysing 'the intellectual content of the discipline in direct relation to social forces' without addressing 'the mediatory role of the academic *institution* and the academic *profession*'.[6] Following the dictum of Keith Robbins that 'the study of change through the study of particular institutions retains a value that is apt to be lost amidst broad sweeps and comprehensive generalizations', the present article helps to fill these gaps by providing one case-study of how English Studies and Medieval Studies have changed and interacted across the last seventy years or so.[7] While this article attests to the degree to which academic journals must be understood through biography, we also emphasise the importance of constructing histories of Medieval Studies and English Studies in terms of

[2] A working paper towards this publication will be found as Alaric Hall, '*Leeds Studies in English and Kindred Languages*: The Founding of a Journal', <https://alarichall.org.uk/working_paper_LSE>, accessed 5 April 2023.

[3] For a synoptic and penetrating study focusing on the Anglophone world, see David Matthews, *Medievalism: A Critical History*, Medievalism, 6 (Cambridge: Brewer, 2015). For a survey with a helpfully German inflection, see Ulrich Müller, 'Medievalism', in *Handbook of Medieval Studies: Terms — Methods — Trends*, ed. by Albrecht Classen, 5 vols (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), pp. 850–65. See also *The Cambridge Companion to Medievalism*, ed. by Louise D'Arcens (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

[4] Cf. Matthews, *Medievalism*, 174–78 and Richard Utz, 'Academic Medievalism and Nationalism', in *The Cambridge Companion to Medievalism*, ed. by Louise D'Arcens (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 119–34. The seminal volume for the biographical approach was Norman Cantor, *Inventing the Middle Ages: The Lives, Works, and Ideas of the Great Medievalists of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Lutterworth, 1992); other key examples include *Medieval Scholarship: Biographical Studies on the Formation of a Discipline*, ed. by Helen Damico and others, 3 vols (New York: Garland, 1995–2000); *Women Medievalists and the Academy*, ed. by Jane Chance (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005); *A Century of British Medieval Studies*, ed. by Alan Deyermond (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); *Handbook of Medieval Studies: Terms, Methods, Trends*, ed. by Albrecht Classen, 3 vols (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), III 2145–736.

[5] See the survey of research on the UK, USA, Continental Europe, and India in Suman Gupta, *Philology and Global English Studies: Retracings* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 69–119.

[6] Gupta, *Philology*, p. 84 (the italics are Gupta's).

[7] Keith Robbins, 'Universities: Past, Present, and Future', *Minerva*, 41 (2003), 397–406 (p. 404).

the intergenerational institutions that individual scholars have made and continually remade. As the journal on which we focus was based in the University of Leeds, the history of the journal necessitates — and provides one perspective on — a history of what are currently Leeds's School of English and Institute for Medieval Studies. Indeed, however incomplete, this article provides the fullest account so far published of the latter, and one of the fullest of the former.[8] In particular, *LSE* affords a perspective on the history of the discipline that was in the late nineteenth century called *philology*, exposing the tripartite disciplinary tensions between 'language', 'literature' and 'linguistics' in English Studies, along with the tensions between English Studies and Medieval Studies. For most of the twentieth century, schools and universities in majority-Anglophone countries have generally put a belletristic conception of English Studies at the heart of their curricula: scholars focusing on the linguistic side of the subject have in the postwar period either decamped to linguistics departments or otherwise been overshadowed by their literary colleagues. Correspondingly, research on the history of English Studies has at times normalised a literary focus.[9] The history of *LSE* provides one useful perspective from the margins, on how the field once constituted at Leeds and at various other universities as 'English Language and Medieval Literature' has negotiated its position in English Studies more generally. This article is also a contribution to the history of academic publishing (particularly, though not only, journal publishing). Academic publishing is the subject of huge amounts of research, as befits a phenomenon economically significant and epistemologically foundational. But deep historical study of journal publishing is rare, and research has focused on journals of the hard sciences. In 2015, Aileen Fyfe, Julie McDougall-Waters and Noah Moxham felt able to say that 'we are now rich in snapshots of the history of scientific periodicals — we have studies of specific editors, and specific journals, at particular points in time — but, except for the rhetoric of scientific articles, we lack the big picture'.[10] But although there is a significant seam of extended editorials and anecdotal accounts of journals' histories waiting to be mined , thorough histories of humanities journals across a long time-span are thin on the ground.[11] Fyfe and her colleagues have shown

[8] Major studies of the School of English are Craig Fees, *The Imperilled Inheritance: Dialect and Folklife Studies at the University of Leeds 1946–1962* (London: Folklore Society Library, 1991); Nina Kane, 'Humani Nil Alienum: A Post-War History of Theatre at Leeds University', unpublished article, <https://www.academia.edu/5913339>, accessed 8 May 2023. See also James Walsh and Vanessa Rosenthal, *Under the Apple Boughs: The Life of Dr James Walsh* ([n.p.]: Royd Press, 2010) and the account of the German Department in the period covered by this article: *LektorInnenlob: 45 Years Applied 'Völkerverständigung' at Leeds University*, ed. by Richard Byrn and Lilias Byrn ([n.p.]: [n.pub.], 2003), <http://richardbyrn.co.uk/LekLob/lekloboverview.htm>, accessed 8 May 2023. For general histories of the University, see A. N. Shinman, *The University of Leeds: The First Half-Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954); *Studies in the History of a University, 1874–1974: To Commemorate the Centenary of the University of Leeds*, ed. by P. H. J. H. Gosden and A. J. Taylor (Leeds: Arnold, 1975); Peter Gosden, 'From County College to Civic University, Leeds, 1904', *Northern History*, 42 (2005), 317–32; Simon Dixon, 'The University of Leeds and the British Higher Education System, 1963–2004', *Northern History*, 43 (2006), 303–25.

[9] E.g. M. H. Abrams, 'The Transformation of English Studies: 1930–1995', *Daedalus*, 126 (1997), 105–31.

[10] Aileen Fyfe, Julie McDougall-Waters and Noah Moxham, '350 Years of Scientific Periodicals', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society*, 69 (2015), 227–39 (p. 228). Cf. Aileen Fyfe, 'Journals and Periodicals', in *A Companion to the History of Science*, ed. by Bernard Lightman (Chichester: Wiley, 2016), pp. 387–99 and 'Scientific Publications, c. 1500–2000', in *A Companion to the History of the Book*, ed. by Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2020), II 691–704 for surveys of past research.

[11] A notable exception with particular relevance to Medieval Studies is Colin Jones, 'Les *Annales* et *Past & Present*: Une Histoire Croisée', *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 75 (2020), 693–707 (which can be supplemented by the comments on *Past & Present* by Kathleen Biddick, *The Shock of Medievalism* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1998), 58–82). An exception with particular relevance to Leeds is the series of articles on

that problems and possibilities in the present concerning, say, the tensions between financial viability and facilitating access to a wide readership,[12] journals' reliance on volunteer labour,[13] or experimentation with the circulation of 'pre-publication' texts,[14] are not new and can be understood better in a historical perspective. Fyfe has also emphasised that 'we know far too little about the distribution, circulation and readership of scientific journals',[15] while she and Anna Gielas have called attention to a lack of work on the role of journal editors (in academic publishing and beyond).[16] For much of its history, *LSE* has archives that could shed light on all these questions in relation to the Arts, but a general history of the journal is a prerequisite for assessing and utilising them. Sprawling though this study is, tales which we could have told but do not announce themselves at every turn: a School of English comprising over forty intellectually fissiparous staff members would fit into a unitary narrative only of the most abstract kind. We have therefore focused throughout on the journal's lead editors (listed in Table 1), while recognising that this reinforces the systemic lack of credit accorded to other editorial board members and peer-reviewers. We have been able to give some recognition to the clerical staff who have made the journal possible, however, and have tried at least to advert to the wives whose labour must often have facilitated male scholars' editorial work. In keeping with the free-access philosophy of *Leeds Medieval Studies*, the preparation of this article has involved the creation and improvement of English-language Wikipedia articles on many of the individuals and organisations named; though their levels of detail and thoroughness vary, we trust that readers struggling to navigate the extensive *dramatis personae* of this article, or wishing further to research them, will find Wikipedia a helpful aid.[17]

the originally Leeds-based *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* contained in 50.3 (September 2015) of that journal. See also Carol Berkenkotter and Thomas N. Huckin, *Genre Knowledge in Disciplinary Communication: Cognition/Culture/Power* (New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 79–96 (on *Reader*); Roy Lowe, 'The Changing Role of the Academic Journal: The Coverage of Higher Education in *History of Education* as a Case Study, 1972–2011', *History of Education*, 41 (2012), 103–15; Ryan Schumacher, 'The *Wisconsin Magazine of History*: A Case Study in Scholarly and Popular Approaches to American State Historical Society Publishing, 1917–2000', *Journal of Scholarly Publishing*, 44 (2012–13), 114–41; Cheryl L. Sheridan, 'National Journals and Centering Institutions: A Historiography of an English Language Teaching Journal in Taiwan', *English for Specific Purposes*, 38 (2015), 70–84.

[12] Aileen Fyfe, 'Journals, Learned Societies and Money: Philosophical Transactions ca.1750–1900', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society*, 69 (2015), 277–99.

[13] Aileen Fyfe, Flaminio Squazzoni, Didier Torny, and Pierpaolo Dondio, 'Managing the Growth of Peer Review at the Royal Society Journals, 1865–1965', *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, 45 (2020), 405–29; Aileen Fyfe, 'Editors, Referees, and Committees: Distributing Editorial Work at the Royal Society Journals in the Late 19th and 20th Centuries', *Centaurus: An International Journal of the History of Science and its Cultural Aspects*, 62 (2020), 125–40; cf. Benjamin Newman, 'Authorising Geographical Knowledge: The Development of Peer Review in *The Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, 1830–c.1880', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 64 (2019), 85–97.

[14] Aileen Fyfe and Noah Moxham, 'Making Public Ahead of Print: Meetings and Publications at the Royal Society, 1752–1892', *Notes and Records*, 70 (2016), 361–79.

[15] Fyfe, 'Journals and Periodicals', p. 395.

[16] Aileen Fyfe and Anna Gielas, 'Introduction: Editorship and the Editing of Scientific Journals, 1750–1950', *Centaurus*, 62 (2020), 5–20.

[17] Cf. Alaric Hall, 'How to Change (Medieval) History', *Public Medievalist* (7 February 2019), <https://www.publicmedievalist.com/change-history>, accessed 8 May 2023. Readers should also not be surprised to encounter occasional identical prose between this article and associated Wikipedia entries. This reuse of Wikipedia material is consistent with its publication under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share-Alike License 3.0 — but since academics are not accustomed to remixing others' prose, it is also worth adding that prose reused here was mostly or entirely contributed to Wikipedia by Hall in the first place.

Dates	**Issues**	**Editor(s)**	**Editorial assistants, review editors, etc.**
1932–37	1–6	Bruce Dickins, Alan S. C. Ross and R. M. Wilson	
1952	7–8	A. C. Cawley and Harold Orton	
1967–70	n.s. 1–3	A. C. Cawley and Robin C. Alston	
1971–74	n.s. 4–6	A. C. Cawley and Stanley Ellis	Betty Hill (1971)
1975-77	n.s. 8–9	Betty Hill and Stanley Ellis	Peter Meredith
1978–81	n.s. 10–12	Peter Meredith	
1982–87	n.s. 13–18	Elizabeth Williams	Joyce Hill (1986–87)
1988–91	n.s. 19–22	Joyce Hill	Andrew Wawn (1988–90) and Stanley Ellis (1990)
1992–94	ns. 23–25	Andrew Wawn	Lesley Johnson
1995–98	n.s. 26–29	Lesley Johnson and Catherine Batt	
1999–2002	n.s. 30–33	Catherine Batt	
2003	n.s. 34	Catherine Batt and Andrew Wawn	
2004–8	n.s. 35–39	Alfred Hiatt and Andrew Wawn	
2009–18	n.s. 40–49	Alaric Hall	Cathy Hume (2009–12), Victoria Cooper (2010–13), Helen Price (2011) and N. Kıvılcım Yavuz (2013–16)

Table 1: editors of *LSE&KL*

Sources and methods

From around the later 1960s, substantial, albeit patchy, archives for the *LSE* operation survive. Alongside fuller sequences of correspondence, several reams of carbon copies of outgoing letters — of which only the top copy was usually signed, leaving us now to guess the authors — run for certain stretches through to the advent of email; extensive, though incomplete, records of payments and invoices exist; and, for a period in the 1980s, minutes of meetings.[18] The material would permit insights into processes of peer-review; the proposed monographs considered, accepted, and rejected; the conferences organised; and the ups and downs of the operation's finances. It is to be hoped that researchers will one day sift them. But it is also from the early 1970s that work on *LSE* emerges into living memory, and it is by oral accounts, and the evidence of the publications themselves, that the present history is primarily constructed. Key informants are Peter Meredith (1933–) and Pam Armitage. Meredith (interviewed 23 April 2020) proceeded from postgraduate study at the University College of North Staffordshire (now the University of Keele) to the University of Adelaide in 1961 (accompanied by his 'equally adventurous' wife Greta), before joining Leeds in 1969.[19] Meanwhile, whereas earlier numbers of *LSE* are silent on the subject of clerical work, editorial notes from 1986 and 1991 attest to the importance of Pam Armitage (interviewed 4 June 2020);[20] in 1995, she finally made it onto the list of editorial board members, remaining there up to 2002. In Meredith's words, 'she was amazing; she really was, you know, everybody's ideal secretary'. Following her A-levels (where her English curriculum included Chaucer, which was to prove useful), she took a one-year course in administration at Leeds Polytechnic (now Leeds Beckett University), and joined Leeds University's School of English in September 1972, taking over from Christine Eastwood as secretary to Arthur Cawley, the Professor of English Language and Medieval Literature. Andrew Wawn (1944–), who came to Leeds in 1983, has also contributed welcome insights (21 June 2021).[21] We have also benefited from archival and oral accounts assembled by postgraduates of the Institute for Medieval Studies in connection with its fiftieth anniversary in 2017.[22] Coming into the present

[18] Much of this material is already lodged at the University of Leeds, Archive Series: LUA/DEP/012, English, School of (incl. Institute of Bibliography and Textual Criticism; Institute of Dialect and Folk Life Studies; Leeds Studies in English[LSE]), <https://explore.library.leeds.ac.uk/special-collections-explore/4097>, accessed 8 May 2023. We hope that the remainder of the material will be accepted into the collection. We provide full shelfmarks for material already archived; for the rest, the dates and correspondents of letters necessarily suffice.

[19] Ralph W. V. Elliott, 'Peter Meredith in Australia', *Leeds Studies in English*, n.s. 29 (1998), 5–6; cf. John Marshall, 'Introduction', in Peter Meredith, *The Practicalities of Early English Performance: Manuscripts, Records, and Staging: Shifting Paradigms in Early English Drama Studies*, ed. by John Marshall (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), pp. xiii–xvii; Peter Meredith, Irmgard Tailby and Alaric Hall, 'John Edward Tailby (18 April 1938–16 July 2022)', *Leeds Medieval Studies*, 2 (2022), 151–55. Interviewed for the current article, Meredith suggested that the path to his appointment began in 1967: the tenants of the Merediths' UK house were friends from Adelaide who took the opportunity of Peter returning to the UK while on study leave to invite Arthur Cawley, A. Norman (Derry) Jeffares (1920–2005), and the Merediths to dinner; 'I suspect there was something they planned, you know, that knowing that I was quite interested in coming back to England, they thought, well, it would be useful if I were more of a face than just a name […] I always suspect that this was very useful in me getting the job'.

[20] Joyce Hill, 'Editorial Note', *Leeds Studies in English*, n. s. 19 (1988), vi; Elizabeth Williams, 'Editorial Note', *Leeds Studies in English*, n. s. 17 (1986), [viii].

[21] 'Andrew Wawn', *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrew_Wawn>, accessed 8 May 2023.

[22] *50 Years of Medieval Studies at Leeds* ([2018]), <https://50years.ims.leeds.ac.uk>, accessed 5 April 2023. Much of the research for and writing of this website is to be credited to Lucy Guest and Sunny Page.

century, we rely primarily on the memories of *Leeds Medieval Studies*'s current editors, along with their electronic access to institutional documents.

Robbins has emphasised the uneasiness that attends academics writing the histories of their own institutions. On the one hand, such people handily combine research skills with ready access to archives, oral sources, and personal experience of relevant events and institutions. On the other hand,

> while universities may parade the fact that they give their historians open access to archives, in reality they may not be anxious to see too frank an airing of personal disputes and policy differences. Sometimes, this job is allocated to senior professors as a joyous retirement task. Others will have to go on teaching and administering. They are perhaps not unmindful of this in what they write.[23]

We can affirm both that the present study was not a joyous retirement task and that Robbins's caveats apply. It will not, for example, have escaped the reader that including in the second volume of *Leeds Medieval Studies* a history of a predecessor journal is part of a wider trend of publishers bolstering their prestige with ambitious claims to antiquity.[24] Yet as Jane Chance recognised in her *Women Medievalists and the Academy*, a willingness to write academic autobiography enables us to write institutional histories that articulate the relationship between the more distant past and our own moment — a practice whose value in medieval English studies specifically has recently been emphasised by scholars responding to deployments of medieval texts in the service of populist politics;[25] to the Black Lives Matter movement, and its implications for our implicit commitments to 'Anglo-Saxonism';[26] and to sexual abuse in the academy,[27] amongst other forces. As David Matthews — echoing in particular the seminal insights of Kathleen Biddick — has argued in relation to the vexed distinction between medievalism and Medieval Studies,

> a purer, disinterested medieval studies seems to be what we do now; medievalism is always a generation ago […] Hence what tends to happen over time is that medieval studies passes into medievalism; as it ceaselessly updates itself, medieval studies expels what it no longer wishes to recognise as part of itself.[28]

Integrating our understanding of Medieval Studies now into the longer history of academic medievalism is, therefore, a necessary part of understanding both phenomena. Robbins even hinted that histories of universities might 'guide or instruct university presidents, vice-chancellors, or rectors in the way they should go'.[29] While no such elevated figures are likely to read the present article, it does strive to develop a disinterested history of *LSE* that can usefully inform the development of *Leeds Medieval Studies* and other publications in its field.[30]

[23] 'Universities', p. 399.

[24] Alistair McCleery, 'Publishing History', in *The Oxford Handbook of Publishing*, ed. by Angus Phillips and Michael Bhaskar (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), pp. 21–37.

[25] E.g. Richard Utz, *Medievalism: A Manifesto* (Kalamazoo: ARC Humanities Press, 2017).

[26] E.g. Donna Beth Ellard, *Anglo-Saxon(ist) Pasts, PostSaxon Futures* (Earth, Milky Way: Punctum Books, 2020), esp. pp. 19–60.

[27] E.g. Irina Dumitrescu, 'The Professor', *Longreads* (November 2021), <https://longreads.com/2021/11/17/the-professor>, accessed 5 April 2023.

[28] *Medievalism*, p. 176. Cf. Biddick, *The Shock*.

[29] 'Universities', p. 398.

[30] Cf. Catherine Batt, Alaric Hall, and Alan V. Murray, 'Editorial Note: Introducing *Leeds Medieval Studies*', *Leeds Medieval Studies*, 1 (2021), vii–xi.

(Re)starting a journal

Leeds Studies in English and Kindred Languages

Properly, the *LSE* story begins around 1931, when Bruce Dickins (1889–1978) took up the chair of English Language at Leeds and founded the journal *LSE&KL*, along with its associated monograph series, with the help of Alan Strode Campbell Ross (1907–80, appointed to Leeds straight out of his Oxford BA in 1929) and Richard (Dick) Middlewood Wilson (1908–70, appointed in 1931 on completing his MA at Leeds in the same year).[31] As mentioned above, the story of *LSE&KL* will be told elsewhere, but that story has a coda that is the necessary prelude to the history of *LSE*. The Second World War led to a hiatus in publishing the older journal, and around the end of the War the editorial triumvirate all left Leeds (Dickins to Cambridge, Wilson to Sheffield, and Ross to Birmingham). Harold Orton succeeded Dickins as Leeds's Professor of English Language in 1946 and, with the great post-war expansion of UK higher education underway, recruited an entirely new English Language team: Arthur Clare Cawley (1913–93), Arnold Rodgers Taylor (also 1913–93), Walter Alfred George Doyle-Davidson (1906–97), and David Abercrombie (1909–92).

Arriving at Leeds in 1947, at the age of 34, Arthur Cawley was an exceptionally well travelled person (as was his wife, fellow-traveller, fellow-teacher, and novelist Winifred, whom Arthur had married in 1939). Born in Kent, Cawley had taken a BA and MA at University College London (meeting Winifred there); held academic positions in Hull, Harvard, and Sheffield; and, from around 1938 to 1946, taught for the British Council in Romania, Yugoslavia, Egypt, Libya, and Iceland — moves determined partly by fleeing the German advance during the Second World War. The get-up-and-go evidenced by Cawley's migrations was also apparent at Leeds, where he took a stab at reviving *LSE&KL*. When, in 1952, he and Orton issued the first volume of the journal since 1937, they elicited a short preface from Dickins about the journal's history. Dickins ended that preface by saying 'its ways will not, I know, be our ways, but variety is the spice of life, and with its new captain and its new crew I wish it a prosperous voyage'. This statement is in one respect misleading and in another respect revealing. What is revealing is the phrase 'its new captain': the editorial note is signed by Cawley and Orton, but Dickins evidently thought that there was one 'captain'; subsequent history shows that this must have been Cawley. Misleadingly, Dickins's note implies that the revived journal was to be different from its predecessor, but the editorial note by Cawley and Orton that follows Dickins's preface promises the old formula, and the volume follows it faithfully. Like its predecessors, it was 'printed by Titus Wilson and Son, Ltd., of Kendal', and its physical appearance is identical to earlier numbers; the contributors, as under Dickins's editorship, were staff, students, and graduates of the department. The only real hint of change was that rather than being printed 'for members of the School of English Language', as the 1930s *LSE&KL* volumes declared, the 1952 volume was printed 'for members of the School of English Language and Medieval Literature' — perhaps an early hint that medieval literature was no longer quite synonymous with English Language.

The volume was not a clear-out of material that had been awaiting publication since the War: alongside contributions from the new English Language staff, most of the graduates'

[31] These and other records of the comings and goings of University of Leeds staff and the departments that employed them are unless otherwise stated derived from the annual *University of Leeds Calendar*, digitised at <https://explore.library.leeds.ac.uk/special-collections-explore/55926>, accessed 8 May 2023.

TWO NOTES ON *BEOWULF*

By A. R. TAYLOR

I. *BEOWULF* 2444-71

The interpretation of *Beowulf* 2444-71[1] has long been a matter of controversy. The chief bone of contention in the past has been whether the 'gomel ceorl' of l 2444 is to be equated with Hreðel, or whether the passage was intended by the *Beowulf* poet as an extended simile.[2] The main purpose of this article, however, is to bring to the foreground the real difficulty, beside which the question of simile or no simile is incidental.

Most scholars to-day seem to accept the theory that the lines constitute a Homeric simile in which the sorrow of Hreðel at the death of his son Herebeald is compared with that of an old man who sees his son hanging on the gallows.[3] This interpretation is favoured by the parallelism of the 'swa' in l 2444 with that in l 2462. On the other hand, as Hoops says,[4] the choice of this motive for comparison with the sorrow of Hreðel is curious. Since Hoops wrote these words an interesting attempt has been made by Miss Whitelock to show that, although curious to the present-day reader, the comparison would yet be effective in Anglo-Saxon times.[5] She points out that Hreðel is grieved not only at the loss of his son but also because his son will be neither avenged nor atoned for. Compensation or vengeance is impossible because the homicide is Herebeald's own brother, Hæðcyn. Compensation or

[1] The text used here is that of Fr. Klaeber, *Beowulf*, 3rd ed, Boston 1941.

[2] Cf H. M. Chadwick, *The Cult of Othin* (London 1899), 39: 'It is not quite clear how far the passage is intended as a simile.'

[3] Klaeber, op cit 213n; R. W. Chambers, *Beowulf with the Finnsburg Fragment* (Cambridge 1943), 122n; J. Hoops, *Kommentar zum Beowulf* (Heidelberg 1932), 260; J. J. Hall, *Beowulf, an Anglo-Saxon Epic Poem* (Boston 1893), 82: 'The passage beginning "swá bið géomorlic" seems to be an effort to reach a full simile, "as . . . so".'

[4] Hoops, op cit 260.

[5] D. M. Whitelock, '*Beowulf* 2444-2471', *Medium Ævum* VIII (1938), 198-204. Cf also the same author's *The Audience of Beowulf* (Oxford 1951), 18.

Figure 1. Traditional typesetting, here on p. 5 of volume 7–8 (1952) of *LMSKL*

work was recent, deriving from theses dating from 1947–50.[32] Yet no new number followed. It is not clear why the volume was issued as a double issue (being numbered 7–8), but perhaps a promised volume 7 overran and the editors decided to roll it into a volume 8, which might suggest difficulty finding time for the editorial work. Money was probably a concern too: the editorial note says 'we hope to issue a new number of LSE at fairly frequent intervals […] We shall also endeavour, with sufficient financial support, to publish new numbers of *Leeds Texts and Monographs*', which all sounds suspiciously circumspect.[33] The volume was warmly received by reviewers, but other demands on the editors were evidently more pressing, and the journal went quiet.[34] *LSE&KL* had come to an end.

One of the demands on Cawley's time that must have distracted him from *LSE&KL* was that in 1952 he became secretary of the Leeds University Medieval Group. The English Language department was not the only one that had seen a thoroughgoing turnover in staffing around the end of the War: staff in the Department of History also changed dramatically during the war years, and in 1945 a new 'Professor of Mediaeval History' was appointed: John le Patourel (1909–81). Keen to foster the study of his period not only within his department but across the University, Le Patourel founded Medieval Group in October 1951 and served as its chair until 1971, shortly after his retirement. The group's members would gather to hear academic papers, preceded by 'sherry in the Chairman's room' and followed 'by supper'.[35] Le Patourel's recently appointed colleague Glanville Rees Jeffreys Jones (1923–96) became treasurer and remained so throughout Le Patourel's chairmanship. For the first year, the group's secretary was Kenneth William Humphreys (1916–72), deputy librarian of Leeds's Brotherton Library and an honorary lecturer in palaeography at Leeds during 1950–52, but on his departure to Birmingham in 1952, Cawley took over.[36] Medieval Group — 'that enormously civilised meeting', as Cawley's obiturist Stanley Ellis later characterised it — was the starting point for the concerted inter-departmental and interdisciplinary pursuit of Medieval Studies at Leeds, and Cawley was evidently committed to it, perhaps at the expense of his journal-editing.[37] The post-War history of *Leeds Studies in English*, then, was in some way entwined from its inception with the emergence of Medieval Studies as a field.

1966 and all that

Well travelled though Arthur and Winifred Cawley were, however, their travels were not yet over: in 1959 they left Britain again as Arthur took up the Darnell Chair of English at the University of Queensland. But, following Harold Orton's retirement in 1964, Cawley returned

[32] Cf. 'Theses Added to Leeds University Library', *Leeds Studies in English and Kindred Languages*, 7–8 (1952), 129.

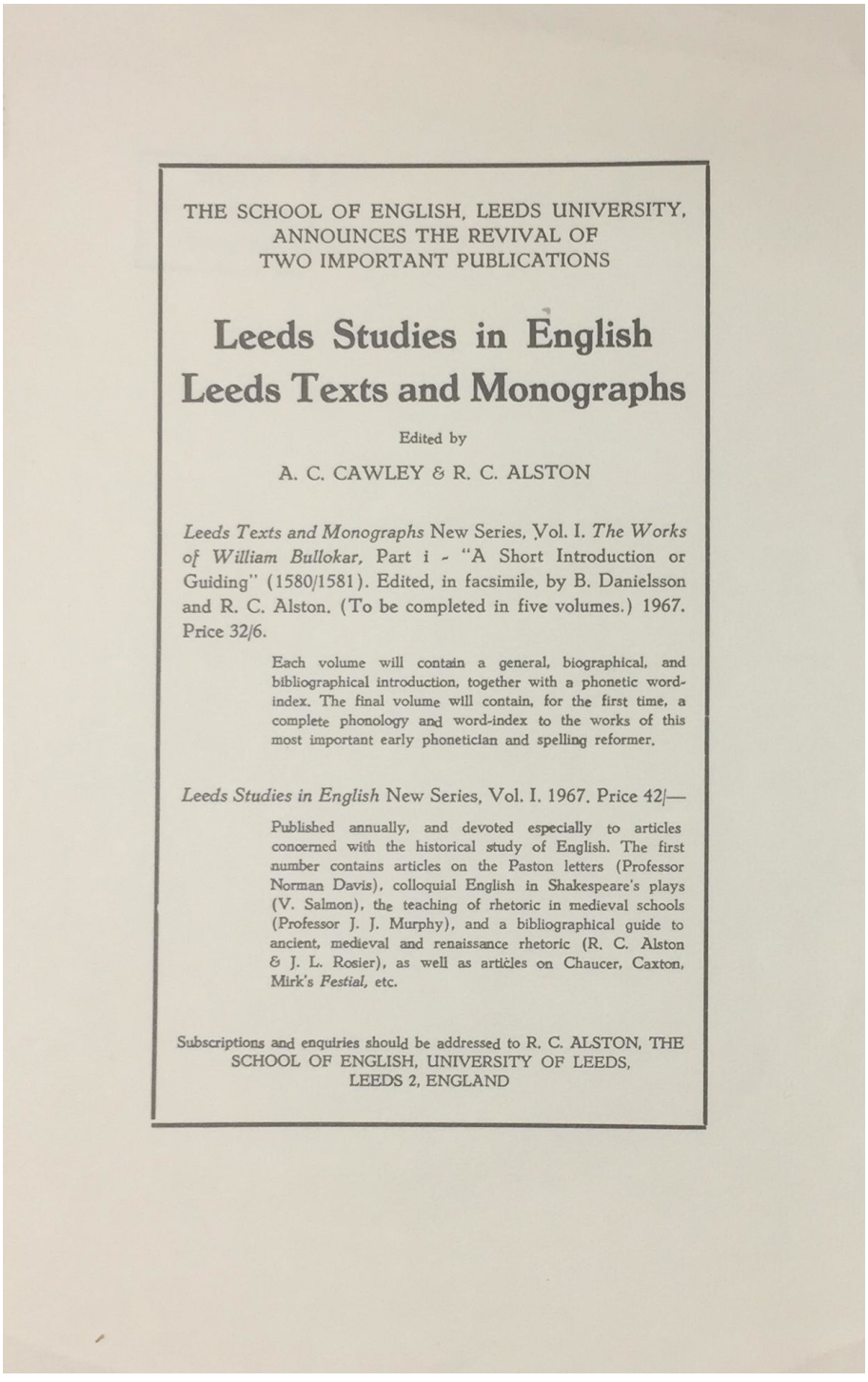
[33] A. C. Cawley and Harold Orton, 'Editorial Note: Leeds Studies in English, 1952', *Leeds Studies in English and Kindred Languages*, 7–8 (1952), 3.

[34] R. Vleeskruyer, 'Recent Work at Leeds', *Neophilologus*, 37 (1953), 174–75; [J. A. Sheard], '*Leeds Studies in English and Kindred Languages*', *The Modern Language Review*, 48 (1953), 451–52.

[35] R. L. Thomson, 'Preface', *A Medieval Miscellany: Essays by Past and Present Members of the Staff Medieval Group and the Centre for Medieval Studies of the University of Leeds in Honour of Professor John Le Patourel*, ed. by R. L. Thomson, Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society. Literary and Historical Section, 18 pt. 1 ([Leeds]: [Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society], 1982), pp. 5–6.

[36] Thomson, 'Preface', pp. 5–6.

[37] 'Arthur Cawley: 1913–1993', p. 4, Leeds, University of Leeds, Brotherton Library, Special Collections, Archive Series: LUA/DEP/012, box 1.



THE SCHOOL OF ENGLISH, LEEDS UNIVERSITY,
ANNOUNCES THE REVIVAL OF
TWO IMPORTANT PUBLICATIONS

Leeds Studies in English
Leeds Texts and Monographs

Edited by

A. C. CAWLEY & R. C. ALSTON

Leeds Texts and Monographs New Series, Vol. I. *The Works of William Bullokar,* Part i - "A Short Introduction or Guiding" (1580/1581). Edited, in facsimile, by B. Danielsson and R. C. Alston. (To be completed in five volumes.) 1967. Price 32/6.

Each volume will contain a general, biographical, and bibliographical introduction, together with a phonetic word-index. The final volume will contain, for the first time, a complete phonology and word-index to the works of this most important early phonetician and spelling reformer.

Leeds Studies in English New Series, Vol. I. 1967. Price 42/—

Published annually, and devoted especially to articles concerned with the historical study of English. The first number contains articles on the Paston letters (Professor Norman Davis), colloquial English in Shakespeare's plays (V. Salmon), the teaching of rhetoric in medieval schools (Professor J. J. Murphy), and a bibliographical guide to ancient, medieval and renaissance rhetoric (R. C. Alston & J. L. Rosier), as well as articles on Chaucer, Caxton, Mirk's *Festial,* etc.

Subscriptions and enquiries should be addressed to R. C. ALSTON, THE SCHOOL OF ENGLISH, UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS, LEEDS 2, ENGLAND

Figure 2. Flyer from around 1967 advertising *LSE* and LTM

to Leeds as Professor of English Language and Medieval English Literature in autumn 1965.[38] He found plenty of familiar faces: all six of his Department of English Language and Medieval English Literature colleagues from 1958–59 were still around (including Orton, still editor-in-chief of the Survey of English Dialects). Likewise, seven of the twelve 1958–59 staff of the Department of English Literature were still at Leeds. But the situation was in other respects transformed. Having split in 1949, the two departments had merged back into a unitary School of English in 1961, and expanded from sixteen to forty-one academic staff, and from two to nine administrative and clerical staff — at which size the School has more or less remained since, albeit with radical shifts in staff expertise. Although there were now staff who taught English Language without teaching medieval English literature, no fewer than ten, including Cawley, had 'English Language and Medieval English Literature' in their job title. The School was home to the newly founded Institute of Dialect and Folk Life Studies, established, after a long gestation, in 1964 (running until 1983).[39] The School's first female staff member had been its first clerk, Vera Cracknell, appointed in 1947, and the expansion in clerical staffing had dramatically increased the number of women in the School's employ. But even the academic staff now included three women, readily identifiable in the *University of Leeds Calendar* by the fact that, whereas male staff are given no titles and their first names reduced to initials, women are prefixed 'Miss' and their first names are given in full, as if 'Miss' were not enough to avert the risk of them being supposed to be men. These groundbreaking academics were Betty Hill (1925–2016, appointed in 1963),[40] Christine Fell (1938–98, appointed in 1965),[41] and Elizabeth (Libby) Williams (1938–2012, also appointed in 1965).[42] Curiously, all were medievalists, suggesting that the field was somehow more accessible to female scholars than other areas.

Other schools in the Faculty of Arts were also expanding dramatically, and the sense of dynamism must have been tremendous. Already on 12 November 1965, Le Patourel and Cawley were building on the informal tradition of Medieval Group and writing to colleagues, saying

> we would like to explore the possibility of establishing an 'Institute of Medieval Studies' in this University, consisting of teachers who are interested in medieval subjects whether as part of their professional interests or not. The object of such an Institute would be to establish post-graduate courses leading to a higher degree or diploma through co-operation between the different departments concerned [...] We have heard of developments of this kind in Toronto and Manchester, and we shall circulate such literature as we can obtain on these two before the meeting.[43]

The reference points of Toronto and Manchester are unsurprising: the Institute of Mediaeval Studies at St. Michael's College of the University of Toronto (now the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies), the first of its kind, had been founded already in 1929 (and its journal *Mediaeval Studies* in 1939), and helped to inspire the foundation of the more secular-minded

[38] Stanley Ellis, 'Arthur Cawley: A Biographical Note', *Leeds Studies in English*, n. s. 12 (1981), 1–2.

[39] Fees, *The Imperilled Inheritance*.

[40] 'Betty Hill', *St. Hilda's College Chronicle* (2016), 24.

[41] Kathryn A. Lowe, 'In Memoriam: Christine Elizabeth Fell (1938–1998)', *Old English Newsletter*, 32.1 (1998), 10–11.

[42] 'Miss Elizabeth Williams' (29 May 2012), <https://forstaff.leeds.ac.uk/news/article/3249/miss_elizabeth_williams>, accessed 1 April 2023).

[43] Leeds, University of Leeds, Brotherton Library, Special Collections, Archive Series: LUA-DEP-031.

Toronto Center for Medieval Studies in 1964, while Manchester's history department had long been a kind of senior partner to Leeds's and the Manchester Medieval Society had been founded already as an offshoot of the Oxford Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature in 1933.[44] Le Patourel and Cawley could also have noted another precursor which is worth mentioning here because of its later importance to developments at Leeds: the Medieval Institute founded at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, in 1962, which became home to the enormously significant International Congress on Medieval Studies. By 1967, the Leeds Graduate Centre for Medieval Studies had been established, with Le Patourel as the director from 1967–70, followed by Cawley from 1970–72 and then his School of English colleague Robert (Bob) L. Thomson (1924–2006) from 1972–77.[45] Meanwhile, Asa Briggs (1921–2016), newly arrived as Professor of Modern History, had in 1956 set up a group for discussing 'problems of North of England history'. Briggs left Leeds for Sussex University in 1961, but from the group emerged the journal *Northern History*, which first appeared in 1966. Edited by Gordon Colin Fawcett Forster (1928–2017), it had a medievally-inclined editorial board (including Le Patourel) whose legacy includes strong medieval representation in the journal to the present day.[46] Moreover, in 1966–67, one of its board, Peter Sawyer (1928–2018), who had joined the School of History from Birmingham in 1964, spent a year working with R. Stuart Hoyt (1918–71), Professor of Medieval History at the University of Minnesota, from which visit emerged the decision to create what became the International Medieval Bibliography, to help cope with 'the growing flood of articles on medieval topics in periodicals, *Festschriften* and conference reports'. By 1969, the Bibliography's base had settled in Leeds, moving from the top floor of Sawyer's house to Leeds University's Parkinson Building in 1970.[47] Changes were underway in the School of English too. The Survey of English Dialects was chugging along. A 1964 conference at Leeds led to the foundation of the Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies and, in 1966, the first, Leeds-based issue of *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*.[48] In 1967 the innovative Workshop Theatre was taking shape, consolidating an interest in humanities study through theatre practice that would be influential, *inter alia*, in the Graduate Centre for Medieval Studies.[49] Moves were also afoot to create what in the academic year 1969–70 became the Institute of Bibliography and Textual Criticism, which also involved issuing the first volume

[44] G. B. Flahiff, 'The Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies at Toronto', *Speculum*, 24 (1949), 251–55; 'Graduate Center for Mediaeval Studies: University of Toronto' *Speculum*, 38 (1963), 678–81; A. J. Taylor, 'History at Leeds 1877–1974: The Evolution of a Discipline', *Northern History*, 10 (1975), 141–64 (esp. pp. 141–47); 'About Us', Manchester Medieval Society <http://medievalsociety.blogspot.com/p/about-us.html>, accessed 18 December 2022.

[45] Thomson, 'Preface'.

[46] &lsquoEditorial Note', *Northern History: A Review of the History of the North of England*, 1 (1966), v; Malcolm Chase, 'Gordon Colin Fawcett Forster (1928–2017)', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 90 (2018), 223–24.

[47] Peter Sawyer, 'The Origins of the International Medieval Bibliography: Its Unwritten History (as Told by its Founder)', *Bulletin of International Medieval Research*, 14 (2009), 57–61 (quoting p. 57); Alan V. Murray, 'Thirty-Five Years of the International Medieval Bibliography (1967–2002)', *Bulletin of International Medieval Research*, 7 (2001), 1–9 (p. 1). Cf. Ian N. Wood, 'Peter Hayes Sawyer (25 June 1928–7 July 2018)', *Leeds Medieval Studies*, 1 (2021), 101–4.

[48] A. Norman Jeffares, 'Arthur Ravenscroft, 1924–1989', *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 24 (1989), vii–ix; Gail Low, 'Professing the Common Wealth of Literature, Leeds 1957–1969', *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 50 (2015), 267–81.

[49] Kane, 'Humani Nil Alienum'.

of a book-series called Leeds Studies in Bibliography and Textual Criticism, echoing the *LSE* brand (though no further volumes appeared).[50]

As all these new activities unfolded, Cawley tried again to restart *LSE*. Besides the generally lively context, the other key new factor in explaining the success of this second run was undoubtedly that the School of English had in Cawley's absence appointed Robin Carfrae Alston (1933–2011), born in the Caribbean and educated in England and British Columbia, newly graduated from his Ph.D. at King's College London on early-modern spelling reform in English. Alongside his interest in historical linguistics, Alston was passionate about bibliography and was, in the words of Peter Meredith, 'a very, very live wire indeed'.[51] Alston's three marriages might suggest the same: one of his obiturists opined that 'Alston was no saint, but a gallant adventurer who often broke rules (and hearts) in the intense pursuit of his truth'.[52] 'Restless, visionary, and endlessly inventive, Alston did not always make an easy colleague, and he stayed with few employers for long', comments another.[53] Alston was dedicated to enabling undergraduates to read set texts in their original editions. In 1966, he founded the Scolar Press, harnessing new technology to produce inexpensive facsimiles of over two thousand texts of importance to the history of the English language. The 1930s LTM tradition of publishing editions must have appealed to him, and he no doubt saw in both *LSE* and LTM the opportunity to bring business to his press. There was clearly a meeting of minds between Alston and Cawley and already in its first year the Scolar Press was publishing the founding volume of what they labelled Leeds Texts and Monographs: New Series, the first of the four-volume *Works of William Bullokar*, in which Alston and Bror Axel Danielsson (1905–88) edited the writings of a sixteenth-century printer and orthographic innovator. It seems likely that it was also Alston who lined up the next volume, a facsimile and English translation of John Caius's 1574 *De pronunciatione Graecae et Latinae linguae cum scriptione nova libellus* by John Butler Gable, which appeared in 1968; he certainly contributed to the first volume of the 'new series' of *LSE*, co-edited by Cawley and himself in 1967.[54]

Correspondence in the archive enables us to reconstruct a moderately detailed story of how these first volumes were capitalised and printed. The publisher of both LTM and the renewed *LSE* was given as the School of English, but the printer was the Scolar Press. By 7 July 1966, Alston had engaged Ken Holmes of the Scarborough company Filmtype Services for the photosetting of the first volume of *The Works of William Bullokar*, and was seeking a quote from him for setting the proposed *LSE*.[55] Exactly how much the *Bullokar* volume cost to produce or how it was capitalised is not clear, but one source of capital is

[50] John Horden, 'The Institute of Bibliography and Textual Criticism, Leeds', *The Library*, series 5, volume 27 (1972), 293–301; Trevor H. Hall, *Mathematicall Recreations: An Exercise in Seventeenth-century Bibliography*, Leeds Studies in Bibliography and Textual Criticism, Occasional Paper, 1 (Leeds: Bibliography Room, School of English, University of Leeds, 1969).

[51] Cawley recruited Meredith to Leeds in 1969 to replace Alston; 'I mean, this is crazy because there was no way in which I could have replaced him!'

[52] Stephen Green, 'Robin Alston Obituary: Scholar Behind The Bibliography of the English Language', *The Guardian* (2 October 2011), <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2011/oct/02/robin-alston-obituary>, accessed 1 April 2023.

[53] David McKitterick, 'Alston, Robin Carfrae (1933–2011)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (8 January 2015).

[54] R. C. Alston and J. L. Rosier, 'Rhetoric and Style: A Bibliographical Guide', *Leeds Studies in English*, n. s. 1 (1967), 137–59.

[55] Leeds, University of Leeds, Brotherton Library, Special Collections, Archive Series: LUA/DEP/012, Leeds Studies in English boxes, box 4 folder 1.

clear: subsequent correspondence concerning the first volume mentions that 'we were able to avoid asking the University for a subsidy towards the Bullokar version, thanks partly to the University Librarian, who ordered 100 copies for exchange purposes': essentially, then, the Library diverted funds that it might have used to buy other universities' publications directly, funding LTM in the expectation of exchanging it for publications from elsewhere.[56] One hundred is a suspiciously round number, hinting that the Librarian (then Bertram Samuel (Tony) Page, 1904–93) was partly supporting the LTM operation as a point of principle. The same purchase of one hundred copies by the Library was agreed for *LSE*; in January 1967, Cawley envisaged a cover price of thirty shillings, which, if the library paid this rate, would imply revenue of £150 (though the eventual official cover price was forty-two shillings, implying £210). 'But even so we are in urgent need of financial assistance', Cawley wrote on 16 January 1967 in an application to the University Publications Committee, explaining that the cost of typesetting (technically speaking photosetting) the first volume would be £225, while the cost of printing and binding a run of five hundred copies would be £125.[57] Cawley's application to the Publications Committee for a £200, non-recurrent capital subsidy was clearly not unreasonable: in 1966 the first issue of *Northern History* was 'facilitated by a guarantee from the publications fund of the University of Leeds, and by donations from local firms and individuals'.[58] By comparison with the capitalisation which *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* was thought to require in the same year, Cawley's request was small: before agreeing to publish the new journal, with a print run of 2000, Heinemann wanted a subsidy; the journal's first editor, Arthur Ravenscroft, recalled thinking that £700 would be right and in the event Norman Jeffares negotiated £1420 from the British Council.[59] Nevertheless, for reasons unknown, the Committee demurred to subsidise *LSE* — but the School of English stepped in, apparently to the tune of £250.[60] The *LSE* operation was underway.

A venture philological: setting the editorial agenda (1966–76)

Alston relinquished his lectureship in 1969 to concentrate on his business activities;[61] though Scolar Press continued to print *LSE* and LTM until 1977, and Alston continued teaching at Leeds until 1976 and completed his four-volume Bullokar edition in 1980, he ceased co-editing the journal after the third, 1970, volume. For the four years following Alston's departure, Cawley co-edited *LSE* with Stanley Ellis (1926–2009), whose work was closely associated with the Survey of English Dialects, while Betty Hill assisted in 1971. Having

[56] Leeds, University of Leeds, Brotherton Library, Special Collections, Archive Series: LUA/DEP/012, Leeds Studies in English boxes, box 4 folder 1, letter of 16 January 1967.

[57] Leeds, University of Leeds, Brotherton Library, Special Collections, Archive Series: LUA/DEP/012, Leeds Studies in English boxes, box 4 folder 1, letter of 16 January 1967. Roughly similar sums are suggested by correspondence concerning the fourth LTM volume, which was subsidised to the tune of three hundred Canadian dollars (then worth around £120) by its author: Leeds, University of Leeds, Brotherton Library, Special Collections, Archive Series: LUA/DEP/012, Leeds Studies in English boxes, box 4 folder 1, letters of 23 December 1970 (Benzie to Alston), 31 December 1970 (Alston to Cawley), 6 January 1971 ([Cawley] to Alston).

[58] 'Editorial Note', *Northern History*, 1 (1966), v.

[59] Low, 'Professing the Common Wealth', pp. 276–77.

[60] Leeds, University of Leeds, Brotherton Library, Special Collections, Archive Series: LUA/DEP/012, Leeds Studies in English boxes, box 4 folder 1, letters of 6 January (Cawley to Douglas Grant, Head of School), 14 January 1967 (Grant to Cawley), 19 January 1967 (Cawley to Grant).

[61] McKitterick, 'Alston'.

OLD ENGLISH *CYNINGSTAN*

By Ray Page

OE *cyningstan* occurs once only, and so may be a nonce-word. It is one of a group of gaming terms in the eleventh-century Latin-Old English glossary of B.M. MS Add. 32246, whence it was copied in the seventeenth century into Bodleian MS Junius 71. The full gloss is *pirgus, cyningstan on tæfle.* Bosworth-Toller amend the OE form to *cynningstan* (*cenningstan* in the Supplement) which they relate to the OE verb *cennan* "try, prove." This they translate "trying-stone," glossing it as "a little wooden tower on the side of a gaming-board, hollow and having steps inside, through which the dice were thrown upon the board."

In his supplement to J. R. Clark Hall, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, 4th ed. (Cambridge, 1962), H. D. Meritt rightly returns to the gloss spelling *cyningstan*, which he translates "an instrument used in casting dice." He examines the word in detail in *Fact and Lore about Old English Words* (Stanford, 1954), pp. 134-5. Here he suggests—what is certainly most likely—that the source of the lemma *pirgus* is a famous section on gaming terms in Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiæ*, XVIII, 1x ff. Isidore defines the words *tabula, alea, pirgus* and *calculus.* Of *pirgus* (*pyrgus*) he says: "pyrgus dictus quod per eum tesseræ pergant, sive quod turris speciem habeat. Nam Græci turrem πύργον vocant." The first part of this accounts for Meritt's definition of *cyningstan*, but leaves the curious compound unexplained. Accordingly, Meritt (comparing the gloss *puplicum, cynestræte*) argues that the glossator related the lemma to MLat *pirgus* which du Cange translated *via regia*, and suggests that the OE glossator got the idea of *cyning-* from *via regia.*

There are two weaknesses in this argument: (i) the link between *pirgus* (which seems from the dictionaries to have been a fairly rare form compared with the variants *pergus, pirgius*) "*via regia*," *pirgus* "dice-box," and the element *cyning-* is tenuous; (ii) even after the first element *cyning-* is established, we must still account for *-stan*, which does not fit the meaning "dice-box." Meritt notes the second difficulty, and argues: "Since the gloss *cyningstan* occurs among terms for dicing such as *alea* [*sic*] glossed *tæfelstanas*, one may assume that the glossator thought of *pirgus* as some kind of *stān.*"

The argument needs examination. I begin by quoting the Anglo-Saxon gaming glosses *in extenso* to give the context of the material.[1] The full list of terms in MS Add. 32246 is *alea, tæfel; aleæ, tæfelstanas; aleator, tæflere; pirgus, cyningstan on tæfle; tessere, uel lepusculæ, feðerscite tæfel.* The Épinal, Erfurt and Corpus glossaries (which are related) have *alea, teblæ/tefil/tebl; aleator, teblere; cotizat, tebleth; calculus, ratio vel sententia vel: tebelstan vel lapillus/tebil[s]tan vel labillus/calculus, ratio, uel sententia, uel numerus, uel teblstan.* Erfurt has an additional *aleator, tebleri aleæ; alia, tefil*, while Leiden,

Figure 3. Photosetting, here on p. 1 of volume 3 (1969) of *LSE*

built up colleagues' involvement in the journal, Cawley stepped back in 1975, but continued to lead Texts and Monographs projects. By the end of his time with the journal, its intellectual course was well established, making this a good moment in the chronology of *LSE* to explore the relationship between the institutions which housed it and its editorial scope.

Some journals carry elaborate manifestos to spell out their intellectual agendas. The editors of *LSE* and its associated projects have, however, bequeathed little commentary of this sort. Writing to the University Registrar in search of capital funding, Cawley wrote:

> as you probably know, the School of English has long had two series of publications on the language and medieval literature side of the School of English. […] These two publications, which were started by Professor Bruce Dickins, brought considerable prestige to the School of English and so to the University. It is unfortunate that they were allowed to lapse, and we (my colleagues and I) are determined to revive them and publish each of them annually.[62]

We should probably take Cawley at his word that he saw the publications bringing prestige to the School, and also infer that their revival represented for Cawley a matter of unfinished business. But it seems unlikely that prestige alone motivated him (the argument evidently did not motivate the Publications Committee). Yet in terms of intellectual motivations, the brief editorial note with which the 1967 *LSE* volume begins offers only:

> it should be pointed out that the title of the periodical has been shortened to Leeds Studies in English, and that contributions are now invited not only from graduates and teachers of Leeds University but from scholars working in the field of early English and Icelandic studies in any part of the world. The new LSE is bound to be different from the old. Its editors can but hope that it will prove a worthy successor.

In terms of intellectual content, nothing here has really changed: *LSE&KL* had always focused on (mostly medieval) English and Old Norse (though 'Icelandic studies' does fly a flag for the specific commitment to Old and Modern Icelandic in the School of English at Leeds). Thus the key policy change was to open up the journal to contributors from outside Leeds, situating the journal firmly in the post-war landscape of international, peer-reviewed academic publishing — but again revealing rather little about the journal's intellectual agenda.

Yet the journal's shifting content does afford a case-study of the changing disciplinary and institutional structures of both English and Medieval Studies through the last century. It is helpful for various reasons to begin exploring the editorial agenda of the *Leeds Studies* project by glancing back to 1932, characterised by the Leeds student newspaper at the time as 'a venture (philological, not like the former one, poetical) by the Department of English Language'.[63]

The break-up of English philology

The title of *Leeds Studies in English and Kindred Languages* surely indicates Bruce Dickins's intellectual programme in at least a couple of ways. First, the title implied that the scope

[62] Leeds, University of Leeds, Brotherton Library, Special Collections, Archive Series: LUA/DEP/012, Leeds Studies in English boxes, box 4 folder 1 (letter of 16 January 1967).

[63] 'The Leeds Language Schools', *The Gryphon*, second series, 14.2 (November 1932), 70–71 (p. 71), <https://explore.library.leeds.ac.uk/special-collections-explore/24773>, accessed 8 May 2023. The 'former, poetical' English Language publication is surely *A Northern Venture*, published in 1923.

of the English Language part of the Leeds English Department (that is, coverage of the first thousand of the then thirteen-hundred years of written English literature and general coverage of English Language) was sufficient for the journal to claim to represent English Studies. While one can see the argument here, given the infamous tensions between 'lit. and lang.' in UK English departments, the title looks rather like a land-grab by an editor not noted for his tact in university politics.[64] Notwithstanding the obviously catholic interests and talents of individual staff members, tension between the English Literature and English Language sides of English at Leeds is apparent from at least the 1920s. George Stuart Gordon (1881–1942), Professor of English Language and Literature at Leeds 1919–22, wrote in 1925 that he had wanted 'to bring the linguistic and literary interests of the Department into more natural and friendly association: the hardest task, as a rule, which such Departments present'.[65] Gordon's concerns reflected discourse in the discipline generally in Britain, not least at Oxford, the *alma mater* of the vast majority of Leeds's inter-War English staff;[66] J. R. R. Tolkien (1892–1973), for example, by turns both promoted and discouraged this 'friendly association', both during his tenure at Leeds (1920–25) and subsequently at Oxford.[67] Officially, there was a single department of 'English Language and Literature' at Leeds from 1898 through to 1948, but throughout the 1930s *LSE&KL* proclaimed itself as 'printed [...] for Members of the School of English Language in the University of Leeds'. This surely reflects the academic identity-politics of Dickins's professorship, and it certainly foreshadowed the official split in October 1948, when the Faculty formed separate Departments of English Literature on the one hand and English Language and Medieval English Literature on the other.[68] Correspondingly, the content of *LSE&KL* never addressed students of literature later than about 1600.

Conversely, *LSE&KL* accommodated the interests of its 'School of English Language' editors without apparent strain; yet the second way in which its title is informative is that it implicitly sought to disabuse readers of the implicit expectation that English Studies might be a monoglot enterprise. The journal overwhelmingly carried articles focused on English, generally venturing beyond only when contributors discussed cognates and loanwords, or Old Norse; this Anglocentric manifestation of philology recalls the situation of the *Transactions of the Philological Society* in (at least) the mid-nineteenth century, when the journal mostly attracted contributions on the history of English.[69] And yet a search for the word *philology* and its derivatives in the journal is instructive, not least since it was around the 1930s that British scholars, desperate to distance themselves from German nationalist philology, were starting to view the word as a term of opprobrium (while not necessarily abandoning the multi-disciplinary, text-led cultural studies that it could denote).[70] It was usually A. S. C. Ross who

[64] See in particular Rita McWilliams-Tullberg, *Women at Cambridge: A Men's University—Though of a Mixed Type* (London: Gollancz, 1975), pp. 210–11, on Dickins's failed opposition to women gaining full membership of Cambridge University; cf. Hall, '*Leeds Studies in English and Kindred Languages*'.

[65] Scull and Hammond, *The J. R. R. Tolkien Companion and Guide*, rev. edn, 3 vols (London: HarperCollins, 2017), II s.v. *Leeds, University of*.

[66] Gupta, *Philology*.

[67] Jill Fitzgerald, 'A "Clerkes Compleinte": Tolkien and the Division of Lit. and Lang', *Tolkien Studies*, 6 (2009), 41–57.

[68] Craig Fees, *The Imperilled Inheritance: Dialect and Folklife Studies at the University of Leeds 1946–1962* (London: Folklore Society Library, 1991).

[69] Fiona Carolyn Marshall, 'Edwin Guest: Philologist, Historian, and Founder of the Philological Society of London', *Henry Sweet Society for the History of Linguistic Ideas: Bulletin*, 42 (2004), 11–30 (pp. 18–19).

[70] John Walmsley, '"A Term of Opprobrium": Twentieth Century Linguistics and English Philology', in *History of Linguistics 2008: Selected Papers from the 11th International Conference on the History of the Language Sciences*

used the word, explicitly to mean 'the study of language';[71] thus there is a sense in the journal that *philology* no longer embraced literary or cultural-history studies, yet that Ross did not perceive the disciplinary split that was implied by the instituting in 1928 of the International Congress of Linguists as a break from traditional philology. The fact that Dickins began the first volume of *LSE* with Ross's ostentatiously (if hubristically) Saussurian 'Outline of a Theory of Language' implies that he did not recognise a fracturing of 'philology' either, and Ross's various contributions show him drawing on both pre- and post-Saussurian approaches with vigour. Still, the willingness of scholars in the field to accept Ross's linguistic range had its limits. The 1934 volume contained a note on 'A Collection of Books in the Non-Slavonic Languages of Russia' at Leeds which, though unsigned, was clearly by Ross (and conceivably also his wife, the energetic Elizabeth Stefanyja Olsewska, 1907–73). This note undeniably ranged beyond any likely denotation of 'English and kindred languages'; reviewing the volume, C. L. Wrenn (1895–1969) griped that

> the quality of the number is as uneven as is the importance of the subjects treated; and one is tempted to suggest that in a periodical of very limited space the non-Indo-European languages of Russia should have been omitted — even if there is a special interest in the Finno-Ugrian languages (as we are told there is) in Leeds University.[72]

These intersecting tensions between lang. and lit. and between monoglot and polyglot portended future developments in English Studies. Indeed, a three-way Medieval Literature–English Language–Linguistics split played out in the history of the chairs to which Dickins, Wilson, and Ross departed after the War: at Cambridge, Dickins's successor as Elrington and Bosworth Professor of Anglo-Saxon, Dorothy Whitelock (1901–82), brought the Department of Anglo-Saxon from the Faculty of Archaeology and Anthropology into the determinedly literary Faculty of English in 1967, representing the 'medieval literature' dimension of English philological tradition.[73] After moving to Sheffield, R. M. Wilson became Professor of English Language in 1955. Yet at Birmingham, after a few years with the same title, Ross became Professor of Linguistics in 1951.[74]

Likewise, the 1948 splitting of the Leeds English department went three ways, producing not only Departments of English Language and English Literature but also a Department of Phonetics. However hard G. S. Gordon found it to bring the linguistic and literary interests of the Department into natural and friendly association, bringing the linguistic interests into

(ICHOLS XI), Potsdam, 28 August–2 September 2008, ed. by Gerda Hassler and Gesina Volkmann, Studies in the History of the Language Sciences, 115 (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2011), pp. 35–47. One attestation of related sentiments at Leeds is afforded by A. H. Cooper's reminiscence on studying Old English at the Yorkshire College sometime between 1894 and 1899: 'Dr. Schüddekopf, a lecturer in German, took a class in Anglo-Saxon. There was extraordinary difficulty in fitting this into the timetable, and we turned up at some outlandish hour in the morning — 8.30, I believe. My only other recollection of the class is a vague annoyance that it had to be taken by a German, and that the text-book was written by a German and translated by an American'. 'A Student's Retrospect', *The University of Leeds Review*, 1 (1948–49), 176–81 (p. 179).

71 Alan S. C. Ross, 'Outline of a Theory of Language', *Leeds Studies in English and Kindred Languages*, 1 (1932), 1–14 (p. 12).

72 C. L. W[renn], '*Leeds Studies in English and Kindred languages*. No. 3', *The Review of English Studies*, o.s. 14, Issue 54 (April 1938), 243.

73 Michel Lapidge, 'Introduction: The Study of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic in Cambridge, 1878–1999', in *H. M. Chadwick and the Study of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic in Cambridge*, ed. by Michael Lapidge [=*Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies*, 69–70] (Aberystwyth: Department of Welsh, Aberystwyth University, 2015), pp. 1–58 (pp. 31–32).

74 'Chair for a Leeds Lecturer', *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer* (9 July 1955), 12. Stanley, 'Ross'.

natural and friendly association with other linguistic interests was to prove even harder. The raft of new English Language staff appointed by Orton in 1947 had included a graduate of the department, David Abercrombie, with the then unusually specific job title of 'lecturer in phonetics'. Abercrombie left English Language at Leeds after just a year because Edinburgh had offered him the chance to start an independent phonetics department.[75] Coincidentally or otherwise, Leeds then appointed Peter Arthur Desmond MacCarthy (1912–79) to start a separate phonetics department in Leeds in 1948.[76] This began to institutionalise linguistics as a discipline distinct from the language-specific, 'philological' study of language at Leeds. Within a decade of English Language and Literature coming back together as the School of English in 1961, Terence Frederick Mitchell (1919–2007) had been appointed as Professor of Contemporary English (1964), renamed his chair to English Language and General Linguistics (1966), served as head of school (1967–70) and then, in 1971, led the creation of a new Department of Linguistics, taking with him four of the School's five lecturers in English Language and General Linguistics. In 1978 he merged Linguistics with the Department of Phonetics to create the Department of Linguistics and Phonetics, an arrangement which persists to the present day. The identitarian angst (intellectual and institutional) associated with the split was acute.[77]

When Cawley and Alston revived *LSE* and removed 'and kindred languages', it looks like they largely shared Wrenn's critique of *LSE&KL*'s tendency to multilingualism; their editorial policy made a concession to the School's long tradition of Icelandic studies, but they demurred to welcome in Celtic, despite its representation in the School by Bob Thomson. On 15 December 1966, Cawley wrote to Gerhard Nickel, evidently in response to a submission which had some connection with his *Habilitation* thesis *Die Expanded Form im Altenglischen*,[78] that

> the editorial committee here have all read it and have requested me to tell you that it is less suitable, in its present modern linguistic framework, for Leeds Studies in English than (say) for Language or Neuphilologische Mitteilungen […] After all, LSE is primarily concerned with the historical study of English and with medieval literature. I think we should be departing from our aims if we admitted articles on transformative grammar (which is in any case well catered for in other periodicals.)[79]

Thus *Leeds Studies in English* instituted in 1960s scholarly publishing the language/linguistics split that was slowly working through Leeds's post-war departmental structures.

[75] Peter Ladefoged, 'David Abercrombie 1909–1992', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 90 (1996), 239–48 (p. 241).

[76] 'Peter Arthur Desmond MacCarthy (1912–1979)', *English Language Teaching Journal*, 34 (1980), 230–31.

[77] For present purposes, it is enough to note the brooding tone in the University's obituary of Mitchell's successor as head of Linguistics and Phonetics, William (Bill) Robert O'Donnell (1925–2006): 'Bill was not a natural university politician, but he supported Professor Mitchell closely at the time when the independent Department of Linguistics split off from the School of English in 1971, and again when that Department was combined with the Department of Phonetics to form the Department of Linguistics & Phonetics in 1978. He did not love the diplomatic manoeuvres these organisational changes made necessary, but he carried them out with a strong sense of duty': 'Obituary: William R O'Donnell' (8 June 2006), <https://www.leeds.ac.uk/secretariat/obituaries/2006/obituary3918.html>, accessed 1 April 2023.

[78] Kieler Beiträge zur Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 3 (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1966).

[79] Leeds, University of Leeds, Brotherton Library, Special Collections, Archive Series: LUA/DEP/012, Leeds Studies in English boxes, box 3 folder 1.

From English Language to Medieval Studies

While effectively endorsing the split of Linguistics from English Language, Cawley looks in both 1952 and 1967 to have been committed to sustaining the integrity of 'English Language and Medieval Literature', and even to reaching out to post-medieval literature. The 1952 *LSE&KL* volume had a fairly even balance of medieval and dialectological articles; the 1967 volume was quite literary, including significant post-medieval contributions; and the 1968 volume was a *Festschrift* for Harold Orton and firmly dialectological. But from 1969, the contributions, with occasional exceptions, were almost uniformly on medieval topics, mostly literature. The fact that Cawley's co-editors Orton, Alston, and then, in 1971–77, Ellis, were all English Language specialists, is telling: all would have been well placed to solicit material from that field. That the journal swiftly settled to medieval research shows that the editors, potential contributors, or both, implicitly found that the old edifice of English Language and Medieval Literature no longer constituted a coherent research area, and perhaps equally there was also little appetite for a new journal with a *Review of English Studies*-style purview reaching across the whole span of English literature.

Effectively, then, the new series of *LSE* focused on studies — literary and sometimes linguistic — in medieval English. Identifying trends in the changing scope of other journals is beyond our present remit, but it is worth noting that, albeit decades after 1967, *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* undertook a similar refocusing: founded in 1897 as *The Journal of Germanic Philology*, it took its present name in 1903, presumably because, just as *LSE* originally felt the need to spell out its welcome to 'kindred languages', the *Journal of Germanic Philology* found it necessary to spell out that *Germanic* included English. The linguistics element in *JEGP* was never strong, but the journal's chronological coverage of literature ran from the Middle Ages to the present until 2004, when the journal's self-characterisation changed from 'a quarterly devoted to the English, German, and Scandinavian languages and literatures' to add 'focusing on northern European cultures of the Middle Ages'.[80] Once more, there is a sense of a tightening of research fields and a consolidation of the Germanic-speaking Middle Ages as a focus for journals.

Cawley and his successors were also negotiating yet another identitarian and institutional divergence, though, this time between medieval English Studies and a conception of Medieval Studies broader in both its disciplinary and linguistic scope. Like linguistics, the field of Medieval Studies was in 1932 only just starting to form a distinct identity, and was evidently not yet exerting institutional force on the self-perception of people like Dickins, Ross, and Wilson.[81] Even in 1952, Leeds's Medieval Group was far from being an institution. But the picture in 1966 was rather different. Meredith speculates on Cawley's return to Leeds as a professor and his relationship with *LSE*:

[80] Achsah Guibbory and Marianne E. Kalinke, '*JEGP* at One Hundred Years', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 96 (1997), 481–85; cf. C. Stephen Jaeger, 'Introduction', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 105 (2006), 1–4.

[81] The handiest Anglophone case-study for the emergence of Medieval Studies as a recognised field is the historiography of the Mediaeval (now Medieval) Academy of America, founded in 1925, followed by its journal *Speculum* in 1926: George R. Coffman, 'The Mediaeval Academy of America: Historical Background and Prospect', *Speculum*, 1 (1926), 5–18; William J. Courtenay, 'The Virgin and the Dynamo: The Growth of Medieval Studies in North America: 1870–1930', in *Medieval Studies in North America: Past, Present, and Future*, ed. by Francis G. Gentry and Christopher Kleinhenz (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1982), pp. 5–22 and, in the same volume, Luke Wenger, 'The Medieval Academy and Medieval Studies in North America', pp. 23–40. In England, Dickins's old teacher at Cambridge, and predecessor as Elrington and Bosworth Professor

> whether he then thought 'now's the time to revive it', and if he did, why, I don't exactly know; but it's kind of tied up, I think, with what became the Centre for Medieval Studies: he and John Le Patourel in History got together to create the Centre, and I think this was all part of a feeling that Medieval Studies needed to get a strong establishment in Leeds. Not just that — the Medieval Group too, which when we first came was very lively indeed, and that again was something which Le Patourel and Arthur were much involved with.

For this reason, and given that *LSE* has now been reincarnated as *Leeds Medieval Studies*, one wonders whether Cawley might not have chosen to create a Medieval Studies journal from the start. But whereas the Institute for Medieval Studies is today well embedded at Leeds, while individually the Schools of English and of Languages, Cultures and Societies host few medievalists, these were not the contours in the late 1960s. Meredith again:

> when I came, in 1969, I wasn't I think aware of the changes that were taking place — of the gradual diminution of Medieval Studies in the School of English. You know, I came; there was Arnold Taylor in Icelandic; there was Doyle-Davidson who was doing Anglo-Saxon art and archaeology; there was Bob Thomson who was in Celtic Studies — a huge range of medieval stuff — and it just seemed, you know, that this was it, this was how it was going to be. Looking back, I can see that there was pressure, partly from Linguistics, because that was quite a new element which had been set up, and that was in the School of English; and what I was less aware of, I suppose, was the extent to which modern literature was extending and expanding and, er, getting belligerent — there was a touch of that. There was that sense that everything — the status quo — was fixed, and that was how it was going to be.

Meanwhile, the Graduate Centre for Medieval Studies, 'I think, was thought to be a bit of a lame duck to start with — I don't think it was thought to be anything very much'. The function of the Centre was specifically to host a cross-departmental master's degree, and the University's main forum for medievalist staff to exchange ideas remained Medieval Group.

These topographies, and the ways in which they started to shift, are apparent in the remarkable work that took place on medieval drama at Leeds in the 1970s. Cawley and Meredith were both leading figures in this area, and other members of the School of English were involved. *LSE* published significant work on English drama on an annual basis; LTM published volumes in the same area in 1974 and 1985;[82] and, perhaps most impressively, the team founded Leeds Texts and Monographs Facsimiles: New Series, which, across eight volumes from 1973 to 1984 published facsimiles of most of the major manuscripts of medieval English drama.[83] At the same time, as Meredith recalls,

of Anglo-Saxon, Hector Monroe Chadwick (1870–1947), had founded the idiosyncratic Department of Anglo-Saxon and Kindred Studies in the Faculty of Archaeology and Anthropology in 1927; but the department did not yet think of its field as Medieval Studies (if indeed it does today). The Oxford-based Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature and its journal *Medium Ævum* were constituted in the same year as *LSE*, 1932.

[82] Merle Fifield, *The Rhetoric of Free Will: The Five-Action Structure of the English Morality Play*, Leeds Texts and Monographs, 5 (Leeds: University of Leeds, School of English, 1974); *Staging the Chester Cycle: Lectures Given on the Occasion of the Production of the Cycle at Leeds in 1983*, ed. by David Mills, Leeds Texts and Monographs, 9 (Leeds: University of Leeds, School of English, 1985).

[83] 'Robin Alston has asked me to act as general editor of a series of photographic facsimiles of medieval drama MSS. in England to be published by Scolar Press', wrote Cawley to Arthur Brown at University College London on 22 April 1969, but it seems unlikely that Cawley was merely acting at Alston's behest; Leeds, University of Leeds, Brotherton Library, Special Collections, Archive Series: LUA/DEP/012, Leeds Studies in English boxes, box 3 folder 1.

> the great thing as far as medieval drama was concerned […] was that the whole University — all the humanities side anyway — could produce somebody who was interested in medieval drama. I mean, we had somebody in German, somebody in French, somebody in Italian, somebody in Spanish, and it was absolutely amazing. So my sense of a community within Leeds was very much based in medieval drama — it was brilliant! I mean, absolutely wonderful. But it didn't have any impact on Leeds Studies — Leeds Studies was very much English.

A key figure here is Lynette (Lyne) R. Muir (1930–2007). 'She was very lively, good with students: it was people like her that made it [the Centre for Medieval Studies] a force to be reckoned with'. Muir and the Wednesday Lunchtime Group met weekly in termtime and arranged a four-day international colloquium on medieval drama in September 1974 that led three years later to the formation of the Société Internationale pour l'étude du théâtre médiéval,[84] and in 1975 Jane Oakshott (1946–), a graduate of the CMS, devised and directed a thirty-six-pageant performance of the York Cycle of mystery plays with the support of the Wednesday Lunchtime Group on campus as part of the centenary anniversary of the foundation of the Yorkshire College, Leeds University's principal institutional ancestor.[85] These activities were under the auspices of the Graduate Centre for Medieval Studies, which was thus starting to position itself as a hub not only for interdepartmental teaching, but also interdepartmental and international research collaboration. In 1977, Muir became the Centre's first female director, removed the word 'Graduate' from the name, and in 1979 won a dedicated room, christened 'The Le Patourel Room', in a one-time church building (currently the home of the University's Workshop Theatre). The colloquium's proceedings were edited by Rastall and emerged, with impressive alacrity, in 1975, beginning a new book series, Leeds Medieval Studies. Produced as a camera-ready typescript and printed by Leeds's University Printing Service, it foreshadowed production methods for *LSE*, and was followed in 1977 by *The Tristan Legend: Texts from Northern and Eastern Europe in Modern English Translation*, edited by Joyce Hill (1947–), and a 1981 edition of the French play *The Passion de Semur* by Muir and Peter Durbin, based on Durbin's 1974 Leeds M.Phil. thesis.[86] As Muir's obituary puts it, 'that essential and, it is not too much to say, at the time revolutionary emphasis on the value of crossing national boundaries and on practical drama was at the centre of her vision'.[87] This fits with the overall sense that the Centre for Medieval Studies had an interdisciplinary, international remit, and that its role was to host students and research to which that breadth was

[84] The organising committee is named in the proceedings as Muir (French), Alan Fletcher (English), Meredith (English), Oakshott (French), Richard Rastall (Music), Margaret Sleeman (Spanish and Portuguese) and John Tailby (German): *The Drama of Medieval Europe: Proceedings of the Colloquium Held at the University of Leeds 10–13 September 1974*, Leeds Medieval Studies, 1 (Leeds: Graduate Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Leeds, 1975), p. iv.

[85] Jane Oakshott, *Centenary Play-cycle and Fair: Centenary of the Yorkshire College of Science 1874–1974: York Mystery-cycle in the Modernised Text by J. S. Purvis. Organised by Jane Oakshott for the Graduate Centre for Medieval Studies in the University of Leeds* (Leeds: University of Leeds, 1975) (Leeds, Brotherton Library, Leeds Archive of Vernacular Culture PRI/2/391). For Oakshott see further Margaret Rogerson, *Playing a Part in History: The York Mysteries, 1951–2006*, Studies in Early English Drama, 10 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), pp. 180–83 *et passim*.

[86] Muir also aspired to publish a *Classified Index of Medieval Drama* in the series, which eventually transmuted into her 1995 Cambridge University Press monograph *The Biblical Drama of Medieval Europe*: see *The Drama*, pp. 93, 101.

[87] 'Lynette Muir: Full Obituary and Funeral Address' (6 July 2007), <https://www.leeds.ac.uk/secretariat/obituaries/2007/obituary4891.html>, accessed 1 April 2023.

central, while individual departments — most of which essentially shared their names with A-level subjects and recruited school-leavers on that basis — should house work in traditional silos of disciplines and languages.

In retrospect, Muir's activities clearly indicate the direction in which Medieval Studies at Leeds was heading, but the path from the 1970s to the present was not a straight one. By the 1980s, as state funding per student plummeted, staff were stretched.[88] Muir took early retirement in 1983, to be succeeded as director of the Centre for Medieval Studies by Meredith, but by then he already had plenty of other editorial work on his plate. In Meredith's words, *LSE*,

> I think, was very much, to start with, Arthur's own baby, you know, and maybe he, maybe others felt — there's a sort of emerging feeling at the back of my mind that I felt — that there ought to be a slightly broader-based editorship.

At the same time, Meredith wonders if Cawley was himself getting fed up with editing. 'This fascsimile series is becoming something of a burden to me — a sign of age!', Cawley wrote to Donald C. Baker (co-editor of the 1976 Facsimile 3, *The Digby Plays*) on 14 April 1977. Whatever the motivations, Cawley successfully weaned both the journal and LTM from his own editorship. The 1975 volume of the journal was co-edited by Betty Hill and Stanley Ellis, with Meredith as assistant editor, an arrangement which held for three years. A document dated 6 June 1978 spells out a kind of constitution, specifying the composition of an editorial committee, an editorial board, and the offices of editor ('who will normally have acted as Assistant Editor […] and will serve for a period of three years'), business editor, and assistant editor. Accordingly, Meredith edited the 1978–81 numbers, and chaired its editorial committee from 1985 until around his retirement in 1998. Meredith does not remember the editorship as an imposition: 'it was good — I and others were probably glad to be involved'. The editing of *LSE* and LTM proceeded apace, but, although hopes to continue it persisted for many years, the drama facsimile series came to an end with Cawley's departure. From the mid-1980s into the mid-1990s, Meredith led efforts to develop locally, and co-ordinate nationally, cheap editions of medieval English texts for students. These efforts only produced a couple of Leeds publications (bearing 'Leeds Studies in English' as a series-name),[89] though similar projects show that the idea was a good one.[90] It is no surprise, then, that the fledgling Leeds Medieval Studies series did not survive Muir's departure. By the late 1970s, though, *LSE* was firmly in place as a journal for medieval English and, every few years, Old Norse/Icelandic, and its intellectual agenda for the next few decades was set.

[88] Dixon, 'The University of Leeds'.

[89] *Sir Orfeo and Sir Launfal*, ed. by Lesley Johnson and Elizabeth Williams, Leeds Studies in English (Leeds: The University of Leeds, School of English, 1984); cf. Joyce Hill, A. R. Taylor, and R. L. Thomson, *Beginning Old English: Materials for a One-Year Course*, Leeds Studies in English (Leeds: The University of Leeds, School of English, 1977), which names Cawley and Ellis as 'General Editors' of the series; *The Towneley Cycle*, ed. by Peter Meredith, 3 vols ([no place]: [no publisher], 1989–90), a comb-bound glossed modern-spelling edition.

[90] Similar student editions and translations, first led by Gabriel Turville-Petre, became a success for the UK-based Viking Society for Northern Research from 1951. Likewise the series Durham and St Andrews Medieval Texts successfully produced four volumes in 1978–83 while its successor Durham Medieval Texts produced as many as eight into the mid-1990s, albeit including some reprints from the earlier series. And from 1990 for the TEAMS Middle English Texts Series by the USA-based collaboration of the Teaching Association for Medieval Studies, University of Rochester, and Medieval Institute Publications of Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, has thrived.

THE EXPOSITORY TEMPORALE POEMS OF THE SOUTH ENGLISH LEGENDARY

By O.S. PICKERING

With the publication of Manfred Görlach's *The Textual Tradition of the South English Legendary*,[1] the textual complexity of the most popular Middle English collection of versified saints' lives has begun to yield its secrets. Progress, too, has recently been made on the associated *temporale* narratives, that is to say, the biblically-based stories, centring on the Life of Christ.[2] Much work remains to be done on the collection, but meanwhile the group of expository poems on *temporale* feasts and fasts - Epiphany, Lent, Easter, and the like - can usefully repay closer study. The problems to be solved include the stage at which these poems were first associated with the *sanctorale* collection, their original and subsequent positioning in relation to it, and the reasons for their incomplete coverage of the feasts and fasts. Analysing their place in the legendary can, in addition, help us to define more precisely the early development of the *South English Legendary* as a whole.

In what follows I first describe the two main states of the *South English Legendary* (*SEL*), the *Z* and *A* versions (1). I then list the expository *temporale* poems in *A* (the standard version), and show that the peculiarities of their selection and positioning among the saints' lives are unparalleled in contemporary Latin legendaries (2). However, an examination of the treatment of the four poems on movable feasts in an alternative manuscript tradition, identifiable with *Z*, leads to the conclusion that these poems were originally grouped separately, outside the *sanctorale* cycle (3). Textual evidence confirms that the *A* version's treatment and texts of these poems are unoriginal (4). I then turn to the poems on the fixed feasts of Circumcision and Epiphany, showing that the combined version in the early Laud MS cannot confidently be assigned to *Z*, and that the standard texts probably originated with *A* as part of the revision on the basis of the *Legenda aurea* (5). It consequently appears that the "*A* redaction" (as regards the expository *temporale* poems) was very likely the work of two separate revisers, one attempting to fit *Z*'s movable feasts into the cycle, the other supplying *Circumcision* and *Epiphany* as well as much *sanctorale* material (6). "*Z*" must also have comprised two stages, for the preliminary group of movable feasts is unlikely to have been a feature of the *SEL* as first conceived (7). These factors help to explain the unusual treatment of the *temporale* festivals in *Z* and *A*. Later *SEL* manuscripts do little to fill in the gaps. The expository *temporale* poems seem never to have been regarded as of great importance: the popularity of the associated *temporale* narratives may have contributed to the lack of interest (8).

Figure 4. Camera-ready, typewritten text, here on p. 1 of volume 10 (1978) of *LSE*

'By scholars, for scholars': the business of publishing

After the Scolar Press, 1977–2008

With the intellectual scope of *LSE* sketched out, we turn to the journal's day-to-day running, and the important relationship this has with questions of the accessibility of research that have become salient in the last couple of decades. Compared with commentary on the journal's intellectual aspects, both oral histories and the journal's published editorials have quite a lot to say about the quotidian side of publishing. For example, when asked why Cawley might have felt the need to reinstitute *LSE*, Meredith recalls him complaining about the length of time that journals took to turn submissions around — implicitly Cawley and Alston believed that they could do better. The prominence of such mundane, if not banal, concerns may seem odd given the highbrow character of the publications, but they remind us of the importance of the material and the institutional to histories of the Republic of Letters. From 1966 to 1972, *LSE* and related publications were photoset and printed via Alston's company Scolar Press. From 1973 onwards the journal was printed, at first by Scolar Press, from camera-ready copy; in 1978 printing was moved to the University's own printing service, an arrangement that lasted up to and including the 1999 volume. Though prompted primarily by an economic challenge, this transition from Scolar Press marks a crucial development in the journal's character.

Although the marginal cost of each extra volume in a print run was relatively low, the labour of typesetting and to some extent the cost of materials still made printing capital-intensive — especially against the backdrop of the oil shocks, high inflation and general industrial unrest of the 1970s, not to mention financial crises in the UK university sector, including at Leeds.[91] On 16 May 1974, A. S. C. Ross wrote to Cawley asking if his 1937 and 1940 LTM volumes could be reprinted. Cawley replied on 13 June:

> I have discussed your proposal […] with Stanley Ellis, my co-editor who is largely responsible for looking after the business side of LSE and Leeds Texts and Monographs. He tells me that we just haven't got the money to reprint earlier volumes in either of our Leeds series. Printing costs have gone up so enormously that we are struggling to keep our heads above water.

On 19 November, Larry Clopper wrote to Cawley, evidently asking whether LTM would be interested in publishing what became *Records of Early English Drama: Chester*, published by the University of Toronto Press in 1979. 'I am very sorry to have to tell you this, but *LSE* finances are now in a perilous state, and we shall need some help from you if we are to publish your Chester documents', Cawley replied on 2 December. Scolar Press itself was short of capital: Alston sold it to Bemrose Corporation for this reason;[92] 'all the proceeds from one published volume are used to pay for the next volume', Cawley explained on 17 September 1979. 'The cost of type-setting seemed likely to put the whole Leeds Studies enterprise out of business', recalled Ellis.[93] The approach taken by *LSE* in the face of these financial pressures set the tone for future policy. Rather than seeking dramatically to raise prices or to find an alternative commercial printer (*The Journal of Commonwealth Literature* had begun at Heinemann Educational Books, while *Northern History* used the Leeds-based

[91] Dixon, 'The University of Leeds', 315–16.
[92] McKitterick, 'Alston'.
[93] Stanley Ellis, 'Arthur Cawley', p. 2.

W. S. Maney & Son, as for a time did the *International Medieval Bibliography*), *LSE* turned to new technology and in-house expertise.

Keeping the journal in-house enabled some financial flexibility: 'Arthur was able […] to revive *Leeds Studies in English*' by, Ellis reported, 'setting a subscription price per volume instead of an annual rapidly inadequate sum'.[94] But technological innovation was also key. Alston's enthusiasm for innovative printing technology had set the mood here.[95] In this he was succeeded by Ellis, who, as well as taking pride in *LSE* generally,[96] was enthusiastic about technology; a letter of 5 June 1995 shows him still providing detailed specifications for a new Apple Macintosh computer for *LSE* use, twelve years after his retirement. But at least some of the groundwork for innovation had also been laid by the series Leeds Medieval Studies, which started in 1975 and used the University Printing Service and, for the first volume, type-written camera-ready copy. It is in this phase of *LSE* history that Pam Armitage comes into her own. Typing up the copy for the new series of *LSE* ahead of typesetting was, according to Meredith, first the work of Cawley's secretary Christine M. Eastwood and then her successor, Armitage. Armitage reports that she would work on *LSE* as well as Yorkshire Dialect Society publications in her University hours when possible, or by coming into work early or on holidays and being paid overtime by the journal itself when necessary to get publications out on schedule (which the team did not always manage; 'the Orton Festschrift volume is only now going to Press', wrote Ellis on 18 November 1968, perilously close to the end of the year of publication, eventually saying 'it is hoped that the eventual appearance of this birthday present compensates for its lateness' in the volume's preface, dated September 1969; 'I should be grateful if you would correct and return the enclosed galleys *without delay by air mail*' reads a Cawley letter of 27 June 1973, with a footnoted 'Please!'). Pam also handled the subscriptions and mailouts for the *LSE* stable. 'I probably shouldn't say this, but my heart sank when the copies arrived in the School', she says: at the time, School staff each had a tiny office near the University's then new and today still brutalist Roger Stevens Building, so her office would be crammed with volumes till she had finished packaging and dispatching them. 'Then cheques would roll back in and Stanley would bank them'.

Armitage associates the real beginning of her work at *LSE*, however, with the end of the Scolar Press days, as it became her job to produce camera-ready copy — a task requiring great care, not to mention artistry and craft. The shift to camera-ready copy was facilitated by the arrival of the 'IBM golf ball'. Everyone interviewed for this article reminisces about this fabled device, which was also the subject of at least one enquiry in the correspondence.[97] Precisely what model of IBM Selectric typewriter *Leeds Studies* was deploying we do not know, but all informants marvel at its capacity to hold a removable typeface element which could be replaced with alternative character sets, enabling the typing of the full range of characters needed by the journal; for Armitage, working from home meant taking the 'golfball' home. The production of camera-ready copy still involved literal cutting-and-pasting though: if she made a mistake, Armitage would have to retype the line, or several lines, and stick the corrected text on top, and authors' corrections to proofs were implemented in the same way.

[94] 'Arthur Cawley: 1913–1993', p. 3.
[95] 'Arthur Cawley: 1913–1993', p. 3.
[96] 'Arthur Cawley: 1913–1993', pp. 3–4.
[97] Attested by a now anonymous reply of 15 December 1983 to a question from Paul Bibire (1945–, then at St Andrews).

Armitage remained in the English Language and Medieval section of the School of English until autumn 1983, when she left work to concentrate on parenting; but she enjoyed the happy, informal environment of *LSE* and continued to produce the journal: 'I got on very well with everyone', which was 'the reason I stayed as long as I did'. 1986 saw the introduction of a logo for the journal, based on a panel from an early medieval cross-shaft from Otley Parish Church, and in that year Armitage, along with the editors of the time, Elizabeth Williams and Joyce Hill, oversaw a transition to word-processed text,[98] with the new format being finalised in 1991 with the introduction of a book reviews section.[99] For this purpose, *LSE* bought an Apple Macintosh computer for Armitage to use, and she recalls an entertaining drive down to St Albans with Ellis to buy it. The Mac lacked the special characters needed by the journal, and the team had to buy the programme Fontographer to design them. Type design 'was far too complicated' as far as Armitage was concerned, but her husband Mike set to it and with great effort eventually produced the characters they needed, meaning that in this period *LSE* had a partly bespoke typeface. During the 1990s, Armitage returned to work, in a secretarial role at her children's old primary school, and ended her *LSE* labours; but by this stage desktop publishing had advanced enough that editors themselves — variously Andrew Wawn, Lesley Johnson (1957–), Catherine Batt (1960–), and Alfred Hiatt (1972–) — could handle the production of camera-ready copy, paying postgraduate students to help with the office work and also benefiting from School of English clerical support.

Compared with professionally typeset journals, *LSE* had a bit of a homespun feel from 1977 through to 2008. In the latter part of that period, Microsoft Word's shaky justification and kerning shows; the use of endnotes rather than footnotes — useful when copy was still produced on a typewriter — was inconvenient for the reader, and the straight apostrophes and quotation marks were particularly hard on the eye. But, since medieval English-orientated journals in the UK were few, *LSE* filled an important niche. Meredith recalls the upsides of in-house production more than the downsides: 'it wasn't the perfect answer, I don't think, but it did mean that everything was under our control, so that we could — no, Pam, Pam would type it up, and we would check it and go through it and then everything could just be printed off'. This enthusiasm for academic editorial control overlapped with a commitment to academic quality; in Ellis's words, printed in 1981, Cawley 'insisted that cheaper should not mean shabbier productions and we can be proud today that the production of the works is still attractive in spite of being produced at much less cost'.[100] In their efforts to keep costs down, the editors evidently shopped around: after using the Scolar Press in the 1970s, printing of LTM moved to the Moxon Press in 1984–85, the University Printing Service from 1987–95, and then Smith Settle in the late 1990s. As Ellis also said, regarding the drama facsimiles, Cawley's

> contacts in libraries and universities throughout the world have always been close, personal and happy […] Few others would have received permission to reproduce these materials so readily and it was surely the knowledge that the request was made in the interests of scholarship that caused librarians and authorities to respond favourably.[101]

[98] Elizabeth Williams, 'Editorial Note', *Leeds Studies in English*, n. s. 17 (1986), [viii].

[99] Joyce Hill, 'Editorial Note', *Leeds Studies in English*, n. s. 19 (1988), vi; 'Editorial Note', *Leeds Studies in English*, n. s. 21 (1990), [vii]; 'Editorial Note', *Leeds Studies in English*, n. s. 22 (1991), [iii].

[100] Stanley Ellis, 'Arthur Cawley', p. 2.

[101] 'Arthur Cawley', p. 2.

Snake Rings in *Deor* and *Vǫlundarkviða*

Robert Cox

The troubles of Welund, alluded to in the first section of *Deor*, are relatively well-understood, given fuller versions of the legend in *Vǫlundarkviða* and *Þiðriks saga*, and thanks to graphic corroboration of the story on the Franks casket and elsewhere.[1]

> Welund him be wurman wræces cunnade,
> anhydig eorl, earfoða dreag,
> hæfde him to gesiþþe sorge ond longaþ,
> wintercealde wræce, wean oft onfond
> siþþan hine Niþhad on nede legde,
> swoncre seonobende, on syllan monn.[2]
> [Welund 'among snakes' endured torment,
> the resolute hero, endured troubles,
> had for company sorrow and frustration,
> wintercold wretchedness, often felt woe
> after Niþhad laid fetters on him,
> supple sinew-bonds, upon the good man.][3]

Yet the phrase 'be wurman' in the opening verse leaves editors and translators, like Welund, in some difficulty. My purpose in this paper is to explore the nature and extent of the difficulty and to offer evidence in support of a reading originally suggested by Kemp Malone, but not widely adopted by subsequent editors or translators.

Even the preposition 'be' in 'be wurman' is troublesome. 'Be' cannot have instrumental meaning ('by means of, using') in this context, but its meaning can be broadly locative ('near, in the presence of'), circumstantial ('in the matter of'), or

Figure 5. Camera-ready, word-processed text, here on p. 1 of volume 22 (1991) of *LSE*

LSE, then, stands as an interesting example of a fairly prominent academic journal that has for decades favoured maximising in-house production at the expense of professional typesetting in order to maintain editorial control and low costs.

2009 and moving towards free access

From a technical point of view, the final major development for *LSE* before the transition to *Leeds Medieval Studies* can be associated with 2009, when a conspiracy of developments came to a head. Locally, falling numbers of medievalists in English and the withdrawal of School administrative support for the journal intersected with the remarkable development of the Leeds Institute for Medieval Studies. Globally, technological advances concerning desktop publishing, print-on-demand, and online distribution intersected with the extensive privatisation of scholarly journal publishing and the emergence of open-access publishing. In the background too was the fact that the UK government audit of research, the Research Assessment Exercise (known since 2008 as the Research Excellence Framework), while reliant on the work of academic editors and peer-reviewers, offers infamously little incentive for this labour.

The attrition of Medieval Studies in the School of English at Leeds began in the early 1980s. Reflecting in 1982 on the English curriculum of the 1930s, Douglas Jefferson wrote:

> it was assumed that at eighteen we were ready for Old English and Middle English, a reasonable viewpoint since we had read enough literature of other periods at school to have a basis of appreciation. I wonder whether that assumption is justified today! The whole question of 'Language' (that is, the English Language and Mediaeval part of the syllabus) is, or was[,] so political that sentiments like these could cause acute distress and acrimony in staff discussions.[102]

As financial pressures on UK universities mounted and members of Leeds's School of English tussled over a gradual shift in the weighting of the curriculum from language to literature, and from the study of pre-1900 to post-1900 texts, the expansive title of what was effectively a journal of medieval English literature started to rankle. Andrew Wawn, who joined the School in 1983 and was involved in editing *LSE* from 1988 to his retirement in 2009, recalls a meal in the 1980s with Inga-Stina Ewbank (1932–2004, who served in the School 1985–97) and Sally Shuttleworth (1952–, in the School from 1983 to the mid-1990s) at which Shuttleworth pointedly asked why the journal was called *LSE*; 'as I said, sourly, at least *Leeds Studies in English* made a profit'.[103]

Keeping *LSE* editions emerging on time was not light work, and the three-year rota for editors shifted from 2003 to a more *ad hoc* co-editing arrangement. Recalling how article-collections in book-form, produced by commercial academic publishers, began to vie with journals for the attention of researchers in the 1990s, Andrew Wawn comments that 'my ignoble single aim was to make sure it didn't die on my watch'. That said, looking at the publications themselves, the period from the later 1980s through into the early twenty-first

[102] 'English Studies at Leeds: 1930–33', p. 6.

[103] For further glimpses of developments at this time, see Andrew Wawn, 'Foreword', in *Constructing Nations, Reconstructing Myth: Essays in Honour of T. A. Shippey*, Making the Middle Ages, 9 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), xiii–xvii; Óli Kári Ólason, '"Það er ekkert gaman hér í bullandi sólskini": Viðtal við Dr. Andrew Wawn', *Sagnir*, 20 (1999), 18–21; Þröstur Helgason, 'Viktoríumenn með víkingablóð', *Lesbók Morgunblaðsins: Menning/listir* (18 August 2001), 4–5.

The Caesura and the Rhythmic Shape of the A-Verse in the Poems of the Alliterative Revival

Noriko Inoue and Myra Stokes

Introduction

The metre of Middle English alliterative verse is a subject which remained relatively neglected for much of the last century until a new impetus was given to it by the work of, most notably, Hoyt Duggan, whose findings regarding the rules governing the b-verse (the second half of the alliterative line) have provided a persuasive and thought-provoking focus for renewed interest in the subject.[1] Since the structure of the a-verse is now attracting attention, the present seems a timely moment in which to open the subject of the caesura: for whether or not the caesura requires to be audibly signalled by a beat at the conclusion of the a-verse is a matter that bears significantly on any theories of the metrical shape of the first half of the line. The existence of such a stress at the caesura has usually been implicitly assumed, though not often explicitly argued, and has never until recently been seriously questioned.

The fact of the caesura itself is accepted by metrists of nearly all persuasions — necessarily so, since the distinction between the a-verse and the b-verse (which forms the basis of nearly all metrical discussion of alliterative verse) presupposes some perceived division of the line into separable halves. Norman Davis represented the orthodox view when he stated that 'the long line is divided by a natural pause, or caesura, into two half-lines each of which normally contains two lifts.'[2] Duggan's work also of course rests on the assumption that 'the alliterative line is made up of two distinct half-lines (verses) divided by a caesura which usually corresponds to a phrasal boundary'; 'though some recent metrists and editors have expressed doubt about the existence of the caesura and thus of the half-line, manuscript evidence strongly supports the notion that the long line is composed of two cola separated by a metrical caesura'.[3] Some editors of Middle English alliterative verse have in fact continued the convention, regularly observed in editions of Old English verse, of presenting the text with

[1] For a recent and convenient summary of Duggan's research, see his 'Metre, Stanza, Vocabulary and Dialect', in *A Companion to the Gawain-Poet*, ed. by Derek Brewer and Jonathan Gibson (Cambridge: Brewer, 1997), pp. 221–42.

[2] *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, ed. by J. R. R. Tolkien and E. V. Gordon, 2nd rev. edn. by Norman Davis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 148.

[3] 'Metre, Stanza', p. 228; the 'doubt' is that of generative metrists such as S. J. Keyser, A. Schiller and R. Sapora, who sometimes deny the existence of the caesura (*ibid.*, n. 12).

Figure 6. PDF text typeset using LaTeX, here on p. 1 of volume 40 (2009) of *LSE*

century reads as a time of stability for both *LSE* and LTM. The latter series steadily produced volumes up to 2000 — variously editions, facsimiles, conference proceedings, and single-author studies — which, for the specialist audiences whom they served, provided high value for money while doing their bit to keep the *Leeds Studies* operation in the black (when the journal's account was renamed to *Leeds Medieval Studies*, in 2020, it stood at £18,331.07).

By the twenty-first century, with dominance in the School's expertise located firmly in post-1900 literature (and department budgets temporarily cushioned by a shift in funding to high student fees facilitated by a shaky scaffolding of state-backed private loans), irritation at the title of *LSE* was succeeded, among staff who had heard of the journal at all, by bemusement. In 2006–7, the number of permanent, non-emeritus medievalists in the School of English stood at four: Rory McTurk (appointed 1978), Andrew Wawn (appointed 1983), Catherine Batt (appointed 1995) and Alfred Hiatt (appointed 2002). In 2007, McTurk retired, being replaced by Alaric Hall (1979–). This was the last like-for-like replacement of a permanent medievalist in English up to the present time: in 2009, during a period of budgetary austerity in the School, Wawn retired and Hiatt left for Queen Mary University of London, and neither was replaced by a permanent medievalist. The retirement of Oliver Pickering from Leeds University Library in the same year,[104] and Mary Swan's departure from the Institute for Medieval Studies the next,[105] further reduced the Faculty's capacity for medieval English teaching. Although a budget line for one medievalist was kept open for some years through a series of temporary appointments (most of whom took other positions before completing their contracts),[106] by 2016 the School (and higher tiers of the University, which took a growing hand in hiring decisions) had shifted hiring and curricular planning away from a period-based conception of the discipline and towards thematic appointments which, while not in theory opposed to recruiting medievalists, also did not prove very conducive to it. When Hall accepted the editorship of *LSE* for the 2009 volume, it was theoretically possible that he would be starting a traditional three-year stint; in the event, he became by default the journal's longest-running editor.

The degree to which School of English administrative staff time has been allowed to *LSE* business over the years is not entirely clear, but up to 2009 there was a general sense that supporting the journal administratively was implicitly as natural a part of the School's work as supporting the academic work of editing. In the early part of the century, the role of *LSE* secretary passed between various unsung heroes on the School administrative staff — records include Juliette Taylor, who handed over to Louise Ward in summer 2004, who handed over to Zoë Thompson by March 2005, who was already sharing the work with Lawrence Stephen Cook by summer 2005. Having taken up the reins, Stephen handled subscriptions and mailouts with fabulous diligence. He spent around 20–30% of his time on the journal, latterly with extra support from Liz Mylod, then a Ph.D. student in the Institute for Medieval Studies, paid for from the journal's income (2008–2012). Cook's support was withdrawn at the end of the 2008–9 academic year (and Cook retired in 2010).[107] When the seventeenth

[104] Janet Burton, William Marx, and Veronica O'Mara, 'Editorial Introduction', *Leeds Studies in English*, n. s. 41 (2010), x–xvi (pp. x–xiv).

[105] John Anderson, Alaric Hall, Joyce Hill, and Elaine Treharne, 'Mary Swan (18 December 1963–19 October 2020)', *Leeds Medieval Studies*, 1 (2021), 102–9.

[106] Cathy Hume 2009–10 (reviews editor 2009–12), Slavica Ranković 2013–14, James Paz 2014, Venetia Bridges 2015–16.

[107] Presented with the opportunity to consider hosting the Institute for Medieval Studies as part of the School of English during the 2010 Faculty audit of the Institute, the same head opined that it was best closed down.

volume of LTM emerged in 2009, it was already an outlier, since the previous one had come out in 2000, but in retrospect it was definitively the last in the series.

The obvious response to these pressures would have been to bring *LSE* to an end; the editorial team was clear that *pietas* alone was not enough to keep it running. The main attraction to Hall of maintaining the journal was a commitment to the free-access publication of research, and a belief that the young, online-only free-access journals that were springing up to fill this need in Anglophone publishing lacked the status to promote free-access publishing effectively: their novelty made it harder for them to attract researchers who prioritised respectability of venue over accessibility or contributors for whom accessibility was not even a variable that they would think to consider.[108] *LSE* had the advantage of a reasonable degree of venerability and an editorial tradition conducive to exploring free-access publishing models.

The motivation of taking *LSE* in a free-access direction foreclosed the second most obvious response to the withdrawal of School of English support, which would have been to accept one of several enquiries from publishers seeking to acquire *LSE* and to give it a subscription-only online incarnation as part of the great enclosure of humanities journal publishing that unfolded from the 1990s onwards. By the early twenty-first century, the most profitable journals had largely been acquired, and publishers were competing over journals promising narrower margins, *LSE* among them. The first such enquiry came to the journal in 2007 from Maney, by that time the publisher rather than merely the printer of *Northern History*. The *LSE* editorial board had weighed up the pros and cons of handing over to a commercial publisher at that stage and seen no great benefits to diverting the journal's revenue and a measure of editorial independence — a decision reflecting the journal's long-standing by-scholars-for-scholars approach. (Maney was acquired in 2015 by Taylor & Francis, one of the world's four dominant academic journal publishers, itself a subsidiary of Informa Plc.)[109] After some shopping around, the board found *LSE* an arrangement with Abramis Academic, the publishing wing of a small print-on-demand business, whereby Abramis handled printing and Stephen Cook's one-time role of subscriptions and distribution but were happy for the editors to have a free hand in typesetting and online distribution. Of the cover price, one third was to pay basic costs, one third income for Abramis, and one third income for *LSE*. After checking the value-for-money of contracting out digitisation, the journal paid a team of postgraduates to digitise the *LSE* back-catalogue, and a fledging digital repository run by Leeds University Library (then called *Leeds University Digital Objects* or *LUDOS*, now *Digital Library*) agreed to host the journal before the University had started contemplating its own publishing operation, the White Rose University Press.[110] With perhaps undue timidity, *LSE* sought to sustain hard-copy subscriptions and therefore revenue by imposing a two-year embargo on online publication, which prevented inclusion in the Directory of Open Access Journals. But a major step had still been taken. Unable to face being the editor of a journal with straight apostrophes, Hall also moved typesetting to LaTeX, sometimes employing postgraduate editorial assistants to undertake this work, while Batt continued to chair the editorial board.

[108] Cf. Alaric Hall, 'Editorial Preface', *Leeds Studies in English*, n. s. 40 (2009), [iii].

[109] The most recent of these enquiries came when the University of Leeds, in collaboration with York and Sheffield, set up the White Rose University Press in 2016, supposedly to support open-access publication. But the press's article-processing fees made this an impractical route for a humanities journal focused on publishing research that is not generally funded by large grants.

[110] <http://digital.library.leeds.ac.uk/view/lse/>, accessed 8 May 2023.

From *LSE* to *LMS*

Viewed in retrospect, the emergence of the Leeds Graduate Centre for Medieval Studies in the later 1960s, with its Europeanist curriculum and its enthusiasm for studying drama through practice, seems obviously of a piece with the wider questioning of pre-War orthodoxies. When asked, Meredith did not remember any self-consciously political agenda for the CMS:

> you're absolutely right, there were things going on: we had our strikes and we had our student invasions of the Registry and all that kind of thing, but it was — I won't say it was sidelined, it was important — but it didn't affect what was going on on the academic side; not as far as I was concerned.

On the academic side, there was rather a sense of 'quietly getting on with things'; politics 'would come and go, but' — he says with a chuckle — '*Leeds Studies in English* would go on forever'. Nonetheless, by the 1990s, the challenge to nationalist curricula that was inherent in Medieval Studies was starting to correlate with visibly changed research agendas. In 1990–92, the Centre for Medieval Studies hosted three annual conferences and, in 1991, a session at the Kalamazoo International Medieval Congress on Medieval Studies, all on 'concepts of nationality and national identity' — a topic characteristic of Medieval Studies' problematisation of nationalist historiographies in that period — and the proceedings emerged in 1995 as the fourteenth volume of LTM.[111] From these activities, associated particularly with Simon Forde (1960–), who edited the *International Medieval Bibliography* from 1988 to 1996 and was deputy director of the Centre for Medieval Studies from 1989 to 1996, arose the International Medieval Congress in 1994, with an associated book series, International Medieval Research, published by Brepols. Alan Murray, then assistant editor of the *Bibliography*, founded the *Bulletin of International Medieval Research* in 1995, and the same year saw an expansion in staffing and the formation of an International Medieval Institute within the School of History.[112] Developments were also afoot in the Centre for Medieval Studies: Joyce Hill, from the School of English, took over the directorship in 1993, supported the inception of the Congress, and in 1996 oversaw the appointment of Mary Swan (1963–2020), who had been teaching on fixed-term contracts in English during 1992–95, as Director of Studies in the Centre, its first dedicated member of staff.[113] In turn, Swan oversaw, in 1999, the addition of a Ph.D. programme to the Centre's MA in Medieval Studies, and her appointment was followed in 2000 by William (Bill) T. Flynn (1956–) as lecturer in Latin and, no less importantly, Alison Martin as departmental secretary.

[111] Simon Forde, Lesley Johnson and Alan V. Murray, 'Preface', in *Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Simon Forde, Lesley Johnson and Alan V. Murray, Leeds Texts and Monographs, n. s. 14 (Leeds: Leeds Studies in English, 1995), pp. vii–viii; cf. *26th International Congress on Medieval Studies, May 9–12 1991* ([Kalamazoo, MI]: The Medieval Institute, 1991), p. 16.

[112] Simon N. Forde, 'Millennial Opportunities for Medieval Studies', *The Bulletin of International Medieval Research*, 1 (1995), 13–17 (p. 13); Robert Hall and Ian N. Wood, 'International Medieval Institute Newsletter', *Bulletin of International Medieval Research*, 2–3 (1996–97), 50–51.

[113] Anderson, Hall, Hill, and Treharne, 'Mary Swan', p. 105. Hill herself was appointed to the School of English as a lecturer in 1971, replacing both Christine Fell, who had moved to Nottingham, and W. A. G. Doyle-Davidson, who had retired. She was director of the Centre for Medieval Studies 1993–98 and Head of the School of English 1999–2001, when she was seconded to a national higher education policy position in London (2001–2002), to which she was subsequently appointed (2002–2005). Following Tom Shippey's departure, she had been appointed to an externally advertised professorship in 1995; was Visiting Professor from 2002–8; and remains Emeritus Professor 2008–.

Clearly these developments at Leeds were partly *sui generis*; nowhere else is the base for the *International Medieval Bibliography* or the International Medieval Congress. Yet in other ways they are representative of wider shifts in Medieval Studies; in the same year as the first Congress, for example, the British Academy merged its Medieval History and Medieval Language and Literature section to create a Medieval Studies section.[114] An error-prone but evocative article in the *Times Higher Education* entitled 'Renaissance of the Middle Ages', which used the fourth (1998) International Medieval Congress as its hook, gives a sense of the growing buzz in Medieval Studies at the time. It quotes the Congress's director, Axel Müller:

> 'some universities were too complacent for too long about the study of the medieval period,' Muller says. Students' lack of enthusiasm is attributed largely to teaching methods: many English graduates can recall being handed a Middle English text and glossary in the first year and told to get on with it. This quickly snuffed out the interest of all but the more scholarly. But change is on the way. Muller says a new method of teaching has sprung up at interdisciplinary centres set up in the 1960s at newer universities such as York, Leeds and Reading, and also in Canada and Australia. By teaching the period across subjects — the medieval period in art, music, literature, history, even physics — the new breed of medievalists has mastered the alchemy involved in turning popular interest into scholarly activity. Student numbers on these new courses are growing. This way of teaching also alleviates the foreigness [sic] of medieval culture and enables students to think themselves into the medieval mind-set when scholars were generalists, not specialists.[115]

While such claims were no doubt viewed at the time as hype by sceptics — the Congress certainly came to be recognised as a flagship for the arts and humanities at Leeds more swiftly outside the University than within — the developments described by Müller really were a trend.[116] By 2003, the research-orientated International Medieval Institute and the teaching-focused Centre for Medieval Studies were being combined into the Institute for Medieval Studies under the newly appointed Institute director Richard K. Morris (1947–), initially as an independent entity within Leeds's Faculty of Arts.[117] Leeds's bureaucratic structures struggled to cope with a body not housed within a School. In a pattern quite characteristic of European Medieval Studies and by contrast with the field in much of North America, the School of History had elected systematically to sustain a critical mass of medievalist teaching staff while other Leeds schools did not, and so across 2010–12 the Institute moved back into the School of History. These organisational changes were not without friction; here it is enough to note that 2010 saw the departure of both Morris (to a research-focused professorship at Huddersfield) and the long-standing *LSE* board member Mary Swan (to a new career, in horticulture).[118] But the School of History proved a benevolent host to the Institute, and the Institute continued to thrive under a series of directors based there (Graham Loud 2010–12, Julia Barrow 2012–16, and Emilia Jamroziak 2016–19). Meanwhile, the *International Medieval Bibliography* and

[114] Alan Deyermond, 'Introduction', in *A Century of British Medieval Studies*, ed. by Alan Deyermond (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 1–5 (p. 1).

[115] 'Renaissance of the Middle Ages', *Times Higher Education Supplement* (10 July 1998).

[116] See for example the essays in *Vital Signs: English in Medieval Studies in Twenty-First Century Higher Education*, ed. by Elaine Treharne, English Association Issues in English, 2 (Leicester: English Association, 2002).

[117] Morris appears as 'Director of Institute for Medieval Studies' already for 2003–4 in the *University of Leeds Calendar* under the Centre for Medieval Studies, but the Institute itself only appears the next year.

[118] Anderson, Hall, Hill, and Treharne, 'Mary Swan', p. 106.

International Medieval Congress enabled the presence of a wider body of medievalist staff which student demand for medievalist teaching would not alone facilitate. Together, these History-based staff have provided an anchor for collaboration between medievalists elsewhere in the University, increasingly hired by schools not seeking to recruit medievalists as such but getting them anyway under non-period-specific job descriptions. Though the number of medievalists on academic contracts at Leeds is lower than the combined Centre for Medieval Studies and International Medieval Institute at their peak, numbers still compare favourably with the balmy climate of the late 1960s.

The development of the Institute for Medieval Studies was not always welcomed by medievalists elsewhere in the University. Not everyone at Leeds was happy to give up the first week or two of their summer research time to the International Medieval Congress. Whereas Meredith recalls no particular tensions surrounding the existence of the Centre for Medieval Studies in its early decades, by the early twenty-first century, at least, some staff were concerned that the Medieval Studies MA was undermining medieval MAs in individual schools; perhaps in earlier times, with more tolerance of small tutorial groups, there had been a sense that there were plenty of medievalist students to go round, but that sense was fading. Likewise, although the Medieval Studies Ph.D. programme was designed to host specifically interdisciplinary Ph.D. projects that could not be housed in the traditional schools, already by the 1990s humanities postgraduates who would profess not to be doing interdisciplinary research were vanishingly rare, so the Institute for Medieval Studies became progressively more central to hosting the Faculty's growing population of medievalist Ph.D. students, again ruffling feathers. Yet to a generation of Leeds academics whose first acquaintance with both the city and University of Leeds came via the Congress, and who were often themselves graduates of Medieval Studies degrees, the Institute for Medieval Studies seemed a core part of the University rather than a peripheral one, and increasingly the locus for an intellectual identity that was hard to sustain in individual schools.

Accordingly, *LSE* began inviting medievalist colleagues outside English onto its editorial board, with Catherine Karkov appearing on the list of board members for 2017 and Rosalind (Ros) Brown-Grant (1962–) for 2018. In 2019 the author of this paper became the first Director of the Institute for Medieval Studies from outside the School of History since the Institute became part of that school in 2010, and suggested that consolidating *LSE* with the *Bulletin of International Medieval Research* would be a good way to improve the usefulness of the two journals both to the University of Leeds and to the wider Medieval Studies community. The principal editors of *LSE* still at the University joined with the editor of the *Bulletin* to form those journals into *Leeds Medieval Studies*, outlining their aspirations for its wide-ranging scope in an editorial in the first volume — aspirations informed by the research reported in the present article.[119] Amidst the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic, in a 2020 editorial note to the forty-ninth volume of *LSE* (for 2018), Hall declared that volume the last of *LSE* and the plans for its successor, *LMS*.[120]

[119] Batt, Hall, and Murray, 'Editorial Note'.
[120] Alaric Hall, 'Editorial Note', *Leeds Studies in English*, n. s. 49 (2018), [iii].

Conclusions

Despite the centrality of academic journals to the infrastructure for advancing knowledge, few have been the subject of detailed historical research, especially in the arts and humanities. This article has presented one case-study of how an arts and humanities journal was (re)founded during the 1960s (which should, in turn, facilitate effective use of the *LSE* archive by future researchers probing aspects of its practices in more depth). This history particularly calls attention to the prominence of material and economic constraints in the editors' experience of their ostensibly primarily intellectual role. Correspondingly, it shows how the journal sought to maximise both its academic rigour and its accessibility to readers by regularly adopting new desktop-publishing technology in order to keep production in-house, attesting to a different model from coeval Leeds journals which either sought commercial publication from the start (*The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*) or later in their history (*Northern History*). Although the degree to which *LSE* developed its in-house and low-cost model has probably been at the extreme end of practice among scholarly journals, it stands as a useful example of a by-scholars-for-scholars model of print-journal publishing which retains an important place in the arts and humanities yet is afforded scant attention in current debates about the future of academic publishing. We have shown, for example, that a guaranteed purchase of volumes by Leeds University Library, for exchange with other institutions, was essential to the capitalising of *LSE*, reminding us that the current rethinking of library budgets as a mechanism to pay for open-access publication rather than to purchase closed-access publications has deep roots. *LSE* also shows how a journal sought to maintain its combined commitments to accessibility and to print publication in the twenty-first century while still embracing the possibilities offered by the Internet for spectacularly low-cost distribution and archiving.

This article has also used *LSE* and its relationship to Leeds departmental structures to present a local history of the three-way split of English philology in England into English Literature, English Language, and Linguistics over the last seventy years. In key respects, the journal promoted disciplinary segmentation, in the 1930s proclaiming a distinct identity for English Language and Medieval English Literature in contradistinction to (post-medieval) English Literature. Yet at the same time it worked to avert a split between English Language and Linguistics. From the late 1960s, however, the journal helped inscribe the split between English Language and Linguistics while working to maintain the cohesion of an empiricist variety of English historical linguistics with the study of medieval English literature. In these respects, then, the journal represents the familiar trend of disciplinary specialisation over time. That said, the intellectual parameters into which *LSE* had settled by the early 1970s proved remarkably stable, well into the twenty-first century. Indeed, while not all of the Leeds University institutions that emerged from the ferment of the 1960s remain — Leeds's Institute of Bibliography and Textual Criticism and Institute for Folk Life Studies, for example, did not survive the 1980s — it is striking how influential the 1960s were in determining the distinctive characteristics of the schools of English and History in the University today. However shaky their beginnings or however meandering their path, 1960s foundations such as *LSE*, the International Medieval Bibliography, *Northern History*, the Workshop Theatre, *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, and what is now called the Institute for Medieval Studies have remained anchor-points for the Leeds intellectual scene for sixty years.

Nevertheless, change has come to *LSE* through the rise of Medieval Studies as a disciplinary practice that sought to accommodate the methodological range and commitment to historicism associated with nineteenth-century philology, to Europeanise English Studies for the medieval period, and latterly to consolidate staff members who lacked critical mass for period-based study within their individual departments. The outlines of the rise of Medieval Studies as an academic institution in the Anglosphere are well known, with pioneering developments around 1930 reflecting the cultural dynamism (amidst economic hardship) of inter-War USA and Britain, a new wave of institution-building around the 1960s reflecting the post-War economic and higher-education booms, and cross-departmental collaboration consolidated in the 1990s by threats to the sustainability of Medieval Studies at department level. However, moving away from the tendency to write disciplinary histories through the biographies of scholars in favour of focusing on institutions (in this case a journal and its relationship to the structures of a university), this study has provided a granular insight into the development of Medieval Studies at Leeds, and in particular its curiously intimate-yet-distant relationship with English Studies, in the post-War period.

One way to conceptualise the merger of two Leeds Medieval Studies journals, *LSE* and *The Bulletin of International Medieval Research*, would undeniably be as part of a century-long rise and decline of Medieval Studies in the School of English at Leeds. This narrative would not be without political usefulness for actors in Medieval Studies today: the previous section, in particular, hints at how the inventiveness in Medieval Studies around the 1990s owed something to the (perceived or actual) existential challenge to the field, and continued wariness should pay continued dividends. Leeds's neighbouring universities certainly encourage such wariness: in 2020, for example, the University of Leicester tackled budgetary difficulties partly by systematically 'closing English Language' and opting 'to cease teaching Medieval Literature and reduce the size of Early Modern Literature';[121] some canny tweeting by David Clark, one of the affected employees, brought extensive media coverage to the decision, but similar changes proceed elsewhere without fanfare through the quiet non-replacement of retiring staff.[122] The same year saw Sheffield pressing on with plans to close its archaeology department, whose fate is at the time of writing uncertain.[123] But another way to conceptualise the merger of *LSE* and *The Bulletin of International Medieval Research* is not as a story of ever narrower disciplinary segmentation, but as a story of disciplinary and departmental reconfigurations in which Medieval Studies at one particular university has through a mixture of inventiveness and luck managed to adapt to changing circumstances, harnessing an intellectual reconfiguration that has in fact been proceeding since the foundation

[121] The quotations are as cited by Brooke Cadwell, 'Universities Don't Understand the Importance of Arts Education', *The Indiependent* (4 February 2021), <https://www.indiependent.co.uk/universities-dont-understand-the-importance-of-arts-education>, accessed 5 April 2023.

[122] A key detail was the implication in a document tweeted by Clark that these cuts would help to produce 'a decolonised curriculum', which successfully offended commentators on the right (alarmed that the canon was under threat) and on the left (who objected to the implication that decolonisation was a good reason to sack staff and reduce diachronic diversity). See for example Craig Simpson, 'Chaucer Courses to be Replaced by Modules on Race and Sexuality under University of Leicester Plans', *The Telegraph* (20 January 2021); Neil Johnston and Nicola Woolcock, 'Leicester University Considers Lessons in Diversity as Medieval Studies Axed', *The Sunday Times* (5 February 2021); Shazia Jagot, 'Students from All Backgrounds Need Access to the Literature of Every Age', *Times Higher Education* (31 January 2021).

[123] The most up-to-date and thoroughly referenced account at this time is 'Department of Archaeology, University of Sheffield', *Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Department_of_Archaeology,_University_of_Sheffield>, accessed 8 May 2023.

of Medieval Group in 1951. As the editors of *Leeds Medieval Studies* noted in their inaugural editorial, Medieval Studies has never stood still, and part of the challenge for the new journal is to move decisively beyond its Anglocentric heritage, and the Eurocentric heritage of post-War Medieval Studies, to publish

> research that challenges the borders of a still Eurocentric field. Those borders are most obviously geographical but may also be chronological: both manuscript and oral cultures, for example, can at times helpfully be understood as part of what, in the terminology of Medieval Studies, we might think of as a 'long Middle Ages', despite falling outside the 'medieval' millennium.[124]

In this second reading, then, the transformations of *LSE&KL* into *LSE* into *Leeds Medieval Studies* are a case-study for the survival mechanisms that medieval English found as philology fractured and both English Studies and History became more presentist. The study of the Middle Ages — and the Arts in general — has, after all, had to be fought for at the University of Leeds before. Michael Sanderson described the University's nineteenth-century precursor institutions as 'frankly philistine';[125] exactly a century ago, J. R. R. Tolkien parodied the opening of *The Canterbury Tales* in an anonymous contribution to the Leeds student newspaper *The Gryphon*, portraying himself at the beginning of the academic year seeking to recruit 'newe clerkes' to study

> Langages old […]
> Of Fraunce or Engelonde or Spayne or Ruce,
> Tho tonges hard of Hygh Almaine and Pruce,
> Or historye, or termes queinte of lawe

but being outcompeted by 'mani uncouth science'. Failing to meet his targets for fee income, the narrator is ejected from the University, to wait outside the gates to try recruiting again another year.[126] Though Tolkien wrote in jest (and for the extremely limited audience who were willing to grapple with his Middle English), the worry that arts subjects, and within them *langages old*, will not thrive in a market-based higher-education system was and remains a serious matter; but success in the past indicates possibilities for success in the future.

[124] Batt, Hall, and Murray, 'Editorial Note', p. x.

[125] Michael Sanderson, *The Universities and British Industry, 1850–1970* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 104.

[126] 'The Clerke's Compleinte', *The Gryphon*, n. s. 4.3 (December 1922), 95. Cf. Tolkien's later reminiscence, to Michael Tolkien, on 'the words of warning given me by old Joseph Wright. "What do you take Oxford for, lad?" "A university, a place of learning." "Nay, lad, it's a factory! And what's it making? I'll tell you. It's making fees. Get that in your head, and you'll begin to understand what goes on." Tolkien's letter places these words in 1925, just after his appointment to Oxford from his lectureship at Leeds, though he claims that some years passed thereafter before 'I now knew that it was perfectly true'. *Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien: A Selection*, ed. by Humphrey Carpenter (London: Allen & Unwin, 1981), p. 336 [letter no. 250].

Reviews

Representing War and Violence 1250–1600, ed. by Joanna Bellis and Laura Slater. Woodbridge: Boydell, 2016. x + 219 pp. ISBN 9781783271559.

Representing War and Violence 1250–1600, edited by Joanna Bellis and Laura Slater, brings together nine essays from a range of disciplines, from literary criticism to art history, together with a scholarly introduction. The introduction grapples with the philosophical and epistemological problems associated with 'representing' historical phenomena, and violence in particular, as well as introducing the essays themselves. The volume is divided into three, loosely thematic sections: Ethics and Aesthetics; Debating and Narrating; Experiencing, Representing and Remembering.

The opening essay is by Richard W. Kaeuper. His monographs *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (Oxford, 1999) and *Holy Warriors: The Religious Ideology of Chivalry* (Philadelphia, 2009) are among the most important scholarship on chivalry and knighthood in the last thirty years. Readers familiar with these works will find little of surprise in this essay, as it is mostly a statement of his key theses about the relationships between chivalric ideologies, violence and religion. It does, however, provide a useful foundation on which the following essays can build their arguments.

Christina Normore provides the first of two excellent works of art history in this volume. She analyses two illuminations depicting the battle of Courtrai (1302) in manuscripts of the *Grandes Chroniques de France*. After contextualising the battle, a humiliating defeat for the French at the hands of common-born Flemings, Normore identifies how the illuminations reflect the political context of their production. The first, made for Charles V of France, recasts the defeat as a chivalric triumph, quite at odds with the actual chronicle text, while the second, intended for Charles VI, emphasises the violence inflicted on the French knights, perhaps to frame Charles's sack of Courtrai in 1382 as an act of righteous vengeance. The article is accompanied by two full-colour plates of the illuminations in question, which greatly enhance the argument.

The final essay of this section, by Anne Baden-Daintree, is a study on the aesthetics of violence in the Alliterative *Morte Arthure*. Baden-Daintree provides useful comparisons between the *Morte* and other major Arthurian texts, arguing that the poet deliberately lingered on images of violence and wounding to appeal to an audience that found such imagery exciting or appealing. For a reader unfamiliar with Middle English, this essay was somewhat difficult

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to read, due to the author inserting translations of particular words into otherwise untranslated passages:

> And wysse [*teach*] me to werpe [*utter*] owte som worde at this tym
> That nothyre [*neither*] voyde [*empty*] be ne vayne bot wyrchip till Him selvyn
> Pleasande and profitabill to the pople [*people*] Þat them heres

A complete translation, either directly beneath the text or in a footnote, as was done in all the other essays in this volume, would have greatly improved readability.

The next three essays are grouped under the heading 'Debating and Narrating Violence'. First is Andrew Lynch's analysis of two works by the fifteenth-century English monk John Lydgate: his *Troy Book* and the later *Siege of Thebes*. Lynch argues for a tension between the 'chivalric' depiction of warfare as glorious, and 'clerkly' concerns about the morality of violence. Rather than being motivated by honour or duty, Lydgate's heroes are motivated by envy, a cold emotion in medieval thought, closely associated with insanity.

Sara V. Torres's essay is about another English author, this time from the late fourteenth century, John Gower. Torres explores the various ways Gower's writings represent both peace and violence. In earlier works, such as the *Vox Clamantis*, the unrestrained violence of rebellious peasantry threatens the peace of England and must, paradoxically, be put down by violence wielded by the young Richard II. In the later *Confessio Amantis*, however, Gower advises the king to avoid wrath and to pursue unity within the kingdom. Finally, in his later works, Gower praises Henry, earl of Derby, as the bringer of a lawful, just peace through his violent usurpation of the throne, to be contrasted with Richard, whose tyrannical behaviour belied his outward policies of peace-making and threatened the unity of England.

This section concludes with a highly detailed study of three illustrations in the thirteenth-century royal manuscript *Estoire de Seint Aedward le Rei* by Laura Slater. Slater analyses these scenes of violence in the *Estoire*, examining how their composition and relationship with the accompanying text were intended to convey ideas of good royal governance and the connection between ruler and populace. Again, three full colour plates greatly enhance the argument and allow the reader to appreciate how the artist has used colour to convey meaning.

The final section consists of three historical essays on the remembrance of war in contemporary texts. Anne Curry's contribution looks at the authorship, creation and purpose of a short chronicle in College of Arms MS M9, created by members of English knight Sir John Fastolf's household as a memorial of his service in the later stages of the Hundred Years War. Curry has since published a critical edition of this text, with Rémy Ambühl, as *A Soldiers' Chronicle of the Hundred Years War* (Woodbridge, 2022). The essay reads very much like an introduction to this chronicle, providing contextual information and arguing for its importance as a different kind of chronicle, one that prioritises naming the various commanders over narrative or interpretation.

Matthew Woodcock's essay is a survey of martial autobiography in Tudor sources. He locates his essay within existing scholarship on autobiographical writings, before turning to an overview of the different military texts produced in Tudor England and how the authors represented their own experience of warfare. Most of these authors are members of the social elite, using autobiography to justify their failures or to appeal for patronage in view of past service, but there is at least one source, by Welshman Elis Gruffydd, that provides a low-ranking soldier's view of war, as he recounts the Boulogne campaign of 1544–46.

The final essay is by David Grummitt. It has a clear, three part structure, analysing the various ways that English writers represented the fall of Calais to the French in 1558. Early accounts seek to explain the defeat, with accusations of treachery within the garrison and Mary Tudor's neglectful rule. In the following decades, the defeat was recast as a display of chivalric heroism, particularly on the part of the commander Lord Grey, who is depicted as a valiant soldier faced with an impossible task. Finally, in the later Elizabethan period, a more rational, critical assessment of the siege followed, by authors such as Edward Hoby, who acknowledged the ability of the French commander, the duke of Guise, and how his conduct could serve as a model for future generals.

While all the contributions to this volume are of a uniformly high quality, as a collection it lacks a certain cohesion. Narrowing the focus, either by discipline or chronology, would have produced a stronger intellectual framework. As it stands, the essays on early modern subjects have very little to say to those on medieval art history, beyond a nebulous shared interest in the practice of violence. Specialists will find the essays in their particular field of interest but it would be difficult to find any individual who would consider the entire collection essential reading.

James Titterton (University of Leeds)

Vilmundar saga viðutan: The Saga of Vilmundur the Outsider, ed. and trans. Jonathan Y. H. Hui, Viking Society Texts (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2021), lx + 57 pp. ISBN 9781914070006

Vilmundar saga viðutan is a 'late' saga probably written in the fourteenth century and preserved in over fifty MSS of the fifteenth century or later. This good new edition of a 'legendary romance' (p. vi) can be seen as part of a recent flourishing of interest in *fornaldarsǫgur* and *riddarasǫgur* ('sagas of ancient times' and 'sagas of knights'), until recently looked down on as low-grade fantasies inferior to the earlier 'classic' family sagas and kings' sagas (*Íslendingasǫgur* and *Konungasǫgur*) and unworthy of consideration as documents of historical or anthropological value (hence sometimes called *lygisǫgur* 'lying sagas').

The saga's hero is Vilmundur *viðutan* ('from outside'), a strong, handsome and even literate peasant's son who leaves home to seek a lost goat and finds Garðaríki (Novgorod) ruled by king Vísivalldur. He has a warlike son, Hjarrandi (who becomes Vilmundur's blood-brother), and two daughters — Gullbrá, destined to marry a king (if Hjarrandi does not kill him) and Sóley destined to marry a farmer's son (if her father agrees). To avoid one undesirable suitor, Sóley exchanges identities with a kitchen-maid Öskubuska (who moves to the palace with Kolur) and hides in the forest, where Vilmundur finds her (led by her missing shoe). After several adventures, Hjarrandi and Vilmundur are sent to kill Kolur (who has gone rogue). In doing which Vilmundur also kills Öskubuska (still disguised as Sóley) but is exiled after presenting her head to the king (who thinks it is his daughter). Vilmundr finds Sóley again who reveals her identity to him. On their return to Garðaríki all is made well. Vilmundr marries Sóley and is made a duke and Gullbrá marries a Galician prince who has come to woo her.

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The introduction deals efficiently and comprehensively with genre, sources and influences, the folkloric background to the saga, and manuscripts and editions. A third of the introduction (pp. xxviii–xlix) is devoted to the saga's chief claim to literary fame, which is that Öskubuska may be the first appearance of Cinderella in Iceland. However, in the discussion at pp. xlvi–xlvii, although it is noted that her name may mean 'ash-broom' (indicating menial status and low morals), and her paramour is called Kolur ('coal'), and there is the motif of a lost shoe, it is not noted that this malign pair probably owe their dusky colour and monstrous behaviour to un-Cinderella-like Scandinavian traditions of black-skinned *jǫtnar* and *þursar*. The introduction mounts an assault on previous generations of scholars who scorned the crudity of *fornaldarsǫgur*. But if there is any literary merit to the saga (which must be slight) or a deeper, Bettelheimian aspect to its motifs, this is hardly touched on.

The text is close to Agnete Loth's semi-diplomatic edition of 1964, but the orthography is happily normalised to a pseudo-fifteenth-century standard form. The translation is on the whole fluent and accurate, but it sometimes has a slightly jarring mixture of modern colloquialism and translationese: 'fooled around with the bower-maidens' (p. 11), 'Buris was so ensorcelled' (p. 35), and (a fine piece of Webbe-Dasentese) 'He harried along the east-way' (p. 43). This capable edition fills a gap between previous scholarly and popular editions and is beginner-friendly in a way that will be useful for undergraduates. The saga is especially worth reading to the end, where the reader will find a very refreshing variation on the formula 'and they lived happy ever after'.

Ian Shiels (University of Leeds)

Jane Bliss, *An Anglo-Norman Reader*. Cambridge: Open Book Publishing, 2018. x + 404 pp. ISBN 9781783743131.

Jane Bliss' *Anglo-Norman Reader* promises 'a new departure in Anthologies, a Reader with a difference' (p. 1), and it does not fail to deliver. The book focuses on the 'importance of readership' (p. 1), both medieval and modern, and organises its collection following the generic criteria established in Ruth Dean's *Anglo-Norman Literature* (1999). Without claiming to be exhaustive, Bliss presents a wide range of literary and non-literary Anglo-Norman texts from across the Middle Ages — covering themes from medieval medicine to murderous monarchs — many of which have not appeared in other anthologies. This structure reflects the frequent 'juxtaposition within manuscripts of courtly and comic, religious and obscene' (pp. 6–7). The book is easily accessible as it can be viewed online for free; it is also possible to download a free XML or PDF version (https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0110).

Every text comes with an introduction and a facing page translation in English. Though Bliss' translations are not literal, they are close enough to aid those studying the language of the texts, along with the footnotes explaining her translation choices. This volume makes for a fantastic introduction to students reading medieval French for the first time, preparing them for facing translations in modern French editions. The English translations faithfully reproduce the tone of each text in prose and occasionally blank verse, replicating, for example,

Leeds Medieval Studies 2 (2022), 144–45 DOI: 10.57686/256204/21 (ISSN: Print 2754-4575/ Online 2754-4583)

the difference between the simple past and vivid present tenses. The *Reader* is completely accessible to non-French speakers, who would only need to read the English versions to sense the differing levels of formality in the extracts, for example, 'Listen to me, my lad, if you know what's good for you!' (p. 181). The texts are mainly reproduced from other editions, meaning that there is no standard editorial form, but this poses no problem as it reflects the reality of reading editions of medieval texts — in any case, the translations, all by Bliss, give the volume unity.

The introduction justifies the selection of texts (such as the entirely logical choice to include an account of the Norman Conquest by Wace, a Channel Islander, in the 'History' section) and summarises the themes running through the *Reader*, which are indeed 'common across medieval literature' […] 'the marvellous, the love (and otherwise) of women, the typical […] settings for stories, and the significant objects that tend to occur' (p. 11). The first section, 'Story' (pp. 25–165), covers 'History', 'Romance' and 'Short Stories', including the Norman invasion, a romance about giants, a text of Scottish origin, a version of the *Tristan* legend, and two fabliaux, which illustrate medieval misogynistic humour perfectly. The second part, 'an Anglo-Norman miscellany' (pp. 167–253) contains a wide range of texts, '[best described] as a collection of moral or social pieces' (p. 167). The 'Miscellany' includes a satire on Arthurian literature, guides to good manners, the medieval equivalent of a French phrasebook, a prescription for gout, and an Anglo-Norman version of Christine de Pizan's letter to Isabelle of Bavaria.

The final section, 'Religious Writings' (pp. 254–371), demonstrates the importance of Christianity in the Middle Ages, reproducing both Biblical and Apocryphal texts. It features glosses on Solomon's proverbs, three hagiographies by women, a verse homily written for a noblewoman, and a sermon on the *credo* and *pater noster* in Latin and French (accompanied by Middle English versions of these prayers for comparison). An Appendix reconstructs a narrative in twentieth-century Alderney patois, which closely resembles Anglo-Norman, highlighting its modern relevance (pp. 372-7). The bibliography is detailed and the index covers both the language and content of the texts.

The accessible nature of *An Anglo-Norman Reader* makes it ideal for students of both French and History; it would, for example, be a great starting point for a BA or MA dissertation on Anglo-Norman texts or the history of Britain. More advanced researchers will find this book equally informative and engaging; it is both academically rigorous and entertaining, giving great insight into the fascinating world of Anglo-Norman literature.

Holly Dempster-Edwards (University of Liverpool)

Flaying in the Pre-Modern World, ed. by Larissa Tracy (Cambridge: D.S Brewer, 2017) vii + 406 pp. ISBN 9781843844525

Flaying in the Pre-Modern World contributes to a burgeoning conversation in historical research: skin studies. Building on previous works in this field such as those undertaken by Stephen Connor, Katie L Walter and Sarah Kay, this edited collection stands out from

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previous studies by examining literal acts of flaying through the laws and tools relating to the body to create a 'more textured understanding' of the skin and its history (p. 4). In the introduction, editor Larissa Tracy posits that 'removing skin tears away identity and leaves a blank slate upon which law, punishment, sanctity or monstrosity can be inscribed' (p. 1). The fourteen chapters within this collection each focus upon one of these categories. The collection aims to remedy the anachronism of medieval flaying portrayed in popular culture. In practice, flaying was rarely sanctioned as punishment. Rather, this collection aims and succeeds in challenging perceptions of flaying by examining the removal of skin in various contexts: medical intervention, scalping, hunting and religious flagellation.

Jack Hartnell's opening chapter analyses the tools of flaying through surgical manuals like those of Guy de Chauliac, Jan Yperman, John Arderne and Jean Gispaden and their accompanying images of tools and anatomy. Hartnell also assesses the material culture of amputation saws and knives from the Wellcome Collection and the London Science Museum. Hartnell argues that the knife was the natural extension of the hand for the medieval surgeon. The puncturing of the skin was used to facilitate healing and recovery. The merging of the hand and the handle borders on the liquid and they become interchangeable. The violent and healing act of penetrating the skin was considered a fluid interplay for the surgeon.

William Sayers' chapter brings a slightly different perspective to the collection by focusing on early medieval Irish law and legal literature. Skin was not a distinct entity but a 'form-giving covering' (p. 284). Sayers closely examines the Irish language, analysing the connection between *croicenn* [skin] and *creicc* [selling, buying] and how this combination renders Christ's flayed skin as both religious artefact and commodity. Sayer concludes that for the Irish, the total removal of the skin was a foreign concept and was brought over by Christian hagiographical literature.

Susan Small's chapter explores sixteenth-century Germany's trial and punishment of werewolf Peter Stubbe. This is an interesting investigation of execution tools like axes, swords and tongs. Small argues that the tools used during Stubbe's punishment 'invoke specific aspects of the crimes they punish, thereby mapping the misdeeds onto the body of the criminal' (p. 73). Building on Esther Cohen's study of pain *The Modulated Scream* (2010), Small advances Cohen's analysis by focusing on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Germany using broadsheets and woodcuts as evidence.

Some chapters of the collection focus on skin as a site where punishment can be exacted. Kelly DeVries explores the flaying of Marcantonio Bragadin, a Venetian who died fighting the Ottoman Turks in 1571-2. DeVries argues that flaying as a punishment was not frequent but that many literary texts used the act of flaying as a 'means of Othering' (p. 52). Similarly, Emily Leverett's chapter argues that because flaying was such a gross erasure of identity, it emphasises the 'deeply culturally damaging acts for which it was used as punishment' (p. 285). Through an exploration of the mid-fifteenth-century romances *Siege of Jerusalem* and *Richard Coeur De Lyon*, Leverett concludes that flaying and cannibalism are used to enforce boundaries of Christian and Muslim identity. The crusading Christian heroes destroy the skin of their enemies to maintain the distinction.

In a chapter focusing on the flaying of beards in Arthurian literature, Michael Livingston argues that this was a gendered sign of political authority. By removing the beard, the man's masculinity was also eliminated and was a mark of humiliation. Beard-flaying was a further

step than beard shaving and made the 'literal a metaphoric removal of an individual from a position of power in the body politic' (p. 314).

Mary Rambaran-Olm's chapter focuses on the myth of flayed Dane skin displayed on the door of an Essex cathedral after the St Brice's Day massacre ordered by King Æthelred in 1002 CE. This myth perpetuated 'an early modern perception of medieval brutality and acts as nothing more than sensational modern nationalist propaganda' (p. 92). Rambaran-Olm dismisses the myth through an assortment of legal codes, hagiographical works and biological analyses which have proven the flayed remains to be bovine. Flayed skin here is the persistent reimagining of the Anglo-Saxon period to 'contribute to the origin myth of the English' (p. 115).

Skin as a site where monstrosity and otherness can be inscribed is one of the primary categories of the collection. Larrisa Tracy, Renée Ward and Frederika Bain examine the wearing of animal hide and changing identities in different contexts. Tracy analyses the connections between flaying and identity in Scandinavian sagas. Grounding the act of flaying as a prominent literary and artistic motif across medieval Europe, Tracy argues that flaying was also used to suggest markers of supernatural difference. Building on the work of Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and his Monster Theory (1996), Tracy suggests that flaying enabled characters to have a new identity. Ögmundr in Örvar-Odds saga (Arrow-Odd's Saga) is a hybrid of human and ogre who is marked as monstrous both before and after he has been flayed. His cloak is formed from the flayed beards of kings, a feature which draws from Livingston's chapter. Tracy concludes that 'flayers and flayed often exchange identities via the removal of skin', reiterating the hybridity of flaying as both restoration and punishment, human and supernatural (p. 347).

In chapter fourteen, Renée Ward examines the ballad of Robin Hood from a seventeenth-century manuscript held by the British Library. Ward posits that Robin's violence against Guy of Gisborne's body resides in the cultural meaning of animal skin and hunting. 'The hide carries a series of identities' and its removal transgresses both cultural and bodily boundaries (p. 350). Robin Hood both literally and figuratively flays Guy of Gisborne, dissociating the body from its recognisable features and humanity. For Ward, skin is used as a signifier of the contradictory medieval social system and Robin violates the perceived boundaries to both resist and reinforce the feudal structure.

Frederika Bain's chapter provides an especially intriguing analysis of the liminal power of wearing skins and hides. Examining myths from Hercules to *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, Bain argues that wearing the skin of animals is a 'barrier-breach' (p. 121) and creates a hybrid being. In all tales of skin-wearing, it provokes 'transformation [and] the breaking of barriers between states.' (p. 136). Building on Sarah Kay's extensive bibliography, Bain contextualises her argument with an examination of medieval hunting, poaching, and parchment-making practices. This also becomes a useful foundation for later chapters. Bain's assessment of liminal personhood through wearing animal skins is a nuanced and interesting conclusion to the first section of the volume.

Many of the chapters in this collection highlight the skin as both a site and source of sanctity. Asa Simon Mittman and Christine Sciacca assess the martyrdom of Saint Bartholomew. A common motif in many medieval works, the saint was often depicted as a flayed figure also wearing his skin. Their most compelling argument is that the arrangement of Bartholomew's body 'recalls scenes of animals flayed as part of the medieval hunt' where

the animal is tracked, killed, and skinned (p. 152). The typological connection between animal sacrifice and martyr sacrifice is highlighted by Bartholomew wearing his own flayed skin as a garment. By building on Sarah Kay's work on the materiality of skin, Mittman and Sciacca establish a balanced assessment of the illustrations found in the hagiographies of Saint Bartholomew.

Sherry C.M. Linquist's chapter surveys the fifteenth-century illustrations of the *Belle Heures*, a Book of Hours commissioned by Duke Jean Duc de Berry from Herman, Jean and Pol Limbourg. Linquist argues that the 'representations of flagellation and flaying are a powerful inter-visual motif [...] of constructing powerful models of masculinist devotion and artistic identity' (p. 175). Linquist highlights the erotic charge of the scenes the Limbourg brothers created for their patron, suggesting Berry's inappropriate sexual sins. The book acts as a redemption narrative for this sexual transgression, the skin flogged as penance. The penetration of bodies evokes both pleasure and the rupture of flesh required for salvation. Saint Bartholomew is pictured, his lacerated skin representing the body to "titillate, accuse, reassure and redeem' Berry's sins (p. 187).

Peter Dent's chapter analyses Christ's flagellated skin, noting that images of medieval visual culture emphasised Christ's flaying as a 'process of devotional adoration' (p. 208). Building on Elaine Scarry's interpretative frame of pain from her monograph *The Body in Pain* (1985), Dent argues that Christ's wound is the 'most significant contribution to the communicative potential of Christ's flagellated body' (p. 214). Dent's most intriguing argument centres on Christ's skin not just as flogged but flayed, as a metaphor for a garment and its associations with parchment. Dent's association of parchment and Christ's skin as modes of communication is convincing because parchment was predominantly made from sheep skin.

Valerie Gramling's chapter examines the permeable border of the skin as representing the delineation between humanity and divinity for both Mary and Jesus in the four English Cycle Passion Plays. By turning his skin into parchment, Gramling asserts that Christ's body becomes a text of deeper significance. Mary laments that Jesus's body is:

> Thow he had nevyr of me be born,
> and I sey his flesch thus al totorn –
> on bak, behyndyn, on brest beforn,
> Rent with woundys wyde.
> Nedys I must wonyn in woo
> to see my frende with many a fo, all to rent from top to too,
> his flesche withowtyn hyde.

The juxtaposition of Mary's bodily integrity and the dissolution of Christ's body 'creates a dichotomy between not only integrity and disintegration but also between the eternal and the mortal, the soul and the body' (p. 241). Gramling's chapter is an interesting exploration of flayed skin as symbol of divine resurrection.

The collection concludes with an epilogue discussing early modern anthropodermic bibliopegy, the process of binding books with human skin, by Perry Neil Harrison. Harrison argues that the fluid meaning of skin is exemplified by this process because it can be used to construct different identities and dehumanise. Books bound in human skin are 'a stark reminder of the mutable nature of human form' (p. 367). As the collection has shown, the skin has potential in both its being and meaning. Versatile, fluid and meaningful, the skin has

the power to represent and change identity. As highlighted throughout the book, despite its rarity in true history, flaying was multivalent and didn't have one, single meaning. Rather, skin, especially when separated from the human frame, represents both the body's fragility and its capacity to endure.

Stephanie Bennett (University of Leeds)

Obituaries

John Edward Tailby (18 April 1938–16 July 2022)

John Tailby was a highly regarded and much loved member of the University of Leeds German Department and also, over his thirty-five years of service, of Leeds's changing medieval-studies institutions.

After attending Leeds Grammar School, John took his undergraduate degree at the University of St Andrews. St Andrews record that he was supported by the City of Leeds Educational Department's Senior City Scholarship (though the recollection of his wife Irmgard is rather that John's parents were unimpressed by the level of government support offered for his University studies). Matriculating in 1957, John graduated in 1961 with an MA in French and German, with second-class honours. He proceeded to postgraduate research at the same university under the supervision of Charles T. Carr, St Andrews's first Professor of German, that set the tone for a career-long interest in medieval and early modern German-language drama.

John's postgraduate research took him to Nuremberg for the academic years 1961–63. He spent the school year starting in September 1961 as a Foreign Language Assistant teaching English, especially conversation, at several Nuremberg grammar schools, and at the grammar school for boys in the neighbouring city of Fürth. His supervisor there was Hermann Offenwanger, a teacher of modern languages, who customarily invited the foreign assistants in his care to his home for the German custom of coffee and cakes (*Kaffee und Kuchen*). As a consequence John arrived at the Offenwanger home on a Sunday in Advent and met the daughter of the house, Irmgard, then a final-year student in English and German at Erlangen University. At that time John was also a guest student (*Gasthörer*) at Erlangen University, where he attended seminars in Old and Middle High German. It was in those surroundings that John and Irmgard furthered their acquaintance. Thus, in the coming decades, whenever she was asked how she met her English husband, Irmgard could truthfully say: 'My father brought him home'.

For the academic year starting in October 1962 John was asked to be an English Lektor at Erlangen University, teaching language classes and giving lectures about English customs that were different from German ones, like the education system. This was called 'Landeskunde' and the English Department was very keen on it. Then, in 1963, rather than returning to St Andrews, Tailby gained the position of Assistant Lecturer in German Language and Literature at the University of Leeds; John and Irmgard married, set up home, and eventually raised two children. John graduated from his St Andrews B.Phil. on 1 July 1966 with a thesis on

Leeds Medieval Studies 2 (2022), 151–55 DOI: 10.57686/256204/23 (ISSN: Print 2754-4575/ Online 2754-4583)

'The Peasant Figure in Fifteenth-Century German Shrovetide Plays'. In the same year Leeds promoted him to Lecturer; promotion to Senior Lecturer followed in 1995. John retired from the University in 2001.

Peter Meredith, who himself retired from Leeds in 1998, offers the following reminiscences.

We (the Meredith family: Peter, Greta and three children) returned from Adelaide, South Australia towards the end of October 1969. I was taking up a post in the School of English and it was all a bit overwhelming. Adelaide now seemed very relaxed and somewhat free and easy; Leeds seemed a bit hidebound and rather dauntingly stiff — except for the younger medievalists in the School: Chris Fell, Elizabeth Williams and Stanley Ellis. Which leads me to John Tailby, another young medievalist, albeit in the German department. The very first entry in our diary which relates to the University is '6.30 Medieval Group' on the 1st November. I would like to say that I remember meeting John on that evening in November. I'm sure I did, because I was new and he was the Secretary of the Medieval Group, but everyone was new and I can't remember any individuals.

Not long after that (or so it seems looking back) I became Treasurer of the Medieval Group — the 'green new chum', as I would have been labelled in Adelaide. I worked with John on the various joint meetings that we had at the time with the medievalists in Manchester and Liverpool, and we got to know each other a bit. But the real connection came with our joint interest in medieval drama — which draws in a new group of people: Lyne Muir in French (the commanding presence), Richard Rastall in Music, Margaret Sleeman in Spanish and Portuguese, Jane Oakshott in French, John in German, and later Raffaella Ferrari in Italian. I think it was Lyne whose foresight it was to see a need for a combination of all of Europe to give a true impression of drama in the Middle Ages.

The immediate result of this was that we all got to know each other through regular lunch meetings to discuss medieval drama, but the more remarkable result, through the determination of Lyne Muir, was that in September 1974 we organised the first European Medieval Drama colloquium. Looking at the list of participants now, it looks very English-drama based, but nevertheless it opened up the possibility of being less parochial. Besides the aim of bringing together those interested in medieval drama from all over Europe, an important concern of the colloquium was to emphasise the need to take performance seriously. Consequently we mounted plays on each of the two nights. John Tailby, not a seasoned performer, nevertheless played his part, the soldier in the Latin *Dulcitius* of Hrotsvitha. Apparently it was a great success and I wish I could comment on the play, but I was too busy preparing for the next, the Anglo-Norman *Adam*. The following night there was another Tailby and Meredith appearance, but this time it was the younger generation: Christine Tailby and Nicholas Meredith as angels in the York *Temptation of Christ.*

The colloquium turned out to be a break-through. Three years later it was followed by what was referred to as the Second Colloquium, even though the Leeds one had not been seen as the beginning of a series, and a European Medieval Drama society was set up: the Société Internationale pour l'étude du théâtre médiéval, SITM — still flourishing today.

What might seem a natural development from the colloquium, but what was actually the result of the persistent enthusiasm of Jane Oakshott, was the first production since the sixteenth century of a wagon-staged production of the York plays in the streets. It was felt that the pageant wagons needed a setting through which to wind their way and against which

to perform. This was John's achievement. He organised a medieval fair, liaised with Leeds City Council, since a licence was required, gathered together a wide variety of stalls — even an alchemist creating lead symbols 'guaranteed' to change into gold over time (I still have mine and am still waiting) — and oversaw the whole affair. In 1983 the Chester Plays were performed in a similar way, with John arranging the fair. (He sourced some of the market stalls himself and put them up, enthusiastically assisted by his young son, Robert.) But the weather took a rather drastic turn and the whole was never as successful as York—as far as the plays were concerned, at least. Some traders, however, rang up John for several years asking when the next medieval market would take place.

SITM was, every three years, an important event. For the second colloquium, John drove three of us via Caen to Alençon. We were to perform the Towneley Pharaoh pageant in a square in the town and John was to repeat his earlier stage role of a soldier, but this time under Pharaoh rather than Dulcitius. The emphasis which we had placed on performance in the first colloquium has borne fruit, in as much as every colloquium since has had a strong, sometimes immensely important, performance element. In many ways, however, more important for me at the Alençon colloquium was that John drove us to see the Bayeux tapestry. Visiting, seeing more of the country, was to be a feature of SITM colloquia. I would have seen so little of the churches of Denmark or the Netherlands, for example, had it not been for John — and for Irmgard, John's wife. Later colloquia were often family affairs. I was elected President of SITM in 1995, but though a European by sympathy and desire I was not the right person: John was a true European and would have made a far more effective President. One of the enduring memories I have of him is his ease of moving smoothly in conversation from English to German to French.

John and I came closest in the preparation of what was the joint work of the 'Wednesday lunchers' (as Lyne Muir thought of our group). I can't now remember why but John and I were given the task of editing a book of medieval drama material from all over Europe selected and translated by members of the group; what became *The Staging of Religious Drama in Europe in the later Middle Ages: Texts and Documents in English Translation*. One of the lasting benefits for me was being introduced by John to the remarkable sixteenth-century Lucerne plays. We spent a considerable amount of time devising a way of presenting the unique early-modern Lucerne plans for the staging of the plays and of understanding the significance of much that is shown on them. And we had a good time during the editing process discussing not only medieval drama but also interweaving John's knowledge of the development of the German language and mine of Old English, mainly to my benefit.

Social gatherings became an important part of life too. Lyne Muir, the Rastalls (Jane Oakshott was now Jane Rastall), Elizabeth Williams and her sister Wendy, Barbara Douglas (a botanist but an honorary medievalist), the Tailbys and the Merediths gathered for board games, or cards, or entertainments of one kind or another on Boxing Day, or at the New Year, or on the Feast of St Peter's Chair, or on someone's birthday — any excuse.

John, like Irmgard, was also a committed Christian. He worked for years for Emmanuel Church, the church of the University of Leeds, and for that most worthy of Leeds causes, St George's Crypt, helping to sustain its invaluable work amongst the most needy in the city.

But nothing lasts and in time John himself needed care, provided with loving dedication by Irmgard and his children. John died on 16 July 2022. He was a delightful companion and a great friend and he is sorely missed.

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The following bibliography lists John's books and research articles. He also published a number of encyclopaedia entries and book reviews.

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