Leeds Medieval Studies

III

Edited by

Catherine Batt, Alaric Hall, and Alan V. Murray
Lisa Trischler (editorial assistant, reviews editor)
Francesca Petrizzo (reviews editor)

Continuing *Leeds Studies in English*
and
The Bulletin of International Medieval Research

Institute for Medieval Studies
University of Leeds
2023

Leeds Medieval Studies

ISSN 2754-4575 (Print); ISSN 2754-4583 (Online)
https://ims.leeds.ac.uk
lms@leeds.ac.uk

Leeds Medieval Studies is an international, free-access, refereed journal based in the University of Leeds Institute for Medieval Studies. It is the successor to and continuation of *Leeds Studies in English* (founded 1932, ISSN 0075-8566) and *The Bulletin of International Medieval Research* (founded 1995, ISSN 1361-4460).

Leeds Medieval Studies welcomes submissions reflecting the full intellectual range of the interdisciplinary Institute for Medieval Studies, including history, art, literature, and language in the period c./ 500–1500 CE, and the study of modern medievalisms./ We are glad to continue our long-standing commitment, unusual in academic journals, to publishing editions and translations as well as essayistic articles. For more information on our editorial policies, please see the editorial note to the first volume (DOI: 10.57686/256204/16).

As a free-access publication, *Leeds Medieval Studies* neither requires authors to pay to publish, nor requiring readers to pay for immediate online access, conforming to the Directory of Open Access Journals Seal for best practice. We do, however, encourage readers to subscribe to our reasonably priced hard-copy publications via our printers and distributors, Abramis Academic, (http://www.abramis.co.uk/books/journals.php).

Editorial Board

Catherine Batt (co-editor)
Rosalind Brown-Grant
Melanie Brunner
Emma Cayley
Alaric Hall (co-editor)
Francesca Petrizzo
Helen Price
James Titterton
Elisabeth Trischler (editorial assistant, reviews editor)
Graham Loud
Fraser McNair
Axel Müller
Alan Murray (co-editor)
Veronica O'Mara
Brett Greatley-Hirsch
Jonathan Jarrett
Catherine Karkov
Francesca Petrizzo (reviews editor)

Notes for Contributors

Contributors are requested to follow the *MHRA Style Guide*, 3rd edn (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2013). Where possible, contributors are encouraged to include the digital object identifiers or other stable URLs of materials cited (see *Style Guide* §11.2.11).

The language of publication is English and translations should normally be supplied for quotations in languages other than English. Please include an abstract and keywords with your submission. Each contributor will receive a free copy of the journal, and a PDF of their article for distribution. Please email all contributions to lms@leeds.ac.uk.

We have no maximum or minimum word-limits: as long as the work is good and the expression efficient, we are happy for it to be whatever size it needs to be.

We aim to complete peer-review of submissions within two months.

Once ready for publication, contributions are published on our website straight away; printed copies of each volume are published annually.

Reviews

Copies of books for review should be sent to the Editor, *Leeds Medieval Studies*, Institute for Medieval Studies, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT, United Kingdom.

Contents

Articles

Reviews

Ælfric's Use of Epithets as Hagiographic Diction in the *Life of St Laurence*

Kiriko Sato

Abstract

Ælfric exploits various epithets in his hagiographic works, thereby producing a striking antithesis between the saint and persecutor. The use of epithets prevails especially in his later prose, and they often fulfil an alliterative function. However, he also displays this technique in his early hagiography, which was written in ordinary prose without alliterative requirements. This article examines Ælfric's use of epithets in the *Life of St Laurence* from his first collection, the First Series of *Catholic Homilies*, focusing on how this life differs from its source in the use of epithets. The epithets in Ælfric's text often correspond to nouns of neutral meaning or pronouns in his Latin source; they may even have no comparable words or phrases in the source. Closer investigation reveals that he improves the source, enhancing the antithesis between the opposing characters. In conclusion, Ælfric had already adopted effective epithets as a stylistic technique to compose hagiography during his early stages as a hagiographer.

Introduction

One of the stylistic features characterising Ælfric's hagiographic writing is the effective use of epithets, which M. R. Godden recognises as 'a specialized hagiographic diction'.[1] Ælfric typically describes the saint as *eadig* 'blessed' and *halig* 'holy', while the tyrant is *reðe* 'cruel' and *wælhreow* 'cruel', thereby setting them in clear antithesis. Godden considers that this technique is prevalent in Ælfric's later lives, although these types of expression are not uncommon in some of his earlier texts that foreshadow his later style. In her 1978 article, Ruth Waterhouse closely examines Ælfric's epithets, 'affective qualifiers' in her term, in one of his later hagiographic texts, the *Life of St Alban* (*LS* 19).[2] Relying on Bede's *Historia*

[1] M. R. Godden, 'Experiments in Genre: The Saints' Lives in Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies*', in *Holy Men and Holy Women: Old English Prose Saints' Lives and Their Contexts*, ed. by Paul E. Szarmach (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), pp. 261–87 (p. 279). I am grateful to the anonymous reviewers for *Leeds Medieval Studies* for providing invaluable comments and suggestions on the earlier manuscript. I also thank the editor, Alaric Hall, for helping me finalise this article.

[2] Ruth Waterhouse, 'Affective Language, Especially Alliterating Qualifiers, in Ælfric's Life of St Alban', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 7 (1978), 131–48. Ælfric's *Lives of Saints* is abbreviated as *LS*.

Leeds Medieval Studies 3 (2023), 1–15 DOI: 10.57686/256204/31 (ISSN: Print 2754-4575/ Online 2754-4583)
© 2023 Kiriko Sato (ORCID iD: 0000-0001-7200-7226)
This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License

Ecclesiastica, Ælfric composes the Alban life in the alliterative style, which he adopts for most of his later prose. Waterhouse demonstrates that Ælfric's affective qualifiers in that life typically fulfil formal as well as emotive functions: emotively, they enhance the contrast between good and bad characters; formally, they carry a stressed syllable, uniting two half-lines by alliteration. She tabulates all epithets extracted from the text, one of which is cited below,[3] along with their counterparts in the source and the Old English Bede:

> and he rixode twentig geara reðe cwellere (*LS* 19, l. 5)
> 'and he [Diocletian] reigned for twenty years, a cruel killer'
>
> Diocletianus […] annis XX fuit (Bede)[4]
> 'Diocletian […] stayed for twenty years'
>
> Dioclitianus casere […] se hæfde twentig wintra rice (Old English Bede)[5]
> 'the Emperor Diocletian […] who had the kingdom for twenty years'

Ælfric rephrases the pronoun *he*, which refers to Diocletian, as *reðe cwellere*, a formula that he commonly uses to refer to Christian persecutors.[6] This derogatory designation is Ælfric's original, as the emperor is merely referred to by his name in the source. The corresponding sentence of the Old English *Bede* does not have any qualifiers, following the source more faithfully. Thus, Ælfric illustrates the cruelty of the persecutor more explicitly by using the epithet *reðe*. Concurrently, it completes an alliterative line with the verb *rixode*. Waterhouse argues that Ælfric prefers to have affective qualifiers in the second half-line (rather than the first), as in this example, probably because he finds it easier to complete the alliteration by adding a filler later in the long line.[7]

The alliterative requirement, however, is not always the governing factor for Ælfric to use epithets; he seems to have the narrative context on his mind when choosing words. Hiroshi Ogawa, for example, refers to a passage from the *Life of St Cuthbert* (*CH* II.10), indicating that Cuthbert is *se witega* 'the prophet' at a crucial point where he prophesies his destiny,

[3] Ælfric's texts are cited from the following editions: *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The First Series*, ed. by Peter Clemoes, Early English Text Society, s. s. 17 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: The Second Series*, ed. by Malcolm Godden, Early English Text Society, s. s. 5 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979); *Ælfric's Lives of Saints*, ed. by Walter W. Skeat, Early English Text Society, o. s. 76, 82, 94, 114 (1881–1900; repr. in 2 vols., London: Oxford University Press, 1966). For Ælfric's *Life of St Laurence*, references are line numbering of Clemoes's edition; otherwise, texts in *Catholic Homilies* are referred to by the abbreviated titles (*CH* I, *CH* II) and homily number and line number; texts in *Lives of Saints* are referred to by number and line number, with its abbreviated title (*LS*). All translations of Old English are my own.

[4] *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. by Bertram Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), p. 26, l. 15.

[5] *The Old English Version of Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. by Thomas Miller, Early English Text Society, s. s. 95 (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 32, ll. 22–23.

[6] Apart from the example Waterhouse cites from the Alban life, '*reðe* (or *reþe*) + *cwellere*' occurs eight times in Ælfric's writing, all in reference to Christian persecutors. It refers to Emperor Decius twice in the *Life of St Laurence* (*CH* I.29, ll. 75–76, 182). The remaining six refer to Herod, the king of Judea (*CH* I.5, l. 57), Egeas, a proconsul of Achaia (*CH* I.38, l. 276), Almachius, a Roman prefect (*LS* 34, l. 196), executioners persecuting Christians after the ascension of Christ (*CH* II.37, l. 78), and servants of Datianus, a Roman general (*LS* 37, ll. 130, 263). To retrieve these examples, I searched the *Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus*, comp. by Antonette diPaolo Healey with John Price Wilkin and Xin Xiang (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English Project 2009), <https://tapor.library.utoronto.ca/doecorpus/> [accessed 23 July 2023].

[7] Anne Middleton gives a similar view regarding the *Life of St Martin*; 'Aelfric's Answerable Style: The Rhetoric of the Alliterative Prose', *Studies in Medieval Culture*, 4 (1973), 83–91 (pp. 85–86).

though he is *se halga (wer)* 'the holy (man)' elsewhere in that text.[8] In one of my previous articles, I have noted that Emperor Julian is referred to as *wiðersaca* 'apostate' six times in a brief episode derived from the *Vita Basilii*, which is inserted into his homiletic account of the Virgin's assumption (*CH* I.30).[9] The comparatively high frequency of the religious epithet is ascribable to the homiletic nature of the text: Ælfric's aim in the Marian homily is to edify his audience, where he preaches that if they reject Christianity, they may suffer the divine punishment, just like Julian or '*wiðersaca*'. Interestingly, the same emperor is never addressed in this manner in Ælfric's later version based on the same *vita*, the *Life of St Basil* (*LS* 3), probably because he focuses on describing the saint's life and the emperor's conversion is of minor significance. All the epithets cited so far are Ælfric's own and absent from his source texts.[10]

As mentioned above, Waterhouse demonstrates Ælfric's skills in using epithets (affective qualifiers) in his later alliterative prose, but it nevertheless remains to be studied how he uses them in his early texts, written in ordinary prose without alliterative requirements. Ælfric's *Life of St Laurence*, the twenty-ninth item of the First Series of *Catholic Homilies* (*CH* I.29), contains quite a few epithets, providing a worthy specimen for this purpose. Gabriella Corona, who focuses on the way Ælfric refers to Christian persecutors, cites some instances from this life.[11] She notes, for example, that Ælfric refers to Emperor Decius as *se godes feond* ('the enemy of God', l. 78), whereas his source merely uses a neutral expression, *Decius Caesar* ('Emperor Decius', c. 19, l. 9), ascribing this 'striking' locution (as she calls it) to his 'preoccupation with inadequate secular leadership'. Corona argues that he might have related Decius's demand for church treasures to the unsettled society in his own time, when the aristocracy sought to take church land.[12] Her socio-historical approach to Ælfric's language in hagiography seems intriguing, but assessing his language in relation to contemporary society would require an interdisciplinary study embracing many texts by Ælfric. Moreover, her analysis is exclusively confined to epithets used for secular persecutors, though the Laurence life contains more epithets, including references to martyrs, which seem to deserve close investigation. In this article, I analyse Ælfric's use of epithets in the *Life of St Laurence*, considering his stylistic techniques in composing one of his early lives.

Genre and style of Ælfric's *Life of St Laurence*

The two series of Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies* are a preaching collection consisting of forty homilies each. However, more than twenty pieces are hagiographic, rather than strictly homiletic.[13] The genre classification is not always simple because both homiletic and

[8] Hiroshi Ogawa, 'Ælfric's Shifting Mode of Speech: Postscript on *Wite Ge* in the Peter and Paul Homily', *Studies in English Literature*, 54 (2013), 1–10 (pp. 5–7).

[9] Kiriko Sato, 'Ælfric's Language for Edification in the First Homily on the Assumption of the Virgin Mary', *Studies in English Literature*, 63 (2022), 39–55 (pp. 48–50).

[10] Ælfric's use of epithets is also discussed in Luke Mins Reinsma, 'Ælfric: The Teacher as Rhetorician' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Michigan, 1978), p. 289; Hiroshi Ogawa, '*Sententia* in Narrative Form: Ælfric's Narrative Method in the Hagiographical Homily on St Martin', *Leeds Studies in English*, n. s., 42 (2011), 75–92 (p. 81).

[11] Gabriella Corona, 'Ælfric's Schemes and Tropes: *Amplificatio* and the Portrayal of Persecutors', in *A Companion to Ælfric*, ed. by Hugh Magennis and Mary Swan, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, 18 (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 297–320 (p. 307).

[12] Corona, p. 316.

[13] Godden, 'Experiments', p. 262.

hagiographic features may be shared in a single text, but the *Life of St Laurence* is clearly hagiographic. Ælfric recounts the passion and martyrdom of Syxtus, Laurence, and Yppolitus under the reign of Emperor Decius, who repeatedly demands that the church treasures should be offered to the heathen gods that he admires. Beginning with the Decian reign, Ælfric consistently concentrates on narrating the story derived from the Latin legend of St Laurence, entitled in the manuscripts as the *Passio Polochronii, Parmenii, Abdon et Sennen, Xyrsti, Felicissimi et Agapiti et Laurentii et aliorum sanctorum*.[14] At the end of the text he leaves his source and provides a brief comment preaching about devotion to the saint: 'Uton nu biddan mid eadmodre stemne þone halgan godes cyðere laurentium' ('Let us now pray with humble voice to the holy martyr of God, Laurence', ll. 292–93). This final exhortation is the sole passage in this text in which Ælfric makes exegetical comments, addressing the audience in his own words. Since Laurence is not a biblical figure, Ælfric naturally never quotes Gospel passages. Furthermore, he does not avail himself of patristic homilies, which are often cited in his hagiographic homilies in *Catholic Homilies*.[15] Therefore, homiletic features are scarce in Ælfric's *Life of St Laurence*, though it is included in a homiletic collection.[16]

In terms of translation style, Hugh Magennis illustrates that Ælfric follows the *Passio* fairly closely. For example, he fully describes the passion and martyrdom of Laurence and his two companions, as in the *Passio*; he retains the proper names of unimportant characters, such as the widow Quiriaca and the blind man Lucillus; furthermore, he translates passages of dialogue, all in direct speech, almost exactly, which constitute a large proportion of the *Passio*.[17] For his faithfulness to the source, Magennis assesses Ælfric's stylistic achievement in this life as follows: 'By preserving passages of dialogue, in particular, he is able to present his story dramatically, but the treatment lacks the spare economy of many of his best lives'.[18] The details found in Ælfric's version might have been omitted or at least condensed in his ordinary practice.[19] However, this translation style enables us to compare his locutions with their Latin counterparts, considering the influence of Latin on his language. Therefore, the *Life of St Laurence* could serve as an appropriate specimen to perceive how Ælfric uses epithets in one of his early texts, which is almost genuinely hagiographic in genre.

[14] For this *passio*, I consult the edition that Hippolytus Delehaye provides in 'Recherches sur le légendier romain', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 51 (1933), 34–98 (the text is printed in pp. 72–98), which is cited by the chapter number given in this edition and line number. Previous scholars consider that Delehaye's edition is closest to Ælfric's version; see Patrick H. Zettel, 'Ælfric's Hagiographic Sources and the Latin Legendary Preserved in B.L. MS Cotton Nero E i + CCCC MS 9 and Other Manuscripts' (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1979), pp. 178–79, 300; Malcolm Godden, *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: Introduction, Commentary and Glossary*, Early English Text Society, s. s. 18 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 238–39. Godden also sources the text in *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici* <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~cr30/Mercian/Fontes> [accessed 15 May 2023]. All translations of Latin are my own.

[15] In his preface to the First Series of *Catholic Homilies*, Ælfric himself names the authorities he relies upon, i.e. Augustine, Jerome, Bede, Gregory, Smaragdus, and Haymo (*CH* I, preface, ll. 15–16).

[16] For homiletic features of Ælfric's hagiographic texts, see Godden, 'Experiments', p. 281.

[17] Hugh Magennis, 'Contrasting Features in the Non-Ælfrician Lives in the Old English *Lives of Saints*', *Anglia*, 104 (1986), 316–48 (pp. 320–22). In this article, Magennis analyses the language of Ælfric's five lives, including Laurence's, to establish linguistic and stylistic features of his genuine items, thereby excluding questionable ones from his canon with confidence.

[18] Magennis, p. 322.

[19] For Ælfric's manner of handling Latin sources for his hagiographical texts, see Dorothy Bethurum, 'The Form of Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*', *Studies in Philology*, 29 (1932), 515–33 (esp. p. 519).

General tendency

Before the examination, it would be appropriate to define the range of epithets analysed in this study. As the term *epithet* is derived from Greek *ἐπίθετος* 'adjective', the words considered epithets are usually adjectives. The definition given by the *OED* is as follows: 'an adjective indicating some quality or attribute which the speaker or writer regards as characteristic of the person or thing described'.[20] However, the *OED* also notes in its etymology section that Greek *ἐπίθετος* 'was used by grammarians for "adjective", but they did not distinguish between adjectives and nouns in apposition to a name'. In fact, *þam cwellere* ('the killer', l. 232), a nominal expression, is derogative of Emperor Decius. Additionally, Laurence derogates Decius, referring to him using the noun *earming* ('wretch', l. 129), which corresponds to the adjective *miser* ('wretched', c. 23, l. 5) in Latin. As these examples suggest, there is little sense in distinguishing nouns from adjectives. Another part of speech that can serve a similar function as adjectival epithets is adverbs. Waterhouse's affective qualifiers also cover adverbs, such as *deofollice* occurring in 'Þa wearð se dema deofollice gram' ('Then the judge became devilishly angry', *LS* 19, l. 41), which clarifies the devilish nature of the judge. Accordingly, I shall deal with adjectives, adverbs, and nouns as epithets, if they carry affective meaning, but exclude those that are morally neutral.

In terms of the correspondence to the *Passio*, Ælfric's epithets used in the *Life of St Laurence* can be divided into the following three categories:

> (1) þu **earming** eart geangsumod on þinre gewitleaste ('you, wretch, are afflicted in your foolishness', ll. 128–29).
>
> 'Tu, **miser**, torqueris in insania tua et in furore tuo' ('You, wretched, you are tormented in your madness and fury', c. 23, ll. 5–6).
>
> (2) **Se wælhreowa cwellere** mid gebolgenum mode. cwæð (The cruel killer said with furious mind, l. 58)
>
> **Decius**, furore plenus, dixit (Decius, furious, said, c. 17, l. 9)
>
> (3) decius cwæð þa to **þam godes cyþere**; geoffra nu urum godum (Decius said to the god's martyr, 'sacrifice to our gods', ll. 209–10)
>
> dixit Decius Caesar: 'Sacrifica diis.' (Decius Caesar said, 'Sacrifice to the gods', c. 28, l. 8)

Example (1) is a literal translation of a Latin epithet, while (2) is a substitution of Decius's name, which is unbiased, with an affective epithet; Ælfric's epithets may substitute a Latin pronoun, which is also classified into this type. In (3), Ælfric's epithet has no comparable words in the source. In the remainder of this article, I shall focus on examples belonging to the last two categories to prove his originality in using epithets. It is worth noting that Ælfric's epithets occurring in dialogues (all of which are put in direct speech) are usually derived from the *Vita*, as in (1) above. I shall address this issue later in this article, discussing Ælfric's technique of handling epithets in the words of his characters and slanting their statements.

I tabulated all the examples retrieved, classifying them into three types according to their references. Table 1 lists epithets used for good characters, and they are further divided into two: Table 1A for the three martyrs, that is, Laurence, Syxtus, or Yppolitus (twenty-three instances) and Table 1B for other good characters (five instances). Epithets are also used

[20] *OED*, s.v. *epithet*, 1a.

for bad characters, either the Emperor Decius or his persecutors,[21] which are listed in Table 2 (fourteen instances). Furthermore, the idea of epithets is not confined to words related to persons, as Ælfric's choice of words may represent his outright disapproval of paganism. They are listed in Table 3 (five instances). It should be noted here that the epithets corresponding to *beatus Laurentius* are included. It is the formula invariably used to refer to the saint in the *Passio*, which means that the adjective *beatus*, when used for Laurentius, is virtually scarcely affective (for this, see also the next section). Thus, the number of epithets that Ælfric originally employs totals forty-seven. Nine instances have no comparable words in Latin, and eight expand Latin pronouns. The rest come from nouns of neutral meaning. Thus, despite his general fidelity to the source, which Magennis recognises,[22] Ælfric introduces quite a few epithets of his own.

Table 1A: Ælfric's epithets for the three martyrs Laurence, Syxtus, and Yppolitus (23×)

Reference	Epithets	Context	Original
ll. 3–4	halig 'holy'	wæs se halga biscop sixtus on romana byri drohtniende	—
ll. 5–6 c. 11, ll. 3–5	unforhtmod 'unafraid'	Syxtus þa unforhtmod to his preostum clypode	Xystus […] dixit ad clerum suum
ll. 33–34	eadig 'blessed'	se eadiga laurentius […] bemænde þæt […]	—
ll. 59–60 c. 17, ll. 9–10	bealdwyrd 'impertinent'	gif þes bealdwyrda biscop acweald ne bið	Si iste extinctus non fuerit
ll. 78–79 c. 19, l. 9	halig 'holy'	betæhte se godes feond þone halgan diacon his heahgereuan ualeriane	Decius Caesar tradidit eum Valeriano praefecto
ll. 89–90 c. 20, ll. 9–10	gesælig 'blessed'	Se gesæliga laurentius tæhte þam blindan soðne geleafan þære halgan þrynnysse	beatus Laurentius catecizavit eum
ll. 94–95 c. 20, ll. 25–26	eadig 'blessed'	fela oðre blinde mid wope comon to þam eadigan diacone	multi caeci veniebant ad beatum Laurentium cum lacrimis
l. 103 c. 21, l. 11	eadig 'blessed'	he mid tearum. to þam eadigan diacone cwæð	dixit ad beatum Laurentium cum lacrimis
ll. 110–11 c. 21, ll. 19–20	unforht 'unafraid'	Hi […] unforhte him ætforan stodon	Et cum venissent ambo simul ante conspectum Valeriani

[21] Ælfric never uses epithets for Decius's prefect Valerianus though he inflicts brutal tortures on the martyrs.
[22] See the previous section for this.

Reference	Epithets	Context	Original
ll. 111–12 c. 21, l. 20	halig ‘holy’, cyþere ‘martyr’	Ða cwæð ualerianus to þam halgan cyþere	Valerianus dixit ad beatum Laurentium
ll. 121–22 c. 22, ll. 18–19	cyþere ‘martyr’	Godes cyþere cwæð	Beatus Laurentius dixit
l. 134 c. 23, ll. 10–11	eadig ‘blessed’	Se eadiga diacon cwæð	Beatus Laurentius dixit
l. 138 c. 24, l. 7	halig ‘holy’, martir ‘martyr’	ða cwæð se halga martyr	Beatus Laurentius dixit
ll. 145–46 c. 24, ll. 16–17	eadig ‘blessed’, martir ‘martyr’	Se eadiga martir þa wæs biddende his drihten ⁊ cwæð	Beatus Laurentius dixit in illa hora
ll. 152–53 c. 24, l. 23	bealdlice ‘boldly’	laurentius þa bealdlice clypode	Beatus Laurentius dixit
ll. 155–57 c. 24, ll. 25–26	halig ‘holy’	se casere […] het þone halgan diacon mid leadenum swipum langlice swingan	Decius […] iussit ut cum plumbatis diutissime caederetur
ll. 169–70 c. 26, ll. 2–3	cyþere ‘martyr’	an þæra cempena […] cwæð to þam godes cyþere laurentium	coepit dicere ad beatum Laurentium
l. 202 c. 27, ll. 24–25	halig ‘holy’	mid stanum þæs halgan muð cnucian	ut os eius cum lapidibus tunderetur
l. 209 c. 28, l. 8	cyþere ‘martyr’	decius cwæð þa to þam godes cyþere	et dixit Decius Caesar
l. 225 c. 29, ll. 15–16	halig ‘holy’	Ypolitus ða bebyrigde þone halgan lichaman	sepelierunt eum in crypta
ll. 252–53	eadig ‘blessed’	þe wæron æt þæs eadigan laurenties handum	—
ll. 258–59 c. 31, l. 20	eadig ‘blessed’	se eadiga ypolitus gehyrte his hired	Yppolitus coepit omnes confortare
ll. 292–93	halig ‘holy’, cyþere ‘martyr’	Uton nu biddan […] þone halgan godes cyðere laurentium	—

Table 1B: Ælfric's epithets for other good characters (5×)

Reference	Epithets	Context	Original
ll. 40–41 c. 13, l. 28	cristen 'Christian'	dæl cristenum mannum. be þan ðe þe gewyrð	divide quibus tibi videtur
ll. 170–71 c. 26, ll. 3–4	engel 'angel'	Ic geseo godes engel standende ætforan þe	Video in te hominem pulcherrimum stantem
ll. 176–77 c. 26, l. 11	gelyfed 'believing'	brohte se gelyfeda cempa romanus ceac fulne wæteres	Veniens autem Romanus et afferens aquam
ll. 178–79 c. 26, l. 13	geleafful 'believing'	laurentius […] þone geleaffulan þegen gefullode	baptizavit eum
l. 265 c. 32, ll. 1–2	halig 'holy'	gegaderode se halga iustinus heora ealra lic. ⁊ bebyrigde	Iustinus presbyter collegit corpora et sepelivit

Table 2: Ælfric's epithets for Emperor Decius or his persecutors (14×)

Reference	Epithets	Context	Original
l. 3	wælhreow 'cruel'	ON DECIES DÆGE þæs wælhreowan caseres	—
ll. 11–12 c. 12, l. 1	reþe 'cruel', ehtere 'persecutor'	On þære nihte wearð se biscop […] to þam reþum ehtere gebroht	Et praesentatus est noctu Decio et Vareriano
ll. 58–59 c. 17, l. 9	wælhreow 'cruel', cwellere 'killer'	Se wælhreowa cwellere mid gebolgenum mode. cwæð to his heahgereuan ualeriane	Decius, furore plenus, dixit ad Valerianum
ll. 75–76 c. 19, l. 6	reþe 'cruel', cwellere 'killer'	Se reþa cwellere hine ða befran	Decius Caesar dicens
ll. 78–79 c. 19, l. 9	feond 'enemy'	betæhte se godes feond þone halgan diacon his heahgereuan valeriane	Decius Caesar tradidit eum Valeriano praefecto
ll. 129–30 c. 23, l. 6	cwellere 'executioner'	decius cwæð to þam cwellerum	Decius Caesar dixit
ll. 141–42 c. 24, ll. 11–12	cwellere 'executioner'	het ða […] þæt ða cwelleras mid stearcum saglum hine beoton	Decius […] iussit eum nudum fustibus caedi

Reference	Epithets	Context	Original
l. 182 c. 26, ll. 16–17	reþe ‘cruel’, cwellere ‘killer’	het se reþa cwellere hine underhnigan swurdes ecge	iussit eum Decius Caesar […] capitis subire sententiam
l. 198 c. 27, l. 21	wælhreow ‘cruel’	se wælhreowa casere þa cwæð	Decius Caesar dixit
l. 202 c. 27, ll. 24–25	wælhreow ‘cruel’	ða het se wælhreowa mid stanum þæs halgan muð cnucian	Tunc iussit ut os eius cum lapidibus tunderetur
l. 205 c. 28, l. 1	cwellere ‘executioner’	decius cwæð to þam cwellerum	Decius Caesar dixit
ll. 223–24 c. 29, l. 1	wælhreow ‘cruel’	se wælhreowa casere […] tengde mid his heahgerefan to þam botle tyberianum	Decius una cum Valeriano ambulavit exinde in palatium Tyberianum
l. 232 c. 30, l. 5	cwellere ‘killer’	hine gelæhton ⁊ to þam cwellere gelæddon	tenuerunt eum et perduxerunt ad Decium Caesarem
ll. 247–48	reþe ‘cruel’	se reða casere þa ða he ne mihte mid nanum pinungum hine geweman fram cristes geleafan	—

Table 3: Ælfric’s epithets for heathenism, heathen gods, or the heathen temple (5×)

Reference	Epithets	Context	Original
l. 22 c. 12, l. 21	deofolgyld ‘pagan temple’	ða cempan hine læddon to þam deofolgylde	Et duxerunt eum ad templum Martis
ll. 24–25	deofolgyld ‘pagan temple’	he […] þam deofolgilde offrian nolde	—
ll. 63–64	deofolgyld ‘pagan temple’	ðæs caseres cempan hine læddon to þam deofolgylde	—
ll. 80–81	undeadlic ‘immortal’	se godes feond […] hine gebig to þam undeadlicum godum	—
ll. 239–40 c. 30, l. 17	gedwyld ‘error’	Đurh nyttennysse ic gelyfde on ðam gedwylde þe ðu gelyfst	quia ignorans feci quod tu credis

Ælfric's improvement of the *Vita*

In the previous section, I have surveyed Ælfric's use of epithets in general, demonstrating that he introduces many epithets either by substituting neutral words of the *Vita* or by making original additions. In this section, I shall present a closer comparison between Ælfric's epithets and their Latin counterparts and consider how his use of epithets improved his source, producing a more striking contrast between good and bad characters.

Ælfric begins his *Life of St Laurence* by illustrating the antithesis between Emperor Decius and Bishop Sixtus clearly — 'ON DECIES DÆGE þæs wælhreowan caseres. wæs se halga biscop sixtus on romana byri drohtniende' ('In the time of Decius, the cruel emperor, the holy bishop Sixtus was living in the city of Rome', ll. 3–4). This sentence is Ælfric's composition, which has no comparable sentence in the *Passio*.[23] By employing the epithets *wælhreow* and *halig*, he opposes the cruel emperor (*þæs wælhreowan caseres*) to the holy bishop (*se halga biscop*). Similarly, Decius (*se godes feond*) is contrasted with Sixtus (*þone halgan diacon*) in 'betæhte se godes feond þone halgan diacon his heahgereuan ualeriane' (the god's enemy entrusted the holy deacon to his prefect Valerianus, ll. 78–79), though in the source they are simply *Decius Caesar* 'Emperor Decius' and *eum* 'him', respectively. Ælfric also produces a striking opposition between Decius and Laurence in 'ða het se wælhreowa mid stanum þæs halgan muð cnucian' ('Then that cruel [man] ordered the mouth of the saint to be beaten with stones', l. 202). In the corresponding Latin, the third person verb (*iussit* 'ordered') is used, whose pronominal subject referring to Decius is omitted;[24] *þæs halgan* (Laurence) is also an expansion of the pronoun *eius* 'his'. Additionally, Ælfric introduces many more epithets for both martyrs and persecutors by modifying his source. I shall examine them according to the individual characters below.

Ælfric's Laurence has various epithets, while he is invariably referred to as *beatus Laurentius* in the *Passio*. The adjective *beatus* is omitted only once in MS P (c. 22, l. 3), which Hippolytus Delehaye uses as the base text for his edition.[25] This omission is probably a simple scribal mistake because the adjective is retained in the other two manuscripts (MSS B and C). Therefore, *beatus Laurentius* must be nothing more than a recurrent formula. Ælfric may render it merely literally as *se eadiga laurentius* 'the blessed Laurence' (e.g. l. 46); he may even omit the adjective, referring to him simply by name (e.g. l. 68) or by name and the occupation *ercediacon* 'archdeacon' (e.g. l. 27). Otherwise, however, he employs various epithets for the saint. He renders *beatus Laurentius* as *þam halgan cyþere* ('the holy martyr', ll. 111–12), *(se) godes cyþere* ('the martyr of God', ll. 112–13, 121, 170), *se eadiga diacon* ('the blessed deacon', l. 134), *se halga martyr* ('the holy martyr', l. 138), *se eadiga martir* ('the blessed martyr', l. 145), and *þæs halgan laurenties* ('the holy Laurence', l. 177; similarly, ll. 184–85). Furthermore, Ælfric adds the prepositional phrase *to þam godes cyþere*

[23] Corona recognises Ælfric's stylistic improvements by comparing his opening sentence with the first sentence in Chapter 11 of the *Passio*, where Decius and Syxtus are introduced merely by their occupations (306): 'Eodem tempore Decius Caesar et Valerianus praefectus iusserunt sibi Xystum episcopum cum clero suo praesentari' ('At that time the Emperor Decius and the Prefect Valerianus ordered Bishop Syxtus brought to them with his clergy', c. 11, ll. 1–2). Precisely, however, this Latin sentence corresponds to 'þa færlice het he his gesihðum þone biscop mid his preostum samod geandwerdian' ('then suddenly he [Decius] ordered his servants to present the bishop with his priests', ll. 4–5).

[24] In Latin, the subject of a personal pronoun is usually omitted unless it is particularly emphatic; see *Allen and Greenough's New Latin Grammar for Schools and Colleges: Founded on Comparative Grammar*, ed. by J. B. Greenough and others (Eastford, CT: Martino Fine Books, 2017), §318.

[25] See n. 14 above.

which is absent in the *Passio*: 'decius cwæð þa to þam godes cyþere; geoffra nu urum godum' ('Decius said then to the martyr of God, "Offer now to our gods" ', ll. 209–10). He also makes a syntactic modification when introducing his own epithet: in 'Decius […] iussit ut cum plumbatis diutissime caederetur' ('Decius […] ordered that he [Laurence] should be struck with lead balls for a very long time', c. 24, ll. 25–26), *caederetur* (the passive form of *caedo* 'to strike') lacks its subject; Ælfric changes the passive voice into active construction, introducing the verbal object *þone halgan diacon*, which refers to Laurence: 'se casere […] het þone halgan diacon mid leadenum swipum langlice swingan' ('the emperor […] ordered to beat the holy deacon with leaden whips for a long time', ll. 155–57). At the end of the text, Ælfric addresses his audience in his own words, exhorting them to pray to the martyr: 'Uton nu biddan mid eadmodre stemne þone halgan godes cyðere laurentium' ('Let us now pray to Laurence, the holy martyr of God, with humble voice', ll. 292–93). Here Laurence is referred to by the most honourable epithet in this life — *þone halgan godes cyðere*.

Regarding Syxtus, Ælfric calls him *se halga biscop*, as cited above, in his original sentence at the outset of this life. Subsequently, he begins to translate the *Passio* closely. Decius first summons Syxtus to demand the church treasures, though the bishop is never scared: 'Syxtus þa unforhtmod to his preostum clypode; Mine gebroþra ne beo ge afyrhte' ('Syxtus, unafraid, said to his priests, "My brothers, do not be afraid" ', ll. 5–7). The adjective *unforhtmod*, which acts in apposition to the subject, is Ælfric's addition and underscores how courageous the bishop was when summoned before the emperor. The bishop Syxtus, who is Laurence's *lareow* ('teacher', l. 52), never yields to Decius's pressure to offer to the heathen gods, and after leaving the church treasures to Laurence, he is martyred with his two deacons. Therefore, it is quite natural that Ælfric should emphasise his integrity by exploiting epithets of his own. Compared to the case of Laurence, however, Ælfric is more indebted to the source for the epithets used for Syxtus: he is *Se eadiga syxtus* ('The blessed Syxtus', ll. 13–14) and *Se eadiga biscop* ('The blessed bishop', l. 56), both of which correspond to *beatus Xystus* (c. 12, l. 9; c. 17, l. 7).

For Yppolitus, another martyr, Ælfric, as well as the *Passio*, uses epithets sparingly. In the *Passio* Yppolitus is usually referred to by name, though he is called *beatus Ypolitus* three times in a climactic scene where he is persecuted and martyred (c. 30, l. 29; c. 31, ll. 6, 24). Ælfric uses *eadig* 'blessed' for him only once, just before he is martyred: 'se eadiga ypolitus gehyrte his hired' ('the blessed Yppolitus encouraged his family', ll. 258–59). He is otherwise consistently referred to merely by name in Ælfric's version. Yppolitus had been heathen and even shut the saint in a prison, before Laurence baptised him: 'he hine beclysde on cwearterne mid manegum oþrum' ('he [Yppolitus] enclosed him [Laurence] in a prison with many others', l. 82). This could explain Ælfric's parsimonious use of epithets for him.

To turn to good characters other than the three martyrs (Table 1B), Ælfric's epithets indicate his keen interest in edification — Christianisation of his audience. He introduces words related to Christianity twice, which are absent from the *Passio*. In the *Passio*, the bishop Sixtus, Laurence's teacher, orders him to have the treasures of the church and distribute them to 'anyone he likes': 'Accipe facultates ecclesiae vel thesaurus, et divide quibus tibi videtur' ('Take the wealth and treasure of the church and distribute them to anyone you like', c. 13, ll. 27–28). Ælfric changes the relative pronoun *quibus* into *cristenum mannum* so that only Christians would receive the treasures: 'Nim nu ure cyrcan maðmas. ⁊ dæl cristenum mannum be þan ðe gewyrð' ('Take now the treasures of our church and distribute to Christians as you like', ll. 40–41). The other example occurs in the scene of Decius's tortures of Laurence.

Romanus, one of Decius's warriors, sees 'a very beautiful person' wiping Laurence's body, 'Video in te hominem pulherrimum stantem cum linteo et extergentem membra tua' ('I see in you a very beautiful person standing with a towel and wiping your body', c. 26, ll. 3–4). However, Ælfric's Romanus sees God's angel doing the same: 'Ic geseo godes engel standende ætforan þe mid handclaðe; ⁊ wipað ðine swatigan leomu' ('I see God's angel standing before you with a towel and wiping your sweating limbs', ll. 170–71).

Ælfric's version also differs from the *Passio* rather considerably in its way of referring to Emperor Decius. Apart from in direct speech,[26] Decius is consistently referred to by name or occupation, *Caesar* 'emperor', in the *Passio*. Ælfric sometimes follows the source, referring to him simply by name (e.g. l. 16) or by name and occupation (e.g. l. 12). Otherwise, however, he replaces neutral expressions in Latin with various derogatory epithets. To quote all the instances: *þam reþum ehtere* ('the cruel persecutor', l. 12), *Se wælhreowa cwellere* ('the cruel killer', l. 58), *se reþa cwellere* ('the cruel killer', ll. 75–76, 182), *se godes feond* ('the enemy of God', l. 78), *se wælhreowa casere* ('the cruel emperor', ll. 198, 223), *þam cwellere* ('the killer', l. 232), and *se reða casere* ('the cruel emperor', l. 247). Ælfric tends to use the noun *cwellere* 'killer' — a derivative of the verb *cwellan* 'to kill' — in the context related to Decius's murderousness. For instance, *Se wælhreowa cwellere* expresses anger when Syxtus denounces him for his massacre (l. 58); similarly, *se reþa cwellere* orders to kill a soldier Romanus, whom Laurence baptised (l. 182). These examples indicate that Ælfric uses *cwellere* in context-specific ways. It is also interesting to note that in two later lives Ælfric uses *wælhreow* and *cwellere* for Decius once each: he is *ðam wælhreowan casere* ('the cruel emperor') in the *Life of SS Abdon and Sennes* (*LS* 22, l. 4), and *ðam hæðenan cwellere* 'the heathen killer' in a brief summary of the legend of the seven sleepers (*CH* II.27, l. 190). Conversely, in a non-Ælfrician (or anonymous) legend of the seven sleepers, which is much longer than Ælfric's one, Decius is never *cwellere*, nor is he *wælhreow*. Similarly, another common epithet Ælfric uses for Decius, *reþe*, is never used in the same non-Ælfrician text.[27] Therefore, these epithets appear to be characteristic of Ælfric's writing.

The noun *cwellere* 'killer, executioner', a common epithet used for Decius, also occurs in its plural form four times, referring to his servants persecuting Laurence on all occasions. One is a literal translation of the Latin *carnifices* 'executioners' (l. 212). However, the rest do not have any counterparts in the *Passio*. For example, Ælfric writes 'decius cwæð to þam cwellerum; Arærað hine up' ('Decius said to the executioners, "Raise him up"', ll. 129–30), though the author of the *Passio* does not clarify verbally whom Decius ordered to raise Laurence (albeit that this agent is contextually inferable): 'Decius Caesar dixit: "Levate eum a terra"' ('Emperor Decius said, "raise him from the earth"', c. 23, l. 6). Similarly, the other two instances are Ælfric's additions (ll. 141, 205). His frequent use of *cwelleras* for Decius's servants would have reminded his audience of their cruel nature.

The idea of epithets is not confined to words related to persons. Ælfric's choice of words may actually represent his disapproval of paganism outright. When Yppolitus converts to Christianity, Decius asks him why he does not worship pagan gods. Then, Yppolitus in the *Passio* replies, 'Ego sapiens et christianus factus sum, quia ignorans feci quod tu credis' ('I

[26] Characters' words in the *Vita* contain epithets referring to Decius. For instance, while his servants are beating Laurence severely, the saint admonishes the emperor, saying, 'Tu, miser, torqueris in insania tua et in furore tuo' ('You, wretched, you are tormented in your madness and fury', c. 23, ll. 5–6).

[27] The author of the anonymous legend of seven sleepers uses epithets for Decius twice: *se þweora* ('the perverse', *LS* 23, l. 12) and *se yfela casere* ('the evil emperor', *LS* 23, l. 348), neither of which Ælfric uses for the emperor.

became wise and Christian though in my ignorance I followed what you believe in', c. 30, ll. 21–22). Ælfric replaces the relative pronoun *quod* 'what' by *gedwylde* 'error': 'Ðurh nyttennysse ic gelyfde on ðam gedwylde þe ðu gelyfst' ('Through ignorance, I believed in the error which you believed in', ll. 239–40). The heathen temple is consistently referred to merely neutrally as *templum Martis* 'the temple of Mars' in the *Passio* (*passim* in c. 12 and c. 17). Ælfric literally renders it as *þam temple martis* once (l. 20) or merely calls it *ðæs temples*/*þam temple* twice (ll. 65, 73), but he renders it as *deofolgyld* 'a pagan temple' three times (ll. 22, 24, 64).[28] These modifications indicate Ælfric's intention of emphasising religious morality to his audience.

We have compared Ælfric's epithets with their Latin counterparts so far and identified only two epithets in the *Passio*. One is *beatus* 'blessed', which is used regularly for Laurence and only occasionally for Syxtus and Yppolitus; the other is *carnifices* 'executioners', used for Decius's men. Compared to this monotonous use of epithets in the *Passio*, the rich variety in Ælfric's version seems to be a remarkable stylistic improvement. He employs quite a few epithets of his own, especially for Decius and Laurence, thereby making the antithetical relationship between them more conspicuous than in his source.

Ælfric's epithets in direct/indirect speech

In the examples discussed in the previous section, Ælfric consistently uses praising epithets for martyrs and censorious ones for persecutors. This unequivocal distinction accords well with his purpose in writing this life — inculcating reverence for the saint in his audience and forbidding heathenism. However, there are some exceptional cases. For example, Decius refers to Syxtus as *þes bealdwyrda biscop* 'this impertinent bishop' in the direct speech: 'gif þes bealdwyrda biscop acwelad ne bið. syððan ne bið ure ege ondrædendlic' ('if this impertinent bishop is not killed, we will no longer be feared', ll. 59–60).[29] In the corresponding sentence of the *Passio*, the bishop is referred to by the demonstrative pronoun *iste* 'that': 'Si iste extinctus non fuerit, non erit clarus timor' ('If that person is not killed, there will be no fear', c. 17, ll. 9–10). As noted by Greenough and others, the pronoun *iste* 'especially refers to one's opponent (in court, etc.), and frequently implies antagonism or contempt.'[30] Thus, Ælfric replaces the pronoun of contemptuous meaning with the insulting epithet (*bealdwyrda*). This alteration seems to indicate that he is so well versed in the Latin language that he can recognise even the subtle nuance of the pronoun, making its connotation explicit in Old English. Nonetheless, it is also notable that Ælfric employs a derogative epithet to refer to the martyr, who deserves worthy recognition.

Here we should call to mind Ælfric's capability to 'slant' or bias the statements of his characters in favour of his moral sense, which Waterhouse first proposed by examining some lives included in his *Lives of Saints*.[31] As she argues, Ælfric may deliberately convert direct

[28] The word *deofolgyld*, which is originally an abstract noun meaning 'idolatry', may refer to a heathen temple metonymically; *Dictionary of Old English: A to I Online*, ed. by Angus Cameron, Ashley Crandell Amos, Antonette diPaolo Healey, and others (Dictionary of Old English Project, 2018), s.v. *deofol-gyld*, 3, <http://tapor.library.utoronto.ca/doe/> [Accessed 16 May 2023]. (Hereafter abbreviated as *DOE*.)

[29] The word *bealdwyrde*, a compound consisting of *beald* 'bold' and *wyrde* 'speech', is recorded only here in Old English; *DOE*, s.v. *bealdwyrde*.

[30] *Allen and Greenough's New Latin Grammar*, §297c. Also see Harm Pinkster, *The Oxford Latin Syntax*, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015–21), I, 1101.

[31] Ruth Waterhouse, 'Ælfric's Use of Discourse in Some Saints' Lives', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 5 (1976), 83–103.

speech in Latin into indirect speech in Old English, introducing epithets of his own into that speech. In this way, he was capable of distorting his characters' words. Waterhouse cites an obvious example from the passage in the *Life of St Alban*,[32] which Ælfric writes relying on Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*. In the source, an impious judge threatens Alban, and says to him, 'quaecumque illi debebantur supplicia tu soluere habes, si a cultu nostrae religionis discedere temtas' ('so you will have to take the punishment he [a cleric] has incurred if you attempt to forsake our worship and religion').[33] Ælfric turns it into indirect speech: '[…] cwæþ þæt he [Alban] sylf sceolde ða swaran wita onfon […] butan he hraðe gebuge to his bysmorfullum godum' ('[…] said that he himself would have to undergo the severe tortures […] unless he immediately submitted to his shameful gods', *LS* 19, ll. 45–48). Here Ælfric slants the judge's statement by replacing *nostrae religionis* ('our religion') with *his bysmorfullum godum* 'his shameful gods', which derogates the heathen gods and which, naturally, the judge would not have said. In this way, Ælfric modifies the judge's words, emphasising that his gods are certainly vile. In the *Life of St Laurence*, however, he never displays the skills in slanting the characters' words. In this life, he never uses indirect speech, though he uses direct speech abundantly due to the close rendition of the *Passio*.[34] Ælfric is so faithful to the source in rendering characters' dialogues that he may even use a positive adjective for heathen gods: Decius threatens Syxtus, saying, 'geoffra þine lac þam undeadlicum godum' ('offer your gift to the immortal gods', ll. 12–13), where *undeadlicum* modifies the heathen gods that he deeply admires. It is a literal translation of *immortalibus* 'immortal' in Latin.[35] Contrariwise, the emperor may use an adjective of a negative sense, insulting Laurence. He orders his servants to torture Laurence, who is *modig* 'proud' in his words: 'ahebbað þæt isene bed to þam fyre. þæt se modiga laurentius hine þæron gereste' ('Raise the iron bed to the fire so that the proud Laurence would rest thereon', ll. 205–06). The word *modig* is derived from the Latin *contumax* 'proud'.[36]

The fact that Ælfric never distorts the words of his characters in the *Life of St Laurence* probably indicates that he had yet to reach the stylistic maturity characteristic of his later hagiography, in which he narrates hagiographical stories more effectively. In his later stage, he might have considered substituting *immortalibus* and *modig*, which are unreconciled with his moralisation; likewise, he might have translated the pronoun *iste* differently.

Conclusion

This article has demonstrated that Ælfric exploits many epithets in the *Life of St Laurence*, where the *Passio* merely uses nouns of neutral meaning or pronouns; he also inserts epithets of his own with no comparable words in the source. In the case of his later prose, alliteration is one of the factors motivating him to resort to more epithets, but even in ordinary prose he

Hiroshi Ogawa shows that the technique of slanting the statement is characteristic of Ælfric: 'Stylistic Features of the Old English *Apollonius of Tyre*', in *Studies in the History of Old English Prose* (Tokyo: Nan'un-do, 2000), pp. 181–204 (pp. 195–99) (first publ. in *Poetica*, 34 (1991), 57–74).

32 Waterhouse, 'Ælfric's Use of Discourse', pp. 83–84.

33 *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, p. 30, ll. 8–9.

34 Magennis, p. 321.

35 The corresponding Latin is: 'Ergo sacrifica diis immortalibus' ('Therefore sacrifice to the immortal gods', c. 12, l. 8).

36 The corresponding Latin is: 'Date lectum ferreum, ut requiescat Laurentius contumax' ('Offer the iron bed so that the proud Laurence would rest', c. 28, ll. 1–2).

provides epithets genuinely for emphasising the contrast between the good and bad characters and sometimes for edifying his audience effectively. The modifications regarding epithets scarcely affect the context of the story, but when accumulated, they help produce a striking antithesis between the martyrs and persecutors, especially Laurence and Decius, and make his language sound more vigorous than his source. In his later prose such as the *Life of St Alban*, Ælfric displays a more sophisticated technique to introduce epithets of his own: he may deliberately convert direct speech in the source into indirect speech in his adaptation and have effective epithets in the words of his characters, thereby slanting their statements to convey his morality. He might have been deficient in this technique when writing the Laurence life. Nevertheless, using epithets had already become a stylistic technique in Ælfric's early career as a hagiographer, being symptomatic of his later style.

A Note On *A Christian Mannes Bileeve*, Robert Holcot's *Convertimini*, and 'Lere You Vnkynde Man' (*NIMEV* 1846 / *DIMEV* 3042)

Nicole D. Smith

Abstract

The devotional text known as *A Christian Mannes Bileeve* relies on a variety of biblical, patristic, and homiletic resources to explain the Articles of the Faith in the Apostles' Creed. This note shows that Robert Holcot's Latin exemplum of birds dying in the woods stands as the source not only for the Middle English exemplum in *CMB* but also for the introduction, original lyric verse, and peroration surrounding the exemplum. In this way, we see that Latinate sermon materials designed to reach a listening public also inform the creative moves apparent in works of private devotion.

In the introduction and commentary to my recent edition of the Middle English explanation of the Apostles' Creed, known as *A Christian Mannes Bileeve* (hereafter *CMB*), I noted that Robert Holcot's *Convertimini*, a collection in Latin of moral appeals used by preachers for their homilies, furnishes the source of the *CMB*'s exemplum of birds dying in the woods during the Passion week.[1] Since the publication of the edition, I have come to the conclusion that this Latin exemplum in *Convertimini* directly influences the Middle English peroration that concludes the vernacular exemplum in *CMB*. Furthermore, verbal parallels exist between the peroration and the unique Middle English quatrain preceding the exemplum, 'Lere you vnkynde man to be kynde'.[2] This note thus demonstrates the *CMB*-writer's reliance on Robert Holcot's sermon materials not only as the source for the vernacular exemplum but also as the inspiration for the entire sequence of lyric, exemplum, and peroration as it appears in *CMB*.

[1] *A Christian Mannes Bileeve: Edited from Washington, Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections, MS 4*, ed. by Nicole D. Smith (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2021), pp. xlii and 37–38. The exemplum is #639 in Frederic C. Tubach, *Index Exemplorum: A Handbook of Religious Tales*, FF Communications, 204 (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1969), p. 53. For Holcot's *Convertimini* and its manuscript witnesses, see Beryl Smalley, 'Robert Holcot, O. P.', *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, 26 (1956), pp. 5–97 (pp. 8–9); and *A Christian Mannes Bileeve*, ed. by N. Smith, pp. xliv–xlvi.

[2] 'Lere you vnkynde man to be kynde' is catalogued as *NIMEV* 1846 in Julia Boffey and A. S. G. Edwards, *A New Index of Middle English Verse* (London: British Library, 2005) and *DIMEV* 3042 in *DIMEV: Digital Index of Middle English Verse*, ed. by Linne R. Mooney, D. W. Mosser, Elizabeth Solopova, and others https://www.dimev.net [accessed 18 October 2022]. I have previously corrected the source of 'Lere you vnkynde man to be kynde' in 'Middle English Lyrics, *Homo vide*, and *A Christian Mannes Bileeve*', *Notes & Queries*, 62 (2015),

Leeds Medieval Studies 3 (2023), 17–23 DOI: 10.57686/256204/28 (ISSN: Print 2754-4575/ Online 2754-4583)
© 2023 Nicole D. Smith

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License

In using Holcot's sermon materials to inform this sequence, the *CMB*-writer provides evidence that Latinate homiletic materials had far-reaching influence on a variety of genres used to encourage pious reflection in private devotional settings. Such a move differs from the popular public practice to use verses in sermons to emphasize doctrine, noted by A. J. Fletcher and S. Wenzel respectively.[3] As Fletcher notes, homilists would procure poetry to command attention and to make eternal consequences pleasurably memorable in their sermons. Wenzel, too, highlights poetry's power to distill lessons in ways that can be easily recalled, and he is not surprised to see these mnemonic verses 'spill over' into other genres than the sermon.[4] Such verses succinctly summarize pithy points that needed to be internalized and, according to Wenzel, they 'very often borrow from such earlier reductions and collections directly'.[5] In the case of *CMB*, the unique lyric 'Lere you vnkynde man to be kynde' appears to derive from a peroration that Holcot crafted to summarize a central lesson from a Latin exemplum. By placing a vernacular explanation of the Creed in creative conversation with a Latin text like Holcot's *Convertimini*, the *CMB*-writer asks readers to rethink the argument that Latin and Middle English exist often as distinct binaries that are placed habitually in competition.[6] Instead of understanding '*clericus–laicus*', 'father-tongue–*lingua materna*', '*auctoritas–experientia*' as 'symbolic dichotomies' that distinguish Latin from English, readers of *CMB* might instead perceive the work as offering a bridge between these pairings across language, genre, and space.[7] In this way, *CMB* demonstrates that Latin homiletic materials influence creative writers producing vernacular texts for private devotion designed, as is the case of *CMB*, specifically for women.[8]

Because *CMB* is relatively unknown, I reproduce lines 500–37, which present the sequence of the original verse (which is written without line-breaks or any other distinguishing marks in all of the MSS), the vernacular exemplum (a translation and expansion of Holcot's Latin), and

17–22. *DIMEV* 3042 lists only two of the four sources for the lyric: Cambridge, University Library, Ii.1.2, f. 127ra–127rb (heretofore abbreviated as C); and Washington D.C., Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections, MS 4, f. 72v (abbreviated as Lc). Missing are London, British Library, Harley MS 978, f. 94r–v (abbreviated as H) and London, Lambeth Palace, MS 3597, f. 85v (abbreviated as Lp).

3 A. J. Fletcher, *Late Medieval Popular Preaching in Britain and Ireland: Texts, Studies, and Interpretations*, Sermo: Studies on Patristic, Medieval, and Reformation Sermons and Preaching, 5 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), pp. 273–305 and S. Wenzel, *Verses in Sermons: Fasciculus morum and its Middle English Poems*, The Medieval Academy of America, Publication 87 (Cambridge, MA: Medieval Academy of America, 1978), pp. 63–65. The seminal study is G. R. Owst, *Literature and Pulpit in Medieval England: A Neglected Chapter in the History of English Letters and the English People*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 1961; repr. 1966).

4 S. Wenzel, p. 65.

5 S. Wenzel, p. 69.

6 Nicole D. Smith, 'The Thinking Heart of Female Spirituality and the Apostles' Creed in *A Christian Mannes Bileeve*', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 48.2 (2018), 227–60 (pp. 228, 237); Fiona Somerset and Nicholas Watson, "Preface: On Vernacular," in *The Vulgar Tongue: Medieval and Postmedieval Vernacularity*, ed. by Fiona Somerset and Nicholas Watson (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), ix–xiii; and Nicholas Watson, 'The Idea of Latinity', in *Medieval Latin Literature*, ed. by Ralph J. Hexter and David Townsend (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 124–48 (pp. 139–40).

7 N. Smith, 'The Thinking Heart of Female Spirituality', p. 228; for 'symbolic dichotomies', see Watson, 'The Idea of Latinity', p. 139.

8 The textual transmission of *CMB* reveals the interests of both pious aristocratic laywomen and female religious communities since the provenances of all MSS, except C, include connections with women readers: H belonged to and was likely made for Dame Anne Wingfield of Harling, a devout laywoman who names herself as a sister at the Priory of the Blessed Virgin Mary (BVM) at Campsey (Suffolk), the Abbey of the Annunciation of the BVM at Bruisyard (Suffolk), with the Austin (Augustinian) Friars of Norwich, the Gray Friars of Babbewell (Franciscan, near Bury) and at the House of Syon (Middlesex, Abbey of St Savior, BVM; and St Bridget, Bridgettine Nuns); Lp has been connected to Margaret Olney and her husband Sir Thomas Throckmorton, and

its peroration. The sequence appears at the end of *CMB*'s explanation of the fourth Article of the Faith, 'He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried'. Alluding to Romans 6:23, in which Paul notes that the wages of sin is death, *CMB* positions animal behaviour in relation to humanity's better ability to register love, kindness, and gratitude to set up the following sequence of lyric, exemplum, and peroration. Note that I italicize verbal similarities, at the introduction and conclusion of the exemplum, use accent marks (ˇ) to indicate insertions by the scribe, provide glosses in brackets, and embolden the lyric, which precedes the start of the exemplum. I have also preserved the tendency of the scribe of Washington D.C., Library of Congress, Rare Book and Special Collections MS 4 to use the single grapheme 'y' for both 'y' and 'þ', a practice that was popular for texts copied or produced in northern England in the late-fourteenth and early-fifteenth centuries.[9] The text reads:

> And Paule sais yat rewarde of synne is ded [death], ye whilk ded first bygan in Abel his maystrye forto kynde yat come to him for syne of his fader. If yat Adam so long tyme murned for ye deed [death] of Abell, ye whilk ded he wist byfell for his syne, *wid vnmetely more skill Cristen man augh to murne sore and hertly wepe ye ded of Ihesu Crist, yat for his syne so mekely dyed on ye rode and so schomfully was pynned. If yat best yat is skilfull als man, ye whilk man is skilfull of kynde, ne may noght stire ye forto haue pite and reuth of ye pyne and ye ded of Ihesu Crist.* **Lere you vnkynd man to be kynde, of beste yat haues no skil of kynde, hou you dos scham to yi kynde, bot you to Ihesu Crist be kynde**.
>
> It was ane Englysch man yat went in pilgremage to ye Haly Londe forto wite forto lede him and schew him ye wnders [wonders] of yat land of ye whilk yis was ane. Ye Sarazyne broght him into a fayre wod yat was alle sett wid fayre hegh trees. Yis pilgryme when he was in yis wod he stode still and listende if yat he might se any foulel [fowl] syng bot none he herde ne sagh stirand. He stode long and bihelde ye faire trees and ye faire bogthes [boughs] and, als he yhus scharpely loked, he sagh ly mony faire briddes deed in yhe bogthes sp`r´erde out yaire wenges of ye maner of a croice. When ye pilgreme sagh yis, he frayned at ye Sarazyne what yat it might be mene yat so many briddes in ye bogthes lien ded and so made croice [cross] of yhamseluen. Ye Sarazyne andswerd yat thurghtout alle ye yere were grett plente of foulthes [fowl] meryly sigand [singing] bot in

it includes a medieval signature, Elyzbeth, who may be either Elizabeth Baynham, second wife to Sir Robert Throckmorton (son of Margaret Olney and Thomas Throckmorton), or Elizabeth, Sir Robert's sister, who became the last abbess of Denney from 1512–39; Lc, a composite MS including the hands of three scribes and the last gathering written about a decade after the others, came to a Benedictine house of nuns in Yorkshire. Although the MS once belonged to Sir James Harrington (Dean of York Minster, d. 1512), its contents suggest a female audience — the Middle English *Rule of St Benedict*, adapted for nuns, includes a colophon indicating that a Benedictine nun commissioned the translation from the French and nouns and pronouns have been adapted to include 'dameseles', 'yonge nunnes', and 'yonge ladies'. The dialect of *CMB* in the last gathering makes it plausible that James Harrington's aunt and benefactress, Joan Pilkington, acquired the MS and brought it with her to the Benedictine Priory at Nun Monkton where *CMB* was added and Pilkington lived the rest of her days. While C's provenance does not appear to include women (save for the inscription, 'Mr Juells and his wiues', in a later hand), its dialect places it firmly within a geographical region that includes the Benedictine nunnery at Ickleton. Immediately outside the dialect region are three houses with connections to the other *CMB* MSS: the White Friars (Carmelites) of Cambridge, ten miles to the north and the house for which Dame Anne Wingfield of Harling was a foundress; Denney, twenty miles to the north where Elizabeth Throckmorton (possible owner of Lp) was the last Abbess; and Castle Hedingham, ten miles east where Lucy de Vere (whose portrait may be inscribed in Lc) was foundress and first prioress. See *A Christian Mannes Bileeve*, ed. by N. Smith, pp. xii, xix–xx, xxiii–xxiv, xxviii; and N. Smith, 'Middle English Lyrics, *Homo vide*, and *A Christian Mannes Bileeve*', p. 22.

[9] See M. Benskin, 'The Letter <þ> and <y> in Later Middle English, and Some Related Matters', *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 8 (1982), 13–30 (pp. 14–15 and 22); and *A Christian Mannes Bileeve*, ed. by N. Smith, p. liv.

> yat fouretennynght yat ye grett prophete dyed yhan were yai ale deed, and yen yat tyme yat yis pilgryme sagh yis was ye Passiun comen in yen said ye Sarazyne to ye pilgryme. After he said yat ye Cristen men recken ye last sounday yat was yen come in ye Passiun of ye prophete als ye telle, and yen bigan alle yher foulthes to dye and sall yus lye alle fulle fourtene days and ye fyfftene day, yat ye calen Pasch day, yai sall rysen agayne to ye lyfe and schul synge and make mirth foryhi he said yat als yat tyme yat is in ye first Sounday of ye Passiun yai murnned to yhe ded for ye prophete, yai whickende agayne wid him to ye lyfe and sithen alle ye yere yai lyuen in yis wod wid luuely song, mirth, and ioy.
>
> *Sithen yen yat beste yat wantes kyndly skill, swilk takenyng of luue schewed to oure louerd Ihesu Crist, of murnyng and of pite, wid vnmetely more skil, man yat haues skil of kynd augh to luue Ihesu Crist and haue reuth and pite of his ded and yat shewe in vttre beryng for non oither creature ne non oither enchesun tholed Crist ded on ye rode bot for man one* (ll. 510–37).

While Holcot's Latin exemplum does not appear in *CMB*, it stands as the source for the above vernacular account and appears to influence both this peroration and the lines directly preceding the exemplum. Holcot's version reads as follows:

> Erat quis anglicus ad terram sanctam profectus qui multum fuit curiosus ad videndum mirabilia. Conduxit quemdam saracenum ut sibi ostenderet aliqua. Inter que hoc vnum accidit: quod cum transiret quoddam nemus pulchrum habens arbores pulchras et proceras nullam tamen auem audivit cantantem et respiciens vidit super ramos aues pulchrimas et plures mortuas iacentes, alis expansis ad modum cruces. Cumque quereret anglicus a saraceno causam illius rei, respondit saracenus: per totum annum in isto nemore est habundancia avium magna et eorum cantus suavissimus, sed in ebdomata passionis qua propheta magnus passus est, omnes moriuntur et etiam tunc ebdomata passionis. & ait saracenus: domenica in passione incipiunt mori & domenica ad quindecimam [diem], scilicet in die pasce, reviviscunctur & tamen resumunt quasi suam mortem usque ad mortem condolentes; pro sua resureccione fiunt gaudentes. *Si hic faciunt aues animalia irrationabilia multa magis homo cum sit rationalis saluatori suo compati deberet. Pro nulla enim creatura nisi pro solo homine passus est* sed inter alias creaturas homo maiorem ingratitudinem ostendit domino nam in passione sua alie creature passe sunt.
>
> [There was an English man who departed to the holy land who was very curious to see wonders. He hired a certain Saracen so that he might show him some (wonders). Among them this one happened: that when he crossed a certain beautiful wood having beautiful, tall trees, he heard however no bird singing and looking about he saw on the branches beautiful birds and many lying dead, wings spread out in the manner of a cross. When the Englishman asked the Saracen the cause of this event, the Saracen responded: 'Through the entire year in that wood there is a great abundance of birds and from them the sweetest song, but in the week of the Passion that great prophet suffered, all die even at that time in the week of the passion'. The Saracen said: 'On the Sunday in the Passion they begin to die and on Sunday the fifteenth day, namely on Easter day, they are restored to life. Nevertheless, they take up, as it were, His death, grieving to the point of death; because of His resurrection they are made joyful. *If bird animals without reason act this way, how much more ought humankind to grieve for its Savior. Indeed, He suffered for no creature save humankind alone,* but among all creatures humankind showed a greater ingratitude to the Lord for at his Passion all of His other creatures suffered'.][10]

[10] *A Christian Mannes Bileeve*, ed. by N. Smith, p. 37.

The *CMB*-writer translates and adapts Holcot across peroration, exemplum, and lyric to encourage intimate and personalized devotion on the core tenets of the faith. At the conclusion of the vernacular exemplum, the *CMB*-writer presents a peroration that revisits the topic of 'bestial' behaviour since the exemplum has shown that birds mourn the death of Christ by dying themselves and return to life with joy and merriment upon Christ's resurrection. Imaginatively repeating 'skil' and 'kynde', the scribe recalls the play on those same words in 'Lere you vnkynd man to be kynde', in which the lyric instructs the unkind man to 'be kynde' in comparison to the beast who does not possess any natural reason ('of beste yat haues no skil of kynde). *CMB* returns to this same theme after the exemplum: 'Sithen yen yat beste yat wantes kyndly skill, swilk takenyng of luue schewed to oure louerd Ihesu Crist of murnyng and of pite, wid vnmetely more skil, man yat haues skil of kynd augh to luue Ihesu Crist and haue reuth and pite of his ded and yat shewe in vttre beryng' (ll. 533–36) [Seeing that, then, that animal, which lacks natural understanding, showed such an indication of love to our Lord Jesus Christ out of mourning and of pity with immeasurably more expertise, man, who has natural understanding, ought to love Jesus Christ and have compassion and pity concerning his death and thus show that in his physical bearing]. The mention of an animal that lacks natural understanding [wantes kyndly skill (l. 533)] and man who has it [man yat haues skil of kynd (l. 535)] appears to be a translation and expansion of Holcot's 'Si hic faciunt aues animalia irrationabilia multa magis homo cum sit rationalis saluatori suo compati deberet' [If bird animals without reason act this way, how much more ought a person, who is rational, grieve for his Savior]. While Holcot briefly differentiates birds from humankind, the *CMB*-writer overlooks 'birds' [aues] and focuses on 'animalia' [beasts]. Then, *CMB* compares 'beasts' to 'man', with the former lacking intellectual faculties and the latter possessing natural reason. This difference communicates an analogous message that humans should behave more reasonably than animals. Despite the lack of direct translation between 'birds' in the Latin and 'beasts' in the English, the chiasmus-like construction between 'animalia irrationabilia […] homo cum sit rationalis' in Holcot's *Convertimini* appears in *CMB* in the form of 'yat beste yat wantes kyndly skill' and 'man yat haues skil of kynd', as if the *CMB*-writer were taking a cue from Holcot. If that is indeed the case, then the verbal echo and analogous rhetorical construction suggest a through-line that begins with Holcot's exemplum, extends to the peroration, and even informs the lyric 'Lere you vnkynde man'.

Given the verbal parallels between animal and human behaviours in response to Christ's crucifixion, the path from Holcot to 'Lere you vnkynde man' seems to run backwards from the peroration at ll. 533–37 to the lyric and its preceding remarks at ll. 503–09. Both peroration and introductory remarks to the lyric note that the Christian responds 'wid vnmetely more skil' (ll. 503, 534–35) to Christ's death. The directive that man should 'haue reuth and pite of [Christ's] ded' (ll. 535–36) is echoed in inverse order and slightly expanded prior to the lyric: man should 'haue pite and reuth of ye pyne and ye ded of Ihesu Crist' (ll. 506–07). Both instances describe Christ on the cross: his death 'on ye rode' (l. 537) or that he died 'on the rode' (ll. 504–05). And there is a verbal echo of mourning: in the peroration, there is mention 'of murnyng and of pite' (l. 534) and before the lyric, there is a suggestion for the Christian to 'murne sore and hertly wepe' (ll. 503–04) at Christ's death. Where the peroration begins with a comparison of beast to human and encourages a demonstration of love, the remarks prior to the lyric operate conversely: they begin with human behaviours and then extend to animal tendencies. In particular, *CMB* compares Adam's longing for Abel to a Christian's longing for Christ as an analogy for the difference between human and animal responses to

the crucifixion. Through the repetition of 'skil' and 'kind', *CMB* notes that a Christian has 'vnmetely more skill' (l. 503) [immeasurably more reason] than Adam, and therefore ought 'to murne sore and hertly wepe ye ded of Ihesu Crist' (ll. 503–04) [to mourn and genuinely weep at the death of Jesus Christ]. The *CMB*-writer then crafts the following conditional phrase to highlight the faculty of reason [skil] that allows the Christian — as opposed to the Old Testament Adam — to grieve appropriately for Christ's death: 'If yat Adam so long tyme murned for ye deed of Abell, […] wid vnmetely more skill Cristen man augh to murne sore and hertly wepe ye ded of Ihesu Crist […].' (ll. 502–04) [If Adam mourned the death of Abel for so long, then with immeasurably more reason the Christian ought to mourn and weep over the death of Christ]. The *CMB*-writer furthermore emphasizes the differences between a human's reason and a beast's lack thereof through repeating a syntactical variation of 'skil': 'If yat best yat is skilfull als man, ye whilk man is skilfull of kynde, ne may noght stire ye forto haue pite and reuth of ye pyne and ye ded of Ihesu Crist' (ll. 505–07) [If that animal that is reasonable like man, who possesses natural understanding, might you not be moved to have pity and sorrow for the pain and death of Jesus Christ]. Highlighting 'beast' and 'skill' as key concepts, the *CMB*-writer then turns to the lyric and exemplum as if to use different forms and genres to reinforce the lesson of human kindness.

Poetry's partnership with exemplum in a work of private devotion allows for a map of salvation to be drawn across forms and genres with a clear path from Holcot to the lyric by way of the Middle English peroration. The text presents a unique lyric with metrical irregularity that plays on multiple meanings of the word, 'kynde', to redeliver a comparison between animal and human behaviours, culminating in appropriate comportment towards God:

> 'Lere you vnkynde man to be kynde,
> of beste yat haues no skil of kynde.
> Hou you dos scham to yi kynde!
> Bot you to Ihesu Crist be kynde' (ll. 507–09)
>
> [Learn to be natural/benevolent, unkind man,
> apart from a beast that is without instinctive moral feeling.
> How you shame your fellow human beings!
> Be obedient/dutiful to Jesus Christ].

This quatrain makes explicit a play on four discrete denotations of Middle English 'kind': man must learn to be 'kynde' — either 'well disposed towards one's kin' (*MED*, 'kinde', adj, 4a) or 'benevolent' (*MED*, 'kinde', adj, 5a) — because if a beast has no natural understanding (*MED*, 'skil', n, 'kinde skil', 1b) then how can man, who possesses such rationality, behave in such a way that shames his own kindred (*MED*, 'kinde', n, 10c)? As the quatrain exhorts, one should be obedient, loving, and faithful to Christ (*MED*, 'kynde', adj., 4a, 5a, or 6b). This sentiment echoes that of the phrase immediately preceding the lyric: 'If yat best yat is skilfull als man, ye whilk man is skilfull of kynde, ne may noght stire ye forto haue pite and reuth of ye pyne and ye ded of Ihesu Crist'. Like this aforementioned phrase, the lyric uses words, such as 'bestes' and 'skil of kynde', to appeal for kindness towards Christ.

By including the differentiation between man and beast at the conclusion of the exemplum, where Holcot inserts his, and also at its introduction, the *CMB*-writer enacts syntactically the reminder advanced by the work more broadly. Both instances measure the 'kindly skill' of a 'beast' against that of man whose natural understanding should prompt him to 'haue reuth and pite of [Christ's] ded [death]' (ll. 535–36). The language appears nearly verbatim in

the statements that both open and close the exemplum: man is 'skilfull of kynde' (l. 506) at the introduction to the exemplum and has 'skil of kynde' (l. 535). Given these and the other aforementioned verbal similarities between the lyric, exemplum, and summary of human kindness at the exemplum's end, it would appear that Holcot's Latin exemplum serves as inspiration for 'Lere you vnkynd man'. Recognizing Holcot's *Convertimini* as a basis for both a popular exemplum and a unique verse reveals that Latin sermon materials, like those in *Convertimini*, were used as creative impulses for works extending to private devotion.

The Greater Annals of St. Gall: Introduction, Translation, and Notes

Chris Halsted

Abstract

As the house annals for one of the most important monasteries in Europe and a critical source for the foundation and expansion of the tenth-century Saxon empire, the *Annales Sangallenses maiores* or *Greater Annals of St. Gall* are a crucial historical document. This paper provides the first published translation of the *Greater Annals* into English alongside a study of the text's context and themes. The *Greater Annals* are a composite work, first created from the basis of the *Annales Alamannici* just after 955, continued intermittently until 1024, then concluded with a long portion from 1025 to 1044 relying on a shared source with Wipo of Burgundy's *Gesta Chuonradi imperatoris* and Hermann of Reichenau's *Chronicle*. The autograph copy of the text, which fortunately survives, is the work of at least thirty-three different scribes, many of whom seem to have updated the text as the desire took them with little thought to narrative coherence or factual consistency. Nevertheless, several consistent themes can be detected in the analysis of the text; in particular the presentation of alternative viewpoints regarding the great events of German history, the development of regional political power in Alemannia, and the history of St. Gall itself. The *Greater Annals* represent an early medieval historical source which has been significantly understudied by modern scholars; both the text itself and the fascinating autograph manuscript deserve more attention.

The *Greater Annals of St. Gall* are the name we give to a set of annals composed in present-day Switzerland in the tenth and eleventh centuries, at the eponymous abbey of St. Gall.[1] The *Greater Annals* present a fantastically rich repository of local, monastic memory, recorded in exemplary fashion. For the 1003 entry, for instance, the *Greater Annals* record a short poem describing the miraculous survival of a laborer who fell from St. Gall's roof during repairs undertaken by the abbot, Burchard. These repairs can be read in light of the slightly earlier 1000 entry, which records that 'our people were struck by fire' during a storm. Though both

[1] For discussions of the text see especially Wilhelm Wattenbach and Robert Holtzmann, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter: Die Zeit der Sachsen und Salier 1. Das Zeitalter des Ottonischen Staates (900–1050)* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967), pp. 226–39; Rudolf Pokorny, 'Das Chronicon Wirziburgense, seine neuaufgefunde Vorlage und die Textstufen der Reichenauer Chronistik des 11. Jahrhunderts', *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, 57 (2001), 63–93, 451–99 (468–87); Roland Zingg, *Die St. Galler Annalistik* (Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 2019), pp. 134–42.

Leeds Medieval Studies 3 (2023), 25–59 DOI: 10.57686/256204/29 (ISSN: Print 2754-4575/ Online 2754-4583)
© 2023 Chris Halsted (ORCID iD: 0000-0001-9357-1301)
This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License

entries are in verse, they are in different hands, and are divided by a laconic 1001 entry — in three *more* hands — recording the death of abbot Gerhard and the appointment of Burchard. The state of the abbey's roof thus constitutes one of the many micronarratives present in the *Greater Annals*, an everyday story recording a decidedly local and even parochial concern — Burchard's repairs are otherwise unattested — but vividly recounted, in prose and in verse and with attendant miracles, by no less than five interlocutors. In short, the story of the roof's repairs is emblematic of the *Greater Annals* as a work of collective monastic remembrance — perhaps unparalleled for its period.

The *Greater Annals of St. Gall* are based, in their earliest passages, on the St. Gall continuation of the *Annales Alamannici*, which extends until 926. Substantial emendations have been made to the earlier material in the *Greater Annals*, however, and they cannot be said to be merely a continuation of the *Annales Alamannici*.[2] Despite being a much-relied-upon source for Ottonian and Salian history — for the years 918–1024 they provide an entirely independent account and for 1025–1044 a detailed account which overlaps with several other well-known sources — the *Greater Annals* have yet to be translated into English (though there is a recent, and superlative, German translation by Roland Zingg). This introductory essay serves to familiarize the reader with the context and production of the *Greater Annals*, as well as highlight several of the themes of the text most useful or interesting to the medievalist audience. I especially focus on the role of the *Greater Annals* as an independent witness with often-diverging viewpoints to many of the important events of early medieval European history and its unique status as a repository of institutional memory and identity for the monks of St. Gall.

St. Gall in Context

According to local tradition, the abbey of St. Gall was first founded as a hermitage by the Irish saint Gallus, a companion of Saint Columbanus, who is said to have become a hermit there in 612.[3] On his death some decades later he was buried there, and the location became both a destination of pilgrimage and a shelter for the surrounding populace.[4] Around 720, the site was placed in the custody of the Alemannian priest Otmar, who founded an abbey on the location.[5] By the ninth century St. Gall had become a favorite recipient of both local and royal patronage,

[2] Zingg, *Annalistik*, pp. 134–36.

[3] Johannes Duft, Anton Gössi and Werner Vogler, *Die Abtei St. Gallen* (St. Gallen: Verlag am Klosterhof, 1986), pp. 16–17; Werner Vogler, 'Historical Sketch of the Abbey of St. Gall', in *The Culture of the Abbey of St. Gall: An Overview*, ed. by James King and Werner Vogler (Stuttgart: Belser Verlag 1991), pp. 9–24 (p. 9); Anna Grotans, 'The Abbey of St. Gall', in *The Oxford Handbook of Latin Paleography*, ed. by Frank Coulson and Robert Babcock (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), pp. 805–12 (p. 806). For the discussion of Gallus' Irish identity see Ian Wood, 'The Irish on the Continent in the Seventh Century', in *Gallus und Seine Zeit: Leben, Wirken, Nachleben,* ed. by Franziska Schnoor and others (St. Gallen: Verlag am Klosterhof, 2015), pp. 39–53, and Sven Meeder, *The Irish Scholarly Presence at St. Gall: Networks of Knowledge in the Early Middle Ages* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), pp. 15–38; for the wider context of Columbanus' career on the Continent see Ernst Tremp, 'Columbans Vermächtnis im Widerstreit: Die Rechtfertigungsrede des Gallus vor der Gesandtschaft aus Luxeil im Jahr 629', in *Gallus und Seine Zeit*, ed. by Schnoor and others, pp. 243–65. J. M. Clark, *The Abbey of St. Gall as a Centre of Literature and Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926) is a useful overview in English, though outdated.

[4] Duft, Gössi, and Vogler, p. 17; Grotans, 'Abbey of St. Gall', p. 806. For the development of the early settlement at St. Gall, see Max Schär, 'Gallus' Eremitensiedlung im Steinachwald', in *Gallus und Seine Zeit*, ed. by Schnoor and others, pp. 183–203.

[5] Duft, Gössi, and Vogler, pp. 17–19, 96–98; Vogler, 'Historical Sketch', p. 9.

and a series of grants over the course of the 800s gave the monks of St. Gall independence from the bishopric of Constance and the right to freely elect their abbots.[6] As its lands grew, so too did the political influence of its abbots. Abbot Gozbert (816–37) rebuilt the abbey and secured the canonization of its founder Otmar; Abbot Grimald (841–72) was chancellor and chaplain to Louis the German (r. 843–76) as well as abbot of Weissenburg.[7] This culminated with the career of Abbot Salomon (890–919), also (as Salomon III) the Bishop of Constance, who acted as an advisor to four kings.[8] The fortunes of the abbey declined following several disasters — most notably the sack by Hungarian raiders in 926 and a fire in 937 — but by the beginning of the eleventh century St. Gall was again a preeminent center for learning and scholarly production, especially under Abbot Burchard II and his schoolmaster Notker Labeo.[9]

St. Gall acts, for many historians, as the example *par excellence* of Carolingian monastic culture.[10] This is no doubt a function of the extraordinary wealth of manuscript evidence which survives at the abbey: the *Stiftsbibliothek St. Gallen* today contains some 2,000 manuscripts, of which at least 400 are pre-millennium; hundreds more produced in the St. Gall scriptorium have been distributed to libraries across Europe.[11] Of this surviving corpus, a significant portion concerns the history of the Abbey itself. We possess multiple saints' lives concerning not only the founders of the monastery, Gall and Otmar, but other figures of historical significance like Notker the Stammerer (d. 912) and the anchoress-saint Wiborada (d. 926).[12] The *Casus Sancti Galli*, a chronicle of the monastery's history begun by the monk Ratpert in the ninth century, continued *c.* 1050 by Ekkehard IV up to 972, and then sporadically continued up until the fourteenth century, presents an organized and at times highly stylized account of events at the monastery.[13] The survival of a rich collection of charters, over 800 of which date from before the millennium, allows for the intricate reconstruction of social and economic history in the region.[14] Finally, and uniquely among monasteries of this era, we have the famous *Plan of St. Gall*, a schematic drawing

6 Duft, Gössi, and Vogler, pp. 20–22, 102–07; Vogler, 'Historical Sketch', pp. 10–13.

7 Duft, Gössi, and Vogler, pp. 22–23.

8 Duft, Gössi, and Vogler, pp. 110–12; Vogler, 'Historical Sketch', pp. 14–15; Grotans, 'Abbey of St. Gall', p. 806.

9 Duft, Gössi, and Vogler, pp. 28–34; Vogler, 'Historical Sketch', pp. 16–18.

10 E.g. Rosamond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 77–134. Walter Berschin, 'Latin Literature from St. Gall', in *The Culture*, ed. by King and Vogler, pp. 145–56, has called St. Gall a 'mythos for modern scholarship'.

11 Grotans, 'Abbey of St. Gall', pp. 807–08; Karl Schmuki, 'The Collection of Manuscripts', in *The Abbey Library of Saint Gall*, ed. by Ernst Tremp, Johannes Huber, and Karl Schmuki (St. Gall: Verlag am Klosterhof, 2007), pp. 69–118.

12 See especially Albrecht Diem, 'Die *Regula Columbani* und die *Regula Sancti Galli*: Überlegungne zu den Gallusviten in ihrem karolingischen Kontext', in *Gallus und Seine Zeit*, ed. by Schnoor and others, pp. 65–97; Schmuki, 'Collection', pp. 87–88.

13 For the most famous section of this record, the account written by Ekkehard IV covering the years 883–972, see Mayke de Jong, 'Internal Cloisters: The Case of Ekkehard's *Casus Sancti Galli*', in *Grenze und Differenz im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. by Walter Pohl and Helmut Reimitz (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000), pp. 209–221; Emily Albu and Natalia Lozovsky, *Fortune and Misfortune at Saint Gall* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), pp. vii–xxviii. For the *Casus* tradition *in toto* see recently Wojtek Jezierski, '*Speculum monasterii:* Ekkehart IV and the Making of St Gall's Identity in the *Casus Sancti Galli*-Tradition (9th–13th centuries)', in *Ekkehart IV. von St. Gallen*, ed. by Norbert Kössinger, Elke Krotz and Stephan Müller (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), pp. 267–302.

14 See recently Bernhard Zeller, 'Language, Formulae, and Carolingian Reforms: The Case of the Alemannic Charters from St Gall', in *The Languages of Early Medieval Charters: Latin, Germanic Vernaculars, and the Written Word*, ed. by Robert Gallagher, Edward Roberts, and Francesca Tinti (Leiden: Brill, 2021), pp. 154–87.

from around 820 possibly intended to be used in the rebuilding of the monastery. This plan has engendered much scholarly debate about the nature and function of Carolingian monasticism.[15] The inclusion of an external school on the *Plan* has also contributed to a lively debate about the nature of lay education in the Carolingian era.[16]

At the same time, St. Gall also had a tremendous scholarly and artistic output. Beyond the plentiful saints' lives, St. Gall was also responsible for Notker Balbulus' *Gesta Karoli magni*, the aforementioned *Casus Sancti Galli* tradition, and numerous biblical commentaries, hymns, and poems.[17] Notker Labeo, the schoolmaster in the early eleventh century, is often regarded as the father of German literature for his sponsorship of a broad vernacular translation program and the composition of many vernacular poems.[18] The abbey is also vitally important to historians of medieval sacred music and book illumination; forms developed at St. Gall can be found across the continent.[19] Historically, the Latin epic *Waltharius* has also been considered a production of the abbey, although more recent investigations have problematized this identification and raised the possibility of other places of authorship.[20]

St. Gall's annalistic tradition is no less important, though it has received less scholarly attention in its own right, perhaps because of the allure of subjects such as the *Casus Sancti Galli*, the *Plan of St. Gall*, or *Waltharius*. No less than eight separate annals are associated with St. Gall; these range from shorter productions of merely a few entries to the much more substantial *Annales Alamannici* and the *Greater Annals of St. Gall*. These latter, which are related, number among the most important historical sources for Carolingian and post-Carolingian Europe. Indeed, the *Greater Annals* especially might be counted among those annals most familiar to a non-medievalist audience, given their somewhat provocative appearance in Hayden White's work on narrative.[21] It is thus all the stranger that they have not thus far received an English translation. This lacuna has been made even starker by two recent publications, Roland Zingg's excellent edition of the St. Gall annalistic tradition in 2019 as

[15] See especially Walter Horn and Ernest Born, *The Plan of St. Gall: A Study of the Architecture and Economy of, and Life in, a Paradigmatic Carolingian Monastery* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979); Warren Sanderson, 'The Plan of St. Gall Reconsidered', *Speculum*, 60 (1985), 615–32; Lawrence Nees, 'The Plan of St. Gall and the Theory of the Program of Carolingian Art', *Gesta*, 25 (1986), 1–8; Richard Sullivan, 'What Was Carolingian Monasticism? The Plan of St Gall and the History of Monasticism', in *After Rome's Fall: Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History*, ed. by Alexander Murray (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), pp. 251–87.

[16] E.g. M. M. Hildebrand, *The External School in Carolingian Society* (Leiden: Brill, 1992); Anna Grotans, *Reading in Medieval St. Gall* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 53–66.

[17] Schmuki, 'Collection', pp. 81–88.

[18] Schmuki, 'Collection', pp. 88–92; Grotans, *Reading,* pp. 111–54; Stefan Sonderegger, 'German Language and Literature in St. Gall', in *The Culture*, ed. by King and Vogler, pp. 161–84.

[19] Johannes Duft, 'The Contribution of the Abbey of St. Gall to Sacred Music', in *The Culture*, ed. by King and Vogler, pp. 57–67; Christoph Eggenberger, 'The Art of the Book in St. Gall', in the same volume, pp. 93–118.

[20] Rachel Stone, '*Waltharius* and Carolingian Morality: Satire and Lay Values', *Early Medieval Europe*, 21 (2013), 50–70; Alice Rio, 'Waltharius at Fontenoy? Epic Heroism and Carolingian Political Thought', *Viator*, 46 (2015), 41–64; Simon MacLean, '*Waltharius*: Treasure, Revenge and Kingship in the Ottonian Wild West', in *Emotion, Violence, Vengeance and Law in the Middle Age: Essays in Honour of William Ian Miller,* ed. by Kate Gilbert and Stephen White (Leiden: Brill, 2018), pp. 225–51.

[21] Hayden White, 'The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality', *Critical Inquiry*, 7 (1980), 5–27, and *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), pp. 5–19; for responses see Marilyn Robinson Waldman, '"The Otherwise Unnoteworthy Year 711": A Reply to Hayden White', *Critical Inquiry*, 7 (1981), 784–92; Nancy Partner, 'Hayden White: The Form of the Content', *History and Theory*, 37 (1998), 162–72; Susan Crane, *Nothing Happened: A History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2020), pp. 153–60.

well as Emily Albu and Natalia Lozovsky's translation of the *Casus Sancti Galli* of Ekkehard IV, which shares material with the *Greater Annals*, in 2021.[22] Both publications highlight the remaining work to be done on the *Greater Annals* and the continued necessity of bringing the work, and St. Gall's unique place in history, to the attention of new audiences. The goal of the present translation, then, is to facilitate the accessibility of the annals to researchers, instructors, and students.

Manuscripts, Composition, and Authorship of the Annals

The *Annals* are extant in three manuscripts. The earliest, St. Gallen Stiftsbibliothek 915, which includes the annals at pp. 196–236, is the autograph.[23] St. Gallen 915 was the book used for the abbey's *officium capituli*, the reading from select texts and commemoration of the dead at Prime.[24] As such, it included not only the *Greater Annals* but two martyrologies, the necrology of St. Gall, and the *Rule of St. Benedict*, as well as other important records like the confraternity agreements between St. Gall and Reichenau and extensive computus tables.[25] Readers of the *Greater Annals* would thus have read them in light of other texts, especially the necrology, which recorded the deaths of many of the figures described in the annals. A second copy of the annals can be found in the twelfth-century St. Gallen Stiftsbibliothek 453, an updated *officium* book which contained many of the same texts as St. Gallen 915.[26] The annals in St. Gallen 453 were copied directly from the autograph in St. Gallen 915.[27] The final manuscript, Wien Österreichische Nationabibliothek Cod. Ser. n. 4427, fols. 9v–37r, is a very late copy of the autograph, from the eighteenth century.[28]

The autograph version of the annals in St. Gallen 915 is a fantastic hodgepodge, written by at least thirty-three hands over the course of more than a century and incorporating a complex variety of form and content. It is written in a single hand down to halfway through the 955 entry.[29] This portion of the text is primarily based on the *Annales Alamannici* (and its St. Gall continuation), itself a composite text first written at Murbach in the eighth century and continued at Reichenau up to 876, after which it finally came to St. Gall.[30] The *Greater*

[22] Zingg, *Annalistik*, pp. 134–213; Albu and Lozovsky, *Fortune and Misfortune.*

[23] Zingg, *Annalistik,* p. 140. St. Gallen 915 is available online at http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/de/list/one/csg/0915.

[24] Johan Autenrieth, 'Der Codex Sangallensis 915: Ein Beitrag zur Erforschung der Kapiteloffiziumsbücher', in *Landesgeschichte und Geistesgeschichte: Festschrift für Otto Herding zum 65. Geburtstag,* ed. by Kaspar Elm, Eberhard Gönner and Eugen Hillenbrand (Stuttgart, 1977), pp. 42–55; Dieter Geuenich, 'The St. Gall Confraternity of Prayer', in *The Culture*, ed. by King and Vogler, pp. 29–38. For the *officium capituli,* see C. Morgand, 'La discipline pénitentielle et l'*Officium capituli* d'après le *Memoriale qualiter*', *Revue Bénédictine*, 72 (1962), 22–60; recently Alain Rauwel, 'Note sur les usages liturgiques du chapitre', *Bulletin du centre d'études médiévales d'Auxerre*, 6 (2013), 1–4.

[25] Autenrieth, 'Der Codex', pp. 43–44; Geuenich, 'Confraternity of Prayer', pp. 29–30.

[26] Zingg, *Annalistik*, pp. 140–41; Geuenich, 'Confraternity of Prayer', pp. 30–32. St. Gallen 453 is available online at http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/de/list/one/csg/0453.

[27] Zingg, *Annalistik*, pp. 140–41.

[28] Zingg, *Annalistik*, p. 141.

[29] Carl Henking, 'Die annalistischen Aufzeichnungen des Klosters St. Gallen', *Mitteilungen zur vaterländischen Geschichte: Historischer Verein des Kantons St. Gallen*, 19 (1884), 195–368 (pp. 358–68); Zingg, *Annalistik,* pp. 134–35.

[30] Wattenbach and Holtzmann, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen*, pp. 226–27; Zingg, *Annalistik,* pp. 134–35. For the *Annales Alamannici*, see Henking, 'Aufzeichnungen', pp. 347–58; Wilhelm Wattenbach, Wilhelm Levison, and Heinz Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter 2: Die Karolinger vom Anfang des 8. Jahrhunderts bis zum Tode Karls des Grossen* (Weimar: H. Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1953), pp. 188–89; Rudolf Pokorny,

Annals are far from a mere copy in this period, however; numerous additional entries have been inserted, covering especially subjects related to the abbey of St. Gall, and previous entries have been excerpted and truncated, qualifying this portion of the *Greater Annals* as a work in its own right.[31] From 919 the *Greater Annals* are entirely independent, and the portion of the work from this point to 955 seems to comprise the creation of a single author.[32]

From the middle of the 955 entry through the 1024 entry the hand changes at minimum every few entries, and sometimes within the same entry.[33] The topics of these entries do not display a consistent narrative and do not appear to follow logically from one another; it seems that entries for this period were recorded on an *ad hoc* basis by a rapidly-shifting cast of authors. At least four of these entries, and possibly more, were definitely much later insertions rather than contemporary records.[34] This portion of the text is thus a bricolage, a collaborative effort with little apparent in the way of order or consistent theme. This section also features one of the most distinctive and interesting phenomena of the *Greater Annals*, their tendency to slip into verse. From 971, the *Greater Annals* include no fewer than fifteen poems written in dactylic hexameter —in twelve different hands.[35] These entries constitute stand-alone poems on a wide variety of subjects, from natural disasters and political events to the death and appointment of abbots and the repair efforts to the monastery roof in 1003. This section also includes a number of erasure marks apparent in the digitized manuscript, which would be a fruitful avenue for future research into the manuscript.[36] I have endeavored to note these in the translation.

From the beginning of the 1025 entry through the end of 1044, the *Greater Annals* are again in a single hand.[37] This period of the text, covering the reign of Emperor Conrad II and the first few years of Henry III, has deep structural parallels to Wipo of Burgundy's *Vita Chuonradi imperatoris* and especially Hermann of Reichenau's *Chronicon.*[38] Following the work of Harry Bresslau in the nineteenth century, scholars have conceived of these three texts as deriving from a single original work of annals, traditionally termed the *Swabian World-Chronicle.*[39] The development of this text and its relatives, however, is not well understood,

'Freisinger Annalen von der Reichenau', *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, 74 (2018), 525–83 (pp. 536–53); Zingg, *Annalistik,* pp. 42–49. For the Murbach annals see recently Ildar Garipzanov, 'Annales Guelferbytani: Changing Perspectives of a Local Narrative', in *Zwischen Niederschrift und Wiederschrift: Frühmittelalterliche Hagiographie und Historiographie im Spannungsfeld von Kompendienüberlieferung und Editionstechnik*, ed. by Richard Corradini, Max Diesenberger, and Meta Niederkorn-Bruck (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2010), pp. 105–20.

31 E.g. 760, 770, 774, 812, 816, 830.

32 Henking, 'Aufzeichnungen', p. 361; Wattenbach and Holtzmann, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen*, p. 227; Zingg, *Annalistik,* pp. 134–36.

33 Henking, 'Aufzeichnungen', pp. 362–63; Zingg, *Annalistik*, p. 137. See e.g. 956, 973, 991, 1001, 1022.

34 Definitely the entries 965–68, possibly also 956–59 and the second half of 955.

35 Entries 971, 973, 980, 984, 1000, 1001, 1003, 1004, 1008, 1011, 1012, 1013, 1015, 1021.

36 E.g. 956, 958, 962, 972, 990, 1007. Some (though not all) of these erasures have been noted by editors, including Zingg, but to my knowledge there is no comprehensive study on the subject.

37 Henking, 'Aufzeichhnung', pp. 363–65; Wattenbach and Holtzmann, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen*, pp. 226–39; Zingg, *Annalistik,* pp. 137–39.

38 See Wipo of Burgundy, *Gesta Chuonradi II imperatoris,* ed. by Harry Bresslau, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi, 61 (Hannover: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1915), 1–62 (pp. 32–62); Hermann of Reichenau, *Chronicon,* ed. Georg Pertz, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores, 5 (Hannover: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1844), 74–133 (pp. 120–24).

39 Harry Bresslau, 'Beiträge zur Kritik deutscher Geschichtsquellen des 11. Jahrhunderts', *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde*, 2 (1877), 539–96 (pp. 566–96); Bresslau, 'Beiträge zur Kritik deutscher Geschichtsquellen des 11. Jahrhunderts, Neue Folge I.', *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere*

and there are several problems with the assumed direct descent from a lost work of annals to these three works.[40] For instance, while the *Vita Chuonradis* has structural parallels to the *Greater Annals*, it excludes much of the specific information, including personal names and the place-names; at other points, such as a miracle description in 1037, the two match almost exactly.[41] Hermann's *Chronicon*, on the other hand, has obvious similarities to the 1025–1044 section of the *Greater Annals*, but also has similar entries from earlier than 1025, suggesting that Hermann may have drawn directly on the *Greater Annals* rather than on a hypothetical predecessor.[42] Despite controversies regarding the origin of the text, this section presents a trove of information regarding imperial history and the personal relationships of the imperial elite with the emperor. Here the sense of St. Gall's monastic identity which pervades the earlier portions somewhat fades away; at times local history entirely disappears in favor of imperial narrative, though a few entries still note the deaths and appointments of abbots or the visit of imperial figures to the abbey.[43] A solitary final entry in 1056, describing the death of Emperor Henry III, concludes the *Greater Annals*.

It is thus misleading to speak of the authorship of the *Greater Annals,* or really even consider it a single 'work' with a single purpose. These were the product of generations of communal effort, occasionally harnessed toward a particular point but more often disparate, bricolage, and hodgepodge. The *Annals* as written fade in and out of narrativity, at times driving home particular points or arguments but at others seeming to represent a more diffuse communal memory of the brothers of St. Gall. The famous dictum of Hayden White that the *Greater Annals* did not constitute a narrative might have been formulated very differently had he looked, say, at the 888–955 section of the annals, which sets out the tale of the invading Hungarians up until their final defeat; conversely, it is absolutely confirmed by the narrativeless chaos of the 955–1024 section.[44]

The *Greater Annals* have a long tradition of study in the modern era. Melchior Goldast published the *editio princeps* in 1606, though he was unaware of the autograph and only utilized St. Gallen 453 for this edition.[45] In 1826 Ildefons von Arx, then the librarian at St. Gall, published an edition for the first volume of the Monumenta Germaniae Historia which for the first time utilized both medieval manuscripts.[46] The 1826 edition continues to be the most widely used version because of its wide accessibility, though the 1884 edition by Carl Henking added significant annotation and commentary.[47] The *Greater Annals* were not edited again until 2019, when Roland Zingg published his study of St. Gall's annalistic tradition.[48] The Zingg edition improves on previous editions in several respects, especially in accurately

deutsche Geschichtskunde, 27 (1902), 127–75 (pp. 162–69). See also Wattenbach and Holtzmann, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen*, pp. 226–39; more recently see the reanalysis of these sources' relationship to the *Chronicon Suevicum universale* in Pokorny, 'Wirziburgense', pp. 470–75, 482–88.

40 Pokorny, 'Wirziburgense', pp. 482–48; Zingg, *Annalistik*, pp. 138–39.

41 Compare Wipo, *Gesta Chuonradi*, chapters 10, 15–22, 36, ed. by Bresslau, pp. 32, 35–42, 56 with *Greater Annals* 1025, 1027, 1037.

42 E.g. Hermann von Reichenau, *Chronicon*, s.aa. 948, 952, 968, 976, 982, 990, 1005, 1012, 1022, ed. by Pertz, pp. 114, 116–20.

43 E.g. 1027, 1034, 1040.

44 White, *Content of the Form,* pp. 6–7.

45 Zingg, *Annalistik*, pp. 141–42.

46 *Annales Sangallenses Maiores*, ed. by Ildefons von Arx, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores, 1 (Hannover: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1826), pp. 73–85.

47 Henking, 'Aufzeichnungen', 265–323.

48 Zingg, *Annalistik*, pp. 144–213.

noting the dating system and changes in hand in the original manuscripts, as well as depicting its various idiosyncrasies (of which there are many).[49] Zingg also provided a translation into German on facing pages; this is the first full translation of the *Greater Annals* into a modern language.[50] The Zingg edition and translation mark a new epoch in the study of the annals: without them, the current effort would have been entirely impossible.

Themes and Analysis

From a purely utilitarian perspective, the *Greater Annals* are useful to medieval historians, as are their source the *Annales Alamannici*, because they often represent independent or divergent opinions on political events. Alemannia was very rarely the center of the Carolingian or post-Carolingian world; scandals, controversies, or even simple politics were often looked at from a different perspective from the texts to which historians are accustomed.[51] To take an interesting example, the *Greater Annals* entry for 876 notes that 'Emperor Charles the Second began to rule'. It is unclear from the text as written whether the entry means Charles 'the Bald,' who was crowned emperor in 875, or Charles 'the Fat,' for whom 876 marks rather the beginnings of his reign as king of Alemannia after the death of his father Louis the German. While Charles 'the Fat' would indeed go on to become emperor, and to reunify the Carolingian empire through a series of surprise inheritances, this would not happen until 881 and 884 respectively.[52] The *Annales Alamannici*, upon which the *Greater Annals* are based in this period, do not mention either Charles in 876, though they do note the elevation of Charles 'the Fat' to *imperator* in 881.[53] Depending on which Charles we think this is, the *Greater Annals* annalist has then shifted the focus and transformed the narrative of his source material in different ways, either crowning Charles 'the Fat' emperor from his first appearance or inserting Charles 'the Bald,' otherwise unreferenced in the *Greater Annals*. The resulting product thus becomes either a piece of Alemannian patriotism highlighting the career of Charles 'the Fat' or a piece of Carolingian cosmopolitanism situating St. Gall within the greater Carolingian world.

Perhaps the classic example of Alemannian perspective in the *Annals* is its treatment of the ascent of Henry the Fowler, king of East Francia from 919 to 936. The *Greater Annals* in the early tenth century, like their source the St. Gall continuation of the *Annales Alemannici*, are generally careful to note the comings and goings of East Frankish kings.[54] They describe

[49] E.g. the use of majuscule for the deaths of the abbots Anno and Ymmo in 954 and 984, the changed dating for the year 801, and the frequent erasures throughout.

[50] A previous translation into German only covered the years 1024–1044 — see W. Pflüger and Wilhelm Wattenbach, *Wipo, das Leben Kaiser Konrad II: Nebst Auszügen aus den Jahrbüchern von Sanct Gallen und der Schwäbischen Weltchronik* (Leipzig: Dyksche Buchhandlung, 1892), pp. 85–92. The first edition of Pflüger's translation, published in 1877, did not include the *Greater Annals*, but terminated after the translation of Wipo's *Gesta Chuonradi.*

[51] For the status of Alemannia within Carolingian politics see especially Simon MacLean, *Kingship and Politics in the Late Ninth Century: Charles the Fat and the End of the Carolingian Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 81–122.

[52] MacLean, *Kingship and Politics in the Late Ninth Century*, pp. 120–29.

[53] *Annales Alamannici*, s.a. 876, ed. by Zingg, *Annalistik*, p. 84.

[54] For the position of East Francia, which had gradually become a separate entity from West and Middle Francia following the reign of Louis the German (843–76), see Timothy Reuter, *Germany in the Early Middle Ages 800–1056* (London: Routledge, 1991), especially pp. 70–112; Benjamin Arnold, *Medieval Germany 500–1300: A Political Interpretation* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1997), especially pp. 21–52.

the death of Arnulf and the succession of his son Louis in 900, the death of the king of Lotharingia, Arnulf's natural son Zwentibold, in 901, the death of Louis and Conrad I's election in 911, and the death of Conrad in 918. This makes it all the stranger that the annals ignore the election of the Saxon king Henry the Fowler, traditionally dated to 919. The 919 entry, which does not rely on any information from the *Annales Alamannici,* instead describes a war between Burchard, *dux* of Alemannia, and Rudolf, king of Burgundy. Henry does not appear until 925, when he is recorded granting the abbacy of St. Gall to Engilbert — itself an odd entry, given that Engilbert was already 'made abbot' in the 924 entry.

One could take this tendency to deviate from 'mainstream' sources of history as evidence of a massaged and propagandistic account. But taking the *Greater Annals* as a distortion of truth is too simplistic — it must be considered instead that they represented an alternative viewpoint. Especially for cases like Henry the Fowler, the *Greater Annals* provide valuable evidence that the political narratives we have come to accept might be underlaid by a more complicated reality. Johannes Fried famously used the absence of notation regarding Henry's election — and the corresponding absence in the continued *Annales Alamannici* — to argue that Henry's authority may have been only gradually recognized outside of Saxony.[55] Another possibility is that the spotty updating of the annals at this time led to an oversight in the inclusion of relevant information; the 955 annalist may not have had access to the details about exactly when Henry had come to the throne. Whatever the case, it is interesting that the founding moment of the nascent Saxon dynasty — by 955 well-ensconced as not only Germany's power *du jour* but Europe's as well — was not included in this text.

By 936, firmly in the period of the annals composed solely by the 955 annalist, the focus on East Frankish kingship had returned — the annals record that 'King Henry died' and 'his son Otto succeeded him in royal power'. Even in the reign of Otto, however, the Alemannic perspective of the 955 annalist shines through. A good example is the 953 rebellion of Liudolf, Otto I's eldest son and *dux* of Alemannia since 949. Liudolf had married Ida, the daughter of the previous *dux* of Alemannia, making him in some sense a hereditary successor.[56] The best-known version of this story, described by Widukind of Corvey, depicts Liudolf as a jealous plotter, working against his father out of fear of being pushed out by Otto's new wife Adelaide.[57] In the *Greater Annals*, however, the analysis is much more neutral; the annalist merely writes that 'discord arose' between Otto and Liudolf, papering over the act of rebellion entirely.[58] A previous entry, in 948, had described the royal heir as 'dear to God and all the Saints' on the occasion of his visit to St. Gall. This favoritism may have been motivated by loyalty to Liudolf as the *dux* of Alemannia, although it is also possible that the different opinions are down to different time frames — the *Greater Annals* annalist likely wrote in 955, when Liudolf was still alive, while Widukind wrote ten years after his death in 957.

[55] Johannes Fried, 'Die Königserhebung Heinrichs I: Erinnerung Mündlichkeit und Traditionsbildung im 10. Jahrhundert', in *Mittelalterforschung nach der Wende 1989*, ed. by Michael Borgolte (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1995), pp. 267–318, (pp. 286–91, 300–02).

[56] Reuter, *Germany*, p. 154.

[57] Widukind of Corvey, *Res gestae Saxonicae,* book 3, chapters 9–15, ed. by. Paul Hirsch, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi, 60 (Hannover: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1935), pp. 109–12. For analysis of the revolt and its context see Karl Leyser, *Rule and Conflict in an Early Medieval Society: Ottonian Saxony* (London: Arnold, 1979), pp. 9–22; recently Gerd Althoff, *Rules and Rituals in Medieval Power Games* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), pp. 234–46.

[58] Entry 953, below.

By comparison, the rebellion of the Alemannian *dux* Ernest against his stepfather Emperor Conrad, from 1025–30, is told with much less sympathy to Ernest. Ernest and his co-conspirators are depicted in no uncertain terms as rebels, authors of an attempt 'prohibited by God' who would eventually be removed from office.[59] This is, however, a fairer account than the (related) description given by Wipo of Burgundy, which twice describes Ernest as rebelling *diabolo suadente*, 'at the instigation of the devil', and depicts Ernest's mother Empress Gisela taking the side of the emperor against Ernest in 1032.[60] Ernest was even more of an Aleman than Liudolf; his like-named father was *dux* of Alemannia from 1012 to 1015, and through his maternal line he was a descendent of the Conradines who had intermittently held the office since 926. It is possible to take the unfavorable account of his actions as representing the further unity of the empire at the beginning of the eleventh century: as imperial power increased, local loyalties proved less durable than they once had been. Given the possible derivation of this account from a lost annal, however, we must also consider that the biases of this unknown author are equally unknown — and in any case, by the time of the lost annals' composition, Ernest had been dead for more than a decade.

Indeed, another historical subtheme detectible in the *longue durée* of the annals is the changing nature of political power in Alemannia. This undercurrent is in fact present from the very first entry in 709, which describes the death of one *dux* Godfrid. Godfrid was one of the last semi-independent Aleman rulers; his death came in the middle of a protracted fight against Carolingian influence.[61] Unlike its source material the *Annales Alemmanici*, which begin with the death of Pippin II's son Drogo and therefore center 'national' concerns from the beginning, the *Greater Annals* therefore consciously focus on local matters from their very start.[62] For the next two centuries, local Alemannian political power takes a backseat, though the Aleman Gerold, Prefect of Bavaria, is at least mentioned.[63] The true story of the Alemannian *duces* begins in the tenth century, with the struggle for dominance of Alemannia among several competing groups, most especially the Conradine and Hunfriding families. The depiction of these leaders changes over the course of the text; early *duces* like Ercharger and Burchard I are depicted as quasi-royal warrior-dukes, while later figures, especially Hermann III and Ernest I who both died tragically early, are depicted as models of elite, youthful manhood.[64]

The place where we can get the closest to sustained authorial intent in the *Greater Annals* is in the sections composed or altered by the 955 annalist. That the later pieces of this section, especially from 888 onwards, were intended to act as a unified whole can be seen by the annalist's treatment of the Hungarians. From their introduction in the 888 entry, the Hungarians are consistently referred to as *Agareni*, 'Hagarenes'— that is, descendants of the biblical Hagar, often identified in the period with Arabs or Muslims.[65] That this was a

[59] Below, entries 1025–30.

[60] Wipo, *Gesta Chuonradi,* chapters 10, 19, 25, ed. by Bresslau, pp. 32, 38–39, 43–44. Liudolf and Ernest are conflated into one character in the later romance *Herzog Ernst* — see Althoff, *Rules and Rituals*, pp. 237–39.

[61] Paul Fouracre, *The Age of Charles Martel* (London, 2000), pp. 51–52.

[62] Roger Collins, 'Frankish Past and Carolingian Present in the Age of Charlemagne', in *Am Vorabend der Kaiser Krönung: Das Epos 'Karolus Magnus et Leo Papa' und der Papstbesuch in Paderborn 799,* ed. by Peter Godman, Jörg Jarnut, and Peter Johanek (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2002), pp. 301–22 (p. 315).

[63] Entry 799.

[64] Entries 1012 and 1015.

[65] For the evolution of the term, see Anthony Hilhorst, 'Ishmaelites, Hagarenes, Saracens', in *Abraham, the Nations, and the Hagarites: Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Perspectives on Kinship with Abraham,* ed. by Martin Goodman, George H. van Kooten and Jacques T.A.G.M. van Ruiten (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 421–34; also Norman Bade, 'Muslims in the Christian World Order: Comprehension and Knowledge of the Saracens in Two Universal

conscious stylistic choice can be seen from the fact that the annalist altered the entries from 892 to 919, which he had copied from the *Alemannic Annals*, from *Ungri* to *Agareni*.[66] The appellation cannot be said to have been especially accurate — no other source from the period connects the Hungarians to Islam, and they do not seem to have been historically Muslim or to have incorporated Islamicate cultural elements.[67] The misascribed identity was even noticed by Ekkehard IV, who noted in a gloss on Orosius that 'some of our idiots now call [the Hungarians] Hagarenes'.[68]

Rather than an identification aiming for accuracy, however, the depiction of the Hungarians as *Agareni* can be taken as an argument for the eschatological significance of the fight against the Hungarians. The 955 annalist wrote in the aftermath of the sacking of St. Gall by the Hungarians in 926; he might well have been at the monastery when this occurred.[69] With the communal memory of this traumatic event in mind, it seems that the annalist rewrote the conflict with the Hungarians in the key of apocalypse, building up to the climactic defeat of the Hungarians by Otto in 955 itself.[70] Given that the defeat of the Hungarians was the final entry in the 955 annalist's hand, this probably functioned as the instigating event for the copying and updating of the annals. At the annalist's crafting, the history of the early tenth century became a world-historical struggle between Christianity and Islam. So too does the Hungarian threat connect to the order of government in the Christian world — the 955 annalist dates the first coming of the Hungarians to 888, implicitly connecting it to the deposition of the Alemannian Charles 'the Fat' by Arnulf of Carinthia.[71] In 892 he again blames Arnulf, writing that he 'unleashed the Hagarenes from where they were enclosed.' Interestingly, the annalist appears not to have noticed the first reference to the Hungarians in the copied 863 entry, where they are described as Huns. He thus introduces the Hungarians twice, once in 863 and once in 888.

The *Greater Annals* are also an excellent source for the understanding of local, monastic history in the Middle Ages. Notes regarding the community of St. Gall continue throughout the course of the text, beginning with simple entries regarding the deaths and appointments of abbots, but growing over the course of the annals to include such fascinating tidbits as

Histories of the Carolingian Empire', *Millennium*, 10 (2013), 293–310. It is worth noting the competing Pauline interpretation, from Galatians 4:22–31, which many medieval Christians took to indicate that Hagar represented *synagoga,* i.e. the Jewish community — see e.g. Deeana Klepper, 'Historicizing Allegory: The Jew as Hagar in Medieval Christian Text and Image', *Church History*, 84 (2015), 308–44 (pp. 315–18).

66 Entries 899, 900, 902, 908, 909, 910, 913.

67 For the early Hungarians see especially Pál Engel, *The Realm of St. Stephen: A History of Medieval Hungary, 895–1526,* trans. by Tamás Pálosfalvi (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001), pp. 8–24.

68 'idiotae nostri quidam nunc Agarenos vocant', a sentiment repeated in his *Casus sancti Galli* as well. Noted by Natalia Lozovsky, 'The Uses of Classical History and Geography in Medieval St Gall', in *Mapping Medieval Geographies: Geographical Encounters in the Latin West and Beyond, 300–1600,* ed. by Keith D. Lilley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 65–82 (pp. 71–72); Meyer von Knonau, *Ekkeharti (IV) Casus sancti Galli* (St. Gallen: Verlag von Huber & Comp., 1877), p. 298, note 998.

69 For the importance of the sack, see Vogler, 'Historical Sketch', p. 16.

70 For the function of apocalypse in tenth-century literature and politics, see especially Levi Roach, 'Emperor Otto III and the End of Time', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 23 (2013), 75–102; Daniel Verhelst, 'Adso of Montier-en-Der and the Fear of the Year 1000', in *The Apocalyptic Year 1000: Religious Expectation and Social Change, 950–1050*, ed. by Richard Landes, Andrew Gow, and David van Meter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 81–92 (pp. 84–85).

71 Other sources also blame Arnulf for the entry of the Hungarians; Regino of Prüm implicitly connects the Hungarian migration to the dissolution of the Carolingian empire by placing his ethnography of the Hungarians in 889, the year after the death of Charles the Fat.

the enclosure of anchorites and the visits of kings and members of the royal family to the monastery. Many of these entries, especially in the bricolage 955–1024 section, revolve around a well investigated theme of monastic communal identity — anxiety surrounding the boundary between the sacred space of the cloister and the secular world outside. To monks of this period, the cloister, a square of specialized buildings surrounding a central courtyard which was inaccessible to laymen in nearly every circumstance, represented a retreat from the world.[72] A pair of entries in 965 and 966, for example, written at the same time sometime after 1050, recapitulate the well-known story from Ekkehard IV's *Casus Sancti Galli* of the reformist abbot Ruodman sneaking into St. Gall's cloister to search for evidence that the monks were breaking the rule of St. Benedict. Belle Tuten has suggested that the final moment of this episode, in which Ruodman hides in the St. Gall latrine, can be interpreted as showing Ruodman's suspicion of illicit sexual behavior.[73] Whether this is the case or not, the episode certainly belongs within the context of tenth-century struggles over monastic reform; Ruodman sought to prove that the St. Gall monks were insufficiently strict in their keeping of the rule — though he violated it himself by entering the cloister in secret. The importance of the privacy and secrecy of the cloister is reemphasized by a long verse entry in 1004 which describes the monks sleeping after a meal on the Saturday before Easter, noting that 'by divine law, no one from the laity sneaks in there'.

A final theme which appears as a notable undercurrent throughout the whole course of the annals is the experience of natural phenomena as marvels, miracles, and portents within the monastic community.[74] Every section of the *Annals,* including the earliest pieces adapted from the *Annales Alemannici*, is full of earthquakes, thunderstorms, floods, and comets. These are often implied to have a causal relationship with events on earth. Thus the deaths of Eberhard of Franconia and Giselbert of Lotharingia in 939, for instance, are presaged by an eclipse of the sun. In another entry, the decision of Kerhilt to became an anchoress in 952 is set against two of the 'greatest thunderstorms' hitting the monastery, but doing no damage. The implication is that the holy enclosure of Kerhilt protected the monastic community from the ravages of the storm. The death of Louis the Pious in 840 comes with an eclipse that also presages the civil war and division of the empire by his sons; a comet seen in 975 was immediately followed by the deaths of three St. Gall monks. In 995 civil war in Bavaria and Burgundy as well as war with the Slavs in the northeast are paired with drought and a cattle plague.

Principles of Translation

The language of the annals is not difficult, but it is decidedly uneven; especially the intermittent poetic entries can present a level of linguistic ambiguity that makes grasping their

[72] See the analysis in Mayke de Jong, 'Carolingian Monasticism: The Power of Prayer', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History II: c. 700–c. 900,* ed. by Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 622–53 (pp. 636–40); De Jong, 'Internal Cloisters', pp. 209–21; Rachel Stone, '"In What Way Can Those Who Have Left The World Be Distinguished?": Masculinity and the Difference Between Carolingian Men', in *Intersections of Gender, Religion and Ethnicity in the Middle Ages,* ed. by Cordelia Beattie and Kirsten A. Fenton (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 12–33.

[73] Belle S. Tuten, 'The *Necessitas Naturae* and Monastic Hygiene', in *Bodily and Spiritual Hygiene in Medieval and Early Modern Literature: Explorations of Textual Presentations of Filth and Water,* ed. by Albrecht Classen (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017), pp. 129–47.

[74] For the function of portents within the medieval mentality, see especially Benedicta Ward, *Miracles and the*

meaning challenging. Where this is the case, I have generally relied on Zingg's translation; places where my reading differs substantially from Zingg's are marked in the notes. While I have endeavored to supply a literal translation of the Latin, in places where this would make the English impenetrable, I have opted instead for an idiomatic translation that preserves the sense, rather than the literal meaning, of the original. I have generally translated the present perfect tense, which sits awkwardly in English historical prose, as simple past. With the goal of conveying the sense of brevity which pervades many of the more abbreviated entries, I have followed previous translators in excluding indefinite articles from these entries; the first two words of the annals, *hiemps dura*, are thus translated 'hard winter' rather than 'a hard winter.'[75] I have left terms for which the translation into English tends to be unhelpful or misleading untranslated. The primary example of this is the term *dux*; a translation of 'duke' implies to the modern reader a rigidity and structure to the system of titulature and landholding which was absolutely not the case for the majority of the period, while the more literal 'leader' obscures the ways in which the term had begun to be used as a proper title. *Ducatus* is likewise left untranslated; the term in the period did not yet have the sense of full-fledged 'duchy' or 'dukedom' but had become more institutionalized than simply 'authority,' 'status' or 'position'. *Miles* is always translated as 'warrior', to avoid the anachronistic implications of 'soldier' or 'knight'. *Regulus* is translated as 'kinglet' to preserve its pejorative implications; *princeps* as 'ruler' or 'leader' based on context. I have translated *comes*, which connected with the administrative unit of the *pagus* had a more regular meaning than *dux* over the period covered by the annals, as 'count'. Names of people have been standardized in cases where this is usual practice (e.g. *Charles* for *Carolus*, *Louis* for *Hludowicus*); names of places have been standardized across the board. I have supplied explanatory notes for matters which might be ambiguous from the text alone, while also attempting not to overburden the text with annotation.

This translation is based on the text of the autograph manuscript, St. Gallen Stiftsbibliothek 915, and excludes entries which only occur in the later manuscripts. Because we possess the autograph, and because of the importance the compositional process of the text holds to its interpretation, I have inserted notes on the nature of the manuscript, such as erasures or corrections, where possible. I have noted brief impositions by a different hand in <angle brackets> and places where the hand changes permanently with ||. Line breaks in verse are noted by /.

Translation

709 Hard winter. *Dux* Godfrid died.[76]
710 A hard year, deficient in produce.
711
712 Vigorous flooding.

Medieval Mind: Theory, Record, and Event, 1000–1215 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), pp. 3–19; see also the analysis of the contemporary *Annals* of Flodoard of Rheims in Edward Roberts, *Flodoard of Rheims and the Writing of History in the Tenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019) pp. 188–217, and especially pp. 193–94.

[75] E.g. Zingg, *Annalistik*, p. 145; White, *Content of the Form*, p. 6.

[76] Godfrid, *dux* of Alemannia from the late seventh century. The decision to being the Annals with the death of Godfrid, rather than the death of the Pippinid Drogo recorded in the *Annales Alemannici,* frames the entire work's more local perspective.

713
714 Pippin, mayor of the palace, died.[77]
715
716
717
718 Charles ravaged Saxony.[78] Great plague.
719
720 Charles fought against the Saxons.
721 Theudo expelled the Saracens from Aquitaine.[79]
722 Great abundance.
723
724
725 The Saracens first came.
726
727
728
729
730
731 The blessed priest Bede died.[80]
732 Charles fought against the Saracens at Poitiers on a Saturday.[81]
733
734
735
736
737 Charles fought against the Saracens in Gothia[82] on a Sunday.
738 Charles in Saxony.[83]
739
740
741 Charles dead.
742
743
744
745 Carlomann and Pippin in Saxony.[84]
746

[77] Pippin II (r. 680–714), father of Charles Martel.

[78] Charles Martel, Mayor of the Palace 718–41.

[79] Eudo 'the Great', *dux* of the Aquitainians *c.* 700–35/740, and the Muslims of what became al-Andalus. ´Saracen', of uncertain origin, was a common ethnoreligious slur in the Middle Ages.

[80] 'The Venerable' Bede, who actually died in 735. Bede's manuscripts were an important presence at St. Gall — see Joshua A. Westgard, 'Bede and the Continent in the Carolingian Age and Beyond', in *The Cambridge Companion to Bede*, ed. by Scott DeGregorio (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 201–15.

[81] Likely somewhere between Tours and Poitiers. While there has been some controversy as regards the date, 732 seems likely — see William Watson, 'The Battle of Tours-Poitiers Revisited', *Providence: Studies in Western Civilization*, 2:1 (1993), repr. at https://deremilitari.org/2013/09/the-battle-of-tours-poitiers-revisited/.

[82] That is, Septimania, the region of southern France abutting the Mediterranean.

[83] Laconic language like this refers to Charles *campaigning* in Saxony, rather than merely being present there.

[84] Carloman, mayor of the palace 741–47, and Pippin, mayor of the palace until 751; thereafter Frankish king until 768.

747 Carlomann went to Rome and because of the love of God, having abandoned the worldly delights of status, resigned the hair of his head[85] and left the governance of his kingdom to his brother Pippin.
748 <He died.>[86]
749
750
751 Pippin elevated to king.[87]
752 Pippin in Saxony.
753 Pope Stephen came to Francia.[88] The lord bishop Boniface aroused Frisia in preaching; he ended his temporal life in martyrdom.[89]
754 Saint Boniface the bishop was crowned a martyr. And with king Childeric, who by baptism was called by another name, Daniel,[90] deposed and tonsured, lord Pippin was made king from prefect of the palace through the authority of Stephen the Roman pontiff, and entered Italy with an army of Franks, and having received the possessions of Saint Peter returned to his seat.[91]
755 The Franks again in Lombardy with an army.
756 Pope Stephen dead.
757 An organ came to Francia.[92]
758 King Pippin entered Saxony.
759
760 King Pippin with an army in Aquitaine. Warin and Ruthard afflicted the blessed and sanctified man Otmar with many injuries.[93] The same man, full of days and full of merit by his sanctity, escaped from the anguish of his life and was buried on an island in the Rhine river called Stein.[94]
761 Pippin again in Gascony up to the city of Limoges.
762 King Pippin again in Aquitaine; he conquered Bourges.
763
764 Long and hard winter.
765
766 Pippin conquered Limoges.
767 Pippin continued to Toulouse.

85 That is, became a monk.
86 In a later hand. It is unclear to whom this is meant to refer; if Carlomann, who died in 754, it is incorrect.
87 This entry is erased, though legible, in the autograph; it is not present in the twelfth-century copy. For this event and the potential involvement of Pope Zacharias, see Rosamond McKitterick, 'The Illusion of Royal Power in the Carolingian Annals', *The English Historical Review*, 115 (2000), 1–20.
88 Pope Stephen II, 752–757.
89 Saint Boniface, famed 'Apostle to the Germans'.
90 A confusion of Childeric III with Chilperic II (r. 715–21), who had indeed been raised as a monk and known as Daniel before his elevation to the kingship.
91 Probably referring to the so-called 'donation of Pippin', in which Pippin confirmed papal territorial control of much of Italy.
92 A significant gift from the Byzantine emperor — see Judith Herrin, 'Constantinople, Rome and the Franks in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries', in *Byzantine Diplomacy*, ed. by Jonathan Shepard and Simon Franklin (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 1992), pp. 91–108 (pp. 100–01).
93 Warin and Ruthard were Frankish counts in the region of Alemannia.
94 Present-day Stein am Rhein, near where the Rhine drains from Lake Constance. Otmar, an Alemanic priest charged with the custody of St. Gall's relics, is considered to have founded the abbey of St. Gall, though the date of that foundation is disputed.

768 Pippin died on September 24.
769
770 Translation of Saint Otmar from the isle of the Rhine to the monastery of St. Gall.[95]
771 King Carlomann died on December 4.[96]
772 The Franks in Saxony with King Charles.[97]
773 Charles in Lombardy.
774 With the city of Pavia conquered, king Desiderius and his wife Ansa were exiled together to Corbie, and there Desiderius devoted his life to vigils and preaching and fasting and many good works up till the day of his death.[98] Charles came to Rome.
775 Charles in Saxony.
776 King Charles in Italy, and from there to Saxony without war.
777
778 King Charles in Hispania and the Saxons in Francia.
779 The Franks in Saxony without war. Great hunger and mortality in Francia.
780 Charles in Saxony, and then to Rome.
781 Charles returned from Rome, with Pippin having been baptized.[99]
782[100] King Charles with the Franks to Lippe without war, and afterwards the Saxons broke their word and killed certain of the Franks, and again the Franks against the Saxons.
783 King Charles again in Saxony; after a slaughter, he ravaged the land.
784 The king crossed the Rhine to Lippe and ravaged the Saxons.
785 King Charles remained at Merseburg and conquered the Saxons peacefully [i.e., they surrendered].
786 Charles came to Rome, then to the monastery of St. Benedict and to Capua, and crosses appeared on clothing.
787 Charles, coming from Rome and to Pavia, led the Lombards away from there and exiled them to Francia, and he remained at Worms. And from there he continued through Alemannia across the borders of the Bavarians, and there *dux* Tassilo returned that country to him and gave him his son Theodo as a hostage.[101]
788
789
790
791 King Charles ravages the kingdom of the Huns.[102]

[95] An entry not in the *Annales Alemannici*.
[96] Carloman I, r. 768–71.
[97] That is, Charlemagne; r. 768–814: King of the Franks from 768, King of the Lombards from 774, Emperor from 800.
[98] Desiderius, King of the Lombards 756–74. The latter half of the sentence, describing Desiderius at Corbie, is new to the *Greater Annals*.
[99] This was Charlemagne's son, formerly Carloman, who was renamed in association with the disinheritance of Charlemagne's eldest son Pippin 'the Hunchback'.
[100] The dates 782–89 were erroneously labeled ΨCXII–ΨCXVIIII, i.e. 812–19, and corrected in a later hand.
[101] Tassilo III, *dux* of the Bavarians 748–88, d. 796. For the context of this event, which constituted the final Carolingian takeover of Bavaria, see Stuart Airlie, 'Narratives of Triumph and Rituals of Submission: Charlemagne's Mastering of Bavaria', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, sixth series, 9 (1999), 93–119.
[102] I.e., Avars.

792 King Charles remained at Regensburg and Pippin resigned the hair of his head.[103] And certain men of the Franks were hanged and killed because of a conspiracy that they had engaged in against Charles.[104]
793 Wilhelm fought with the Saracens at Narbonne, and there cut down many men, and killed one of their kings along with a multitude of Saracens.[105]
794 Charles again in Saxony, and those Saxons came against him and promised fidelity, and afterwards broke their word.[106]
795 Again King Charles with a great army of Franks in Saxony; he ravaged the land and conquered those [Saxons] and from there led 7,070 captives and returned with a peace agreement. The Vandals were conquered and Zotanus, *dux* of Pannonia, came to King Charles at Aachen and gave over himself and the country which he held, and he himself and all who came with him were baptized, and he returned with peace and honor to his country.[107]
796 King Charles in Saxony with a great army. He ravaged the land and with great booty returned to his own [country].
797 Again Charles came into Saxony; he ravaged the land and returned with a peace agreement to Francia at Aachen. And again with an army in Saxony with all his household, and he remained there the whole winter.
798 King Charles in Saxony and conquered those [Saxons] and from there led innumerable captives and returned with a peace agreement.
799 Gerold died.[108]
800
801 <In the name of our lord Jesus Christ.>[109]
802
803
804
805
806
807
808
809
810
811 Bishop Haito traveled across the sea.[110]

[103] That is, became a monk.
[104] Pippin 'the Hunchback'. The two events are connected; the conspiracy's goal had been to place Pippin on the throne. See Carl I. Hammer, '"Pipinus Rex": Pippin's Plot of 792 and Bavaria', *Traditio*, 63 (2008), 235–76.
[105] Wilhelm of Gellone, Count of Toulouse 790–811.
[106] For the trope of the perfidious Saxons, see Robert Flierman, '*Gens perfida* or *populus Christianus*? Saxon (in)fidelity in Frankish historical writing', in *The Resources of the Past in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. by Clemens Gantner, Rosamond McKitterick, and Sven Meeder (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 188–205.
[107] By Vandals, the annalist means Avars; Zotanus is not a personal name but a mistake for the Avar title *Tudun*, a type of regional military leader. See Walter Pohl, *The Avars: A Steppe Empire in Central Europe, 567–822* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), pp. 361–63.
[108] Gerold, Prefect of Bavaria 788–99. According to other sources, he died in battle with the Avars.
[109] In a later hand, and of unclear meaning. The date here has the 800 written out in full, *octingentesimus i*; it is thus possible that the entry refers to the *anno domini* dating.
[110] Bishop Haito of Basel (*c.* 806–23), on a mission to Constantinople.

812 Abbot Werdo died.[111]
813
814 Emperor Charles died. Year one of Emperor Louis.[112]
815
816 Gozbert was made abbot.[113]
817
818
819
820
821
822
823
824 The monk Wetti from Reichenau died.[114]
825
826
827
828
829
830: The foundation of the basilica of Saint Gall and the translation of Saint Otmar from the same church into the basilica of the apostle Saint Peter.[115]
831
832
833
834
835
836
837 Bernwig was made abbot.[116]
838
839
840 Emperor Louis died, and an eclipse of the sun occurred on May 5 between the eighth and ninth hour.
841 War of the three brothers.[117] Grimald was made abbot.[118]
842 Division of the kingdom begun.
843 Peace made among those [brothers].[119]
844

[111] Werdo, Abbot of St. Gall since 784.
[112] Emperor Louis the Pious, 814–40.
[113] Gozbert, abbot of St. Gall 816–37.
[114] The schoolmaster at Reichenau for over twenty years and an important figure in the history of Carolingian monastic education. From the perspective of St. Gall, he is particularly vital because of his authorship of the second *Life of St. Gall*. Wetti is also the subject of the *Vision of Wetti*, a much-studied example of Carolingian dream literature.
[115] This was the 'refoundation' of St. Gall under Gozbert, who entirely rebuilt the church.
[116] Bernwig, abbot of St. Gall 837–41.
[117] That is, the sons of Louis the Pious: Lothar, Louis 'the German', and Charles 'the Bald'.
[118] Grimald, abbot of St. Gall 841–72.
[119] The treaty of Verdun, which divided the Carolingian empire into three sections. West Francia, corresponding to much of modern-day France, went to Charles 'the Bald'; Middle Francia, a span of wealthy territories stretching

845
846
847
848
849 Earthquake. Abbot Walafrid died.[120]
850
851
852
853
854
855
856
857
858
859
860 Great winter and mortality of animals.[121]
861 Fiercest hunger. Meinrad the hermit was martyred.[122]
862
863 The *gens* of the Huns attacked the name of Christianity.[123]
864 Translation of Saint Otmar from the church of Saint Peter to the church of Saint Gall.[124]
865
866
867 Earthquake and excessive overflow of rain.
868 Comet. Strongest hunger and the mortality of men and animals.[125]
869
870
871 Master Yso died on April 30.[126]
872 Abbot Grimald died and Harmut succeeded him.[127]
873
874

from the Low Country down through Burgundy to Italy, went to the eldest son Lothar; and East Francia, corresponding to the western and southern portions of modern Germany, went to Louis 'the German'.

120 For earthquakes in the St. Gall record see especially Monika Gisler, Donat Fäh, and Virgilio Masciadri, ' "Terrae motus factus est": Earthquakes in Switzerland before A. D. 1000. A Critical Approach', *Natural Hazards*, 43 (2007), 63–79. Walafrid Strabo, abbot of Reichenau since 838, one of the most important authors of the so-called 'Carolingian Renaissance' and writer of a metrical life of St. Gall.

121 For animal pestilences in the early Middle Ages see Timothy P. Newfield, 'Early Medieval Epizootics and Landscapes of Disease: The Origins and Triggers of European Livestock Pestilences, 400–1000 CE', in *Landscapes and Societies in Medieval Europe East of the Elbe: Interactions Between Environmental Settings and Cultural Transformations,* ed. by Sunhild Kleingärtner, Timothy P. Newfield, Sébastien Rossignol and Donat Wehner (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), pp. 73–113.

122 Saint Meinrad of Einsiedeln.

123 Seemingly the Hungarians/Magyars.

124 Erasure mark around text.

125 Possibly Rinderpest/measles — see Timothy P. Newfield, 'Human-Bovine Plagues in the Early Middle Ages', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 45 (2015), 1–38.

126 Iso, schoolmaster of St. Gall. According to Ekkehard IV, he taught notable figures like Notker the Stammerer, Salomo III of Constance, and the monks Tuotilo and Ratpert.

127 Hartmut, abbot of St. Gall 872–83. Erasure mark around text.

875

876 Louis, the pious king of Germany, died.[128] Volo died.[129] Emperor Charles the Second began to rule.[130]

877

878 Pope John came to Francia.[131]

879

880

881 Emperor Charles consecrated by Pope John.[132]

882[133] Emperor Charles received the governance of the kingdom of the Franks.[134]

883 At the request of Abbot Hartmut, Bernhard was established in his place.[135]

884

885

886

887

888 Emperor Charles deposed from royal power and died on the eighth day after Epiphany the same year. And Arnulf, in whose time the Hagarenes first came to those regions, was elevated to royal power.[136]

889

890 Salomon was made abbot.[137]

891 The same man was crowned with the episcopal honor. Regensburg was burned in fire.

892 Arnulf hastened against the Moravians and unleashed the Hagarenes from where they were enclosed.[138]

893

894

895

896 Arnulf was made emperor.

897

898

899 The Hagarenes entered Italy and vanquished the Lombards in war.

[128] Louis the German, king of East Francia 843–76.

[129] Seemingly by suicide — see Ekkehard IV, *Casus,* chapters 43–44, trans. by Albu and Lozovsky, pp. 125–29. The Latin, *cecidit*, has the meaning not only of 'died' but also of 'fell.' A marginal note in the manuscript in a later hand points the reader towards the *Vita Notgerii* for more information.

[130] Although the text is unclear, it seems likely to me that this is Charles 'the Fat', king of Alemannia from 876, Frankish emperor 881–87, d. 888 after his ouster by his nephew Arnulf of Carinthia. Usually counted as Charles III, after Charlemagne and Charles the Bald, not Charles II. See the discussion in the introduction above.

[131] John VIII, Pope 872–82.

[132] That is, made emperor.

[133] The dates from 882–89 were erroneously labeled ΩCXII–ΩCXIX, i.e. 912–19, and corrected in a later hand.

[134] That is, East Francia, after the heirless death of his brother Louis 'the Younger.'

[135] Bernhard, abbot of St. Gall 883–90.

[136] Arnulf of Carinthia, king of East Francia from 887, emperor 896–99. Hagarenes here meaning the Hungarians, a connection which continues in the annals until the year 955 (see the discussion in the introduction above). A similar apposition, implicitly linking the death of Charles and the elevation of Arnulf to the entry of the Hungarians, is made by Regino of Prüm in the 888–89 section of his *Chronicon*.

[137] Salamon III, Bishop of Constance, abbot of St. Gall 890–919.

[138] Possibly drawing on imagery from the Alexander legends, in which the 'unclean peoples' of Gog and Magog — often equated to invaders from the Eurasian steppe — were locked behind the Caspian gates.

900 Emperor Arnulf died. Louis, his son, was raised to royal power while still a young boy.[139] The Norici[140] fought with the Hagarenes and part of them perished.
901 King Zwentibald was killed by his own men.[141]
902 The Hagarenes summoned by the Bavarians to a feast, where their king Chussol was killed and very many others with him.[142] Earthquakes everywhere.
903
904
905
906 Adalbert, the glory of the Franks, was killed.[143]
907
908 The whole army of the Bavarians was killed by the Hagarenes.[144] Bishop Adalbero came to the monastery of St. Gall with great pomp and many gifts.[145]
909 Hagarenes in Alemannia.
910 Bishop Adalbero died. The Hagarenes fought with the Alemannians and the Franks and defeated them, and they killed the Norician part of the army.[146]
911 A comet appeared. King Louis, the son of King Arnulf, died, and Lord Conrad accepted royal power.[147]
912 King Conrad came to the monastery of St. Gall on the feast day of St. Stephen at Vespers. That same year master Notker died.[148]
913 On the purification of Saint Mary, after the feast, a great miracle happened at Vespers: the stars flew about among themselves, in a marvelous manner, until the middle of the night. The same year immense snow falling on April 13 lasted a week after easter. Archbishop Hatto died and Bishop Otbert died.[149] The Hagarenes entered Alamannia. Erchanger and his brother Berhtold and Count Odalric with the help of their nephew Arnulf the best *dux* of the Bavarians completely cut down their whole army next to the Ine river, <with the exception of thirty men.>[150]
914 Bishop Salomon was captured.[151]

[139] Louis 'the Child', king of East Francia 900–11.

[140] Referring to the old Roman province of Noricum in southern Bavaria. For the relationship of the *Norici* to the Bavarians, see especially Matthias Hardt, 'The Bavarians', in *'Regna' and 'Gentes': The Relationship between Late Antique and Early Medieval Peoples and Kingdoms in the Transformation of the Roman World*, ed. by H.-W. Goetz, J. Jarnut, W. Pohl, and Sören Kaschke (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 429–62.

[141] Zwentibald, natural son of Arnulf, king of Lotharingia 895–901.

[142] The word for feast is *brandium,* i.e. *prandium*, referring usually to breakfast or animal fodder. The implication may have been to compare the Hungarians to animals. Chussol is Kurszán, a leader of the Hungarians whose exact position is disputed.

[143] Adalbert of Babenberg; a casualty of an ongoing feud with the rival Conradine family. See Regino of Prüm, *Chronicon,* s.a. 906, ed. by Friedrich Kurze, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi, 50 (Hannover: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1890), pp. 150–53.

[144] The Battle of Pressburg (usually dated to 907). For the other sources on the battle see Kurt Reindel, *Die Bayerischen Luitpoldinger 893–989: Sammlung und Erläuterung der Quellen* (Munich: Beck, 1953), pp. 62–67.

[145] Adalbero, Bishop of Augsburg 887–909.

[146] It is unclear if the use of *Norici* here is a classicizing reference to the Bavarians or implies a specifically southern Bavarian section of the army.

[147] Conrad I, king of East Francia 911–18.

[148] Notker 'the Stammerer', best known for his *Gesta Karoli Magni* and his *Liber Hymnorum*, an important early collection of sequences.

[149] Hatto, Archbishop of Mainz 891–913; Otbert, Bishop of Strasbourg 906–13.

[150] Erchanger, *dux* of Swabia 915–17; Udalrich, Count of Thurgau *c.* 912–17; Arnulf, *dux* of Bavaria 907–37.

[151] By Erchanger. The story is recounted, in highly stylized form, by Ekkehard IV, *Casus*, chapters 17–19, trans.

915

916 Erchanger and his brother Berhtold and Luitfrid were captured and killed.[152] Wiborada was confined [i.e., became an anchoress].[153]

917

918 King Conrad died before Christmas.

919 Bishop Solomon died on the night before Epiphany. King Rudolf and Burchard *dux* of the Alemans fought at Winterthur, and the king was victorious.[154]

920 Rachildis was confined [i.e., became an anchoress] on the nativity of St. Mary.[155]

921 Hartmann was made abbot.[156]

922 King Rudolf accepted the daughter of *dux* Burchard [in marriage].

923

924 Engilbert was made abbot.[157]

925 *Dux* Burchard was killed in Italy by trickery. The Hagarenes invaded the monastery of St Gall. Wiborada was martyred.[158] Abbot Engilbert received his abbacy from King Henry.[159]

926

927

928

929

930

931

932

933 Thieto was made abbot on Monday, October 28.[160]

934 Bishop Noting and Abbot Engilbert and Deacon Moses died.[161] <Alawic was made abbot of Reichenau.>[162]

935 Conrad was made bishop.[163]

936 That youth died.[164] King Henry died. Otto, his son, succeeded him in royal power.[165]

937 The monastery of St. Gall was burned on Wednesday, April, 26, and Arnolf, *dux* of the Bavarians, died.[166]

938

Albu and Lozovsky, pp. 47–55.

152 Luitfrid appears as a nephew of Erchanger and Berhtold in the *Casus* telling.

153 The *Vita Wiboradae* describes her enclosure in a cell abutting the church of St. Magnus, 500 meters north of the monastery of St. Gall.

154 Rudolf II of Burgundy, 912–37, and Burchard II of Alemannia, 917–26.

155 According to the *Vita Wiboradae,* Rachildis became an anchoress after seeking out Wiborada.

156 Hartmann, Abbot of St. Gall 922–25.

157 Engilbert, Abbot of St. Gall 925–33.

158 Discussed in much more detail in the *Vita Wiboradae.*

159 Henry I, King of East Francia 919–36.

160 Thieto, Abbot of St. Gall 933–42. A later hand has supplied the II in *II feria* (Monday).

161 Noting, Bishop of Constance 920–34. Erasure mark around text.

162 Alawic, Abbot of Reichenau 934–58.

163 Conrad I, Bishop of Constance, 934–75.

164 It is unknown to whom this is referring.

165 Otto I, King of East Francia 936–73.

166 According to Ekkehard IV, *Casus*, chapters 67–70, trans. by Albu and Lozovsky (n. 14 above), 193–201, a fire set by students trying to avoid a disciplinary flogging. See the discussion in De Jong, 'Internal Cloisters', pp. 219–20.

939 An eclipse of the sun occurred around the third hour[167] of the day on Friday, July 19, in the fourth year of king Otto, on the 29th day of the moon. The same day in the region of the Gauls an innumerable army of Saracens was completely destroyed by a certain queen named Tota, except their king and 49 men with him.[168] The same year Eberhard, *dux* of the Fanks, was killed, and Giselbert, *dux* of the Lotharingians, ended his life in the Rhine.[169]
940 A hard year, deficient in produce.[170]
941 A miraculous sign appeared in the heavens, and there was a mortality of cattle.
942 Thieto abandoned his abbacy and Cralo, his uterine brother, succeeded him on Tuesday, May 30.[171]
943 The whole army of the Hagarenes was killed by the Bavarians.[172]
944 An earthquake occurred on the Tuesday after Easter, around cockcrow on May 16. The same year the whole summer passed in rain.
945 Huge snowfall on March 15.
946 Rachildis the anchoress died.
947
948 Lindau was burned on June 5.[173] The same year Liudolf, dear to God and all the saints, son of king Otto, first came with *dux* Hermann to the monastery of Saint Gall on the feast day of the same saint.[174]
949 Waldo bishop of Chur and Hermann *dux* of the Alemannians died.[175]
950
951 King Otto took Italy.[176]
952 Kerhilt was clothed in a veil on May 27, on the sacred day of the ascension of the Lord, and was confined [i.e., became an anchoress] on the nativity of Saint Mary.[177] The same year two of the greatest thunderstorms occurred at the monastery without harm.
953 Discord arose between Otto and his son Liudolf, *dux* of the Alemannians.[178] The same year Abbot Anno received the management of the monastery of St. Gall and governed it for one year, two months, and one week.[179]

[167] The first part of this line is covered by an erasure mark, with a rip in the manuscript at the end of the word *eclypsis.*
[168] Toda Aznárez, Queen of Pamplona 905–25, regent for her young son García Sánchez I afterwards. Toda remained deeply involved in the governance of the kingdom until her death in 958. See Roger Collins, 'Queens-Dowager and Queens-Regent in Tenth-Century León and Navarre', in *Medieval Queenship*, ed. by John Carmi Parsons (Stroud: Sutton, 1993), pp. 79–92 (pp. 87–89).
[169] Eberhard, Duke of Franconia 918–39; Giselbert, Duke of Lotharingian from at least 925. See Widukind (n. 57 above), book 2, chapter 26, ed. by Hirsch, pp. 88–89.
[170] Erasure mark around text; this entry is identical to the 710 entry.
[171] Cralo, Abbot of St. Gall 942–58.
[172] Compare Adalbert of Magdeburg, *Chronicon*, s.a. 944, ed. by Friedrich Kürze, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi, 50 (Hannover: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1890), pp. 162–63.
[173] An island on the eastern side of Lake Constance.
[174] Liudolf, eldest son of Otto I, Duke of Swabia 950–54, d. 957.
[175] Waldo, Bishop of Chur 920–54, a nephew of Salomon III; Hermann, Duke of Alemannia 926–49, Liudolf's father-in-law.
[176] In fact an assertion of his seniority over Italy's king, Berengar II — see Reuter, *Germany*, pp. 168–70.
[177] At St. Magnus until 1008.
[178] The 953–54 rebellion headed by Liudolf and Conrad the Red — see Reuter, *Germany,* pp. 155–60.
[179] Anno, Abbot of St. Gall 953–54.

954 Adalbert, son of Berchtold, and Arnulf, son of *dux* Arnulf, were killed.[180] And Frederick archbishop of Mainz and, alas, Abbot ANNO died.[181]

955 King Otto fought with the Hagarenes <on the feast day of Saint Lawrence>[182] and conquered them with God's help, and their number was 100,000, and many of them were caught with their king named Pulszi and hanged from gibbets.[183] || And another war with them was waged by the Bohemians, where their king named Lele was caught after his army was destroyed.[184] The same year, on the feast of St. Gall, King Otto and his son Liudolf fought with the Abodrites and Wilzi and Zcerezcpani and Tollensani[185] and achieved victory in this, with the death of their *dux* named Stoigniew, and made them tributaries.[186] In that same year Henry *dux* of the Bavarians died.[187]

956 || Liudolf, son of king Otto, entered Italy.[188] <That year crosses appeared on white clothing.>[189]

957 Liudolf, having caught a fever in Italy, alas, finished his present life. Alawic of Reichenau, abbot of blessed memory, began to suffer a paralyzing disease.

958 The venerable Abbot Cralo departed his life. Burchard succeeded him, a noble man born from a lineage of ancient kings, wise and beautiful and fine in appearance.[190] The same year Alawic, abbot of Reichenau, died and in his place Ekkhard was placed over that same monastery, a place of delights.[191]

959 A hard year, and in many regions a disappointing harvest, and many died from hunger. Bertrata[192] || was confined in a cell [i.e., became an anchoress] at Saint George.[193]

[180] Adalbert, son of the Berchtold d. 917 and nephew of Erchanger *dux* of Alemannia; Arnulf son of *dux* Arnulf d. 937. Both failed to rise to the heights of achievement of the previous generation, motivating their dissatisfaction with and rebellion against the Ottonian regime.

[181] Frederick, Archbishop of Mainz 927–54. *Anno* is written in entirely majuscule letters in the autograph manuscript, probably as a form of emphasis (see the 984 entry below as well).

[182] A marginal notation, in the hand that writes the second half of the entry.

[183] Bulcsú; according to Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio,* chapter 40, ed. by Gyula Moravcsik and trans. by Romilly Jenkins (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzatine Studies, 1967), pp. 174–79, Bulcsú was *karchas* (harka), the third-ranking prince of the Hungarians**.** For the battle itself see Karl Leyser, 'The Battle at the Lech, 955: A Study in Tenth-Century Warfare', *History*, 50 (1965), 1–25.

[184] Lehel or Lél, referenced in the *Gesta Hungarorum* (c. 1200). The only other source attesting this leader before the *Gesta* is the eleventh-century *Chronicon Eberspergense,* ed. by Wilhelm Arndt, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores, 20 (Hannover: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1868), pp. 10–15 (p. 12).

[185] The Zcerezcpani and Tollensani are both marginal notations in the same hand.

[186] Stoigniew, d. 955, is known to us from Widukind (n. 57 above), book 3, chapters 53–55, ed. by Hirsch pp. 132–35.

[187] Henry, *dux* of Bavaria 948–55, Otto I's younger brother. In my own estimation, the second half of this entry, including the details of the second battle with the Bohemians, derives from much later, at least from the eleventh century — see Chris Halsted, 'Einhardian Geography and the Tenth-Century Abodrites', *Early Medieval Europe,* 30 (2022), 236–65 (pp. 261–63).

[188] The first half of this entry, which Zingg estimates at eight words, has been scraped off the page — see Zingg, *Annalistik*, p. 174, note a.

[189] Possibly a later hand. The marvel is reported in Widukind, book 3, chapter 61, ed. by Hirsch, pp. 136–37. At the end of the line, around three words have been erased — see Zingg, *Annalistik,* p. 174, note d.

[190] Burchard, Abbott of St. Gall 958–71. This sentence appears to have been written over a large erasure mark, including the erasure of a previously-written date, though it is not noted by Zingg and I have not inspected the manuscript in person.

[191] Ekkehard, Abbot of Reichenau 958–72.

[192] This word, marking the end of the hand that had updated the entries from 956 onwards, was written over an erasure.

[193] A church approximately a kilometer southeast of St. Gall. According to Zingg, the last phrase is in an earlier hand than the 956–59 entries. As a whole, the 956–60 entries are quite muddled; the original 959 date appears

960

961 || King Otto made a second campaign into Italy with a great army in the month of August.

962 The same king was consecrated by Pope Octavian on the purification of St Mary, a Sunday.[194]

963

964

965[195] || Ruodman abbot of Reichenau entered the cloister at night and in secret, so that, if he was able to uncover something approximating an accusation, he might make it public; thus he entered as a wolf into a sheepfold. But having been caught, discovered by the shrewdness of the monk Ekkehard, who bore a lantern before him. He [Ruodman] was expelled, seeking many forgivenesses, by no means without shame. And this is what he was plotting:[196]

966 Arrival and entrance of eight of the bishops and just as many of the abbots to the monastery of St. Gall to examine our life and our observation of the rule [of St. Benedict]. By the gift of God, when they depart they will charitably give the best testimony, as they promised the brothers.[197]

967 Thietbert the priest died.[198]

968 || This year an eclipse of the sun occurred on December 22, on the 28th day of the moon, on the third hour of the day.

969 A furious whirlwind appeared with great ruin to the buildings and the trees on the third of August.[199]

970

971 || This year the benign Notker was made abbot./The monthly moon, which changed fifteen day before the kalends/of the month of Theseus, marked when he was about to come.[200]

972[201]

to have been erased and the 960 date changed to read 959, with another 960 added beneath, though this date has no added entry.

194 That is, crowned emperor, according to most contemporary sources. Octavian is John XII, Pope 955–64. The use of his birth name likely follows from his falling out with Otto soon after the coronation.

195 A modern hand has added a note in the margin here reading in Latin 'the writing below, different in style from that above'.

196 This entry is in the same hand as the following, and seems to have been written at the same time. The implication is that both entries are meant to form a complete narrative, and thus that the delegation to examine St. Gall's adherence to the rule of St. Benedict constituted the "plot" of Ruodman. The context of this bizarre episode was the tenth-century conflict over monastic reform, in which St. Gall came down decidedly on the anti-reform side. More detail about this episode is given in Ekkehard IV's *Casus Sancti Galli*, 91–93, trans. Albu and Lozovsky, pp. 259–69; this begins a series of related events which continue throughout the rest of the narrative. The *Casus* explains that Ruodmann, the reformist abbott of the neighboring Reichenau, had snuck into the cloister trying to find some violation of the Rule of St. Benedict, but was cornered while hiding in the latrine. This intrusion is only the first in a series of maneuvers between Ruodmann and the monks of St. Gall. However, the 965–66 entries date from the eleventh century and are based on the *Casus* telling, even echoing the same phrasing in the wolf-in-a-sheepfold simile. As Zingg argues, this was probably an attempt by the author to provide a historical basis for Ekkehard's tale in the main monastic annal; see Zingg, *Annalistik*, p. 176, note 234; also Henking, 'Aufzeichnungen', p. 292, note 228. For the context of Ruodmann's latrine invasion see Tuten, '*Necessitas Naturae*', pp. 129–47.

197 See Ekkehard IV, *Casus,* chapters 99–113, trans. By Albu and Lozovsky, pp. 279–315.

198 A green mark around the text seems to indicate that a previous entry was erased.

199 Several lines of erasure follow this entry.

200 Notker, Abbot of St. Gall 971–75. The Latin of this entry is essentially a very tangled way of dating the arrival of Notker, on 18 May 971. See Henking, *Aufzeichnungen*, p. 294, note 229.

201 An erased entry of a single line.

973 || The august Emperor Otto and *dux* Burchard and Bishop Odalric and his nephew Adalbero and Count Odalric and the monk Ekkehard in that year retired from this world.[202] || What portion you will have given has been what you wished to give/seven or even eight times over, oh holy God.[203]
974[204]
975 || A comet was seen in the time of autumn. Soon followed the death of Abbot Notker, and of his predecessor Burchard and Notker the doctor.[205]
976 Ymmo was ordained abbot.[206] In this year serious contention arose regarding the kingdom between emperor Otto and his nephew Henry *dux* of Bavaria, son of Henry.[207]
977
978 || Lothar king of the Franks, acting contentiously against emperor Otto regarding the borders of his kingdom, invaded Aachen, as if it was the seat of the kingdom of his fathers, and also seized the land between the Moselle and the Rhine which was taken hold of in the reign of Otto [the Great].[208] Otto [II] immediately led 30,000 horsemen into Francia against him, and wasting it hostilely, made a most famous expedition.[209]
979 || Gebhard was made bishop.[210]
980 || Bertrata, having died in her enclosure, sought the heavenly place./Hartker soon after bound himself to his cave.[211]
981[212]
982 || Emperor Otto, not satisfied with the borders of his father, while he was at Rome, departed to occupy Campania, Lucania, Calabria, Apulia, and all the further parts of Italy up to the sea of the Sicilians and Trapani. Because of this the Constantinopolitan emperor, under whose rule lay this whole land, first tried fruitlessly to urge him from what he had begun through envoys.[213] Then he led the Saracens from Sicily and other islands of the sea and the borders of Africa and Egypt against him [Otto] in battle. With these [Otto] fought unsuccessfully. For determining, when he noticed a few men on the shore of the sea like bandits, that they came for plundering, he attacked with a small group to take them by surprise. Then surrounded by a boundless multitude, which had concealed itself by night in the mountains, with everyone in his army having fled or been killed or captured, [Otto] scarcely

[202] Burchard III of Alemannia, 954–73; St. Ulrich, Bishop of Augsburg 923–73, who had been educated at St. Gall; Ekkehard I, Deacon of St. Gall. Adalbero had been appointed to assist Ulrich in his duties due to illness, to some controversy. It is unclear where Count Odalric's power lay — see Zingg, *Annalistik,* p. 178, note 244.
[203] Written in a second hand, seemingly as a meditation on the great amount of death the previous entry had described.
[204] An erased entry of several lines.
[205] The latter Notker is known as Notker II 'Peppercorn'. An erased word, possibly 'Notker', is visible before the beginning of this entry. See Zingg, *Annalistik,* p. 178, note g.
[206] Ymmo, Abbott of St. Gall 976–84.
[207] Otto II, emperor 973–83; Henry 'the Quarrelsome', *dux* of Bavaria 955–76 and again 985–95, *dux* of Carinthia 989–95. Henry was Otto's cousin — the son of Otto I's brother Henry — not his nephew.
[208] Lothar, King of the West Franks 954–86.
[209] Compare the depiction in Thietmar of Merseburg, *Chronicon,* book 3, chapter 8, ed. by Robert Holtzmann, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi, nova series, 9 (Berlin: Apud Weidmannos, 1935), p. 106.
[210] Gebhard II, Bishop of Constance 979–95.
[211] Hartker was enclosed at St. George until he died in 1011. Below this couplet in the manuscript, faint writing, seemingly in a much later hand, can be seen.
[212] An erased entry of a single line.
[213] This was Basil II, emperor 976–1025. 'Constantinopolitan' is likely an elegant way of declining to call the Byzantine emperor 'Roman.'

escaped by ship to a certain castle of his. We have seen, however, many of the captives who returned after, just as many laity as churchmen, one of whom was the bishop of Vercelli, weakened by long imprisonment in Alexandria.[214]

983 In this year the emperor, thinking to avenge himself on those Saracens who live in Sicily, wished to invade Sicily by the ruse of Darius, a certain king of the Persians, with a bridge made of linked ships just as he [Darius] invaded Greece, but he was prevented by his premature death and burial in Rome. His son Otto ruled in his place, the third of this name, at four years of age, with whom at the same time ruled his mother Theophanu, whom his father received from the nobles of the Greeks as a wife.[215]

984 || Here at a mature age that father passed from life/to the peace of the fatherland; YMMO[216] passed away today./Our people should vigilantly remember this one with good reason:/many memorials to him remain in the place of Gall.[217]

985[218]

986[219]

987

988

989 || A bright comet appeared on the day of Saint Lawrence.[220]

990 || Abbot Odalric left his life, and Gerhard was put in his place.[221] And the monk Ekkehard died.[222]

991 || Faillanus Scottus of blessed memory departed from this world.[223] || And empress Theophanu died in the ninth year of her widowhood with many nobles of her kingdom.

992

993

994

995 || Henry *dux* of the Bavarians, son of Henry, died. Civil war preceded his death, with the ruin of many of the nobles of the Bavarians. This year Rudolf in Burgundy, who succeeded his father Conrad in the kingdom, having attempted to deprive certain of his own [family] of their paternal inheritance, was attacked by them.[224] Then this kinglet, although he had an extensive army, was nevertheless easily defeated and driven to flight. Also a noteworthy year for the excessive dryness of the air, with many cattle in this region killed, and many men also.[225] For to such a degree were all the rivers of Europe drained that almost none were not

[214] Compare the depiction in Thietmar, *Chronicon,*book 3, chapter 20–23, ed. Holtzmann, pp. 122–129.

[215] Otto III, king 983–1002, emperor from 996. Theophanu, a relation of Byzantine emperor John Tzimiskes who had married Otto II in 972, acted as her son's regent from her husband's death in 983 until her own death in 991.

[216] Majuscule in the manuscript, probably for emphasis.

[217] This passage appears as part of the 983 entry in the MGH edition. This is probably an attempt to combine the depictions in the autograph and the twelfth-century copy, in which each line of verse is placed beside a year from 990–93 (by this point in the text, the twelfth-century manuscript is off by several years).

[218] An erased entry of less than a line; possibly 'abba' faintly visible.

[219] An erased entry of less than a line; possibly 'obit' faintly visible.

[220] Likely Halley's Comet. St. Lawrence was especially associated with Ottonian rule after being associated with the victory over the Hungarians in 955, which also occurred on his feast day, August 10.

[221] Odalric, Abbot of St. Gall 984–90; Gerhard, Abbot of St. Gall 990–1001. A word has been erased in this sentence between *ei* and *subrogatur*.

[222] Ekkehard II 'Palatinus.'

[223] Possibly a teacher at the monastic school — see Zingg, *Annalistik,* p. 182, note 275.

[224] Rudolf III of Burgundy, 993–1032; Conrad I of Burgundy, 937–93.

[225] The first letter of the opening word of this line, *notabilis,* is in a stylized majuscule, unusual for this text.

full of shallows. Between those Saxons and those Slavs who are called Weletabi, slaughtering with mutual carnage and fire; they disturbed the whole of Germania between the Danube and the place of the ocean to the greatest degree.[226]

996

997[227]

998 || In the month of February a comet was seen, and, receding not far from the sun, for a few days it appeared around daybreak.

999[228]

1000[229] || It thundered from the height of the heavens, our people were struck by fire/but no one was harmed. Praise to you, Christ God! ||Amen!

1001 ||Abbot Gerhard ||died this day.

|| The Lord has entrusted our management to Burchard/A man who has already prepared himself for everything.[230]

1002 || Emperor Otto died in Rome without an heir. Henry, of the royal lineage and also *dux* of the Bavarians, third by this name, succeeded him. Hermann, *dux* of Alemannia and Alsace, was trying to divide the kingdom with him by force, and to gain a part of it.[231] But with the matter unfinished, having attempted revenge on those who agreed with the king against him in Strasbourg, [Hermann] invaded the city and ordered it plundered, and setting the worst example violated the sacred places. Soon subjugated by the king, he did not complete a year from that day. His son, a small boy, the cousin of the king, was ordained *dux* by the people.[232]

1003 || A new matter: while Burchard restored to Gallus his roofs,/a peasant fell headfirst from the highest point./He offered our people a much too pitiable spectacle./But after he fell, he lifted up his head and sat up./Marvelously, he rose whole through Gallus and praised him.

1004 With the final preparations for Easter made solemnly in the spirit on Holy Saturday/the brothers received accustomed sleep after the meal./A silence led by faith sought our innermost spaces/into which, by divine law, no layman enters unknown./By the exertions of the fathers, an altar devoted in these [spaces] is potent:/it is said that there Gallus has his everlasting rest/He himself taught by his appearances that one should seek him there:/the father appeared, as he had taught, and loosened their tongues.[233]

1005 Behold, hunger — never was any through the ages more ferocious.

1006 || A new star appeared of unaccustomed brightness, glittering in form and lashing the eyes, not without terror. In what a wonderful manner it was at times more contracted, at times

[226] Erasure marks throughout. For the Weletabi/Wilzi, by which the annalist means the Liutizi, see Wolfgang Fritze, 'Beobachtungen zur Entstehung und Wesen des Lutizenbundes', *Jahrbuch für die Geschichte Mittel- und Ostdeutschlands*, 7 (1958), 1–38; compare *Annales Quedlinburgenses* s.aa. 995, 997, ed. By Martina Giese, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum eparatism editi, 72 (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 2004), pp. 485–89, 492–97.

[227] A four-line entry erased. The year is written rather sloppily, in an ink that, unlike the other dates on the page, has bled through to the next.

[228] The half-erased remnant of a previous entry is visible in the manuscript; *ad ei ex atque* is faintly visible.

[229] For the entries 1000, 1001, and 1002, the Greek sign for 900 is written before the Roman M, likely indicating that the scribe went through making 900 signs before he returned to complete the date.

[230] Burchard II, Abbot of St. Gall 1001–22.

[231] Henry II, king 1002–24, emperor from 1014; Hermann II, *dux* of Alemannia 997–1003.

[232] Hermann III, *dux* of Alemannia 1003–12. Compare the narrative of Thietmar, *Chronicon*, book 5, chapters 2–27 and book 6, chapter 9, ed. by Holtzmann, 222–53, 284.

[233] The Latin of these two entries is exceedingly opaque; I have relied extensively on the translation in Zingg, *Annalistik,* 187 and the suggestions in von Arx, p. 11, notes 4–6. The final line refers to the healing of muteness, a miracle recorded often in association with St. Gall.

more expanded, and occasionally extinguished. It was seen however for three months near the eastern horizon, beyond all signs which are visible in the heavens.
1007 A serious plague, which suddenly ravaged the populace with widespread death.[234]
1008 || Kerhilt, raw and green before God, but an elder by age/died in the cloister, unlocking the prison of her flesh.
1009
1010
1011 || The anchorite Hartker is changed for the better, as I hope./Let him be at your right hand on the eighth day, good Christ!
1012 || This boy *dux* Hermann is placed among his fathers;/then the man, his brother-in-law Ernest, takes up the emblems of office.[235]
1013 Henry in Italy, with chosen soldiers, at Rome/scarcely having considered it, was made and created Caesar.[236]/These matters accomplished just as he determines, he returned from there/and part of the people of that land soon defected from him/after Hartwin was already defiling the Scepter for a while.[237]/Sorrowful comets burned in an uncommon way/for a long time, indeed, through different places:/now in the middle of the earth, now the interior below the east/now it concealed itself beyond the arctic pole./And a plague without name followed, wasting bodies/seething the intestines, then flowing with blood.
1014
1015 || Old Kotelint, her finished days worth lamenting/went up to the heavenly groom, for whom she interred herself in life./[238]
It causes repentance and sorrow, it grieves and pains, it stupefies, it trembles:/a solitary death without precedent happened by unfortunate chance./I would never want to know the tormented beast of the forest/I would prefer quivers and arrows broken entirely/than the youth of *dux* Ernest, wrongly cut down in its bloom./O, stop the hand guiding the wavering spear/from piercing our peaceable [*dux*] rather than the deer!/Although you would by no means commit any crime by free will,/the blood of the *dux*, companion, was borne out by a faithful friend./Peace to the *dux*, and Father, who is a lover of gentle peace,/may you number him among your peacemakers.[239]
1016
1017
1018
1019
1020

[234] An erased note of a line and a half, of which the last word appears to be *Gallo*, follows this entry.

[235] Ernest I, younger son of the Babenberger *marchio* Leopold of Austria, *dux* of Alemannia 1012–15. Ernest was married to Hermann's older sister Gisela, later wife of Conrad II. This entry covers an erased line.

[236] That is, made emperor.

[237] That is, Arduin, king of Italy in opposition to Henry since 1002.

[238] Kotelint is referenced in Ekkehard IV, *Casus*, chapter 93, trans. Albu and Lozovsky, pp. 265–69, in an anecdote which takes place in the 960s. This short couplet appears to be an entirely separate poem from what follows; it is separated in the autograph manuscript by a stylized capital at the beginning of the next line.

[239] This short poem refers to the premature death of Ernest I by a hunting accident. Compare the depiction in Thietmar, *Chronicon*, book 7, chapter 14, ed. by Holtzmann, 414–17; Hermann, *Chronicon*, s.a. 1015, ed. Pertz, p. 119. See the discussion in Herwig Wolfram, *Conrad II, 990–1039: Emperor of Three Kingdoms,* trans. by Denise A. Kaiser (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), pp. 34–36, for the political context of Ernest's death and his widow Gisela's marriage to soon-to-be-emperor Conrad II.

1021 || The whole globe was shaken by an earthquake from every direction;/horrid portents sounded, like a split in the abyss.
1022 || Emperor Henry, having invaded Apulia with mighty force, was received honorably and splendidly by the rejoicing Beneventines; and forced Troia, Capua, Salerno, and Naples, cities of his empire defecting to the Greeks, to surrender. Troia, well-defended with her strong men and with every military preparation, became a longer delay and a sticking point for victory. Nevertheless, although, damaged, she damaged and wounded many in her defense and killed very many, in the third month after she was besieged, she gave her hand as a supplicant to the emperor [i.e. surrendered], and he promised her safety and grace in victory, having given an oath of guarantee. And having accomplished these things he returned, leading away the ruler of Capua with him into custody. But around the departure from Italy, a plague afflicted his army and consumed the majority, so that it is not possible to remember how the body of the Roman Empire was so destitute of its limbs without misery and sadness. A horrible summer, with more thunderstorms and terrifying lighting than mortals are accustomed to, and a movement of wind thundering from the east shook buildings and tore trees up by their roots. Lord Abbot Burchard, most elegant mirror of the holy church, and Ymmo and Burchard, youths of good nature, died on this campaign. Notker, the most learned and benevolent man in our memory, Heribert and the two Rudperts, men of the highest innocence, Dietrich, and Liudolt || died with the disease raging widely.[240] Also Rudhard, bishop of Constance died and Heimo succeeded him, and Thietbald was made abbot.[241]
1023
1024 Pope Benedict died.[242] Emperor Henry died. And Conrad was consecrated in the kingdom at Mainz on the birth of saint Mary.[243]
1025 || The savage kindling of contention arose on the sacrosanct day of Easter at Augsburg between king Conrad and his cousin Conrad.[244] Also Ernest, his cousin, *dux* of Alemannia, and Count Welfhard, after having united with him [the second Conrad], dared to rebel against the king at the same time.[245] But this rash enterprise, having been prohibited by God, had no effect.[246]
1026 King Conrad celebrated Christmas in Aachen, and having entered Italy around springtime, subjugated nearly the whole of it on this side of Rome to himself, with Luca alone resisting him with margrave Reginhero.[247] Heimo bishop of Constance died, and Warman was appointed to the same church.[248]

[240] Notker III 'Labeo' or Notker 'the German', St. Gall's schoolmaster; the others mentioned cannot be identified with specificity, though Ymmo, Burchard, Dietrich, and Liudolt appear in St. Gall's necrology.
[241] Rudhard, Bishop of Constance 1018–22; Heimo, Bishop of Constance 1022–26; Thietbald, Abbot of St. Gall 1022–34.
[242] Benedict VIII, Pope 1012–24.
[243] Conrad II, king 1024–39, emperor from 1027.
[244] Conrad 'the Younger', whom Wipo describes as the opposition candidate in the 1024 election.
[245] Ernest II of Alemannia, son of Ernest I and Gisela, *dux* of Alemannia 1015–30; Welf II, count in Alemannia, d. 1030.
[246] Compare the treatment in Wipo, *Gesta Chuonradi*, chapter 10, ed. by Bresslau, p. 31; Hermann, *Chronicon,* s.a. 1025, ed. by Pertz, p. 120.
[247] Rainier, margrave of Tuscany 1014–27, a supporter of Henry II's.
[248] Warman, Bishop of Constance 1026–1034. Compare Wipo, *Gesta Chuonradi*, chapters 11–14, ed. by Bresslau, pp. 32–35; Hermann, *Chronicon*, s.a. 1026, ed. by Pertz, p. 120.

1027 The aforementioned king, coming to Rome, was ordained emperor of the Romans by the blessed Pope John on the holy day of Easter.[249] Returning from there through Alemannia, he held a public assembly at Ulm. And there he received *dux* Ernest (that is, his stepson) and Count Welfhard and the others accused of treason, who surrendered to him, and he decided to transfer them to various places for safekeeping. Also, the castle which is called Kyburg, besieged for three months as Count Werinhero resisted at length and in vain, was captured by the same king.[250] At the same time Empress Gisela, having entered the monastery of St. Gall with her son Henry and given presents most kindly, obtained fraternity there.[251]
1028 The same Henry, the son of the emperor, with his father present, was crowned at Aachen on the most sacred day of Easter, anointed with oil by Pilgrim, Archbishop of Cologne.[252]
1029
1030 Ernest *dux* of the Alemannians, having effected a rebellion against his stepfather the emperor again, lost favor along with his *ducatus*, and Hermann, his brother, acquired the same *ducatus*, with his mother the empress having obtained it by entreaties.[253] The emperor invaded Hungary and ravaged the same region from the nearest part up to the Fisca river. Meanwhile, Ernest the former *dux* took hold of a certain castle which is called Falchenstein with the aforementioned Werinhero, his soldier, and afflicted neighboring regions with no minor slaughter of their inhabitants. But a certain count called Manegold entered battle with him, suffering this in place of the emperor. In this [battle] both of them died and very many others on both sides were killed on the octave of Saint Lawrence.[254]
1031
1032 With King Rudolf having died, Odo, the son of his sister, pursued the kingdom of the Burgundians with a strong company, as if it was his paternal inheritance.[255] And he fortified any captured townships with his protection**,** while at the same time the emperor pursued war against the Polish Slavs.[256]
1033 The same emperor led many soldiers with him, nearly in the middle of winter, into Burgundy, and besieged the castles Murten and Neuenburg. Hindered by the excessive force of cold, however, he returned with the matter unfinished. Then in the next summer he took the war to Odo. He [Conrad] utterly destroyed his [Odo's] cities with plunder and fire, and by

[249] John XIX, Pope 1024–32.
[250] Werner of Kyburg, son of Liutfried of Winterthur, d. 1030.
[251] Gisela, wife of Conrad II, whose first husband had been Ernest I of Alemannia; the future Henry III, emperor king 1039–56, emperor from 1046. Compare Wipo, *Gesta Chuonradi,* chapters 15–22, ed. by Bresslau, pp. 35–42, Hermann, *Chronicon*, s.a. 1027, ed. by Pertz, pp. 120–21.
[252] Pilgrim, Archbishop of Cologne 1021–36. Compare Wipo, *Gesta Chuonradi*, chapter 23, ed. by Bresslau, pp. 42–43; Hermann, *Chronicon*, s.a. 1028, ed. by Pertz, p. 121.
[253] Hermann IV, *dux* of Alemannia 1030–38.
[254] Manegold II of Nellenburg. Compare Wipo, *Gesta Chuonradi*, chapters 25–28, ed. by Bresslau, pp. 43–47; Hermann, *Chronicon*, s.a. 1030, ed. by Pertz, p. 121.
[255] The kingdom the Burgundians was a successor of the Middle Frankish kingdom which consisted of parts of southeastern France and eastern Switzerland. The criticism here appears to be that Odo tried to make a claim through the maternal line. The annalist here rather obscures the fact that the claim of Conrad II, the German emperor who would eventually become king of Burgundy, was essentially baseless (Conrad's predecessor Henry II, to whom he was not closely related, was named heir to King Rudolf of Burgundy but predeceased him in 1024).
[256] Odo II, Count of Blois 1004–37. Compare Wipo, *Gesta Chuonradi*, chapter 29, ed. by Bresslau, pp. 47–49; Hermann, s.a. 1032, ed. by Pertz, p. 121. The Slavic campaign is also mentioned in the *Annales Hildesheimenses,* s.a. 1032, ed. by Georg Waitz, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi, 8 (Hannover: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1878), p. 37.

that necessity he forced that same man to come to him as a supplicant, following the promise, although feigned, of restitution.[257]

1034 Bishop Warmann and the venerable Abbot Dietbald died. They were succeeded by Bishop Eberhard and Abbot Notpert.[258] Emperor Conrad again entered Burgundy with an army, and subjugated all those townships with fortifications to his dominion as far as the Rodan river, and came to Geneva. There, having truly been received honorably by Heribert Archbishop of Milan and the other leaders of Italy and Burgundy, he was led forth crowned on the feast of St. Peter in Chains,[259] and elected king in the kingdom of the Burgundians.[260]

1035 A league of strong conspirators appeared in Italy. For inferior warriors, oppressed more than necessary by the unjust domination of their superiors, all having united at the same time, resisted those ones.[261] Not less did certain from among the enslaved, having conspired against their lords with a violent faction, establish judges, courts, and laws for themselves from their own number; they mixed up right and wrong. The bishop of Milan and the other senators of Italy, rising up against them to stop them, attempted to draw them back from such insolence, if they were able. But by no means did they wish to acquiesce to them, unless it was granted to those ones [the rebels] in writing by the king that they held the inviolable right of their fathers.[262]

1036 Emperor Conrad joined his son Henry in matrimony with the daughter of Cnut, king of the English.[263] And Conrad committed to his cousin [Conrad] the *ducatus* of Adelbero in Carinthia, having deprived him [Adalbero] of it.[264] Having gathered an army, he [Conrad] departed for Italy at the beginning of winter.[265]

1037 The same emperor, having celebrated Christmas at Verona, went from there to Milan. There, he was received honorably by the archbishop and the citizens. However, as he [the archbishop] bore feigned loyalty, proceeding from there, he[Conrad] led the same [arch]bishop with him to Pavia and, having imprisoned him suddenly as if he was guilty of treachery, he gave him to the patriarch of Aquila for safekeeping.[266] Having craftily escaped him [the patriarch] by flight, for this reason the archbishop was received gratefully in the city by the triumphant Milanese. But the emperor, desiring to take revenge on them, besieged the city with a strong company and left the property of the bishopric to the army to be ravaged. But a marvelous and previously unfamiliar prodigy happened there at that time. For on the sacrosanct day of Pentecost, at sunrise, lighting was seen to move above the army, thunder to bellow, with the citizens within those walls not perceiving any of this. It is also said that not a

[257] Compare Wipo, *Gesta Chuonradi*, chapter 30–31, ed. by Bresslau, pp. 49–50; Hermann, *Chronicon*, s.a. 1033, ed. by Pertz, p. 121.

[258] Eberhard, Bishop of Constance 1034–1046; Nortpert, Abbot of St. Gall 1034–72.

[259] Celebrated on August 1.

[260] Heribert, Archbishop of Milan 1018–45. Compare Wipo, *Gesta Chuonradi*, chapter 32, ed. by Bresslau, p. 51; Hermann, *Chronicon*, s.a. 1034, ed. by Pertz, pp. 121–22.

[261] I.e., their superiors.

[262] Compare Wipo, *Gesta Chuonradi*, chapter 34, ed. by Bresslau, p. 51; Hermann, *Chronicon*, s.a. 1035, ed. by Pertz, p. 122.

[263] Gunhilda of Denmark, d. 1038, daughter of Cnut the Great, king of England since 1016, Denmark since 1018, and Norway since 1028, d. 1035.

[264] Adalebero, *dux of* Carinthia *c.* 1011–35. The cousin is the same Conrad who was a candidate for the kingship in the 1020s.

[265] Compare Wipo, *Gesta Chuonradi*, chapter 35, ed. by Bresslau, pp. 54–56; Hermann, *Chronicon*, s.a. 1036, ed. by Pertz, p. 122.

[266] That is, Poppo or Wolfgang, Patriarch of Aquileia 1019–45.

few horses and men there were transfixed by lightning, and certain of them truly were seized by a demon. A war between Gozelin and Odo was carried on, in which Odo, defeated, died, and his army was scattered here and there.[267]

1038 The wife of king Henry and his brother Hermann, *dux* of the Alemans, died. The same king received his *ducatus*, with the kingdom of Burgundy, from his father the same year, with those leaders of the same kingdom having sworn him loyalty with an oath.[268]

1039 Emperor Conrad passed away and his son Henry took up the governance of the kingdom.[269]

1040 The same king enters the monastery of St Gall, and in that same year, having attempted to tame Bretislav *dux* of Bohemia, who was refusing to endure the bridle of his command, alas, he lost many of his men — and not the lowliest of them — in the forest through which he ordered his men to journey.[270] For Count Werner, made the leader of this venture by the others, while ignorant of the ambush before him along with the others, recklessly entered a forest between the narrow gorge of the path, simultaneously arriving in a place excessively unfavorable to him and also favorable enough to the ill intent of the enemy.[271] Overwhelmed there by spears of every kind thrown from afar, they died unavenged, since, when those [enemies] had entangled them in the density of the forest, there was no opportunity to strike back or to join battle.[272]

1041: The aforementioned king, holding deep pain in his heart, added a new [army] to the old army, and then entered Bohemia, more cautious than before. He destroyed fortresses, consumed towns with fire, and finally compelled the same *dux* to give his son to him as a captive, and made him follow him to Regensburg. The same year Peter king of the Hungarians, having been foully expelled from his own kingdom by a certain count, came to the same King Henry asking for help.[273] Pitying this unfortunate one, the most pious king, although harmed by him in the past, wept for the lot of human weakness. That same king [Henry] supplied him with paternal comfort through both words and material things.[274]

1042 King Henry, having brought many warriors with him, attacked Hungary and ravaged the greatest part of it.

1043 A most notable year, with the excessive overflow of rain and paucity of the fruits of the earth. The aforementioned king [Henry], desiring to restore Peter to his ancestral throne, equipped a huge ship with greatest force, and about to tempt the fortune of war, again entered Pannonia by the Danube. Having entered, he did many things bravely and many things successfully, and he compelled that counterfeit and false kinglet to give up his unjustly-possessed wealth. Furthermore, he bound him with an oath, that he would not exceed the borders of his kingdom; but the matter for which he came he has not yet achieved, hindered, I believe, by the will of God. For the same Peter, as long as he reigned, stood out as a sinner

[267] Gozelo, *dux* of Lower Lorraine 1023–44, also Upper Lorraine from 1033. Compare Wipo, *Gesta Chuonradi*, chapters 35–36, ed. by Bresslau, pp. 54–56; Hermann, *Chronicon*, s.a. 1037, ed. by Pertz, p. 122.

[268] Compare Wipo, *Gesta Chuonradi*, chapters 37–38, ed. by Bresslau, pp. 57–58; Hermann, *Chronicon*, s.a. 1038, ed. by Pertz, pp. 122–23.

[269] Compare Wipo, *Gesta Chuonradi*, chapter 39, ed. by Bresslau, pp. 58–60; Hermann, *Chronicon*, s.a. 1039, ed. by Pertz, p. 123.

[270] Bretislav, *dux* of Bohemia 1034–55.

[271] Werner, count of Winterthur 1030–40.

[272] Compare Hermann, *Chronicon*, s.a. 1040, ed. by Pertz, p. 123.

[273] Peter Orseolo, king of Hungary 1038–41 and 1044–46, death-date unclear.

[274] Compare Hermann, *Chronicon*, s.a. 1041, ed. by Pertz, p. 123.

in many ways. From there returning to Ulm the same king [Henry] held a general assembly, then came to Constance in time for the synod, where he remained, entering a covenant with just as many bishops as other of the best men of the kingdom, as a diligent <public> advocate for all that was to be conducted there. But on the fourth day, which is commonly called indulgence, he himself with the bishop ascended the stage as an eloquent orator, and began to encourage the populace to peace with a splendid sermon. At the end, moreover, he concluded his speech thus: that he pardoned everyone who was guilty towards him, and compelled all those who were present, at times with entreaties and at times through his authority, to do that as well. What was profitably begun there, he ordered to be taught throughout the whole of his kingdom. And not long afterwards, with all matters having been completed in peace, he married the daughter of William, *dux* of Poitiers.[275] Empress Gisela died.[276]

1044 Great hunger. After the same often-mentioned king [Henry] had gathered aid from everywhere, he departed for Pannonia a third time. That kinglet met him with an infinite multitude, with an approach that seemed undaunted, and when he was able to prevent his [Henry's] crossing of a certain river, he permitted him to cross deliberately, having considered it an easier battle for himself within the borders of his own kingdom, and retreating more difficult for an enemy pressed against a river. But something very different from what he hoped occurred: in the end, our leader decided to engage the other as soon as possible, and to bring courage to his words, saying that it is better to lay down one's life bravely in battle than to lie beneath the mockeries of the enemy as if a worthless slave. Indeed he himself [Henry], armed so that his bravery was greater than others', drew up the battle line to suit the place and his forces, and with the signal having been given attacked the enemy and laid low those resisting him as if he was a tempest. Without delay he became the victor with the favoring mercy of Christ, and immediately he conquered the city, where he apprehended the wife and sons of the king, along with a huge amount of money. Peter he restored to his own kingdom, and with things done well he returned to Saxony.[277]

1045

1046

1047

1048

1049

1050

1051

1052

1053

1054

1055

1056 || Emperor Henry died, and his son Henry succeeded to the kingdom.[278]

1057

1058

1059

1060

[275] William, *dux* of Aquitaine 995–1030.

[276] Compare Hermann, *Chronicon*, s.a. 1043, ed. by Pertz, p. 124.

[277] Compare Hermann, *Chronicon*, s.a. 1044, ed. by Pertz, pp. 124–25.

[278] Henry IV, king 1054–1105, emperor from 1084.

An Analogue in II Samuel of the Conclusion to *Beowulf*

John Shafer

Abstract

The last third of *Beowulf* is recognisably distinct from the first two-thirds, the first part long acknowledged to derive from one or more traditional, pre-Christian narratives such as the 'Bear's Son' or 'Hand and the Child' story-pattern. The concluding episode of Beowulf fighting and being killed by a dragon vividly expresses the Geat people's fear that it cannot maintain its autonomy among larger and more militarily powerful neighbours following the heirless death of its leader. This article identifies an earlier analogue for this last portion of *Beowulf* from the biblical book of II Samuel, a narrative of King David fighting a giant that shares both this concern and a number of key plot points. *Beowulf*'s theme of heroic heathenism defiantly, victoriously — but also inevitably — ending to make way for Christianity is not only seen intrinsically to relate to the clear similarities between Beowulf's dragon-fight and its earlier parallel, but is also shown to motivate clear differences between *Beowulf* and the earlier narrative.

Introduction

The biblical story of the young, unassuming shepherd David defeating the Philistine giant Goliath by hurling a small stone from his sling and striking the monster on the forehead has long been one of the most widely known narratives in the western world, and the fundamental similarity between David's story and the story of Beowulf fighting and killing Grendel has long been recognised.[1] In both narratives a young man who is not thought of much account — though he has defeated ravenous beasts before virtually unarmed — leaves home to visit a king whose men are being terrorised by a large, fearsome antagonist.[2] The young man offers

[1] In this article I consistently use the versions of biblical names the Authorised Version and most English translations use: Ishbi-Benob, Abishai, Zeruiah, etc. Research for this article was facilitated by a grant from the Lynne Grundy Memorial Trust. I also benefited from early encouragement and suggestions from Dr Roberta Bassi (Bloomsbury Publishing), Professor Éamonn Ó Carragáin (University College Cork), and Dr Helen Appleton (Oxford), as well as additional critique and suggestions from those hearing earlier versions of this research presented at the Universities of Leicester in 2011 and Nottingham in 2013. I gratefully acknowledge the contributions of all these parties, and I also thank my former students at Durham (2006–12), whose active engagement in tutorials provided the context in which I first originated these ideas.

[2] Though in this article I refer to Grendel, Goliath, and other creatures as 'giant' or 'large', and sometimes as 'giants', I do not classify any as a 'giant' according to either Anglo-Saxon concepts such as *ent* or *eoten* or Latin ones such as *gigas*, *colossus*, or *titanus*. The classification is unnecessary in this article. What is important is that all these

Leeds Medieval Studies 3 (2023), 61–75 DOI: 10.57686/256204/29 (ISSN: Print 2754-4575/ Online 2754-4583)
© 2023 John Shafer (ORCID iD: 0009-0003-6175-3057)

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License

to fight the mighty creature for the king, though the king and his followers fear this young man cannot defeat it. The young man refuses to wear armour or carry a sword, but fights the monster as he has defeated beasts before: without traditional weapons of war, trusting his victory to Almighty God. The young man is victorious, and it is predicted that in time the young man himself will be a king, though his father had not been one; the young man later does indeed become a king. Beyond these broad similarities, certain closer details of David's story correspond to Beowulf's: the hero's speech to the king on his fitness to fight the monstrous warrior based on his previous success in contests against fearsome beasts (I Samuel 17:35–37, cf. *Beowulf* lines 530–606); his explicit pre-fight refusal to wear armour or carry a sword (I Sam. 17:39, *Beo.* 677–87); and his decapitation of the slain opponent using its own sword, or at least a sword in its possession (I Sam. 17:51, *Beo.* 1584–90).[3]

The basic correspondence between this biblical episode in I Samuel Chapter 17 and the first part of *Beowulf* has been explored several times since the poem first began to be discussed in print. Sylvia Huntley Horowitz's 1978 article noting the correspondences between Beowulf and the Old Testament figures of David and Samson asserts the high probability that the *Beowulf*-poet knew David's story.[4] Andy Orchard's 2003 critical companion to the poem discusses the narrative analogy between the two giant-fighting stories and also provides a useful table detailing the individual points of correspondence.[5] Margaret E. Goldsmith compares David and Beowulf in a couple of publications I discuss further below. Once noticed, the similarity between David and Beowulf is difficult to ignore, and furthermore it usefully conveys the importance of recognising Christian contexts of even those texts that apparently celebrate a 'pagan heroic' value system.

Neither I nor any of the earlier scholars I am aware of suggest Beowulf's fight against Grendel is based on David's against Goliath in the sense that *Beowulf* is a 'version' of David's story. Rather, if *Beowulf*'s narrative analogy to David versus Goliath is to be regarded as intentional, it must be the result of a Christian poet or at least a poet with a great deal of biblical knowledge adapting a heroic story inherited from native folklore tradition, using Old Testament narrative as enhancement.[6] I will return to the *Beowulf*-poet's engagement with

characters are textually described as large, superhumanly strong, and antagonistic in battle against the texts' heroic main characters. Goliath, for example, is not called *gigas* or *titanus* in the Vulgate, but he is said to be six cubits and a span high; to wear armour that weighs 5,000 shekels; and to carry a spear 'like a weaver's beam' with a head weighing 600 shekels. See I Samuel Chapter 17 for these details. Grendel is in *Beowulf* sometimes referred to as *eoten* and *eotena cynnes*, but the comparisons drawn in this article do not depend on how closely either Grendel or the biblical characters match whatever Anglo-Saxons understood by these terms.

3 Throughout this article I cite Friedrich Klaeber's edition of the poem, *Klaeber's Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, 4th rev. edn by R. D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork, and John D. Niles (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008).

4 'Beowulf, Samson, David and Christ', *Studies in Medieval Culture*, 12 (1978), 17–23.

5 *A Critical Companion to Beowulf* (Woodbridge: Brewer, 2003), p. 145. I provide a similar table below, partly based on Orchard's but with some refinements of my own.

6 A thorough treatment of *Beowulf* and its analogues is given in J. Michael Stitt, *Beowulf and The Bear's Son: Epic, Saga, and Fairytale in Northern Germanic Tradition*, Albert Bates Lord Studies in Oral Tradition, 8/Garland Reference Library of the Humanities, 1402 (New York: Garland, 1992), in which he uses written analogue comparison and folk narrative research to address the possibilities of the folktale origins of the Grendel episode in *Beowulf*. The two primary contenders are the Germanic 'Bear's Son' tale (now designated ATU301 'The Three Stolen Princesses' in the Aarne-Thompson-Uther tale type index) and the Irish narrative tradition known as 'The Hand and the Child'. Though I subscribe to the Germanic interpretation, it is unimportant to my argument which particular story tradition provided the basic material for the Grendel episodes in *Beowulf*; it is only important to acknowledge that this portion of the poem is based on an earlier heroic narrative.

Christianity in my concluding section below, but my basic interpretation, shared with others, is that the poet re-purposed her or his traditional Germanic narrative as a sort of 'Old Testament story' for the Anglo-Saxons: 'Old Testament' in the sense that Christian Anglo-Saxons could admire the heroic qualities in their pre-Christian ancestors and tell their stories, just as the Old Testament was read and used in Christian instruction despite being itself pre-Christian. Goldsmith explicitly argues that the *Beowulf*-poet visualises its Danes as 'Old Covenant' rather than Christian, 'to be judged according to the Old Law as the Israelites were, since they had had no Revelation of God'.[7] More recently, Malcolm Godden admires the *Beowulf*-poet's 'imaginative response' to Old Testament material, drawing on biblical stories to create its 'mythic structure' in aspects such as the world's beginning and the 'archetypal example' of Cain's fratricide, which introduces the tribal and familial feuding pervasive in the world of *Beowulf*.[8]

The idea that the *Beowulf*-poet enhanced a Germanic heroic tale with elements of David's story can even make sense of minor inconsistencies in the Anglo-Saxon poem, such as one noted by Kenneth Sisam in which a description of Beowulf as slow and unpromising in his youth (lines 2183–89) conflicts with the accounts of his promising upbringing (lines 2428–34) and successful swimming contest against Breca and monsters (lines 530–89).[9] The inconsistency troubles us less if we imagine a poet adding to the original, heroic story of Beowulf details from David's unpromising youth — who when he fights Goliath is, unlike Beowulf, not a warrior at all but the youngest son of seven and seen as fit only for tending sheep — but failing to remove conflicting details of Beowulf's promising youth.

But what these Davidic interpretations of *Beowulf* have in common is that they address only the first part of the poem, the part concerning Beowulf's fights against Grendel and against Grendel's mother: two connected episodes that together form a self-evidently coherent story. (Grendel's death is in fact not even fully assured until after the fight with Grendel's mother, when, in true adherence to the Proppian structure of the Bear's Son story-type, Beowulf cuts off the giant creature's head with its own sword.) This makes sense: most scholarly arguments and proposals seeking to identify the story-pattern *Beowulf* follows address only these fights with Grendel and his mother. Certainly the dragon episode seems naturally detachable from what may be the 'original' story of Beowulf, or at least that part that re-creates the Bear's Son story-pattern.[10] It seems appropriate for the story to end after Beowulf fights and kills Grendel's mother, or even, as in Michael Crichton's excellent re-imagining of the story,[11] that

[7] 'The Christian Perspective in *Beowulf*', *Comparative Literature*, 14 (1962), 71–90 (pp. 78, 79 fn. 27); Goldsmith devotes an extended footnote to arguing this 'highly controversial point'. See also J. R. R. Tolkien, 'Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 22 (1936), 245–95 (pp. 19–28, esp. 27–28). Like Horowitz, Goldsmith also (briefly) compares Beowulf with the mighty biblical hero Samson: 'The Christian Theme of *Beowulf*', *Medium Ævum*, 29 (1960), 81–101 (pp. 100–01).

[8] Pages 215, 222 and 223 of 'Biblical Literature: The Old Testament', in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. by Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 214–33 (pp. 215, 222–23).

[9] 'Beowulf's Fight with the Dragon', *Review of English Studies,* nw sries, 9 (1958), 129–40 (p. 130). Though northern Germanic heroes can often have an unpromising youth — cf. the *kolbítr* tradition of Norse legendary stories — the inconsistency here still seems notable, given that when Beowulf's youthful heroic exploits are described in Heorot they are clearly well-known to everyone already, including his detractors.

[10] Sisam, 'Beowulf's Fight', begins with a lament over the general scholarly disinterest in the dragon-slaying episode, writing 'I have always wanted more about the fight with the Dragon' and calling it the heart of the adventure (p. 129). Christine Rauer, *Beowulf and the Dragon: Parallels and Analogues* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2000), which I return to below, does to an extent discuss the dragon episode in terms of what goes before.

[11] Michael Crichton, *Eaters of the Dead: The Manuscript of Ibn Fadlan Relating His Experiences with the Northmen*

the hero should both kill the monstrous female and be killed by her, a properly heroic death for a young hero before his warrior credentials decay with time and his battlefield faith in Almighty God gives way to overweening pride in his own prowess, or to greed.

Nevertheless, to progress beyond Beowulf's and David's youthful monster-fights on behalf of kings and turn our attention to the later parts of their stories, their final battles as aged kings themselves, we see several more remarkable similarities. In both cases: after defeating the giant warrior — though not immediately — the young man becomes king and rules for many years. He is renowned as a great warrior in battle against human opponents, though he is not called upon to fight any more giant monsters for a long time. About fifty years after defeating the first fearsome antagonist, however, his kingdom is attacked by another. The king goes to battle against this monster, though there are fears that if the king is killed, his people will soon disappear from the earth. This time the king fights the monster using all conventional weaponry of war, but the creature's power is too much for the king and defeats him. A young kinsman of the king must come to his aid, saving his life and helping him defeat and kill the monster.

As the above points indicate, the story of David continues to match the later story of Beowulf in several remarkable ways. Though many people know of David defeating Goliath, fewer are familiar with this story of David's second and final contest with a giant opponent towards the end of his long reign as king of Israel, in which his nephew Abishai comes to his aid to defeat the antagonist; this episode is related in II Samuel 21:15–17. Like the similarities between David's and Beowulf's early careers as monster-fighters, once these parallels are seen they are difficult to ignore. As far as I know, however, the only scholarly reference to these parallel episodes previous to this article is Fred McFarland's 2016 MA thesis in which he twice briefly notes the similarity between the II Samuel episode and the end of *Beowulf*. Once McFarland observes how Abishai's heroic intervention to save his king may have been interpreted by Anglo-Saxons according to the *comitatus* principle, a pagan Germanic warrior-culture ethic they may have found readily adaptable to Old Testament narratives, and later McFarland comments on the relative strength of fate (*wyrd*) and God's providence when interpreting Beowulf's heroic outcome, and the blending of these concepts in this episode.[12]

In the following, I assess the similarities between these stories in more detail, along with what the comparison can add to our understanding of *Beowulf*.

Lines 2312–3155 of *Beowulf* and verses 15–17 of II Samuel 21

Table 1 enumerates similarities between David's story and Beowulf's, the first section substantially based on similar comparisons by Andy Orchard and Sylvia Huntley Horowitz;[13] the second part is my own, itemising the close analogy between the structure of Beowulf's final

in AD 922 (New York: Knopf, 1976), and its film adaptation *The 13th Warrior*, dir. by John McTiernan (Touchstone Pictures, 1998).

[12] Fred McFarland, 'The Warrior Kings and their Giants: A Comparative Study of Beowulf and King David', East Washington University Masters Collection, 356 (unpublished MA thesis, Eastern Washington University, 2016), pp. 23, 44–45, accessible at http://dc.ewu.edu/theses/356. I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer of this article who first brought this reference to my attention. As my first footnote states, I presented earlier versions of this argument at conferences in 2011 and 2013, but those papers did not appear in print.

[13] 'Youth' section partly based on Orchard, *A Critical Companion*, p. 145 and Sylvia Huntley Horowitz, 'Beowulf, Samson, David and Christ', *Studies in Medieval Culture*, 12 (1978), 17–23 (p. 19).

The monster-fighting hero's story	***I & II Samuel***	***Beowulf***
Youth	**Ch. and v.**	**Lines**
There is a king whose men were being terrorised by a giant	I Sam. 17:3, 23	115–93
The king offers a fine reward for killing the giant	I Sam. 17:25	384–85, 660–61
The hero, a promising youth, leaves home (elsewhere) to visit the king	I Sam. 16:12, 17:20	247–51
As a young man the hero has not been thought of much account by his family	I Sam. 16:11, 17:15	2183–88
The hero's capacity to fight the giant is challenged	I Sam. 17:28, 33	506–28
The hero narrates his previous experiences fighting other monsters and beasts	I Sam. 17:35–37	530–606
The hero's coming is thought to be heaven-sent, and his offer of help is accepted	I Sam. 17:37	381–84
The hero removes helmet, breastplate and sword, refusing to wear or carry them into battle	I Sam. 17:39	669–74
The hero boasts of victory with God's help	I Sam. 17:46	677–87
The hero fights the giant alone, without a sword	I Sam. 17:39, 42, 50	710–836
After defeating the giant, the hero decapitates him with a sword belonging to the giant or his family	I Sam. 17:51	1584–90
The hero returns with the giant's sword and severed head	I Sam. 17:54	1612–17
Though he is not in line for any throne, it is predicted that the hero will one day be a king	I Sam. 16:1–13	856–61
Maturity		
The hero does rise to the throne and rules for many years	II Sam. 5:4–5	2200–08
A monstrous creature attacks the hero's land, and he battles against it	II Sam. 21:15	2312–27, 2535–49 and following
The hero fights using traditional armour and weapons	Implied by context	2538–41, 2575–80
The creature vanquishes the hero	II Sam. 21:16	2580–95
The hero's younger kinsman comes to his aid, killing the monster for/with the hero.	II Sam. 21:17	2602–30, 2694–709
Immediately the hero's followers express concern regarding their nation's downfall due to the king risking his life in battle and losing it	II Sam. 21:17	2911–13, 2999–3007, 3148–55

Table 1: Narrative correspondences between Beowulf and David

fight against a dragon and the biblical David's final battle as warrior-king of Israel, against a giant.

To see if there is a little more than simple narrative coincidence between these two tales of a formerly mighty warrior-king's last fight, a nearly disastrous contest with a monster, we may explore the details further. A normalised Vulgate text of the relevant Old Testament passage, II Samuel 21:15–17 (Latin: II Regum), reads as follows:

> factum est autem rursum proelium Philisthinorum adversum Israhel et descendit David et servi eius cum eo et pugnabant contra Philisthim deficiente autem David. Iesbidenob qui fuit de genere Arafa cuius ferrum hastae trecentas uncias adpendebat et accinctus erat ense novo nisus est percutere David. Praesidioque ei fuit Abisai filius Sarviae et percussum Philistheum interfecit tunc iuraverunt viri David dicentes non egredieris nobiscum in bellum ne extinguas lucernam Israhel.[14]

The correspondences between Beowulf's dragon-fight and David's battle with Ishbi-Benob are not as numerous as those between Beowulf's fight with Grendel and David's with Goliath. It is also true, of course, that Beowulf dies at the end of his last monster-fight, and David does not. But leaving aside for the moment this crucial difference, which I will return to, what happens next in both narratives is notable. Immediately after his nearly fatal fight with Ishbi-Benob, David's men forbid him from ever going into battle again, 'lest the lamp of Israel should be extinguished,' as the Authorised Version expresses it. Spoken in the context of a nearly unsuccessful battle against Philistines, who have threatened the kingdom of Israel throughout the narrative of David's life and most of the time of the Judges before it (cf. again Samson, who also fought Philistines), this statement clearly expresses the Israelites' anxiety about being overrun by more powerful neighbouring nations if their mighty warrior-king dies. This is the correspondence between II Samuel and *Beowulf* that seems truly key to me, as this is precisely the fate the Geat men and women fear upon Beowulf's death, which they explicitly state three times in the closing parts of the poem (lines 2911–13; 2999–3007; and 3150–55, quoted below). The Geat woman who wails a lament at the death of Beowulf seems to be mourning the loss of her people's life and liberty as much as of her king:

> swylce giōmorgyd Gēatisc meowle
> æfter Bīowulfe bundenheorde
> sang sorgcearig, sæde geneahhe
> þæt hīo hyre heregeongas hearde ondrēde,

[14] All Vulgate passages in this article are quoted from *Biblia Sacra Latina* (London: Bagster, 1977). The English of the Douay-Rheims translation reads 'and the Philistines made war again against Israel, and David went down, and his servants with him, and fought against the Philistines. And David growing faint, Jesbibenob, who was of the race of Arapha, the iron of whose spear weighed three hundred ounces, being girded with a new sword, attempted to kill David. And Abisai the son of Sarvia rescued him, and striking the Philistine killed him. Then David's men swore unto him, saying: Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle, lest thou put out the lamp of Israel.' The biblical 'race of Arapha' or the 'Rephaites' are Canaanite antagonists of the Israelites set apart in the narratives they are mentioned in by great height, great strength, and/or physical characteristics presented as monstrous (eg six fingers on each hand and foot); for examples of all these, see I Chronicles Chapter 20, in which, as here, 'sons of Rapha' oppose David and his men in battle. Like David's earlier giant Philistine opponent Goliath, here the brief characterisation of Ishbi-Benob focuses on the marvellously heavy weight of the spear he is able to wield. Abishai is David's nephew, the son of David's sister, the Zeruiah (Sarvia) referred to here (and see I Chronicles 2:13–16). The biblical historical books frequently refer to Abishai and his brothers as the 'sons of Zeruiah', never by their father's name, possibly indicating narrative emphasis on their family connection to David.

wælfylla worn, werudes egesan,
hȳnðo ond hæftnȳd.[15]

So, the downfall of the Geat nation as a result of Beowulf's strict adherence to his warrior code despite all consequences — and the downfall, perhaps, of what the Geat nation represents — is a crucial point, maybe the central point of the last part of *Beowulf*.[16] Thus the final, elegiac lines of the Anglo-Saxon poem and the biblical verses describing David's last battle share a concern with the warrior-king failing to reproduce as an old king what he once achieved as a young warrior armed only with his faith and his God-given strength, with the threat of his nation's obliteration looming large as a consequence.

With the exception of Fred McFarland in his MA thesis, referred to above, previous scholars, including those who have pointed out similarities between Beowulf and I Samuel, have not observed the narrative elements shared by the Old English poem and II Samuel.[17] In this context, it is worth clarifying my thesis. I am not arguing that *Beowulf* is or is intended to be an Old English poetic 'version' of David's story, nor, strictly speaking, am I suggesting that the Anglo-Saxon poet closely modelled the account of Beowulf's last battle on David's. There are too many clear differences between the two narratives, not least that the creature Beowulf fights is a dragon and, again, that unlike David Beowulf does not survive the contest but dies. What I am proposing is:

1. that a poet intimately familiar with the Old Testament — certainly the stories of Creation, Cain, and the Flood, and likely the entire biography of David — recognised the inherent, organic correspondences between David's fight against Goliath and the traditional 'Bear's Son' or 'Hand and Child' narrative s/he knew and wished to re-tell in *Beowulf*;

[15] Lines 3150–55a: 'So too a song of mourning did a Geatish woman, | with hair bound up, for Beowulf | sorrowfully sing, saying repeatedly | that she greatly dreaded army invasions, | heaps of slaughter, terror of troops, | humiliation and captivity.' Old English translations throughout are my own. An alternative reading of *heregeongas* 'army invasions' is *hēofungdagas* 'days of mourning'.

[16] See esp. Tolkien, 'Beowulf', pp. 31–36.

[17] Though it is difficult to confirm fully that an idea has never been proposed at all, this one certainly does not appear in scholarly sources where it would be expected. It certainly seems likely that if Tolkien had noticed this analogy, which is not unlikely given his rigorous, intellectual Christianity and voluminous knowledge of Germanic narrative, he would at least have mentioned it in his landmark analysis of *Beowulf*. The other articles above that do connect Beowulf and David — Horowitz, Goldsmith, and Orchard — simply do not mention David's late-reign fight against Ishbi-Benob. Sisam, 'Beowulf's Fight' does not connect the dragon-fight with David. Jo Ann Pevoto, 'An Inquiry into the Possibility that the Unknown Poet of the Anglo-Saxon Poem *Beowulf* May Have Been Influenced by the Scriptures, Particularly Viewed from a Typological Method of Interpretation' (unpublished MA thesis, University of Houston, 1967), accessible at https://hdl.handle.net/10657/12729, investigates the extent to which the *Beowulf*-poet was influenced by scripture and does mention Ishbi-Benob among a list of five giants David and his men defeat (p. 82), but she does not connect the episode to Beowulf's dragon-fight in any way. I have found no reference to the connection either in scholars commenting on the Christian elements in *Beowulf*, such as Friedrich Klaeber's extensive treatment of the subject, 'Die christlichen Elemente im Beowulf', *Anglia: Zeitschrift für Englische Philologie*, 35 (1911), 111–36, 249–70, 453–82; 36 (1912), 169–99; Arthur R. Skemp, 'The Transformation of Scriptural Story, Motive, and Conception in Anglo-Saxon Poetry', *Modern Philology*, 4 (1907), 423–70; and William Whallon, 'The Christianity of *Beowulf*', *Modern Philology*, 60.2 (1962), 81–94; or in those on the origins and dating of *Beowulf*, such as Fred. C. Robinson, 'History, Religion, Culture: The Background Necessary for Teaching *Beowulf*', in *'The Tomb of Beowulf' and Other Essays on Old English* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), pp. 36–51; Sam Newton, *The Origins of 'Beowulf' and the Pre-Viking Kingdom of East Anglia* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1994); and the editorial material in *Klaeber's Beowulf*, ed. by Fulk, Bjork and

2. that this poet then enhanced the folklore-derived portion of Beowulf's story — that is, his fight against Grendel and his mother — with details from David's fight against Goliath; and

3. that, having a larger literary purpose than simply repeating the traditional material, the poet carried the hero's story to a heroic, meaningful end by drawing inspiration from an episode near the end of David's life, of which s/he was also aware, or possibly from a Davidic motif itself based on that episode.

The other major detail of *Beowulf*'s final extended episode that does not match the II Samuel episode is that the monster Beowulf fights is a dragon, not the giant or giant-like creature David and his nephew Abishai defeat. This does not conflict with my proposition that the biblical episode could have served as the basic inspiration for the episode in the Anglo-Saxon poem; a poet could easily take the fundamental idea of the episode — an older king who fought a giant warrior as a youth makes a poor decision to fight a later monster threatening his people, and a younger kinsman comes to his aid to defeat it — and simply replace the giant with a dragon for reasons of her/his own. As Tolkien puts it: 'Beowulf's dragon, if one wishes really to criticize, is not to be blamed for being a dragon, but rather for not being dragon enough'.[18]

My proposition, then, also does not fundamentally conflict with previous *Beowulf* scholarship that addresses the questions of the dragon episode's origin and how it came to be attached to the clearly separate, coherent tale of the first two fights in the first two-thirds of the poem. In her authoritative 2000 book on parallels and analogues of the *Beowulf* dragon, Christine Rauer, who though concerned with the narrative's underlying structure does not connect the dragon-episode with David, ultimately illustrates its analogy with both Germanic dragon episodes (such as we can know them) and dragons in classical Latin texts and hagiography; the *Beowulf*-episode shares a number of details with various 'saint defeats dragon' accounts, and especially notable may be the first-century example of Capaneus and Hippomedon confronting a serpent or dragon-like creature in Statius's *Thebaid*, a text popular in the Middle Ages and perhaps the only European dragon-story before *Beowulf* in which two people fight a dragon at once.[19] If the dragon-fight in *Beowulf* is more directly based on any of these narratives Rauer examines (or a related one that no longer survives), there is even the alternative possibility that details from David's story, such as the kinsman coming to the rescue, may have been adapted to the existing dragon narrative, very much as details from David's fight against Goliath enhanced the poet's existing Bear's Son narrative.

Other scholarly interpretations of the *Beowulf* dragon-episode focus less on its structure and more on what the creature represents. Sonya R. Jensen, for example, asserts that the dragon represents an invading human force, the Swedes feared by the Geats.[20] Scholars have long discussed the use of the word *aglæca* to refer to both Beowulf and the monsters he

Niles.

[18] Tolkien, 'Beowulf', p. 16.

[19] *Beowulf and the Dragon*, pp. 134–42 and (for Statius) p. 46; the latter example is also highlighted by *Klaeber's Beowulf*, ed. by Fulk, Bjork and Niles. Relevantly to my own research into this area, Rauer here also remarks: 'no surviving literary sources of *Beowulf* have hitherto been identified consensually. Particularly problematic factors in this regards are perhaps an unusually idiosyncratic method of composition of a poet who may have displayed great independence from surviving literary material, and the uncertainty which surrounds the date and place of composition of *Beowulf*' (p. 134).

[20] *Beowulf and the Swedish Dragon* (Narrabeen, NSW: ARRC, 1993), p. 9 *et passim*.

fights, including the dragon (line 2958) — as if the type of fearsome creature described is not as important as whatever mighty, deadly quality the word represents, a quality the poem's problematic hero shares.[21] Similarly, in his thorough and highly linguistically-focused analysis of mythic paradigms of Indo-European dragon fights, Calvert Watkins notes that Old English *bona* (also *bana*, 'killer') applies to both the hero and the dragon, and he comments wryly on the 'bidirectionality' of dragon-slaying, in which killer and killed are linguistically conflated, and obscured.[22] Along the same lines, William Whallon notes that the tone and action of *Beowulf* make small separation between Grendel, his mother, and the dragon, remarking that Grendel and the dragon belong to 'essentially the same race' and calling them 'variants', like Circe and Calypso in the *Odyssey*.[23] In her book on the medieval Germanic dragon generally, Joyce Lionarons tellingly observes: 'the *Beowulf* dragon confusingly offers evidence to confirm all the commonplace yet conflicting views on the general character of dragons while denying none'.[24] If Beowulf's dragon is indeed a rag-bag of well-known characteristics of different dragons from disparate traditions — if its 'dragon-ness' is not integral to its own story but has simply been assembled from what is known to be 'dragonish' — this is consistent with the episode being based on no previous dragon-story analogue, but simply invented for the purpose of the poem. According to my interpretation, then, the dragon element has been added to the basic story underneath, in which that figure can be any daunting antagonist suggested by David's final, superhumanly strong opponent Ishbi-Benob.[25]

Echoes of David elsewhere in *Beowulf*: Psalms

The biblical David is of course not identified by name in the text of *Beowulf*, but there are some indirect indications (beyond the narrative similarity of the Grendel-fight to the Goliath-fight)

[21] For a recent discussion of this addressing and citing much of the relevant scholarship, see Jane Roberts, 'Hrothgar's "Admirable Courage" ', in *Unlocking the Wordhord*, ed. by Mark C. Amodio and Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), pp. 240–73 (pp. 242–47). Roberts refers to an interpretation of the dragon as an embodiment of the destructive fire of Judgment Day (p. 248).

[22] *How to Kill a Dragon: Aspects of Indo-European Poetics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 418, 422.

[23] 'The Christianity', p. 91.

[24] Joyce Tally Lionarons, *The Medieval Dragon: The Nature of the Beast in Germanic Literature* (Enfield Lock: Hisarlik Press, 1998), p. 28. In Chapter 2, 'Beowulf and the *Beowulf* Dragon', Lionarons interprets the *Beowulf* dragon in an explicitly Christian way, as a synthesis of Christian and pagan heroic values (see esp. pp. 45–47, 18), but like other scholars she does not connect it with David.

[25] I do not suggest that the inspiration for the dragon itself was drawn from David, whom no biblical book or later story-tradition I am aware of describes fighting a serpent or dragon, and this is certainly not fundamental to my argument, which simply identifies as an analogue to *Beowulf* the basic Davidic story motif of fighting a monstrous opponent and needing a younger kinsman's help to defeat it. There is, however, a tantalising Anglo-Saxon connection between David and a dragon in a full-page miniature in an eighth-century Northumbrian manuscript, a copy of Cassiodorus's commentary on the psalms (Durham Cathedral Library B II 30, fol. 21v). The illustration portrays a male, robed figure holding a spear and standing on a double-headed, scaled beast without limbs, perhaps a serpent or dragon. The man has a halo around his head, and within a similar circle held aloft in his hand is the clear label 'dauid'. Alternative interpretations to an otherwise unknown Anglo-Saxon story of David slaying a dragon are 1) that the figure is not supposed to have slain the serpent he stands upon, 2) that the figure is not David and has mistakenly been labelled so by a later scribe, and 3) that the figure is an amalgamation of David and Christ, who according to a Christian interpretation of Genesis 3:15 will crush the head of the serpent who strikes at his heel. The latter interpretation blending the figures of David and Christ has the weight of scriptural support, on which see my concluding section below. The manuscript, illustration, and interpretations are discussed in Richard Gameson, *Manuscript Treasures of Durham Cathedral* (London: Third Millenium Publishing, 2010), pp. 34–37, where the miniature appears as a full-page colour plate.

that the Old English poet may have drawn inspiration from David, specifically in occasions of the poem's rhetorical similarity with psalms. David's primary identity in Anglo-Saxon Christian culture was the composer of their psalter, and manuscripts of Anglo-Saxon psalters often include as a miniature or illumination an image of David as the psalmist, always holding or playing his harp.[26]

Harps and court singers certainly figure throughout *Beowulf*, but there are closer correspondences between particular psalms and certain sections of the poem. Margaret Goldsmith's 'The Christian Perspective in *Beowulf*' discusses how an attitude expressed by Hrothgar echoes the sentiment of Psalm 118 (Authorised Version 119), in which God-sent afflictions and His law are more valuable to the psalmist than silver or gold; that the poem's interpretation of the Danes' idol-worship as a falling away from the one true God is reminiscent of Psalm 77 (AV 78); and how Psalm 18 (AV 19) — specifically Augustine's interpretation of it — answers Beowulf's concern that he has sinned in ignorance, lines 2327–32.[27] In a later work Goldsmith indicates how Beowulf's pre-Christian attitude in his dying speech on going to his people is similar to attitudes expressed in a *Vita* of St Anthony and Psalm 48 (AV 49).[28] In 'Die christlichen Elemente im Beowulf', Klaeber devotes a good deal of discussion to a Christian mindset appearing in *Beowulf*'s wordings, comparing its Old English word-choices to the Latin of the Vulgate Psalms.[29] Jane Toswell discusses how the 'reflective and ruminative approach' in *Beowulf* aligns with the poetic style of 'psalmic contemplation'.[30]

The clearest correspondence to a psalm that I have found is Beowulf's promise to hunt down and kill Grendel's mother:

> Ic hit þē gehāte: nō hē on helm losaþ,
> nē on foldan fæþm nē on fyrgenholt
> nē on gyfenes grund, gā þær hē wille.[31]

To this compare Psalm 138:7–10 (AV 139):

> Quo ibo ab spiritu tuo et quo a facie tua fugiam
> Si ascendero in caelum ibi es tu si iacuero in inferno ades

[26] I am grateful to Éamonn Ó Carragáin for suggesting this idea. The Vespasian Psalter, London, British Library, Cotton MS Vespasian A I, a Latin text of the Psalms with interlinear Old English glosses from the second or third quarter of the eighth century, provides quite a handsome example on folio 30 verso, with a harp-playing David surrounded by other musicians.

[27] 'The Christian Perspective', pp. 78–80, 86. When in a footnote to 'The Christian Theme', p. 101, Goldsmith refers to an upcoming paper on echoes of the Psalms in *Beowulf*, she is probably referring to this 1962 article. I have not found another article devoted exclusively to the poem's echoes of the Psalms.

[28] *The Mode and Meaning of 'Beowulf'* (London: Athlone, 1970), p. 240.

[29] E.g. pp. 119–20, 121, 131–32, 133–34, and 464–65. Paul Cavill, 'Christianity and Theology in *Beowulf*', in *The Christian Tradition in Anglo-Saxon England: Approaches to Current Scholarship and Teaching*, ed. by Paul Cavill (Woodbridge: Brewer, 2004), pp. 15–39, engages with both Klaeber's exploration of Christianity in *Beowulf* and others by Bruce Mitchell and by Kenneth Sisam, but does not mention either the Psalms or David.

[30] *The Anglo-Saxon Psalter*, Medieval Church Studies, 10 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), pp. 358–59, 362–63. Toswell does not discuss any specific instances in *Beowulf* of wording similar to individual psalms, and she also does not explore any narrative parallels between the characters of David and Beowulf.

[31] Lines 1392–94: 'I promise you this: [she] will not escape to any refuge, | neither in the bosom of the earth nor in mountain forests | nor at the bottom of the sea, go where [she] will.' The Old English in fact says 'he' will not escape, but the reference is clearly to Grendel's mother, and the scholarly discussions around why the manuscript refers to her with the masculine pronoun are not relevant to my argument here.

Si sumpsero pinnas diluculo habitavero in novissimo maris
Etiam ibi manus tua deducet me et tenebit me dextera tua.[32]

This is probably no direct allusion. The similarity here is more in the list-like rhetorical figure used than in diction or direct verbal correspondence, though the notable image of ineffectively hiding beneath the depths of the sea is used in both. Note too that in this verbal echo of the psalm the voice speaking is Beowulf's, casting him in the role of David.

Ultimately, there is no definitive evidence that *Beowulf* drew directly on the psalms. Yet it is also plausible that the psalms did influence the language of the poem, and this at least does not discourage the idea that the *Beowulf*-poet might have had an interest in stories about David himself.

Anglo-Saxon knowledge of David's fight against Ishbi-Benob

The argument as presented so far is a conjecture depending on narrative correspondences, and one of the narratives in question, though in the Bible and thus reasonably accessible to Anglo-Saxon authors and poets, is a small episode within a much larger narrative and quite obscure, then and now. II Samuel and the other Old Testament history books will certainly not have been as widely available and read in Anglo-Saxon England as, say, the Gospels and the psalms. We might reasonably ask if an Anglo-Saxon writer would even have known the story of David's late-reign fight against a giant.

Biblical commentaries are a natural place to look for evidence of textual attention to this episode, and it has certainly been thoroughly argued by Marie Padgett Hamilton, Dorothy Whitelock, Albert Brodeur, Margaret Goldsmith, and Paul Cavill among others that the *Beowulf*-poet was affected by and willing to incorporate into the poem early medieval Christian ideas and ideology as expressed by commentators such as Bede, Augustine, and Gregory the Great.[33] However, the only late antique or early medieval commentator I know of who definitely writes about David versus Ishbi-Benob is Ambrose, the fourth-century bishop of Milan, in his *Apologia Dauid*. One of the original four doctors of the Church, Ambrose enjoyed great influence within medieval Christianity, but he mentions the giant-fight of David's mature years only briefly, hardly saying more than that it happens.[34] Bede wrote a complete commentary on the first book of Samuel, and it is not unlikely that he would have continued and written a commentary on II Samuel if he had lived longer. Certainly Bede's interest in this part of the Old Testament was not limited to I Samuel; another of his

[32] The Douay-Rheims translation reads: 'Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy face? If I ascend into heaven, thou art there: if I descend into hell, thou art present. If I take my wings early in the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea: Even there also shall thy hand lead me: and thy right hand shall hold me.'

[33] Marie Padgett Hamilton, 'The Religious Principle in *Beowulf*', *PMLA*, 61 (1946), 309–30; Dorothy Whitelock, *The Audience of Beowulf* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951), e.g. pp. 39–45; Albert G. Brodeur, *The Art of Beowulf* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), esp. pp. 207–10; Goldsmith 'The Christian Theme' and 'The Christian Perspective', esp. p. 75; and Cavill, 'Christianity' , pp. 15–39.

[34] Ambroise de Milan, *Apologie de David*, ed. by Pierre Hadot, trans. by Marius Cordier, Sources Chrétiennes, 239 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1977), p. 114 [VII.33]. Ambrose was furthermore not widely read in Anglo-Saxon England. Dabney Bankert, Jessica Wegman and Charles Wright observe in their survey of Ambrose's works in Anglo-Saxon England that though his influence has been plausibly traced in some Old English poetry, Ambrose 'was not a major source for later vernacular authors': 'Ambrose in Anglo-Saxon England with Pseudo-Ambrose and Ambrosiaster', *Old English Newsletter: Subsidia*, 25 (1997), 9–18 (pp. 12, 17).

exegetical works, *In Regvm Librvm XXX Qvaestiones* ('thirty questions about the books of kings'), includes material from II Samuel.

There is one Anglo-Saxon literary figure who certainly knew the story of David's late-career giant-fight, as attested by one Old English text which not only refers to this story, but also uses it to make precisely the same point I have suggested attracted the *Beowulf*-poet to the episode. This is the prolific Anglo-Saxon homily-writer Abbot Ælfric of Eynsham, and the work is a fragment of ambiguous purpose beginning 'wyrdwriteras us secgað ða ðe awritan be cyningum' ('historians who wrote about kings tell us').[35] Though this excerpt lacks unity and its precise purpose is difficult to assess, it is nevertheless clear that it concerns the government of the kingdom and its defence against invaders. John C. Pope describes the beginning of the text this way:

> the first eighty-six lines are designed to show by the example of history that some of the most successful rulers have delegated their military power to carefully chosen generals, thus lightening their own burdens and greatly extending the range of their defence against enemies (lines 3–5), while they have avoided the risk of depriving the people of leadership by an untimely death (47–49).[36]

The lines Pope refers to relate to David's part in the text, where Ælfric summarises the biblical episode and the conclusion it draws concerning the danger to the nation:

> Eft wæs geworden wið Israhel gefeo[h]t;
> on ðam gefeo[h]te wæs sum wundorlic ent
> se wolde ofslean þone cyning Dauid,
> ac him gehe[a]lp sona Abisai his ðegen,
> Ioabes broðor, and he þone ent ofsloh,
> for þon ðe he geseah hu he syrwde embe Dauid,
> wolde hine forstelan betwux his þegenum.
> Ða sworon sona ðæs cyninges ðegenas ealle,
> and sædon him þus to: Ne scealt ðu næfre heonon forð
> mid us to gefeohte, þinum feore to plyhte,
> þelæst þu adwæsce Israhe[l]a leohtfæt:–
> þæt wæs Dauid him sylf be ðam ðe hi sædon swa.[37]

Note that though the biblical Vulgate text identifies Ishbi-Benob only as 'of the race of Arafa' or 'a Rephaite', leaving the reader to make the connection with the giant inhabitants of Canaan from other Old Testament books (Genesis 15:20; Deuteronomy 2:11 and 3:11; Joshua 17:15;

[35] *Homilies of Ælfric: A Supplementary Collection, Being Twenty-one Full Homilies of his Middle and Later Career for the Most Part not Previously Edited, with Some Shorter Pieces, Mainly Passages Added to the Second and Third Series*, ed. by John C. Pope, Early English Text Society, 259–60, 2 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1967–68), II 725–33. In that volume this work immediately follows Ælfric's most widely-read homily, 'De falsis diis'.

[36] *Homilies*, ed. by Pope, II 725.

[37] Though I do not assert that Ælfric's text is verse, for simplicity I preserve Pope's editorial lineation. Lines 39–50: 'Again there was battle in Israel; | in that battle there was a marvellous giant | who wanted to kill David the king, | but Abishai his thane, Joab's brother, quickly came to his aid, | and he killed the giant, | because he saw what he intended for David, | how he wished to carry him off from among his thanes. | Then straightaway all the king's thanes made an oath, | and spoke to him thus: Henceforth you shall never | go to battle among us, at the risk of your life, | lest you should extinguish Israel's lantern:— | it was because of David himself that they said this.' A marginal gloss in the manuscript notes that OE *leohtfæt* translates Latin *lucernam* (*Homilies*, ed. by Pope, II 730), and in Ælfric's text the passage is headed by the first few Latin words of the scriptural episode: 'Factum est autem rursum prelium | aduersus Israhel Philistinorum, et cetera.' Jane Toswell, *The Anglo-Saxon Psalter*, p. 88 explores the importance of this gloss in a footnote.

and especially I Chronicles 20), Ælfric, like Ambrose before him, unambiguously calls David's opponent a giant: *ent*. With Ælfric's use of the Ishbi-Benob episode to support his thesis concerning kings who put their nations at risk with their decisions in battle, we see that David's life is prime material for illustrating Anglo-Saxon writers' messages about kingdoms and their precarious positions — whether in a heroic, poetic idiom, as in *Beowulf*, or with religious and very likely contemporary political significance, as in Ælfric's writing. Jane Toswell observes that this text by Ælfric, which she calls a 'treatise' and 'an extended statement' about David's kingship, 'may well be a polemical statement about how kings need to be kept under control and need to delegate and share authority'. Though she considers the portrait of David and his importance the more significant purpose of this treatise, Toswell joins Pope in acknowledging that here (as in his homilies) Ælfric uses biblical analogy and spiritual illustrations to critique English 'regnal behaviour' of his time, expressing concern about the enclosing threat of the Danish aggression against late tenth- and eleventh-century England, as well as frustration at the English rulers' poor decisions in response to this threat.[38] In this case Ælfric proves his thesis with a series of royal exempla, and he uses David's fight against Ishbi-Benob as the first of these.

That Ælfric was almost certainly writing in a later and different setting from the *Beowulf*-poet (though consensus on when and where exactly *Beowulf* was written remains elusive) does not materially disrupt the basic point that Anglo-Saxon writers familiar with II Samuel, from early eighth-century Bede exploring theological questions that book raises to late tenth-century Ælfric explicitly referring to David's fight with Ishbi-Benob, could and did draw on the biblical episode for their own purposes. There is no reason the *Beowulf*-poet could not have done the same.

Conclusions

To reiterate the basics of this article: not only are many of the details of Beowulf's fight against Grendel similar to those in the I Samuel account of David's fight against Goliath, but several details in Beowulf and Wiglaf's confrontation with the dragon are similar to those in the brief but significant account in II Samuel of King David and his nephew Abishai fighting the powerful antagonist Ishbi-Benob. The analogue itself is clear. The poet's probable knowledge of David's story is suggested by the finer details in Beowulf's preparations to fight Grendel that recall David preparing to fight Goliath and perhaps also by echoes of psalmic language in *Beowulf*. This leaves tantalisingly open the possibility that the *Beowulf*-poet could have drawn inspiration either from the II Samuel episode directly or from a Davidic motif based on it. Ælfric's direct reference to this biblical episode to illustrate very much the same point that both *Beowulf* and II Samuel make, that the poor decisions kings make when fighting foreign threats can put their own people in danger, reinforces the plausibility — if not the likelihood — of this possibility.

There remains one crucial difference between the narratives of David and Beowulf that invites attention: David lives on after his final battle, but Beowulf dies. To me this difference is not irksome, but relates directly to how a poet with knowledge of both a Bear's Son narrative and David's biography may have drawn inspiration from the later biblical episode to construct

[38] Toswell, *The Anglo-Saxon Psalter*, pp. 86–88.

a meaningful end for his pagan hero's story. I conclude with a few brief words about this significance.

Goldsmith classifies the Danes in *Beowulf* as 'Old Covenant' rather than Christian (see above), and elsewhere she expands on the idea of the admiration of Beowulf's heroism being recognisably similar to admiration of David — who is not a perfect exemplum of behaviour, like Christ, but who is nevertheless, in a heroic mould, admirable all the same. She writes:

> many notable scholars have convinced themselves that Beowulf is presented as the saviour of his people, like a Christian knight, or even like Christ himself, in spite of the fact that even in the final eulogy there is no hint of this. Beowulf is presented as a noble hero, but not as the complete paragon of kingly virtue. One can imagine a comparable Christian poem about King David: there would be much to praise in the hero, but no-one would suggest that his every act was held up for imitation by the poet's patron.[39]

Far from holding up its hero's every act for imitation, the concluding episode of *Beowulf* explicitly calls into question the heroic values by which a king will put his entire nation at risk to seek personal martial glory; perhaps it also implicitly critiques a value-system by which the king's personal success is so bound up with his nation's success that it can live no longer than he. Tolkien's 1936 reading of the poem makes its theme the certainty that all men and all their works must pass away from the earth, and this is certainly one good reason why Beowulf must die at the end of his last battle rather than live to pass his kingdom on to a strong successor, as King David does.[40]

But there is another reason Beowulf dies, a reason connected with Christian belief about what David's true role is. David is the king of Israel from whose line Christ will descend — Jesus is the king who rules with David's authority, and when Jesus gives up his life on the cross he cries out David's words.[41] There are many New Testament references connecting Jesus Christ with King David, generally interpreting Jesus as the Messiah descending from David or his father Jesse, referred to in various Old Testament passages (e.g. Isaiah 11:1). Examples include the genealogies of Matthew 1 and Luke 3, and genealogical comments in Romans 1:3 and Revelation 5:5 and 22:16. The book of Hebrews repeatedly quotes psalms as prophetic statements referring to Jesus Christ, and in verses 30–37 of Acts 13 Paul both quotes psalms as prophecy and explicitly connects David's death after serving his purpose in God's plan with Jesus rising from the dead to fulfil his. For Christians, the fear expressed by David's men that his death will result in the destruction of Israel is, by extension, a threat to Christianity itself. David must live for Israel to go on and ultimately for Christ to be born in Israel, in David's line.

[39] 'The Christian Theme', p. 81. With this speculation on a *Beowulf*-like Anglo-Saxon poem based on the life of David, Goldsmith comes closest of any previous scholar I am aware of to making the connection McFarland does in his MA thesis and I do in this article. Goldsmith, however, never connects Beowulf's dragon-fight with David's fight against Ishbi-Benob, even when she discusses the dragon and more generally what Beowulf's fights represent (pp. 90–96). In other respects, Goldsmith's analysis goes into great depth showing how Christian themes are handled in *Beowulf*.

[40] To this we might compare various Anglo-Saxon writers' emphasis on the excessive pride of Alexander the Great, a portrayal explored and explicitly compared to Beowulf's portrayal by Andy Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the 'Beowulf'-Manuscript* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1995), pp. 116–39, especially pp. 135–36, 139. Like other scholars exploring the monsters of *Beowulf*, Orchard does not in this book connect King David's fight against Ishbi-Benob with King Beowulf's against the dragon.

[41] 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' according to Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34, quoting Psalm 22. This is the only statement by Christ on the cross appearing in more than one gospel.

In *Beowulf*, however — where Beowulf and his kingdom may be seen to represent the pre-Christian, heroic order and beliefs of the north — the warrior-king does not need to live to preserve his nation and ensure the advent of Christ: he needs to die. To Anglo-Saxon Christians looking back on their heathen, heroic past, there was no more natural belief than that what had gone before must die out to give way to the correct, holy faith in Christ. The ancient pagan heroes could fight giants like David, be mighty in battle like David, be blessed with the Lord's success like David, and even echo his life with theirs: but ultimately they were heathen, and the English knew that the rise of their Christian beliefs had depended on the decline and death of the old ones. As Tolkien memorably remarks of the *Beowulf*-poet's perspective: 'the wages of heroism is death'.[42]

And so Beowulf dies, and in his poem is realised the specific dread vocalised by David's people, that their king continuing to fight monstrous creatures who threaten their nation could destroy them. But the words Beowulf's people express after his death are not dread, but at first a statement of undeniable fact and finally a sorrowful but awestruck elegy for the greatness that had to pass away for righteousness to rise.

[42] Tolkien, 'Beowulf', p. 27.

An Eddic Fairy-tale of a Cursed Princess: An Edition of *Vambarljóð*

Haukur Þorgeirsson

Abstract

The Eddic fairy-tales are a group of poems of medieval origin which were collected from oral tradition in Iceland in the seventeenth century and later. These poems employ an Icelandic version of the Germanic alliterative metre and make use of Eddic formulas and style. They have fairy-tale subjects with evil stepmothers, elves, ogresses, curses and other supernatural elements. A striking trait of these poems is their emphasis on female characters and perspectives. The poem here edited is *Vambarljóð*, which tells of Signý, a resourceful princess cursed by her stepmother to appear as a cow's stomach. The poem was collected three times from oral tradition. One version (V) survives as part of a late seventeenth-century collection of ballads and other popular poems. Two other versions are fragmentary: one of them (Þ) was written down for Árni Magnússon (1663–1730) and the other (J) by one of Árni's successors. The most complete version, V, is also the one that has the most archaic appearance and probably best reflects the poem's medieval origins. The three versions are edited separately here. Later poems and prose narratives of the same tale type are also briefly described.

Introduction

In seventeenth-century Iceland it became fashionable to collect folk-poetry from oral tradition.[1] Most of the poems thus recorded are ballads, many of them of medieval origin and with close analogues in the Faroe Islands and mainland Scandinavia.[2] But along with these, the folk-poem collections also contain a few works of another genre, the Eddic fairy-tales.[3] These are narrative poems with fairy-tale motifs composed in the Icelandic version of the

[1] I am grateful to the anonymous reviewers of this article for an abundance of constructive and helpful feedback. I also owe many thanks to Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir, Yelena Sesselja Helgadóttir, Vésteinn Ólason, Helgi Skúli Kjartansson and Frog. The map comprising Figure 2 was produced by Pétur Húni Björnsson.

[2] The standard work on Icelandic ballads is Vésteinn Ólason, *The Traditional Ballads of Iceland*, Rit, 22 (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, 1982). During the doctoral disputation of this work, Vésteinn further reviewed the evidence that shows that many of the ballads collected from oral tradition in the seventeenth century are of medieval origin: Vésteinn Ólason, 'Fornkvæðaspjall III: Svör Vésteins Ólasonar', *Gripla*, 6 (1984), 187–201, https://gripla.arnastofnun.is/index.php/gripla/article/view/401/387%3E.

[3] I introduce the term 'Eddic fairy-tales' here as a more legible alternative to the vague Icelandic word *sagnakvæði*.

Leeds Medieval Studies 3 (2023), 77–135 DOI: 10.57686/256204/32 (ISSN: Print 2754-4575/ Online 2754-4583)
© 2023 Haukur Þorgeirsson (ORCID iD: 0000-0002-7872-0601)
This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License

Germanic alliterative metre. Only eight of these poems have come down to us but some exist in more than one version, including *Vambarljóð*, which is edited here.

A striking feature of the Eddic fairy-tales is their wealth of poetic formulas, many of which they share with the Eddic poems of the Codex Regius and other medieval poetry. Jón Helgason argued that the Eddic fairy-tales represent a direct continuation of the Eddic tradition.[4] There are good reasons to believe that this is true. The popular subject matter and the oral preservation are factors which suggest a continuous tradition rather than later learned imitations.[5] The strong emphasis which these poems have on female characters and perspectives is also unlike the typical products of the educated elite but in keeping with Eddic poems such as *Oddrúnargrátr* and the *Guðrúnarkviður*.

Vambarljóð tells the story of Signý Hringsdóttir, a princess cursed by her evil stepmother to have the shape of a stomach (*vömb*). Signý takes to being a monster with gusto and there is some charm in the ruthlessness with which she forces a prince into marrying her to undo the curse. In one stanza, Signý taunts the prince for crying on his wedding day, pointing out that many brides are sad when they enter into marriage but an unhappy groom is a novelty. The stanza appears to call attention to a certain subversion or role-reversal in the narrative and may have been salient to the audience of the poem since it is one of a small handful to be preserved in all three versions edited here.

Vambarljóð was published along with the other Eddic fairy-tales by Ólafur Davíðsson in 1898 but that edition leaves much to be desired and was not based on all surviving manuscripts.[6] In the current edition, three versions are separately edited and translated. The V version tells a complete story while the Þ and J versions are fragmentary. These versions have enough textual overlap to be seen as the same poem but they are so different that an edition with one base text and variants would not do them justice.

There exists a fourth version (L) of *Vambarljóð* which is significantly longer than the other three. It tells the same story but shares only very few lines with any of the other versions. This longer text is not edited here but I include some analysis of it which indicates that it is of post-medieval origin — perhaps best seen as a new composition based on the old poem rather than a variant of it. The story of Signý is also preserved in two versions in *rímur* style (rhymed epic) as well as a prose fairy-tale version collected in the nineteenth century. It was a productive story for a long time.

The first collector

Students of Old Norse literature know the efforts undertaken by bishop Brynjólfur Sveinsson (1605–75) to gather and transmit the medieval literature of Iceland. His most famous

For an introduction to the genre see Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir, 'The Tradition of Icelandic *sagnakvæði*', *RMN Newsletter*, 6 (2013), 15–20.

4 Jón Helgason, 'Norges og Islands digtning', in *Litteraturhistorie B: Norge og Island*, ed. by Sigurður Nordal, Nordisk kultur, 8B (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1952), 3–179 (p. 167).

5 In a previous study I contrasted the Eddic fairy-tale *Gullkársljóð*, which is clearly of medieval origin, with the mythological poem *Hrafnagaldur*, which has many telltale signs of being a learned seventeenth-century composition. Haukur Þorgeirsson, '*Gullkársljóð* og *Hrafnagaldur*: Framlag til sögu fornyrðislags', *Gripla*, 21 (2010), 299–334.

6 *Íslenzkar þulur og þjóðkvæði*, ed. by Ólafur Davíðsson (Copenhagen: Hið íslenzka bókmentafélag, 1898), pp. 4–94. The haphazard methods used in the edition are reviewed by Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir, '(Ó)Traustar heimildir: Um söfnun og útgáfu þjóðkvæða', *Skáldskaparmál*, 4 (1997), 210–26.

accomplishment is acquiring the Codex Regius of the Eddic poems, which he sent to his sovereign, Frederick III of Denmark, in 1662. Few know that around the same time, Brynjólfur's younger brother Gissur also set out to collect medieval poems, but for a different purpose and with a different method — not from old vellum but from the lips of the people.

The manuscripts which preserve most of the Eddic fairy-tales are collections of *fornkvæði*, 'poems of old'. These collections mostly contain ballads in the same simple end-rhymed poetic form as was popular in the Faroe Islands and mainland Scandinavia. For this reason, the word *fornkvæði* is sometimes translated as 'ballad' but this may cause some confusion since the Icelandic word had a wider sense. The first known collector of *fornkvæði* was Gissur Sveinsson (1604–83), a clergyman in the West Fjords. Gissur's collection survives in his own autograph copy, AM 147 8vo (G), which originally contained 71 numbered poems. The title page of the book notes that it is 'til gamans og skiemtunar ad lesa' ('to be read for enjoyment and entertainment') and the first page reiterates this with the heading 'Nøckur fornnkvæde til gamans' ('Some *fornkvæði* to enjoy'). Gissur and the other seventeenth-century collectors aimed to collect enjoyable poetry and their primary objectives were not philological or historical.[7] Some examples will give an idea of the contents of Gissur's book and the Icelandic ballad tradition.

Poem 1 is *Kvæði af Magnúsi Jónssyni*, known only from Iceland and the Faroe Islands. The titular character proposes to two women and ends up paying for that with his life. Vésteinn Ólason describes the ballad's 'clumsy' style as 'characteristic of ballads which have come late to Iceland', suggesting the sixteenth century as a possibility.[8]

Poem 2 is *Kvæði af Tófu og Suffaralín*, a medieval ballad, known from all the Nordic countries.[9] The characters are historical — King Valdemar the Great of Denmark (1131–82), his queen Sophia ('Suffaralín') and his mistress Tove. As in poem 1, the subject is a love triangle, followed by a murder. In this case, the queen kills the mistress.

Poem 7 is *Kvæði af Ólafi liljurós*. This is the only medieval ballad which is still popularly sung in Iceland. It tells of a knight's meeting with some elf-maidens who invite him to live with them. The knight says that he would rather keep his faith in Christ. One of the elf-maidens then asks him for a parting kiss and as he obliges, she kills him with a sword. The ballad is known in all the Nordic countries and closely related ballads were recorded in Scotland and in Brittany.[10]

Most of the poems in Gissur's book are indeed ballads and most of those were recorded from Icelandic tradition. There are also, however, twelve poems translated directly from the Danish ballad edition of Vedel, which was first published in 1591 and reprinted several times in the seventeenth century. These twelve texts are close renderings of the Danish originals and distinct in style from the other ballads.

Along with the ballads, Gissur's book contains four Eddic fairy-tales: *Snjáskvæði* (poem 24), *Kötludraumur* (poem 25), *Þóruljóð* (poem 48) and *Kringilnefjukvæði* (poem 49). Finally, there are twelve poems near the end of the book which are neither ballads nor Eddic fairy-tales. Jón Helgason considered one of those, *Enska vísan*, to be recorded from oral tradition

[7] There is some information on Gissur's personality and speculation on his possible motives as a collector in Vésteinn Ólason, 'Vedel á Vestfjörðum – Um Magnús Jónsson í Vigur og söfnun fornkvæða', *Jocoseria Arna-Marianiana* (Copenhagen: [no publisher], 2002). [Photocopied *Festschrift* without pagination.]

[8] Vésteinn Ólason, *The Ballads of Iceland*, pp. 226–27.

[9] Vésteinn Ólason, *The Ballads of Iceland*, p. 307.

[10] Vésteinn Ólason, *The Ballads of Iceland*, p. 112.

while he judged the other eleven to have been composed pen in hand and transmitted through scribal tradition.[11] The reader might be surprised by the frequent and confident statements made by Jón Helgason on which poems did or did not undergo oral transmission but there are many tell-tale signs which distinguish preservation by memory from preservation by ink.[12]

Gissur's book does not mention any sources, authors or informants or provide any explanation on how the work was compiled. But the chance survival of some curious pages seems to offer a little bit of insight into Gissur's methods. Three leaves which are now a part of G (probably originally as flyleaves) contain what seem to be working documents made by Gissur while he was compiling the poems.[13] The notes contain the first few words of each stanza of *Magna dans* and *Ásu dans* — presumably Gissur made these notes in an effort to gather up all the stanzas and place them in the right order.

When these initial notes are compared with the final versions, it turns out that there are some differences. The final versions have more stanzas and some differences in wording, even if we only have a few words of each stanza for comparison. Presumably more stanzas came to light as Gissur continued working with his informants.[14]

Gissur wrote the extant G in 1665. It is his own copy of a previous version of his collection, known as *X. Another seventeenth-century collection of *fornkvæði* descended from *X is known as B (Add. 11.177). It contains most of the same poems as G but with a couple of omissions and a few additions. The hand in B is that of Oddur Jónsson (1648–1711), a relative of Gissur, also raised in the West Fjords.[15] While B represents only a minor expansion of Gissur's collection, a much more extensive expansion was to come.

The great collection

Magnús Jónsson *digri* ('the stout') of Vigur (1637–1702) in the West Fjords was an admirer of books and literature with enough worldly means to pursue his interests extensively. Along with his secretaries, Magnús produced a substantial collection of manuscripts, some of them of great size.[16] The grandest of all is a hefty folio volume of the sagas of Icelanders (AM 426 fol.) with full-page colour illustrations of three saga heroes, including Egill Skalla-Grímsson.

Among many manuscripts of poetry produced under Magnús's auspices was a collection of 186 *fornkvæði* produced in 1699–1700. The original manuscript, *V, is now lost but the text survives in good copies. This great collection begins with Gissur's original collection and then expands it with more poems of the same sort — ballads translated from Danish as well as ballads and other poems recorded from Icelandic tradition.

The great collection contains two Eddic fairy-tales that are not in G — *Vambarljóð* (poem 176) and *Gullkársljóð* (poem 177). Both have clearly been through oral transmission but we

[11] Jón Helgason, *Íslenzk fornkvæði. Islandske folkeviser*, Editiones Arnamagnæanæ, series B, 10–17, 8 vols (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1963), I xl.

[12] Haukur Þorgeirsson, '*Gullkársljóð* og *Hrafnagaldur*'; Haukur Þorgeirsson, 'Hávamál Resens prófessors', *Són*, 13 (2015), 111–34.

[13] Jón Helgason, *Kvæðabók séra Gissurar Sveinssonar AM 147, 8vo* (Copenhagen: Hið íslenzka fræðafélag, 1960), pp. 51–52.

[14] Vésteinn Ólason, *The Ballads of Iceland*, p. 21. I have previously discussed this example in the context of the different recorded versions of *Vǫluspá*: Haukur Þorgeirsson, 'In Defence of Emendation: The Editing of *Vǫluspá*', *Saga-Book*, 44 (2020), 31–56 (pp. 34–35).

[15] Jón Helgason, *Íslenzk fornkvæði*, I xvi.

[16] See the overview in Jón Helgason, *Kvæðabók úr Vigur: AM 148, 8to* (Copenhagen: Hið íslenzka fræðafélag,

can be sure that *Gullkársljóð* was not collected from memory or oral performance specifically for *V. An earlier text of *Gullkársljóð* exists in a manuscript (JS 28 fol.) written ca. 1660 for bishop Brynjólfur Sveinsson. The texts in 28 and *V are so similar — the same 71 strophes in the same order — that they are highly unlikely to represent two independent recordings from the sort of oral tradition that existed in seventeenth-century Iceland.

Since *Vambarljóð* and *Gullkársljóð* are adjacent in *V it seems plausible that they were obtained from the same source. We could speculate that *Vambarljóð* already existed in written form ca. 1660 like the four Eddic fairy-tales we have in Gissur Sveinsson's hand and the one that we have in a manuscript written for his brother, Brynjólfur. Some support for this is found in the L version of *Vambarljóð* which is discussed later on.

A glimpse of the informants

While the seventeenth-century collectors of *fornkvæði* left us little information on their sources, the arrival of Árni Magnússon (1663–1730) on the scene clears away some of the fog. Eager to collect almost any information on the past, Árni did not neglect the value of texts and knowledge in human memory and in some cases the *fornkvæði* written down for Árni include information on the informants.

When Árni was in Álftanes in Iceland in 1703 he had a ballad recorded, *Kvæði um sankti Hallvarð*. The informant was a woman near the age of eighty.[17] Another ballad, *Eyvindar ríma*, is also noted by Árni to have been recorded from an old woman.[18]

Árni seems to have made a particular effort to collect the Eddic fairy-tales. What survives of his collection in AM 154 8vo includes seven texts of *Kötludraumur*, four of *Snjáskvæði*, two of *Kringilnefjukvæði* and one each of *Bryngerðarljóð*, *Hyndluljóð* and *Vambarljóð*.[19] One of the texts of *Snjáskvæði* was recorded from 'a confused old lady who had learned it from her mother'.[20] Árni also had a text of *Vambarljóð* (the Þ version) recorded from an old woman, as described below. The source of *Bryngerðarljóð* was Guðrún Hákonardóttir (1659–1745), who supplied Árni with many poems recorded from oral tradition.[21]

Judging from Árni's informants, the *fornkvæði* tradition seems to have been kept alive by women and this is corroborated by two other sources. One is *Landbúaljóð* by Eiríkur Hallsson (1614–98) which mentions 'the beautiful old *fornkvæði* of Norway which the old ladies would repeat in the dark.'[22] Another source is a letter from Snæbjörn Pálsson (1677–1767) to Árni Magnússon written in 1708. Snæbjörn comments on a particular book of *fornkvæði*, probably the great collection:

1955), pp. 7–14.

17 'kona um ättræds alldur'; Jón Helgason, *Íslenzk fornkvæði*, IV 106.

18 'uppskrifud epter gamalli konu'; Jón Helgason, *Íslenzk fornkvæði*, IV 110.

19 When Jón Ólafsson (1705–79) described AM 154 8vo in his catalogue, he recorded three texts of *Vambarljóð*, two of which have since been lost, and two of *Gullkársljóð*, both of which have been lost or misplaced; see Haukur Þorgeirsson, 'Glatað eða á röngum stað?', *Bókavarða hlaðin Guðnýju Ragnarsdóttur sextugri 9. janúar 2023* (Reykjavík: Menningar- og minningarsjóður Mette Magnussen, 2023), pp. 18–19. There are also indications that a text of *Kringilnefjukvæði* written for Árni by Þórður Þórðarson has been lost; see Jón Helgason, *Íslenzk fornkvæði*, IV xlvii–xlviii. There is some further analysis of the composition of the 154 collection in Beeke Stegmann, 'Árni Magnússon's Rearrangement of Paper Manuscripts' (doctoral thesis, University of Copenhagen, 2017).

20 'Skrifad efter fyrirsogn óskirrar kerlingar er þad hafde numed af módur sinne', AM 154 8vo II, 1r.

21 Jón Helgason, *Íslenzk fornkvæði*, IV xli–xlvi.

22 'falleg Norvegs / fornkvæði gömul, / sem kerlingar / klifuðu í húmi.'

> It seems to me that the book of *fornkvæði* is not as rich in poems as I knew the hearts and minds of eighty-year-old women to be when I was a child. But most of them are buried in the ground now along with their knowledge.[23]

Although Snæbjörn may have seen his childhood in a nostalgic light, there are real reasons to believe that the *fornkvæði* tradition was already in decline by the early eighteenth century. The seventeenth-century collectors were able to obtain more poems and more complete poems than their later counterparts. One constant, however, is that the known informants are predominantly women in later times as well.[24]

The feminine leanings of the Icelandic *fornkvæði* tradition are clear not only from the gender of the known performers but also from the content of the poems themselves.[25] This is true both of the ballads and the Eddic fairy-tales. *Vambarljóð* certainly fits this pattern. Both the hero and the antagonist are women and the purpose of the male characters is to serve as their love interests and family members.

The story: a summary of the V version

Some of the subsequent discussion will be easier to follow for readers that know the story of *Vambarljóð* and thus it may be convenient to have a summary at hand. The V version is complete enough to be summarized as a coherent story. Insofar as they are preserved, the J and Þ versions largely agree with V but differ in some details.

King Hringr and Queen Alþrúðr have a happy marriage and a promising daughter named Signý. The queen dies and the king is distraught, going every morning to her burial mound to grieve. Signý attempts to comfort him but he cannot be consoled and sends her away. She then predicts that the king will be betrayed and walks saddened back to her bower.

A woman named Yrsa arrives at the burial mound and introduces herself to king Hringr. He suspect she is a troll-woman ('flagð') and attempts to send her away but she shakes a drop of wine onto the king's lip. He is then bewitched and under Yrsa's control and takes her as his new queen. Yrsa envies Signý for her beauty and curses her to take the shape of a stomach. Signý compels Yrsa to include some way to undo the curse. Yrsa replies that if Signý gets married to a king's son then Yrsa's curses will be undone and she will die.

Signý, now in her stomach shape, rolls into a different land, ruled by one King Ásmundr with the assistance of his mother. She finds a peasant couple near the royal estate and convinces them to take her on as an adopted daughter and a hard worker. Signý then takes to driving the goat herd of the old couple onto the king's field to have the goats graze there. King Ásmundr is away on an expedition but when he returns his men tell him that an old lady's daughter has been grazing his fields and causing damage. The king is angered by this and goes alone to attend to the issue. He meets Signý, commands her to leave and then strikes her. As he strikes Signý, Ásmundr becomes stuck to her even as she begins rolling around.

[23] 'Fornkvæda bokenn þiker mier ecke so rijk af fornkvædumm sem hiórtu og briöst attrædra kerlinga hef eg vitad nær jeg var barn, enn þær med þeim frödleik eru flestar i jórd grafnar nu.' Vésteinn Ólason, *The Traditional Ballads of Iceland*, p. 18.

[24] Paul Acker, 'Performing Gender in the Icelandic Ballads', *New Norse Studies: Essays on the Literature and Culture of Medieval Scandinavia*, ed. by Jeffrey Turco, Islandica, 58 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Library, 2015), 301–19 (p. 303).

[25] Paul Acker, 'Performing Gender in the Icelandic Ballads'.

Distraught, he asks her what he should do in order to be released. Signý replies that he must propose to her and wed her as he would a princess. The king is forced to accept.

At home, Ásmundr's mother asks him why he is unhappy. He asks her in turn for poison to drink. In the next scene, Signý the stomach rolls before the throne of the king and taunts him for his sadness. In the evening, the king's mother puts Signý into bed with the king and they fall asleep together. As Signý wakes, she feels as if she is burning. She is now in human form and discovers that the king is burning her stomach form and asking her for her name. She tells him about the curse and asks him to bring her to her father. He proposes to her again and sends a messenger to her father, King Hringr. The messenger learns that Yrsa is dead and relays a message from Signý that her body should be burnt and the ashes thrown out to sea. Finally, Hringr sails to King Ásmundr's realm and asks Signý to accept Ásmundr's proposal. The tale ends happily.

The Eddic fairy-tales: love, elves and ogresses

In order to contextualize *Vambarljóð*, this section and the next briefly review the other seven Eddic fairy-tales. These poems have much in common, including themes, poetic language and in some cases even the names of the characters.

Going by the number of attestations, the most popular of the Eddic fairy-tales was *Kötludraumur*, 'Katla's dream'. It is also the only one to have a historical setting, tenth-century Iceland; the main characters are mentioned in *Landnámabók*. The title character, Katla, has a dream in which she is impregnated by an elf. She confesses this to her husband, Már, but he takes this kindly and they raise the child together. Gísli Sigurðsson takes *Kötludraumur* to deal with the social issue of extramarital pregnancy, which carried harsh penalties under Icelandic law after 1564. In his interpretation, the popularity of the poem suggests that the public had a more lenient attitude to such infractions than the law.[26] In a response article, Einar G. Pétursson convincingly argues that the composition of the poem must predate the Reformation. He offers various additional considerations on Icelandic attitudes to infidelity and the reality of elves.[27]

Another fairy-tale of human-elf relations is *Gullkársljóð*. The princess Æsa falls in love with an elf named Gullkár. Her parents disapprove of the relationship but she eventually follows her lover to Álfheimar. The poem has many plot points in common with *Yonec* by Marie de France, which was translated to Norse in the thirteenth century.[28] I have previously pointed out similarities between *Gullkársljóð* and the Eddic poem *Vǫlundarkviða*, both in themes and in turns of phrase.[29] The Eddic fairy-tale *Bryngerðarljóð* also has much in common with *Gullkársljóð*, including a love-affair opposed by parents.

[26] Gísli Sigurðsson, 'Kötludraumur: Flökkuminni eða þjóðfélagsumræða?', *Gripla*, 9 (1995), 189–217, https://gripla.arnastofnun.is/index.php/gripla/article/view/353.

[27] Einar G. Pétursson, 'Tvö skrif um Kötludraum', *Gripla*, 26 (2015), 185–228, https://gripla.arnastofnun.is/index.php/gripla/article/view/139.

[28] This was first pointed out by Einar Ól. Sveinsson, *Um íslenzkar þjóðsögur* (Reykjavík: Sjóður Margrétar Lehmann-Filhés, 1940), p. 81, and further explored by Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir, 'Old French *lais* and Icelandic *sagnakvæði*', in *Francia et Germania: Studies in Strengleikar and Þiðreks saga af Bern*, ed. by Karl G. Johansson and Rune Flaten, Bibliotheca Nordica, 5 (Oslo: Novus, 2012), pp. 265–88.

[29] Haukur Þorgeirsson, 'Gullkársljóð og Hrafnagaldur: Framlag til sögu fornyrðislags', *Gripla*, 21 (2010), 299–334.

Þóruljóð tells the puzzling story of a tall woman or ogress, Þóra, who comes visiting at a farm in pre-Christian Denmark during a Yule feast.[30] She is welcomed by the young host, Þorkell, despite the reservations of his mother. Þóra eventually rewards Þorkell by giving him a sail with some favorable properties. In a previous article, I pointed out similarities between the Þóra of the poem and the Háa-Þóra ('Tall Þóra') of an Icelandic game referred to in sources from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries.[31] From the point of view of metrics and historical linguistics, *Þóruljóð* is the most archaic of the Eddic fairy-tales. It is possible that it is genuinely older than the others but another possibility is that it is merely better preserved. *Þóruljóð* is the shortest poem, only 26 stanzas, and short poems may get through centuries of oral preservation with fewer changes than longer ones.

Kringilnefjukvæði is another short poem with a helpful ogress, Kringilnefja. She joins the household of a poor widower and his daughter, Gullinhöfða. The ogress educates her stepdaughter in needlework and helps her in a rather forceful way to marry a prince. In the end it turns out that the stepmother ogress was Gullinhöfða's aunt under a curse.

The evil stepmother poems

While *Kringilnefjukvæði* has a helpful stepmother, the more common trope of an evil stepmother cursing her stepdaughter occurs in three Eddic fairy-tales. *Snjáskvæði* combines this theme with an interest in elves and tells the story of an elven princess who is cursed to appear as a human king. As pointed out by Lee Colwill, the transformation seems to take place chiefly through the taking on of some external trappings of masculinity:

> Réð ég kvenglysi að kasta mínu.
> Steyptu seggir yfir mig svalri brynju.
> Settu skreyttan hjálm á skarar fjall
> en í hendi hjaltorm búinn.[32]
>
> I cast off my female finery. The men threw a cool mailcoat over me. They placed an ornamented helmet on my hair mountain [head] and a decorated hilt-worm [sword] in my hand.

Hyndluljóð is the Eddic fairy-tale which is most similar to *Vambarljóð*. Princess Signý Logadóttir is cursed by her stepmother to take the form of a bitch ('Hyndla'), an enchantment to be lifted only by marriage to a prince. Signý curses her stepmother in turn to take the form of a cat. Hyndla succeeds in befriending a peasant couple and takes to driving their cattle. A neighboring prince, Ásmundr, encounters Signý for a brief moment when she is in human form. He falls in love with her; they marry, and during the wedding night Signý permanently reverts to human form.

Hyndluljóð shares most of its plot points and even the names of the protagonists with *Vambarljóð*. One interesting difference is that the relationship between the princess and her suitor is never antagonistic in *Hyndluljóð*. Einar Ól. Sveinsson believed that *Hyndluljóð* was

[30] Anna Alexandra McCully Stewart, 'Knock, Knock. Who's There? A Translation and Study of *Þóruljóð*' (unpublished master's thesis, University of Iceland, 2017), pp. 8–25, http://hdl.handle.net/1946/28720.

[31] Haukur Þorgeirsson, 'Þóruljóð og Háu-Þóruleikur', *Gripla*, 22 (2011), 211–27.

[32] Lee Colwill, 'The King's Two Bodies? *Snjáskvæði* and the Performance of Gender' (unpublished master's thesis, University of Iceland, 2018), pp. 50–51 http://hdl.handle.net/1946/29928.

derivative of *Vambarljóð*.[33] If true, it might explain that the episode with the peasant couple is integral to the story in *Vambarljóð* but seems to serve no particular purpose in *Hyndluljóð*. On the other hand, it seems natural that a bitch would drive livestock around and it is less expected that a stomach would do so.

There is a prose narrative with significant similarities to *Vambarljóð* and *Hyndluljóð* in *Hrólfs saga kraka*. The relevant section is worth quoting in full:

> Einn jöla aptan er þess gietid ad Helgi k(ongur) er kominn j reckiu og var vedur jllt vte, ad komid var vid hurdina og helldur ömätuliga. Honum kom nu j hug ad þad væri ökongligt ad hann lieti þad vte sem vesallt var, enn hann ǽ biarga þui. Fer nu og lykur vpp dyrunum. Hann sier ad þar er komid eitthuad fätækt og tǫtrugt. Þad m(ælir), vel hefur þu nu giǫrt k(ongur), og fer sijdan jnn j skiemmuna. K(ongur) m(ælir), ber ǽ þig halm og biarnfelldi so þig kali ei. Þad m(ælir), veittu mier reckiu þijna herra og vil eg hiä þier huÿla, þui lÿf m(itt) er j vedi. K(ongur) s(eigir), rijs mier hugur vid þier, enn ef so er sem þu s(eigir), þä ligdu hier vid stockinn, j klædum þijnum og mun mig ecki saka. Hun giǫrir nu so. Kongur snijr sier fra henni. Liös brann j husinu og er stund leid, leit hann vm ǫxl til hennar. Þä sier hann ad þar huÿlir kona so væn ad eij þikist hann adra konu frydari sied hafa. Hun var j silcki kyrtli. Hann snijr sier þä skiött ad henni med blydu. Hun m(ælir), nu vil eg fara j burt s(eigir) hun, og hefur þu leist mig vr micklum naudum, þui þetta var mier stiupmodur skǫp, og hef eg marga konga heimsockta, enda legdu nu ei med lytum.[34]
>
> One Yule evening King Helgi had gone to bed and there was bad weather outside. There came a knock at the door, a rather weak one. It occurred to him that it would not be kingly to have whatever wretch this was remain outside if he could help it. He goes and opens the door. He sees that something poor and tattered has arrived. It speaks: 'You have done well, king', and then enters the hall. The king says: 'Take some straw and bear hides so that you do not freeze.' It says: 'Grant me your bed, lord, and I want to rest with you, for my life is at stake.' The king says: 'I shudder at you but if it is as you say then lie here at the side of my bed in your clothes and that will do me no harm.' She now does that. The king turns away from her. A light was burning in the house and when some time had passed he looked over his shoulder at her. Then he sees that a woman is resting there, so beautiful that he feels he has never seen a prettier woman. She was wearing a robe of silk. He now turns to her quickly but gently. She speaks: 'Now I wish to go away', she says, 'and you have released me from great distress for this was a stepmother's curse and I have visited many kings and do not blame me for it'.

This episode has much in common with the Eddic fairy-tales. The story begins the same way as in *Þóruljóð*, with a strange woman knocking on the door during Yuletide. As in *Hyndluljóð* and *Vambarljóð*, a woman is cursed into some wretched shape by her stepmother and the curse is lifted in a prince's bed. The woman, furthermore, is an elf.

Hrólfs saga kraka was likely composed in the fourteenth century, but stepmother curses are also referred to in earlier sources. The early thirteenth-century *Sverris saga* refers to 'old stories in which it is said that the children of kings were the victims of stepmother curses'.[35] There is also a reference to stepmothers in *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* by Oddr Snorrason: the

[33] Einar Ól. Sveinsson, *Verzeichnis isländischer Märchenvarianten mit einer einleitenden Untersuchung*, FF Communications, 83 (Helsinki: Academia scientiarum fennica, 1929), p. 39.

[34] *Hrólfs saga kraka*, ed. by Desmond Slay, Editiones Arnamagnæanæ, 1 (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1960), pp. 31–32.

[35] 'í fornum sǫgum er sagt at verit hefði þá er konungaborn urðu fyrir stjúpmœðra skǫpum', *Sverris saga*, ed. by Þorleifur Hauksson, Íslenzk fornrit, 30 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 2007), p. 12. For an overview of

saga tells of 'stepmother stories told by herdsmen, the truth of which is known by none and that always make the king out to be the least in their tales'.[36] *Vambarljóð* is certainly a stepmother story with humiliating roles for the kings involved. It belongs to a genre current in medieval times and, as shown in the two following sections, the preserved texts have stylistic traits characteristic of medieval poetry.

Poetic formulas

It is immediately apparent that *Vambarljóð* uses a great amount of traditional poetic language, formulas, kennings and poetic words. We can take the first stanza of the Þ version as an example:

> Þ-1. Fardu heim hedan heillin góda
> hafdu þǫck fyrer þína gaungu
> mey veit ek ǫngva ne mans konu
> sem bǫlstǫfunum bregde mínum.
>
> Go home from here, dearest. Thank you for your visit. I know no maiden nor man's wife who might alter my baleful staves.

The formula in short lines 5–6, *mey né manns konu*, also occurs in the Eddic poems *Hávamál*, *Lokasenna* and *Sigrdrífumál*. The last two short lines are also highly reminiscent of *Sigrdrífumál*, which has *bǫlstǫfum* in strophe 30 and *bregða blundstǫfum* in strophe 2.[37] Short lines 2–3 have a parallel in *Kötludraumur* 18, 'Hún þakkaði mér / mína gaungu'.[38] Short lines 1–2 have a parallel in *Vambarljóð* V-29, even though the context there is quite different. In sum, every part of this strophe is built out of poetic words and phrases that occur elsewhere.

In previous work I identified and listed a number of poetic formulas occurring in *Vambarljóð*. I defined 'poetic formula' as 'a combination of words found at least twice in texts using a poetic register but not elsewhere'.[39] Under this definition I came up with forty-seven poetic formulas, of which twenty-seven were shared with other Eddic fairy-tales and seventeen with the poems of the Codex Regius. A smaller number were shared with other poems in *fornyrðislag*, with skaldic poetry or with *rímur* cycles.

stepmother curses and other *álög* see Jonathan Y. H. Hui, Caitlin Ellis, James McIntosh and Katherine Marie Olley, '*Ála flekks saga*: A Snow White Variant from Late Medieval Iceland', *Leeds Studies in English*, new series 49 (2018), 45–64.

[36] 'stjúpmœðra sǫgur, er hjarðarsveinar segja, er engi veit hvárt satt er, er jafnan láta konunginn minnstan í sínum frásǫgnum', *Færeyinga saga,Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar eptir Odd munk Snorrason*, ed. by Ólafur Halldórsson, Íslenzk fornrit, 25 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 2006). Stepmother tales can be classified as involving either a 'wicked stepmother' or a 'lustful stepmother'; for an overview of the latter see Ralph O'Connor, '"Stepmother Sagas": An Irish Analogue for *Hjálmpérs saga ok Ölvérs*', *Scandinavian Studies*, 72 (2000), 1–48.

[37] *Eddukvæði*, ed. by Jónas Kristjánsson and Vésteinn Ólason, Íslenzk fornrit, 36 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 2014).

[38] Ólafur Davíðsson, *Þulur og þjóðkvæði*, p. 6.

[39] Haukur Þorgeirsson, 'Poetic Formulas in Late Medieval Icelandic Folk Poetry: The Case of *Vambarljóð*', *Approaching Methodology – RMN Newsletter*, 4 (2012), 181–96 (p. 184). I have found it convenient to stick with this definition here but many other approaches could be as valid. For much more detailed methodological discussion see Frog, 'On the Case of *Vambarljóð* I: Comments on Formulaicity in the *sagnakvæði*', *RMN Newsletter*, 5 (2012), 22–38; Frog, 'On the Case of *Vambarljóð* II: Register and Mode from Skaldic Verse to *sagnakvæði*', *RMN Newsletter*, 5 (2012), 49–61; Haukur Þorgeirsson, 'How Can You Tell Who's Talking? – Transitions between Direct Speech and Narration in *Vambarljóð*', *RMN Newsletter*, 6 (2013), 20–25 (p. 22), https://www2.helsinki.fi/sites/default/files/atoms/files/rmn_06_2013.pdf.

Dating *Vambarljóð*

In previous work on Eddic fairy-tales I have pointed out some linguistic and metrical traits that are indicative of medieval origin. In the following, I look at these features in the three texts of *Vambarljóð* edited here (V, Þ, J) and also in the long version (L) as printed by Ólafur Davíðsson.

The medieval features in question are instances of alliteration between *j* and vowels[40] as well as alliteration between *sl* or *sn* and *s*.[41] The A2k metrical type is a further archaic trait.[42] It was a staple of medieval alliterative poetry but after the Reformation it appears mostly to occur by accident. Finally, I count instances where the *Vambarljóð* texts share a poetic formula with the poems of the Codex Regius.[43] The results are shown in Table 1.

The table indicates that the L text has essentially no identifiable medieval traits. The V text, however, has the most medieval appearance. As it turns out, there is a difference between the first and the second half of the V text in this respect, as shown in table 2. The first half has significantly more medieval traits.

An alternative way to proceed is to look at late or post-medieval traits and again I have selected four. One is the presence of the suffixed article, which is mostly avoided in medieval *fornyrðislag* poetry. All four *Vambarljóð* texts have a number of instances.[44] A less common late trait is to begin a sentence with a preposition, which is a violation of Kuhn's second law and abnormal in medieval *fornyrðislag*.[45] Another syntactic trait which is late in this context is to place the verb further than the second position into an unbound sentence.[46] Finally, I have counted the number of verses where a svarabhakti vowel is needed for the number of syllables to rise to the normal minimum of four.[47] This phenomenon entered Icelandic poetry in the fourteenth century and meant that previously monosyllabic words like *hendr* could occur as disyllabic *hendur*.[48]

[40] Haukur Þorgeirsson, 'Gullkársljóð og Hrafnagaldur', p. 308. The instances in *Vambarljóð* are found in V: 11.1–2, 17.7–8; J: 13.3–4, *3.1–2.

[41] Ibid, p. 309. The instances are in V: 30.5–6; Þ: 14.5–6; L: 66.5–6.

[42] Ibid, pp. 309–310. V: 1.7, 2.6, 10.6, 13.8, 21.6, 24.6, 26.7, 28.4, 31.8, 37.8, 53.2, 57.4, 59.8; J: 1.7, 3.6, 9.4, 10.8, 11.2, 11.8, *5.4, *6.8; Þ: 7.3, 11.7, 13.4, 21.8; L: 44.8.

[43] I include the seventeen formulas identified in previous work (M3, M8, M9, M10, M11, M12, T17, T18, T20, T21, T23, T24, T26, K1, K2, K3, K10) and two additional formulas. Those are *gumna stjóri*, found in *Grípisspá* 1.6 and *Vambarljóð* J 29.2, and *hvarf í skemmu*, which occurs in *Vambarljóð* V 9.4, Þ 2.4, as well as in *Guðrúnarhvǫt* 7.2 *hvarf til skemmu*. Note that even under my relatively lax definition of a formula I cannot find any instances of Eddic formulas in the L version.

[44] It seems unnecessary to list every instance but those in V are in strophes 3, 21, 22, 37, 45, 46, 47 (3), 52, 54, 58 and 62.

[45] There are sentences beginning with prepositions in strophes J 31; L 2, 4, 14, 21, 24, 27, 31, 34, 47, 51 (2), 74.

[46] I refer to this principle as K4 following the enumeration in Bjarne Fidjestøl, *The Dating of Eddic Poetry: A Historical Survey and Methodological Investigation*, Bibliotheca Arnamagnæana, 41 (Copenhagen: Reitzel, 1999), p. 297. See also Hans Kuhn, 'Zur Wortstellung und -betonung im Altgermanischen', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* (PBB), 57 (1933), 1–109; Haukur Þorgeirsson, 'Þóruljóð og Háu-Þóruleikur', pp. 218–19. List of K4 violations V: 11, 20, 43; J: 33, *3; L: 2, 4, 5, 8, 14, 15, 21, 23, 26, 30, 34, 47, 51, 52, 60, 66, 69, 70, 72, 74.

[47] V: 5.4, 10.1, 11.8, 32.2, 33.3, 42.6, 51.5, 61.1; Þ: 19.5, 22.7; J: 17.8, 21.5, 30.6. In a previous article I used a more sophisticated approach to measure the prevalence of the svarabhakti vowel in a poem: Haukur Þorgeirsson, 'Gullkársljóð og Hrafnagaldur', pp. 311–13. But the simple approach used here makes it easier to aggregate data.

[48] Haukur Þorgeirsson, *Hljóðkerfi og bragkerfi* (doctoral thesis, University of Iceland, 2013), p. 365.

Table 1: Medieval traits in the four versions of *Vambarljóð*

	Eddic formulas	A2k verses	S-alliteration	J-alliteration	Total	Strophes	Total per 100 strophes
V version	17	13	1	2	33	62	53
J version	7	8	0	2	17	39.75	43
Þ version	2	4	1	0	7	27	26
L version	0	1	1	0	2	80	3

Table 2: Medieval traits in the first and second half of the V text of *Vambarljóð*

	Eddic formulas	A2k verses	S-alliteration	J-alliteration	Total	Strophes	Total per 100 strophes
V (1–31)	12	9	1	2	24	31	77
V (32–62)	6	4	0	0	10	31	32

Table 3: Late traits in the four texts of *Vambarljóð*

	Eddic formulas	A2k verses	S-alliteration	J-alliteration	Total	Strophes	Total per 100 strophes
V (1–31)	12	9	1	2	24	31	77
V (32–62)	6	4	0	0	10	31	32

Table 4: Late traits in the first and second half of the V text of *Vambarljóð*

	Eddic formulas	A2k verses	S-alliteration	J-alliteration	Total	Strophes	Total per 100 strophes
V (1–31)	12	9	1	2	24	31	77
V (32–62)	6	4	0	0	10	31	32

Again the L version has by far the latest appearance while V has the earliest. And again it is true that there is a striking difference between the first and second half of the V text, as shown in table 4.

It is tempting to conclude that V has a more archaic appearance than J and Þ because it is better preserved and thus closer to the medieval text that these three versions are derived from. Perhaps it is also true that the first half of V is better preserved than the second half: this would be a natural enough state of affairs for a text preserved in human memory.

While linguistic and stylistic traits show that *Vambarljóð* must have existed already in medieval times it is difficult to further narrow down the time of origin. Ideally we would like to make comparisons with poetry in *fornyrðislag* but there is little after the thirteenth century which can be precisely dated. The most plausible candidate for a comparison is *Skaufalabálkur*, which there are good reasons to date to the mid-fifteenth century.[49] The linguistic dating traits of that text are similar to the V, Þ and J versions of *Vambarljóð*. On the other hand, *Skaufalabálkur* has no identifiable Eddic formulas. The poetic language of *Vambarljóð* and the other Eddic fairy-tales gives us some reason to think these poems may have earlier origins. I would not like to rule out composition in the thirteenth century or even earlier in which case most or all of the late traits would have accumulated during the oral transmission. Further studies on this corpus as a whole may shed more light on the question.

The V version of *Vambarljóð*

A version of *Vambarljóð* was preserved in the manuscript *V, a large collection of ballads and other popular poems written for the magnate Magnús Jónsson at Vigur in 1699–1700. This book is now lost but two copies of it survive. One is V^1 (NKS 1141 fol.), made in Copenhagen in the eighteenth century. The other is V^2 (JS 405 4to), made in Iceland in 1819.[50] These are both good and faithful copies with minimal editorial interventions and relatively few mistakes. *Vambarljóð* in particular is also preserved in two other manuscripts derived from *V. One is T (Thott 489 8vo, eighteenth century) which is chiefly derived from *V but with some stanzas and readings from the J version as well as some intentional editing. Finally there is I (JS 80 8vo, ca. 1800), which is clearly derived from *V but with a significant amount of editing.[51]

This edition uses V^1 as its base text but in cases where the combined evidence of V^2, T and I indicates that *V had another reading I have emended the base text accordingly. The resulting edition should closely resemble the text of the lost manuscript *V. The apparatus gives every variant reading from V^2 but does not include the many isolated readings from T or I in order not to overload the apparatus with secondary variants. Jón Sigurðsson (1811–79) made a copy of V^1 in JS 406 4to. He suggests some reasonable conjectures which I have cited in the apparatus.

Some texts preserved in *V are also preserved in older manuscripts related through a scribal tradition. In those cases it is sometimes apparent that the editors of *V tried to improve on the text from a metrical point of view.[52] A case in point is *Þóruljóð*, which was found in *V

[49] Haukur Þorgeirsson, 'Gleðiskáldið – Hvað fleira orti höfundur Skíða rímu?', *Skírnir*, 196 (2022), 53–85.

[50] Jón Helgason, *Kvæðabók séra Gissurar Sveinssonar*, pp. 39–43.

[51] Cpr. Jón Helgason, *Íslenzk fornkvæði*, v xxi–xxiii.

[52] Jón Helgason, *Kvæðabók séra Gissurar Sveinssonar*, pp. 45–46.

but also in the manuscripts G (AM 147 8vo) and B (Add. 11.177). The relationship between these mansucripts was investigated by Jón Helgason and is shown by the stemma in figure 1.[53]

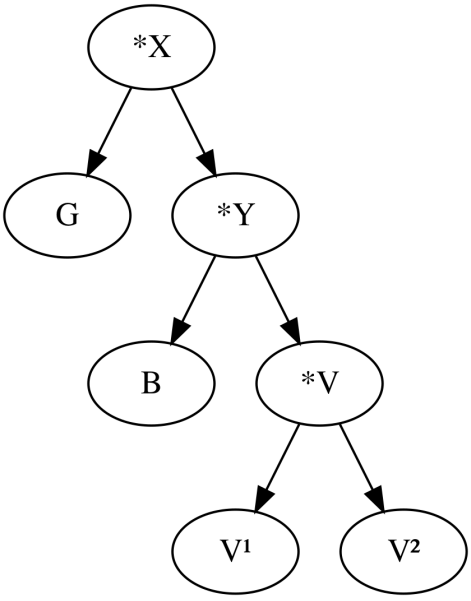

Figure 1. Jón Helgason's stemma of several Icelandic folk poetry collections

The text of the final stanza of *Þóruljóð* is as follows in G:

Þu muntt sigla framm j romu
vera fremstur j før allra manna
skal þig alldrei hamingjuna skortta
ä medann su hin **bjartta** **byrvod** þoler.[54]

The first three verse pairs of this stanza have a structural defect — the verse pairs are not linked by alliteration. The text in B is nearly identical and no better in terms of alliteration so the exemplar of *V must have had the stanza in this form as well. However, the editor of the *V text (presumably Magnús Ketilsson, the scribe of the manuscript) took it upon himself to remedy these alliterative problems. The text in V^1 is as follows (V^2 differs only in orthography):

Þú munt **sigla** **seggr** í rómu
og vera **fremstr** í **fǫr** **flestra** manna
hal skal alldri **hamingiu** skorta
á medan sú hin **bjartta** **byrvoð** þolir.[55]

[53] Jón Helgason, *Kvæðabók séra Gissurar Sveinssonar*, p. 47.
[54] AM 147 8vo, 76r. Alliteration in bold.
[55] NKS 1141 fol., p. 247. Alliteration in bold.

The insertion of some handy words has brought the alliteration into order for all three verse pairs. The meaning of the strophe is minimally affected. The editor of the V text does not seem to compose new stanzas or radically alter the sense of the text.

Has the text of *Vambarljóð* in the V manuscripts been edited in a way similar to that of *Þóruljóð*? Perhaps. In some cases where we have comparative material in J or Þ we might suspect similar editing. Here is one example:

J-4.5-6 mei skalltu verda i **vambarlike**
V-19.5-6 **víf** skalltu hafa **vambarlíki**

It is possible that the editor of the V text inserted the synonym *víf* for *mey* to get alliteration between the verse pair. If it was a conjecture it might be a successful one — the original text may have had *víf*.

The objective of the V collectors was to compile a book of enjoyable poetry — 'til gamans, skemtunar og Dægra-styttingar' as the title page proclaimed.[56] A little polishing of the text is in accordance with that objective. But any such editing of *Vambarljóð* must have been carried out opportunistically rather than systematically since the V text has a number of verse pairs with unsatisfactory alliteration. Indeed, the first verse pairs in stanzas 30, 31, 50 and 54 in V have no alliteration at all.

The Þ version

The Þ version of *Vambarljóð* was recorded from oral tradition for Árni Magnússon. The informant was Þorbjörg Guðmundsdóttir (b. 1636, d. after 1703) and on the basis of her name I refer to this text as the Þ version. Þorbjörg's first known residence is Stapar in Vatnsnes but her family later relocated to Snæfellsnes where she lived first at Arnarstapi and then at Hellnar.[57] These locations are at some distance to Vigur and Eyri, where the V and J versions were recorded.

Þorbjörg was the mother of Guðmundur Bergþórsson, a prolific poet. An eighteenth-century biography of Guðmundur briefly mentions his mother. She seems to have had a warm relationship with her son and to have enjoyed his poetry. An illness at the age of four left Guðmundur largely paralyzed but his left hand was hale and he could use it not only to write but also to crawl at surprising speed while dressed in leather pants.[58] This must have been an unusual sight and one wonders if Guðmundur heard *Vambarljóð* from his mother and if he felt any kinship with Signý, the cursed princess who rolled around instead of walking.

When Jón Ólafsson of Grunnavík (1705–79) made the first catalogue of the Arnamagnæan manuscript collection (AM 477 fol.) three versions of *Vambarljóð* were preserved under the shelfmark AM 154 8vo. Two of these texts must have been lost since only one version of *Vambarljóð* remains in 154 — the L version. The L text was copied from 154 to NKS 1894 4to by Markús Magnússon (1748–1825). Following this, Markús copied out another version, the Þ text, which was presumably also taken from 154. The page preceding the poem itself

[56] Jón Helgason, *Kvæðabók séra Gissurar Sveinssonar*, p. 39.

[57] Páll Eggert Ólason, *Íslenzkar æviskrár frá landnámstímum til ársloka 1940*, 6 vols (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka bókmenntafélag, 1948–76), II 127; Guðmundur Bergþórsson, *Olgeirs rímur danska*, ed. by Björn K. Þórólfsson and Finnur Sigmundsson, 2 vols (Reykjavík: Landsbókasafn Íslands, 1947), I xiii–xiv.

[58] 'alltíð var hann í skinnbuxum þegar hann fór nokkuð sjálfur og skreið á endanum og dró sig áfram með annari hendinni og skreið út á aðra hliðina og var ólíkindalega fljótur að skríða svoleiðis áfram', *Olgeirs rímur danska*, ed. by Björn K. Þórólfsson and Finnur Sigmundsson, I xv.

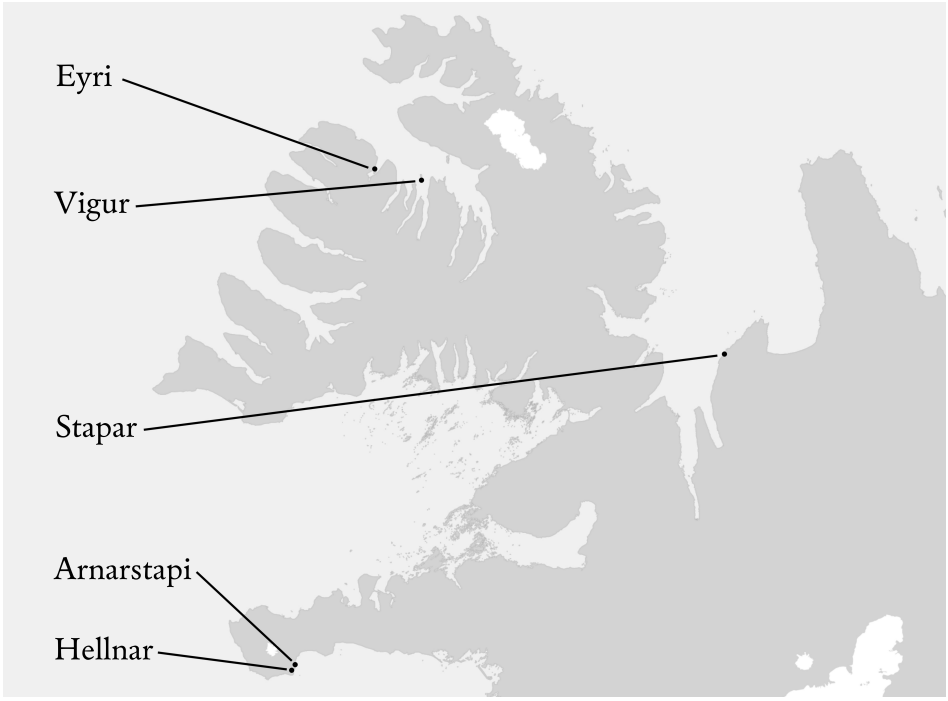

Figure 2: Locations in Iceland relevant to the recording of *Vambarljóð*; V was recorded at Vigur, J probably at Eyri. Stapar, Hellnar and Arnarstapi are locations where Þorbjörg Guðmundsdóttir, the source of Þ, is known to have lived.

has this piece of information: 'Scriba ad A. Magnæum: Ad eg síne ydr þó nockurn lit, er þetta fragment Vambarlióda sem afgômul kelling móder Gudmundar Bergþórssonar kunne' ('Written to Árni Magnússon: In order to make some effort on your behalf, here is a fragment of *Vambarljóð* as a very old woman knew it, the mother of Guðmundur Bergþórsson'). This must be taken from a letter written to Árni Magnússon which is not otherwise preserved. Presumably, Árni had written to one of his friends in Iceland, requesting *Vambarljóð* and perhaps other texts or information as well. The apologetic wording ('þó nockurn lit') indicates that the correspondent was only partially able to fulfill Árni's requests. He or she is well aware that the *Vambarljóð* text is incomplete, a 'fragment', and presumably Þorbjörg thought so as well. A brief prose introduction corresponds to the opening stanzas of the other versions.

While the collectors of the seventeenth century were searching for complete poems with entertainment value, it is characteristic of Árni's philological interests also to have collected any available scraps, no matter how imperfect. While we do not have the letters he wrote seeking *Vambarljóð* we can guess at their contents from enquiries that have survived. Especially interesting is a letter written by Árni to Ólafur Einarsson on December 10, 1707:

> Kona hefur heited Ragnhilldur Þorvardz dotter su er kunne Modars rimur, tvær ad visu, dötter Ragnhilldar skal heita Vigdis Þorlaks dötter, og vera j vist ä Þyckva bæjar klaustre. Væri nu svo ad þessi Vigdis lifdi, og j ödru lage kynne sagdar Modars rimur, þa vil eg ydur umbeded hafa, ad läta epter henne uppskrifa nefndar rimur, eda svo mikid sem hun ur þeim kann. En kunni hun eckj samfleytt j rimunum, þä bid eg ad epter henne mætte uppteiknast skilmerkeliga efned ur þeim, og þar jafnframt þau einstöku erenden er hun kann ur rimunum hier edur þar.[59]
>
> A woman named Ragnhildur Þorvarðsdóttir knew *Móðars rímur*, two in number. Ragnhildur's daughter is thought to be named Vigdís Þorláksdóttir and to be a part of the household at Þykkvabæjarklaustur. In the case that this Vigdís is alive and, secondly, does know these aforementioned *Móðars rímur*, I would like to ask you to have the aforementioned *rímur* recorded from her, or as much as she knows of them. But if she does not know the *rímur* contiguously then I would ask that the storyline from them should be carefully recorded as well as the individual stanzas she knows from here or there in the *rímur*.

As it happened, Vigdís did know *Móðars rímur* from beginning to end and they have come down to us only by virtue of being recorded from her knowledge. But it is worth considering Árni's comment on the eventuality that the informant might not know the whole text but might know parts of it and be able to summarize the storyline. Whoever recorded the Þ version of *Vambarljóð* might have received similar instructions and the brief prose introduction to the poem might be an attempt to honour them. The Codex Regius of the Eddic poems also has prose introductions to some of its poems as well as prose connecting stanzas or groups of stanzas within poems. In some cases the explanation might be, as in the case of the Þ text, that parts of the poems had been forgotten.

In addition to NKS 1894 4to, there is another manuscript which may or may not have some textual value. This is JS 430 4to, which was in the possession of Hallgrímur Scheving (1781–1861). There is a copy here of the Þ text but I have been unable to determine whether it is copied from NKS 1894 4to or directly from the lost text in AM 154 8vo. In any case, it is clearly a less accurate copy than 1894, with many conjectural emendations. In the edition here, I have selectively cited variants from 430 when they seemed plausible and not obviously the result of conscious editing. There are copies of the 430 text in JS 581 4to and Lbs 202 8vo.

The J version

The J text has been preserved in a rather curious way on two individual leaves of paper that are now in different collections but must have originally belonged together. One is in the Icelandic National Library under the shelfmark JS 406 4to, a collection of material from Jón Sigurðsson (1811–79). The leaf has two texts written in a hand dating to ca. 1700 or the early eighteenth-century. One text is *Vambarljóð* while the other is *Þornaldarþula*, a bizarre folk poem of the *þula* type.[60] The leaf gives no indication to the provenance of the texts. The abbreviation 'def.' between some strophes in *Vambarljóð* correctly indicates that the text is defective — some strophes have been forgotten.

[59] Cited from a page at the back of AM 135 8vo.

[60] See Yelena Sesselja Helgadóttir, *Íslenskar þulur síðari alda* (doctoral thesis, University of Iceland, 2020), pp 386–89 and *passim*.

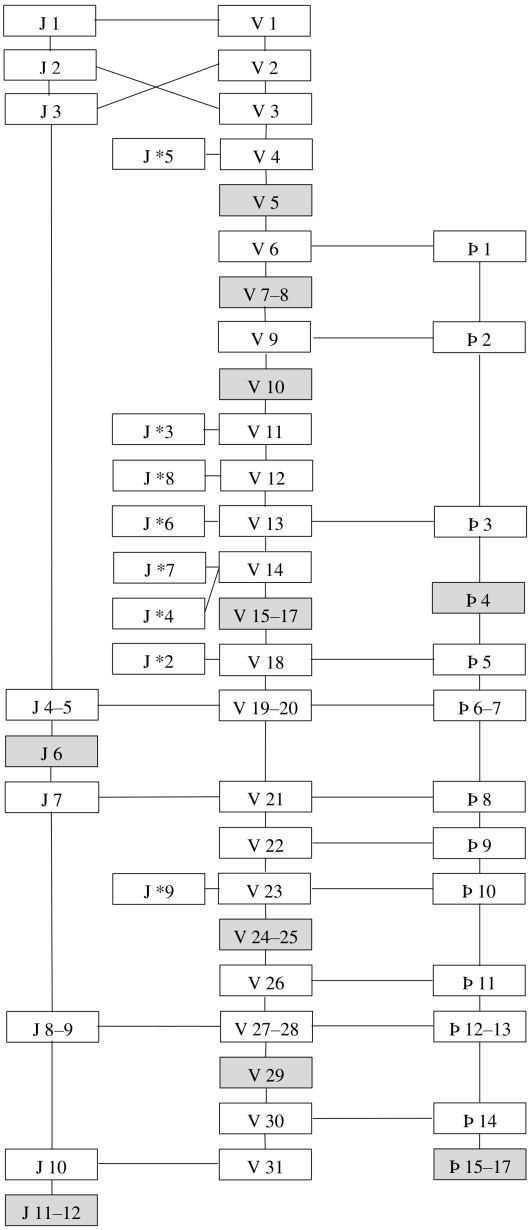

Figure 3: Corresponding strophes in the first half of *Vambarljóð*; shaded strophes are unique.

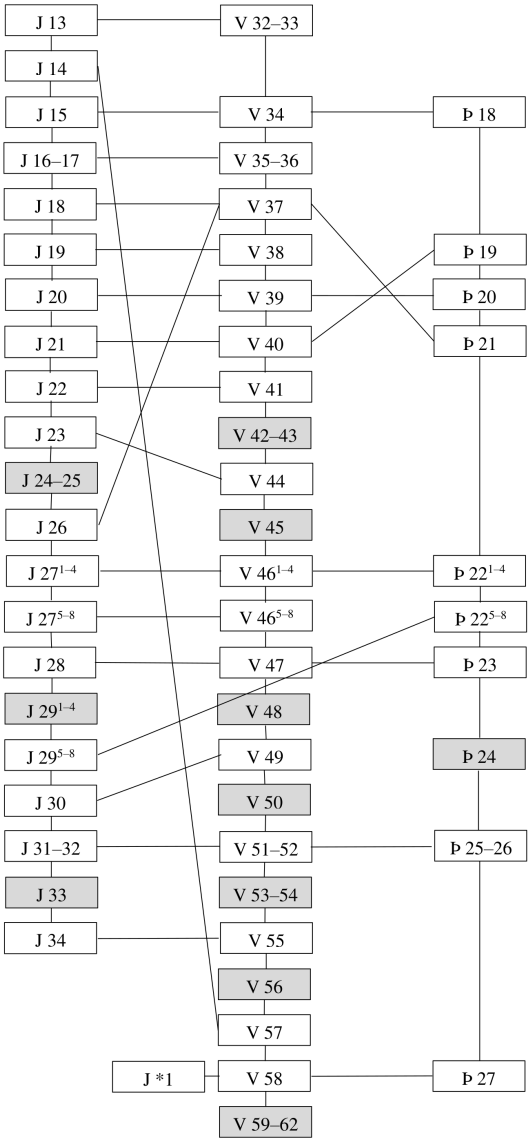

Figure 4: Corresponding strophes in the second half of *Vambarljóð*; shaded strophes are unique.

The other source of the J text is a single leaf at the back of Thott 489 8vo which I refer to here as J*. Kaalund's catalogue indicates that the leaf was used as a cover for 489 at that time but at some point it must have been inserted and glued into the manuscript.[61] This leaf is originally an envelope for a letter addressed to Jón Sigurðsson (1702–57), provost (*prófastur*) at Eyri by Skutulsfjörður. The envelope was reused for some notes and texts, including *Kötludraumur* and some nine strophes or half-strophes of *Vambarljóð*.

Several facts make it clear that J and J* belong together. They are written in the same hand and both use the abbreviation 'def.' to indicate missing material. Furthermore, there is no overlap in the strophes recorded in each of them. It seems apparent that J was written first and represents someone's attempt to get through *Vambarljóð* from beginning to end with the strophes in a coherent order while realizing that some were missing. Then J* constitutes a partially successful effort to recover some of the missing material from memory. The strophes in J* are not in the order of the narrative but presumably in the order in which they came to mind. It is interesting that the name *Yrsa* occurs nowhere in the original J recording but it occurs in each of the first strophes of the J* text. Presumably the name came to mind and with it some disjoint text fragments containing it.

I assume that the writer of J and J* was provost Jón Sigurðsson, principally because no-one else would be likely to reuse as scrap paper an envelope addressed to him. I have loosely compared the handwriting in J and J* to some of the many preserved manuscripts written by Jón and there seem to be enough similarities for the theory to hold. There is, however, substantial variation in Jón's handwriting depending on what sort of text he is writing and in what sort of context — doubtless there are also chronological developments. A detailed study of his oeuvre would be required to firmly confirm that J and J* were written by him.[62]

Jón Sigurðsson grew up with Jón Ólafsson, who became Árni Magnússon's assistant and a prolific scholar. Both Jón Sigurðsson and Jón Ólafsson came to Copenhagen as students in 1726. Jón Sigurðsson graduated in 1729 and then returned to Iceland. He became a pastor at Eyri in 1730 and a provost in 1732. In 1741 he returned to Copenhagen to work as a scholar.[63] Since J* is originally an envelope addressed to Jón as provost it must be from a letter written between 1732 and 1741. It seems likely that the piece of paper was reused for notes on poetry shortly after being received, presumably while Jón was still at Eyri in Iceland — a short distance from Vigur where the great collection (*V) was created. Most likely, Jón then brought J* (and J) with him to Copenhagen in 1741. While Jón was a student in Copenhagen in 1726–29 he had got to know Árni Magnússon and this may have inspired him to write down *Vambarljóð* and *Þornaldarþula* at a later date in Iceland. Most likely this was from some unknown informant though it is not inconceivable that he was writing from his own memory.

The J text was used by the compiler of Thott 489 8vo (perhaps Jón Sigurðsson) to make a neatly written and edited version of *Vambarljóð*. The original intention seems to have been

[61] 'Som omslag er anvendt et brevomslag', Kristian Kaalund, *Katalog over de oldnorsk-islandske håndskrifter i Det store kongelige bibliotek og i Universitetsbiblioteket* (Copenhagen: Kommisionen for Det arnamagnæanske legat, 1900), p. 365.

[62] In an unpublished introduction to an edition of Þornaldarþula, Jón Samsonarson also reaches the tentative conclusion that J* was written by Jón Sigurðsson. I am grateful to Yelena Sesselja Helgadóttir for drawing my attention to Jón's notes – I had altogether overlooked J* until then. Its existence was also clearly unknown to Jón Helgason when he prepared his notes on *Vambarljóð*.

[63] Jón Helgason, *Jón Ólafsson frá Grunnavík*, Safn fræðafjelagsins um Ísland og Íslendinga, 5 (Copenhagen: Hið íslenzka fræðafjelag, 1926).

to produce a text based on J and J* but after writing out the first three stanzas from J, the compiler must have discovered that it was difficult to construct a complete narrative out of the J text. He then started anew, this time with the V text as the base. Many readings from J and J* are, however, introduced along with some stanzas which are only found in J. The result is that Thott 489 8vo (T) contains a new composite text type, longer than the source versions. Ólafur Davíðsson's edition of *Vambarljóð* uses T as one of its sources and includes the strophes which T had sourced from J.

Jón Þorkelsson indicates that there is a text of the J type in JS 398 4to but I have been unable to find any trace of *Vambarljóð* in 398.[64] Possibly, Jón had confused JS 398 4to with JS 406 4to, possibly there was a text in 398 that has now been lost, or possibly the leaf in question was at some point moved from 398 to 406.

Among Jón Helgason's documents preserved in Copenhagen is a transcript of JS 406 4to. I have cited some readings from this transcript as JH in the apparatus.

A comparison of V, J and Þ

The three versions printed here have many corresponding strophes but each of them also has some material not shared by the others. A slightly simplified visualization of the relationship between the strophes of each version can be seen in figures 3 and 4. The overall picture is consistent with the idea that all three versions are derived from an oral archetype that was similar in scope to the V text. It seems especially telling that there is very little material common to J and Þ and lacking in V — chiefly the second half of J 29 / Þ 22.

I have compared the 16 stanzas that are, in whole or in part, shared by V, J and Þ. There is no clear pattern of common errors though it is tempting to think that J 32.4 *til ats buenn* is the original wording. The humorous point that the stomach is not being roasted for eating seems fitting while the vague wording in V and Þ might be a common error.

Many of the strophes found only in one preserved version may have been a part of the archetype while some may be new compositions to replace forgotten or half-forgotten lines. A third possibility is that some strophes might have migrated from other poems. This might be true for J 6, which has a close analogue in *Hyndluljóð* 46[65] and which there is no trace of in V and Þ even though the surrounding stanzas are common to all of V, J and Þ. Another possible migrant is the sequence J 11.5–12.8, which mentions *hafskrímsl* 'sea monster' and the 'vatni ausa' ceremony, both of which are otherwise absent from the text. To be sure, it is not impossible to make some sense of this — a wandering stomach might look like some sort of marine creature. But it also seems possible that these lines come from a lost fairy-tale where a girl is cursed to appear as a sea monster.

I do think it would be possible to reconstruct a text moderately closer to the original composition — or to the oral archetype — by using the V text as a basis and then adding to it and correcting it in a few places based on the testimony of J and Þ. I have not done so here to avoid adding further complexity to what is already a lengthy treatment but it would be a worthwhile avenue for further study.[66]

[64] Jón Þorkelsson, *Om digtningen på Island i det 15. og 16. århundrede* (Copenhagen: Høst, 1888), p. 208.

[65] Ólafur Davíðsson, *Þulur og þjóðkvæði*, p. 69.

[66] Leonard Neidorf justly criticizes 'the intellectual paralysis that the philosophy of textual conservatism has inflicted upon the field'. At the same time, his study shows that thousands of words of analysis may be required to convincingly establish one reading as anterior to another: Leonard Neidorf, 'The Ruthwell Cross Inscription and

Textual difficulties

There are two textual difficulties in *Vambarljóð* which I have not been able to resolve. The first is an obscure noun phrase which appears in three versions, all incomprehensible, in the three texts of the poem:

> ef eg skal eiga ýr við grímu
> þau hafa fádæmin flestu vm ollað. (V-45, 5–8)
>
> If I shall have *ýr við grímu* it is mostly caused by abnormal events.
>
> og so til blidrar brullaupid bua
> þo hann ætle þig arfa grimu. (J-7, 5–8)
>
> and celebrate the wedding with the sweet one though he think you *arfa grimu*.
>
> so til blídrar brullaup drecka
> sem hann ætte Ilfa grímu. (Þ-8, 5-8)
>
> and celebrate a wedding with the sweet one as if he had *Ilfa grímu*.

The context in the Þ text could imply that the phrase refers to something positive but the context in the J version calls for a negative sense and the V version also seems to suggest as much. The word *gríma* can mean 'night' or 'mask' but the word also occurs as a troll-woman's name. The form *arfa* could be accusative of *arfi* ('heir') so *arfa grímu* could formally mean 'heir of the night'. While this sounds promising in English as a vague reference to an awful creature, I am not aware of any parallels in Old Norse. According to the Prose Edda, the mythological being Nótt ('Night') has three offspring, Auðr ('Wealth'), Jǫrð ('Earth') and Dagr ('Day'), but this does not seem to lead anywhere. The word *ýr* would typically mean 'yew' or 'bow' but neither sense seems to fit here. What *Ilfa* might be is no less obscure; *ylfa* is a rare word for she-wolf but this does not seem to help. It appears likely that *ýr við*, *arfa* and *Ilfa* are three corruptions of some lost word that had become incomprehensible to the transmitters of the poem.

These difficult verses have a further parallel in Egill Skallagrímsson's *Sonatorrek*, which is only preserved in seventeenth-century copies:

> maka eg upp ï aröar grimu
> rïnis rejd rjette hallda[67]
>
> I cannot uphold the *rïnis* wagon *ï aröar grimu*, *rjette*.

This, too, is very obscure and almost certainly corrupt. Even allowing for some conjectural emendations, there is no convincing interpretation of *ïaröar grimu*. I have no solution and will offer none.

The second textual problem occurs when the stomach is roasted:

> nú mun elldzlitnum ǫllum linna
> ef hilmi segir hvað þitt er heiti. (V-52.5–8)
>
> All the colour of fire will end if you tell the prince what your name is.
>
> hier mun ollum elldslitrum linna
> enn siklinge segdu hvad þu heiter. (J-32.5–8)

[67] AM 453 4to, 82r.

> Now all the *elldslitrum* will come to an end. Tell the prince your name.

While *elds-litr* ('the colour of fire') is a normal enough word it is surprising in this context. The word in the J version seems to be *eld-slitr*, a hapax legomenon seemingly meaning 'the shreds of fire', no less surprising in the context. There is a parallel to this half-strophe in *Kringilnefjukvæði*:

> Nú mun álögum öllum linna,
> en eg heiti Hildifríður.[68]
>
> Now all the enchantment will come to an end and my name is Hildifríður.

The word *álögum* fits very well here semantically and we might consider if *elldzlitnum*/*elldslitrum* could have a similar meaning. There is a possible parallel in the word *eluist*, which occurs at the beginning of *Guta saga* and seems to mean 'bewitched'.[69] The word has been related to Old English *ælwihta*, 'strange creatures' and English *eldritch* with the first element, *æl-* or *el-*, meaning 'foreign, strange; from elsewhere'.[70] On the other hand, *ælwihta* has been related to the Eddic word *alvitr*, with initial *a* rather than *e*,[71] though Sophus Bugge suggested a reconstructed **elvitr*.[72] Conceivably, Old Norse had **el-litr* or **els-litr* for 'enchanted form', which was then eventually reinterpreted as *eldslitr*.

The later texts

There are four texts which tell the tale of Signý Hringsdóttir which I have not edited here. First there is the L version of *Vambarljóð*, which is preserved in AM 154 8vo (early eighteenth century) and in Lbs 985 4to (mid-eighteenth century). Both manuscripts are defective: 154 ends with stanza 80 while 154 ends with stanza 123.[73] Ólafur Davíðsson was unaware of 985 but he printed the text of 154 in his edition, which I use in the following citations.

The first three stanzas of the text provide an introduction in which the authorial voice says that in his or her youth they learned much from old books ('á fornum bókum') and that they found this adventure ('ævintýri') in an old collection ('í einni fornri syrpu'). There is nothing implausible about this and perhaps the author did read a version of *Vambarljóð* in an old book, perhaps a *fornkvæði* collection from the 1660s that has not come down to us. The author may have remembered the storyline but little from the poem itself and thus arrived at the solution of composing a new poem.

The story of the L version is close to that of V, Þ and J but it has various additional details — for example Alþrúður is said to be from Hungary while Yrsa claims to be from Hálogaland. The text itself is very different from the older versions but a few stanzas have some recognizable verbal similarity. The closest similarity is in stanza 54, which has 'sem úr nýdrepnu / nauti væri', a phrase which is also found verbatim in V 27, J 8 and Þ 12. There is a similar case in strophe 42:

[68] Ólafur Davíðsson, *Þulur og þjóðkvæði*, p. 43.

[69] *Guta saga*, ed. by Christine Peel (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1999), p. 2.

[70] Alaric Hall, 'The Etymology and Meanings of *Eldritch*', *Scottish Language*, 26 (2007), 16–22.

[71] See for example Ottar Grønvik, 'Runebrakteater fra folkevandringstida med lesbare og tydbare urnordiske ord', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, 120 (2005), 5–22 (p. 12).

[72] Sophus Bugge, 'Sproglige oplysninger om ord i gamle nordiske love', *Nordisk Tidskrift for Filologi*, 3 (1877–78), 258–75.

[73] The difference between 154 and 985 is substantial. Further study will be needed to determine whether extensive

> Þig æði ormar stinga,
> grös og steingur, grund og skógar,
> nema þú leggir mér líkn með nokkra,
> svo eg ósköpum úr megi komast.[74]
>
> You will be maddened, snakes will sting you, grass and rods, ground and forest, if you do not grant me some mercy along with this so that I can escape the enchantment.

Short lines 5–6 here have a closely corresponding text in stanzas V 20, J 5 and Þ 7. These two shared quarter strophes seem to suggest that the author of the L version had at some point read or heard a version of the older poem.

According to *Rithöfundatal* by Hallgrímur Jónsson (1780–1836), a *rímur* cycle on the subject of *Vambarljóð* was composed by the poet Sigmundur Helgason (1657–1723). No such text has come down to us.[75] However, two *rímur* cycles on the subject are preserved from the eighteenth century.

The manuscript ÍB 895 8vo, written in 1792, preserves *Rímur af Signýju Hringsdóttur* by one Þórður Pálsson who is otherwise unknown. The text has some relationship with the L version of *Vambarljóð* — Alþrúður is said to be from Hungary.[76] The text is also partially preserved in Lbs 2324 4to.

In 1781, the poet Helgi Bjarnason (ca. 1730–84) composed another cycle also called *Rímur af Signýju Hringsdóttur*. This is preserved in two manuscripts, Lbs 985 4to and JS 579 4to. Here, too, Alþrúður is said to be from Hungary.

Finally, a prose fairy-tale, *Sagan af Signýju Vömb*, was recorded from Guðrún Ólafsdóttir (ca. 1791–1862) in 1856.[77] This version also shares some details with the L version of the poem — such as a curse turning Yrsa into a cat.

Some other Icelandic fairy-tales also feature princesses cursed by their stepmothers into the form of a stomach and in each case the curse is lifted by sleeping with a prince. One such tale is *Hildur góða stjúpa og veltandi vömb* which was recorded from the prolific storyteller Guðríður Eyjólfsdóttir (1811–78).[78] Another is *Gorvömb*, which was first recorded by Þorvarður Ólafsson (1828–72)[79] who did not specify an informant. Another *Gorvömb* tale with similar content was recorded on tape from Katrín Valdimarsdóttir (1898–1984) in December 1971 or January 1972. Katrín was unsure whether she had learned the story from Járnbrá Einarsdóttir (1871–1961) or from Hólmfríður Sigurðardóttir (1833–1913), Katrín's grandmother.[80]

When Einar Ól. Sveinsson published his classification of Icelandic folk tale types he did not find a suitable pre-existing type for *Vambarljóð* and related tales so he added the tale type 404*. He mentions that he had himself heard the story long before from the old woman

editing or re-oralization is at play.

74 Ólafur Davíðsson, *Þulur og þjóðkvæði*, p. 60. The corresponding text in Lbs 985 4to is 'Þig skulu armar arir stÿnga, gras og steingur, grund og skögar, nema þu leggir mier likner nockrar, so ad eg oskópum, ur meige komast'.

75 Ólafur Davíðsson, *Þulur og þjóðkvæði*, p. 64; Finnur Sigmundsson, *Rímnatal*, Rit Rímnafélagsins, 11, 2 vols (Reykjavík: Rímnafélagið, 1966), II 122–23.

76 ÍB 895 8vo, 84r.

77 Manuscript: Lbs 528 4to, 101r–102v. Printed in Jón Árnason, *Íslenskar þjóðsögur og ævintýri*, rev. edn by Árni Böðvarsson and Bjarni Vilhjálmsson, 6 vols (Reykjavík: Þjóðsaga, 1954–1961), IV 495–97, VI 102.

78 *Íslenskar þjóðsögur og ævintýri*, IV 590–94.

79 *Íslenskar þjóðsögur og ævintýri*, II 360–64.

80 Rósa Þorsteinsdóttir, *Sagan upp á hvern mann: átta íslenskir sagnamenn og ævintýrin þeirra*, Rit, 82 (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, 2011), pp. 96–100, 280–85.

Steinunn Runólfsdóttir[81] in Vestur-Skaftafellssýsla — adding yet another female storyteller known to have had the story as a part of her repertoire. Einar adds that he had forgotten most of the story but did remember the stomach saying at the wedding that she had often seen a weeping bride but never a weeping groom.[82]

The first recording of *Vambarljóð* which we can definitely establish took place in 1699–1700 and the poem then written down shows every sign of medieval origin. The story caught the attention of multiple poets and in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there were still old ladies who could tell tales of resourceful princesses who were cursed to appear as a stomach. Anyone who wants to delve deeper into this tale has plenty of material to work with.

About this edition

The objective of this edition is to present the V, J and Þ versions of *Vambarljóð* faithfully and separately. In the case of the V text, the fact that we have four independent manuscripts allows us to reconstruct their lost written archetype *V with some precision. In the cases of J and Þ we are mostly dependent on single sources. I have resorted to conjectural emendation in a few places where the preserved text appears untranslatable and corrupt and a plausible restoration suggests itself. A further few conjectures for which a reasonable case could be made are suggested in the apparatus.

The text is diplomatic and follows the punctuation and capitalization of the manuscripts though I have intervened to begin each strophe with a capital letter and end it with a full stop. As it happens, the spelling of V^1 is rather close to that of normalized Old Norse or modern Icelandic and the spelling in Þ is also helpful in marking vowel distinction. The spelling of J is typical for a manuscript written in the eighteenth century.

The translation aims for a relatively literal style, similar to that used in the *Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages*. When the different versions have identical wording I have aimed to use identical translations and when the versions have the same meaning but differ slightly in the choice or order of words I have tried to vary the translations a little as well.

Manuscripts used

V^1 = NKS 1141 fol., 18th century (basis of V edition)
V^2 = JS 405 4to, written in 1819
T = Thott 489 8vo, 18th century
T* = the first version of the poem in T, only three strophes
I = JS 80 8vo, ca. 1800
J = JS 406 4to, 1732–41
J* = Thott 489 8vo, single leaf at end, 1732–41
JH = Jón Helgason's transcript of J
Þ = NKS 1894 4to, late 18th century (basis of Þ edition)

[81] Presumably Steinunn Mýrdalína Runólfsdóttir, born in 1836.

[82] 'Häufig habe ich eine traurige Braut gesehen, aber noch niemals einen weinenden Bräutigam', Einar Ól. Sveinsson, *Verzeichnis Isländischer Märchenvarianten*, pp. 38–39. The tale type is listed in Stith Thompson, *The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography*, FF Communications, 184 (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1961), p. 134. Since the type has not been found outside Iceland it is discontinued in Hans-Jörg Uther, *The Types of International Folktales: A Classification and Bibliography. Based on the system of Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson*, FF Communications 284–86, 3 vols (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2004).

154 = AM 154 V 8vo, ca. 1700
430 = JS 430 4to, early 19th century
985 = Lbs 985 4to, mid-18th century
1894 = NKS 1894 4to, late 18th century

Manuscripts known with certainty to have existed

*V = a lost book of *fornkvæði* written in Vigur in 1699–1700
*Þ = pages lost from AM 154 8vo after Þ was made, ca. 1700

More hypothetical manuscripts

*L = the original manuscript of the L version
*forn syrpa = the claimed source of the L version, presumably dating to the second half of the 17th century; this, or a related manuscript, may have also served as the exemplar of *V

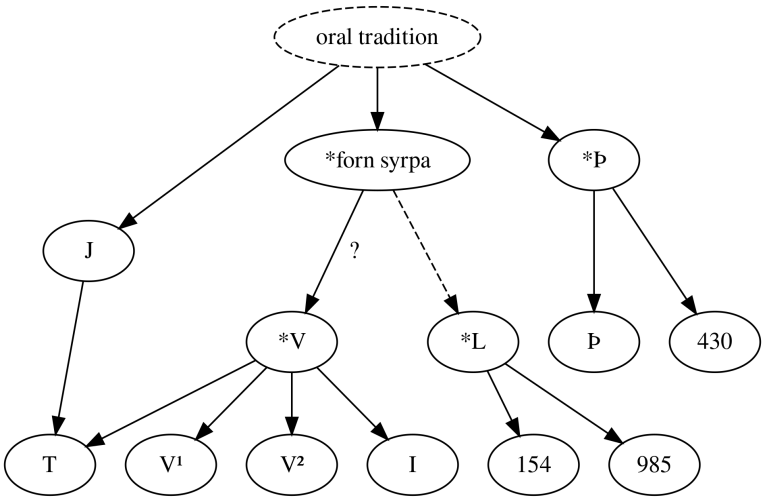

Figure 5: A possible stemma of the manuscripts of *Vambarljóð*.

176. Qvæðe / kallað / Vambar lióð (V version)

V-1 (J-1)

Sat *gullaudigur gylve að lande
sá er hǫlldar hríng kǫlluðu
konu átte hann sier kynstórrar ættar
kappsamr konungr kiærn að flestu.

A leader, wealthy in gold, held the land, the one whom men called Hringr. He had a wife of a noble family — that vigorous king, wise in most things.

Title: 176 Vambarliód, V^2 1.1 gullaudigur: *so* V^2, gullaudugur TI, gullauðgr V^1 1.7 konungr: kongur V^2, gramr I

V-2 (J-3)

Ól sier dǫglingr dóttr eina
þá er Signýiu *seggir nefna
hafðe hvors slags hannyrð numið
ýng auðarlín átta vetra.

The monarch had one daughter, whom men call Signý. She had learned every sort of needlework — that young Lín of wealth [woman] — by the age of eight.

2.4 seggir: *so* V^2TI, segir V^1 2.6 hannyrð: handyrd V^2

V-3 (J-2)

Svo var ágætleg æfin hióna
að hvort þeirra ǫðru heiðrs leitaðe
enn er kongs konu kvǫldu verkir
hýr varð hlaðzsól að hyliast molldu.

The life of the married couple was so excellent that each of them sought honour for the other. But after the king's wife was tormented by pain the gentle headband-sun [woman] needed to be covered with earth.

V-4 (J-*5)

Geck á háfan haug alþrúðar
morgin serhvorn mætr landreke
enn fyrir hilmi á margan veg
tignarmenn hans telia fóru.

Every morning the esteemed land-ruler walked upon the high mound of Alþrúðr. But the nobles came to plead with their king in many ways.

4.5 hilmi: mildíng, Jón Sigurðsson's conjecture

V-5

Fagrvaxin geck við fǫðr að mæla
og vm háls grami *hendur lagðe
skunda til skemmu skatna drottinn
mier er tíðt við þig tafl að efla.

The shapely one went to speak with her father and she laid her hands around the neck of the king: 'Hurry to the bower, lord of men! I would like to play *tafl* with you.'

5.4 hendur: *so* V^2TI, hǫndur V^1 5.8 tafl: chess or another board game

V-6 (Þ-1)

Hǫrva heim aftr *hilmers dótter
og haf þú þǫck fyrir þína gaungu
mey veit eg ongva ne manns konu
er *bǫls stǫfum *bregdi mínvm

'Go back home, princess, and thank you for your visit. I know no maiden nor man's wife who might alter my baleful staves.'

6.2 hilmers: *so* V^2T, hilmer I, hilmis V^1 6.4 bǫls: *so* V^2, bóls V^1, bøl TI 6.8 bregdi: *so* V^2TI, bregða V^1

V-7

Hier sit eg hiá þier og siá þyckiunst
að muner siklingr fyrir svikum verða
giǫrir þú bǫl mikið barni þínu
*þó má skiǫlldungr ei við skǫpum vinna.

'I sit here by you and I seem to see that you, lord, will be afflicted by deceit. You will do much evil to your child but the ruler cannot contend against fate.'

7.7 þó: *so* V^2TI, þá V^1

V-8

Geck ýng meyia aftr til skemmu
var *ei lofðungs mær lett vm dryckiu
þó hún salkonur sumar gledde
með gulle rauðu og gersemum.

The young maiden walked back to the bower. The princess did not find it easy to partake in drinking though she gladdened some of her hall women with red gold and treasures.

8.3 ei: *so* V^2TI, eigi V^1

V-9 (Þ-2)

Kom þar að haugie kona gangande
þegar *hilmers mær hvarf í skemmu
kvadde hún qðling með orðum blíðum
sit þú hilmir heill með huga glqðum.

A woman came walking to the mound when the princess returned to the bower. She greeted the king with sweet words: 'Sit in good health, lord, with a happy mind.'

9.3 hilmers: *so* V^2TI, hilmis V^1 9.8 með: i V^2

V-10

Leyfðr konungr leit ecki við
þó sá hann lióma á loft bera
seg þú en þýða þitt nafn grame
má eg *ei við þig mæla fleira.

The praised king did not turn his head yet he saw a beam of light in the sky: 'Tell, kind one, your name to the king. I can speak no more to you.'

10.7 ei: *so* V^2TI, eigi V^1

V-11 (J-*3)

Ýrsa eg heite og er jǫfurs dótter
hef eg margt numið er menn *ei vita
spurt hef eg alllítt hylmir heilan
og mun eg brádt á því bætur vinna.

'My name is Yrsa and I am a ruler's daughter. I have learned many things that people do not know. I have heard that the king is not well at all and I will soon remedy that.'

11.1 Ýrsa: Irsa V^2T (here and elsewhere) 11.4 ei: *so* V^2I, eigi V^1 11.7 mun: mon V^2 11.7 brádt á: brádla V^2

V-12 (J-*8)

Far heim til hallar hellst miǫg er framorðið
þar muntu góða gisting fánga
það er flagða háttr að fara miǫg síð
nú tel eg sólu setta vandlega.

'Go home to the hall, it is getting very late. You will get good lodging there. It is the way of troll-women to go about very late. Now I reckon the sun has set completely.'

V-13 (J-*6, Þ-3)

Hryste hún sínar handagiǫrver
að hraut víndrope á vǫr grami
fýsti nú millding meira að drecka
þá gaf hún honvm horn fullt miaðar.

She shook her gloves so that a drop of wine fell onto the king's lip. Now the monarch desired to drink more — then she gave him a horn full of mead.

V-14 (J-*7, J-*4)

Drack af kalke kóngr víðrisinn
að til Alþrúðar eckert munde
setst niðr hiá mier og seg tíðinde
þvíað margt við þig mæla eg villde.

The renowned king drank from the goblet so that he did not remember Alþrúðr at all. 'Sit down by me and tell me news for I would like to say many things to you.'

14.2 víðrisinn: hapax legomenon, probably a corruption of 'vígrisinn', cpr. *gramr vígrisinn* in *Grípisspá*

V-15

*Ei vil eg sikling sitia í hiá þier
skal eg til hallar heim fyrir aftan
þá tók hilmer í hǫnd vífi
og til borgar heim brátt skunduðu.

'I do not want to sit with you, lord. I must go home to the hall before evening.' Then the prince took the hand of the woman and they hurried to the castle.

15.1 Ei: *so* V^2T, Eigi V^1 15.1–2 Ei vil ec hiá þer Sikling sitia V^2, Sist vil eg hiá þier sitia konungur I

V-16

Gack í ǫndvegi æðra að sitia
eig svo við mig át og dryckiu
ǫngvum skal það ýta hlýðast
*af hǫfðe þer hár að blása.

'Come sit in the nobler high-seat and have food and drink with me. No-one will be suffered to blow a hair off your head.'

16.6 hlýðast: hlida TI 16.7 af: I, á V^1V^2T; the phrase *blása hár af hǫfði* occurs in multiple Old Norse prose texts and always with the preposition *af*, while *á* appears meaningless

V-17

Allz ǫngvum var hún Ýrsa í þocka
þó kvaðst ræsir einn ráða vilia
lǫgðust síðan í sæng eina
óbrúðarleg mey og jǫfr siálfr.

Yrsa was to no-one's taste, yet the king said that he alone would decide. Then that unbridely maiden and the ruler himself lay down into one bed.

V-18 (J-*2, Þ-5)

Frá eg hún Signý með salkonum
veðrblíðan dag geck epli að velia
og er hún var vti ein á skógie
þá kom hún Ýrsa þar að gangande.

I heard that Signý went one fine day with her hall women to pick apples. And as she was alone out in the woods then Yrsa came walking.

18.3 geck: *om.* V^2

V-19 (J-4, Þ-6)

Ángr er mier að því meira enn mikið
að þú fegre ert flióðe hveriu
víf skalltu hafa vambar líki
og úr kvǫl þeirre komast alldregi.

'It bothers me more than much that you are fairer than every girl. Woman, you shall have the shape of a stomach and never escape that misery.'

V-20 (J-5, Þ-7)

Vlfar þig skulu og ǫll skógar dýr
kallt griót og steinar kvika slíta
vtan leggir mier líkn nockra með
vm dapurlega æfe mína.

'Wolves and all forest beasts, the cold rocks and the stones shall shred you alive unless you also grant me some mercy for my sad life.'

V-21 (J-7, Þ-8)

Það skal til líknar língrundin þier
ef að þig konungsson kaupir mundi
og villde til blíðrar brúðkaup giǫra
enn ætla þig þó óvætte vera.

'It will be a mercy for you, linen-ground [woman], if a king's son buys you with a bride price and wants to wed the sweet one and yet thinks you a monster.

21.4 kaupir: kaupa V^2 (and J)

V-22 (Þ-9)

Ef svo ólíklega verða mætte
skal bráðr bane bíta Ýrsu
enn Hríngi *kongi harminum brugðið
að honvm verðe *ei neitt að ángre.

In that unlikely case, sudden death shall befall Yrsa and king Hringr be released from sorrow so that nothing will grieve him.'

22.2 orðit gæti, Jón Sigurðsson's conjecture 22.5 kongi *so* V^2TI, konungi V^1 22.7 ei: *so* V^2TI, eigi V^1

V-23 (Þ-10, J-*9)

Vallt síðarla vǫmb til heiðar
enn Ýrsa geck heim að hǫllu
sagðe hún hilmi hvarf Signyiar
enn hann kvaðst í því allz enkis sakna.

The stomach rolled late to the heath and Yrsa walked home to the hall. She told the king that Signý had disappeared but he said that was no loss to him.

V-24

Kom þar af mǫrku mær aðrennande
sem liúfr konungr lǫndum stýrðe
ýtum þótte hann Ásmundr vera
í fornum sið frægr snemmindis.

The maiden came sliding from the wilderness into lands ruled by a beloved king. Ásmundr was considered famous at a young age during the days of the old religion.

V-25

Móðr átte hann sier með landreka
sú var veigaþǫll vitr og hyggin
hún stýrðe lǫndum og lýði víða
þegar lofðúngar í leiðangri vóru.

The land-ruler had a mother. That fir-tree of beverages [woman] was wise and intelligent. She ruled widely over the lands and the people if the princes were on an expedition.

V-26 (Þ-11)

Karl hefr búið nærre *kongs velldi
sá er auðæfi átte lítil
hann var genginn vm grænar follder
geitur heim reka og gamlar kýr.

A man who had little wealth lived near the king's estate. He had walked over green ground to drive home goats and old cows.

26.2 kongs: *so* V^2TI, konungs V^1

V-27 (J-8, Þ-12)

Vǫmb sá hann liggia vndir viðar runni
sem úr nýdrepnu nauti være
studde að framan fæti sínvm
þá reð mær við hann margt að ræða.

He saw a stomach lying under a shrub in the woods — as if from a freshly killed bull. He touched it in the front with his foot. Then the maiden came to speak many things to him.

V-28 (J-9, Þ-13)

Hlíf mier hýr faðer og hygg að eg mune
minne móður miǫg þǫrf vera
eg kann að birla og búa að gulle
enn ómagie ecki þickiunst.

'Spare me, kind father! And consider that I will be very useful to my mother. I can fill cups and decorate with gold. I am no freeloader.

V-29

Haf þig heim aptr heilla góðe
enn eg mun geyma geita þinna
eg skal hvorn dag hiarðar gæta
enn þið sæl megið sitia heima.

Go back home, dearest, and I will keep your goats. I will watch over the herd every day while you two sit happily at home.'

29.3 mun: mon V^2

V-30 (Þ-14)

Karl skundaðe til húss þaðan
fann nú kerlingu káta sína
sagði hann henne slíkt er hann visse
enn hún kvað ser *ei vndralaust vera.

The man hurried to the house from there and found his cheerful old lady. He told her what he knew and she said that this seemed wondrous.

30.7 ei: *so* V^2TI, eigi V^1

V-31 (J-10)

Mær rak jafnan hiǫrð kerlingar
það er ólogieð í akur konungs
beitte hún þar henne hvorn dag *at ǫðrum
og giǫrðe fylki fiártión mikið.

The maiden constantly drove the old lady's herd — this is no lie — to the king's field. She had it graze there one day after another and did costly damage to the ruler.

31.6 at: *so* V^2TI, af V^1

V-32 (J-13)

Heim kom að hausti horskr stillir
með allmyklu ýta mengi
heitt var munngát á móti gram
enn ǫlkonur ǫðling fǫgnuðu.

In the fall the wise king came home with a great host of men. Beer was prepared for the monarch and the ale-women celebrated the prince.

V-33 (J-13)

Frettu að frægan hvorsu farið hefði
enn *lofdúngur let vel yfir
spurðe á móte margs fróðlega
eða er hier nockuð nýtt í frettum.

The famous one was asked about his journey and the prince declared it successful. He asked intelligently in return: 'Or is there anything new to report here?'

33.3 lofdúngur: *so* V^2T, lofdángr V^1

V-34 (J-15, Þ-18)

Illt er vndrum eptir að fretta
og þó er enn verra að vita af sínum
beitt hefr alla akra þína
mær kerlingar og er slíkt mein mikið.

'It is bad to enquire about wonders and yet it is worse still to know them from sight. An old lady's maiden has been grazing all your fields and causes much harm.'

V-35 (J-16)

Menn þickist þier mikilla burða
og oflátar ongvum minne
enn hafið þó ecki ellt úr garðe
kerlingar jóð og keyrt med hǫggum.

'You consider yourselves able men and you are second to none in showing off. Yet you have not chased an old lady's child from the estate and driven her away with blows.'

V-36 (J-17)

Reiðr geck þaðan recka drottinn
og bað þá alla eftir að sitia
vallt að honvm vǫmb óþvegin
vertu hilmir heill með huga glǫðum.

Angry did the lord of men walk from there and he asked all of them to remain behind. The unwashed stomach rolled up to him: 'Be well, lord, with a happy mind.'

36.8 glǫðum: gódum V^2

V-37 (J-18, J-26, Þ-21)

Hvor leyfði þer *liótvaxinn mær
að beita alla akra mína
far heðan aftr heillinn góðe
eg mun í kvǫlld heim helldr síð koma.

'Who allowed you, ugly-shaped maiden, to graze all my fields?' — 'Go back from here, dearest, I will come home rather late tonight.'

37.2 liótvaxinn: *so* V^2TI, líttvaxin V^1 37.6 góðe: the masculine form of the adjective indicates that the king is addressed

V-38 (J-19)

Þá reð að reiðast recka drottinn
og laust hana hende sinne
mátte *ei leysa lófa frá kvistum
svo var buðlúngr við brǫgð kominn.

Then the lord of men became angry and struck her with his hand. He could not release his palm from the branches. Thus the prince was tricked.

38.5 ei: *so* V^2TI, eigi V^1

V-39 (J-20, Þ-20)

Vallt óþvegin vǫmb til nauta
þar varð ǫðlingr eptir að darka
seig þú sámlituð siklingi það
hvað eg skal til vinna að við skilium.

The unwashed stomach rolled to the bulls and the king had to trudge behind. 'Tell the prince, dark one, what I should do to separate us.'

V-40 (J-21, Þ-19)

Hier skalltu alla æfe þína
buðlúng við mig bundin vera
engi maðr skal að því giǫra
fyrr enn við afgǫmul ǫndumst bæðe.

'You will be bound to me all your life, lord, and no-one can do anything about it until the both of us die in ripe old age —

V-41 (J-22)

Vtan þú biðier mín bauga deilir
og eftir mier egir að ganga
svo skalltu brúðkaup búa vandlega
sem þú *kóngsdóttur kaupa munder.

— unless you propose to me, divider of rings [man], and seek me. You shall prepare the wedding as carefully as if you were marrying a princess.'

41.7 kóngsdóttur V^2T, kongs dótter I, konungsdótter V^1

V-42

Gramr kvað ecki úr góðu að ráða
þó kaus vísir vomb að eiga
hellt heim þaðan horskr stillir
var *ei lofdungi lett vm dryckiu.

The prince said that there was no good choice and yet the ruler decided to marry the stomach. The wise king went home from there. The monarch did not find it easy to take part in drinking.

42.7 ei: *so* V^2TI, eigi V^1

V-43

Að spurðe en hvíta *hilmers móðer
hvað til ógleði jǫfri være
hann í hlióðe henne sagðe
gef mier íborið eitur að drecka.

The white mother of the king asked what was giving the prince displeasure. He told her quietly: 'Bring me blended poison to drink.'

43.2 hilmers V^2T, hilmer I, hylmis V^1 43.6 sagðe: allt sagdi V^2

V-44 (J-23)

Hvað er svo ólíklegt orðið vm *hilmer
að þú villt fylkir fiǫrvi týna
siá munu reckar ráð betra til
enn þennan kost þigg eg eigi.

'What unlikely thing has happened to the king that you, lord, want to lose your life? Some better counsel will be found. I will not accept this option.'

44.2 hilmer: *so* V^2, hilme T, þig V^1 44.4 fiǫrvi: fiǫri V^2I

V-45

Illt er vndrum eptir að fretta
þó er enn verra vita *á sýnum
ef eg skal eiga ýr við grímu
þau hafa fádæmin flestu vm ollað.

'It is bad to enquire about wonders, yet it is worse still to know them from sight. If I shall have *ýr við grímu* it is mostly caused by abnormal events.'

45.4 á *so* V^2TI, að V^1 45.6 ýr: the word is underlined in V^1 but probably not by the original scribe, yr V^2TI 45.6 ýr við grímu: obscure, see commentary on textual difficulties

V-46 (J-27, Þ-22)

Velltist vm vrðer vǫmb óþvegin
og fyrir hasæte hylmirs sínvm
ser hún hvar húkir *heria stiller
mátte hún *ei allra orðanna bindast.

The unwashed stomach rolled over rocky land and by the throne of her king she sees where the lord of armies is cowering. She could not refrain from speaking.

46.6 heria: *so* T, hermanna I, herians V^1V^2, Herjann is a common poetic synonym for Óðinn but it gives no sense here; the form in T is almost certainly an emendation, but it is a sensible one, cpr. *herja stilli* in *Guðrúnarkviða III* 46.7 ei: *so* V^2TI, eigi V^1

V-47 (J-28, Þ-23)

Margar hef eg vitað meyiarnar daprar
þegar flióðin voru fǫstnuð manni
hitt vissa eg *aldrei á æfe minne
að brúðguminn byggist við gráta.

'I have known many maidens to be sad when the girls were engaged to a man. But never in my life have I known the groom about to cry.

47.5 aldrei: *so* V^2T, alldri V^1I

V-48

Hier máttu bragning siá brúðe þína
vertu glaðr af því gumna drottinn
stýrðu vel lǫndum og *lidi víða
þer skal eg hilmir hníga að armi.

Here, prince, you can see your bride! Be happy for it, lord of men. Rule well and widely the lands and the hosts. I will sink into your arms, lord.'

48.6 lidi: *so* V^2TI, lýðe V^1

V-49 (J-30)

Þá tók drottning við dýrre snót
vertu flióð komið með fǫgnuðe
lagðe hún meyiu í miðia sæng
og sveypaðe að vtan silki dúki.

Then the queen received the precious lady: 'Be happily welcomed here, girl!' She laid the maiden into the middle of the bed and wrapped her with a silken cloth.

49.8 dúki: dúka V^2

V-50

Hún breidde síðan skickiu eina
svinn seimabil yfir sæng þeirra
hafið nú náðer og niótist vel
enn hiá lofðúngi hún lagt sofnaðe.

Then she spread a cloak — that wise Bil of gold [woman] — over their bed. 'Go to sleep and enjoy each other!' And she fell asleep beside the prince.

50.2 skickiu: blæu, Jón Sigurðsson's conjecture, cpr. *Oddrúnargrátr* 25 þa er breiddo viþ / blęio eina 50.8 lagt: the sense of this word here is unclear, conceivably it has to do with the relative position of the sleepers as 'fyrir ofan' does in J-30

V-51 (J-31, Þ-25)

Þá reð að vakna vísers dótter
svo að buðlungs mær brenna þóttist
hvor velldr svo heitum elldi
verðr mier all lítt ángurs á mille.

Then the princess awakened and felt as if she were burning. 'Who causes such a hot fire? Little time passes from one of my troubles to the next.'

V-52 (J-32, Þ-26)

Vǫmb hef eg steikta vísirs dótter
þó mun enn eigi alldeilis búið
nú mun elldzlitnum ǫllum linna
ef hilmi segir hvað þitt er heiti.

'I have roasted the stomach, princess. Yet things are not quite over. All the colour of fire will end if you tell the prince what your name is.'

52.5 elldzlitnum: this word is unexpected here, see section on textual difficulties

V-53

Qll hafa þesse álǫg verið
stillis arfue af stiúpmóður *skǫpt
ef þú fylgder mier fǫður að finna
þá hefðe lofðung leyst vel af hende.

'This entire curse, prince, was wrought by my stepmother. If you were to take me to my father you would have done well.'

53.4 skǫpt: *so* V^2T, skǫpuð V^1, þinne I

V-54

Fyrr skal eg bióða gull rauðt við þier
og þig mær við mundi kaupa
skal nú veitzlan sú verða að ǫngvu
sem hún móðer mín mest vandaðe.

'I would sooner offer red gold for you and purchase you, maiden, with a bride price. Now the feast that my mother carefully prepared will come to nought.'

V-55 (J-34)

Hann sende síðan sinn riddara
sem að mannvite mestu stýrðe
jafnan fór drengr dag sem nóttu
vns til hallar kom Hríngs að kvellde.

Then he sent his knight of greatest wisdom. The warrior travelled steadily through day and night until he reached the hall of Hringr one evening.

V-56

Var vel tekið við kóngs þegni
og frett giǫrla að tíðendum
spurðe á móti margs fróðlega
eða er hier nockuð nýtt í frettum.

The king's man was well received and asked closely for tidings. Sagely, he asked many things in return: 'Or is there anything new to report?'

56.8 frettum: lande T

V-57 (J-14)

Þau eru her *ordin nýiust tíðendi
að bráðdauð varð buðlungs kona
enn hitt er annað ecki minna
að fylkirs dótter finnzt alldregi.

'The last thing to happen is that the king's wife died suddenly. And another thing, of no less import, is that the king's daughter is nowhere to be found.'

57.1 ordin: *so* V^2T, vorðin V^1, i landi I

V-58 (Þ-27, J-*1)

Satt vil eg segia sialfum konungi
að Signý sitr í sal vorum
bað hún á báli að brenna hana Ýrsu
og á æginn vt ǫsku kasta.

'I will tell the truth to the king himself. Signý is sitting in our hall. She asked for Yrsa to be burnt on a pyre and the ash thrown out to sea.'

58.2 konungi: kongi V^2, jøfre T, tiggia I

V-59

Það skulu aðrer ýtar þióna
enn eg mun skunda til skipa ofan
mig skulu skeiður skreyttar fram bera
enn lýðer aðrer landveg fare.

'Other men will tend to this but I will hurry down to the ships. The splendid warships will carry me forth and other people will go by land.'

59.2 ýtar: Ita V^2

V-60

Dreif drengia lið á dreka *gilldan
og siglde gramr að góðu veðre
feck hraðbyri hǫllda drottinn
vnz til hallar kom Ásmundz að kvelldi.

A host of warriors rushed onto the golden dragon ship and the king sailed in good weather. The lord of men had favorable wind until he arrived at Ásmundr's hall one evening.

60.2 gilldan: so V^2T, gilldum I, gylltan V^1 60.2 gilldan: this spelling could represent either *gylldr* 'golden' or *gildr* 'broad' but the first is more likely in light of the V^1 form and the many literary references to golden-headed dragon ships

V-61

Bað blíðugr bauga þiliu
að hún Ásmunde ecki neytte
gengu síðan í sal konur
sá var flióða skare skrautlegast búinn.

The gentle man asked the plank of rings [woman] not to refuse Ásmundr. Then the women walked into the hall. That host of ladies was splendidly dressed.

V-62

Biuggu síðan báðer jǫfrar
bar hvor þeirra bríost fyrir ǫðrum
svo man vm síðir sagan lyktast
að vm allan alldr með vnað lifðu.

Then both the princes lived on, each of them cared for the other. So, at last, the story comes to an end. They lived in bliss for all their life.

Vambar Liod (J version)

J-1 (V-1)

Sat gunnþorer godur a lande
þann er holldar hring kolludu
konu atte hann sier var kiæn ad afle
kappsamur konungur af kine godu.

A good leader, brave in battle, held the land. Hringr was his name. He had a wife, that vigorous king, she was wise in power, of a noble kin.

Title supplied from T, J has none. 1.1 gunnþorer: hapax legomenon which I take to be a nominalization of *gunnþorinn*, 'battle-brave'

J-2 (V-3)

Þaug unntu sier allt hid besta
hugde hiona hvort odru vel
þar til kona konungs var kuldu verke
þa var hun hladsol hulenn molldu.

They enjoyed themselves in the best way — each of them thought well of the other — until the king's wife was *kuldu verke*. Then the headband-sun [woman] was covered with earth.

2.6: obscure but cpr. V-3

J-3 (V-2)

Atte doglingur sier dotter eina
þa er segger Signyu nefna
hun hafde hveria handnird numed
ung audarbil atta vetra.

The monarch had one daughter who was called Signý. She had learned every type of needlework — that young Bil of wealth [woman] — by the age of eight.

J-4 (V-19, Þ-6)

Angur er mier ad þvi meir enn miked
ad þu fegre ert fliode hveriu
mei skalltu verda i vambarlike
og ur kvol þeirre komast alldreige.

'It bothers me more than much that you are fairer than every girl. Maiden, you shall have the shape of a stomach and never get out of that misery.'

J indicates that material is missing after stanza 3 with 'def. a'. 4.3 fegre ert: There is some illegible attempt at correction here in J.

J-5 (V-20, Þ-7)

Þig skulu ulfar og oll grei
kallder griotsteinar kvika slita
nema þu legger likn nockra mier
um dapurlega æfena mina.

'Wolves and all bitches and the cold rocks shall shred you alive unless you grant me some mercy for this sad life of mine.'

J-6

Latum vid hverugt halldast þetta
sem eg mær vid þig mællte af folsku
þetta mun hvertveggia halldast verda
þo med meinum minn alldurenn sie.

'Let neither of us hold to these things which, out of foolishness, I spoke to you, maiden.' — 'Both things will hold, though my life be one of sorrows.'

This stanza is also in *Hyndluljóð*, where the context is clearer. A curse is followed by a countercurse and then an offer to cancel both curses. The offer is rejected. This motif is found in tales in Iceland, Ireland and Scotland, see Einar Ól. Sveinsson, *Um íslenzkar þjóðsögur*, pp. 246–47.

J-7 (V-21, Þ-8)

Þad skal til liknar liufbundenn mær
ad þig kongson kaupa munde
og so til blidrar brullaupid bua
þo hann ætle þig arfa grimu.

'It will be a mercy for you, sweetly bound maiden, if a king's son were to buy you and celebrate the wedding with the sweet one, though he think you *arfa grimu*.'

7.2 The hapax *ljúfbundin* might have developed from *línbundin* 'linen-bound', an adjective applied to women in two skaldic stanzas. 7.8: see section on textual difficulties

J-8 (V-27, Þ-12)

Vallt um heidar vomb oþveigenn
sem ur nydrepnu naute være.

The stomach, unwashed as if from a freshly killed bull, rolled through the heaths.

J indicates that material is missing after stanza 7 with 'def B'. 8.1 heidar: 'nar' added above the line to correct to 'heidarnar'

J-9 (V-28, Þ-13)

Hlifdu mier fader ad eg hugda munde
minne modur margþorf vera
eg skal geima geita þinna
enn þid sæl skulud sitia heima.

'Spare me, father, since I think I would be useful in many ways to my mother. I will keep your goats and you two shall sit happily at home.'

9. J indicates that material is missing after stanza 8 with 'def'.

J-10 (V-31)

Mær rak hvorn dag hird kiellingar
enn þad var olofad i akra konungs
beitte hun sidann hvern af odrum
giorde hun fylker fiarspioll mikel.

Every day the maiden drove the old lady's retinue — though it was not allowed — to the king's fields. She had them graze one after the other. She did costly harm to the ruler.

10.2 hird: either a humorous way to refer to the goats or an error for 'hiord'

J-11

Geingu heiman hirdmen konungs
og badu oþockann undann ad snauta
vissum vier ei ad þu varst vatne ausen
vier hugdum þig hafskrimsl mikid.

The king's retainers went forth and asked the disgusting one to clear off. 'We did not know that you were sprinkled with water. We thought you a great sea monster.'

11–12: Here I follow T in the order of the verses. The order in J is 11.5–8, 12.5–6, 11.1–4, 12.1–4, 12.7–8 with some ambiguous symbols which may be intended to indicate another order. 11.6 vatne ausen: pagan baptism

J-12

Þid erud dælsker og dulberer
þid ætled mier ongvu ad rada
þeir voru hyggnare en hvor ydar
sem mig villdu vatninu ausa.

'You are foolish and deluded. You expect me to have no say! Those who would have me sprinkled with water were more intelligent than any of you.'

J-13 (V-32, V-33)

Heim kom um hausted heria stiller
med allmiked jarla meinge
spurde a mote allfrodlega
er hier nockud nytt i lande.

In the fall the lord of armies came home with a great host of jarls. He asked sagely in return: 'Is there anything new in the land?'

13.2 heria: 'ns' added above the line to correct to 'herians' 13.6: 'all' corrected to 'marg' above the line

J-14 (V-57)

Þaug eru tidendenn mest ad fretta
ad braddaud vard budlungs kvinna
og þo er annad ecke minna
ad kongsens mær siest alldreige.

'The most important news is that the monarch's wife died suddenly. And there is another thing, no less weighty. The king's daughter is nowhere to be seen.'

J-15 (V-34, Þ-18)

Jllt er undrum epter ad fretta
þo er enn verra ad vita til sinna
beitt hefur alla akrana þina
mær kellingar þad er mein miked.

'It is bad to enquire about wonders. Yet it is worse still to know for sure. An old lady's maiden has been grazing all your fields and causing much harm.'

15.4 sinna: I take this to represent *sýnna*

J-16 (V-35)

Menn þykiast hier meire burdar
og *oflatar ecke minne
ad þeir skyllde ecke hart ur garde
kellingar jod keira med hǫggum.

'My men think they are capable and there is no lack of showing off. But they have not driven an old lady's child firmly from the estate and chased her with blows!'

16.3 oflatar: conjectural emendation, hoflatar J

J-17 (V-36)

Gekk reidur þadan *heria stiller
bad ita alla epter ad sitia
vallt ad honum vomb oþveigenn
sittu hilmer heill med hird gladur.

Angry, the lord of armies walked from there and asked the men to remain behind. The unwashed stomach rolled up to him: 'Be well, lord, happy with your retinue.'

17.2 heria: conjectural emendation, herians J

J-18 (V-37, Þ-21)

Hvor leifde þier liotvaxen mær
ad beita alla akrana mina
skridtu a burtu heim hiedann
og sidann þu siast alldreige.

'Who allowed you, ugly-shaped maiden, to graze over all my fields? Slither back home and never be seen again!'

J-19 (V-38)

Þa giorde ad reidast *heria stiller
og liste ad *henne hende sinne
gat eige leist lofan fra kviste
þa var budlungsson i brogd komenn.

Then the lord of armies became angry and struck at her with his hand. He could not release his palm from the branch. Thus the son of the prince was tricked.

19.2 heria: conjectural emendation, herians J 19.3 henne: henne henne J

J-20 (V-39, Þ-20)

Vallt oþveigenn vomb til nauta
þar vard odlingur epter ad snauta
segdu samlitud siklinge þad
hvad til skal vinna so eg laus verde.

The unwashed stomach rolled to the bulls and the king had to lumber behind. 'Tell, dark-coloured one, to the prince what I should do to be free.'

J-21 (V-40, Þ-19)

Hier skalltu budlungur bunden vera
vid mig alla æfena þina
eingenn madur skal ad þvi giôra
fyr enn vid afgômul ondustum bæde.

'You will be bound to me, lord, for all your life and no-one can do anything about it until the both of us die in ripe old age —

J-22 (V-41)

Nema þu bidier min baugadeiler
og epter þvi eige eg ad ganga
so skalltu brullauped bua vandlega
sem þu kongsdotter kaupa muner.

— except if you propose to me, divider of rings [man], and I accept the offer. You shall prepare the wedding as carefully as if you were marrying a princess.'

22.5–6: There is some hard-to-make-out attempt to correct these lines in J, perhaps to 'so skalltu budlungur brullauped vanda' (JH). 22.8 muner: corrected to 'munder' in J

J-23 (V-44)

Hvad er illt orded ungum filker
ad lofdungsson vill life tina
sia munu reckar rad betra til
mun eg þenna kost kiosa ecke.

'What evil thing has happened to the young prince that the king's son wants to lose his life? Some better counsel will be found. I do not accept this choice.'

J indicates that material is missing after stanza 22 with 'd.' and some space.

J-24

Ok i vagne veltiolldudum
kiæn kinge bil karl ad finna
sia vil eg dotter dulssens skeggia
og syne minum sidann gipta.

The clever Bil of magic [woman] travelled in a nicely covered wagon to find the old man. 'I wish to see the daughter of the denizen of deceit and then marry her to my son.'

J-25

Vallt ad vagne vomb oþveigenn
hier mattu snot sia sonar konu efne
þike þier ecke eg alvæn vera
þo epter þvi eige hann ad ganga.

The unwashed stomach rolled to the wagon: 'Here, lady, you can see your daughter-in-law-to-be. You do not think me altogether pretty. Yet he is to accept this.'

25.4 efne: 'þina'(?) added above the line

J-26 (V-37, Þ-21)

Villtu vif med mier a vagn fara
og oduglega aka til byggda
heim fardu hiedann heillenn goda
eg mun sidar um kvolld koma.

'Would you, woman, go with me on the wagon and drive swiftly to the settlements?' — 'Go back home, dearest, I will arrive later tonight.'

J-27 (V-46, Þ-22)

Vallt um hurder vomb oþveigenn
og i hasæte til hilma sinna
sier hun hvar hann hædst situr heria stiller
ei matte hun allra ordanna bindast.

The unwashed stomach rolled through the doors and onto the high seat to her princes. She sees where he sits, highest, the lord of armies. She could not restrain all her words.

27.4 a puzzling verse; using plural forms of 'hilmir' is unusual 27.5 situr: 'sit' with a curl under it, JH transcribes this as 'situr'

J-28 (V-47, Þ-23)

Margar hefe eg sied meyarnar daprar
þo fliodenn være fostnud manne
hitt sa eg alldrei a æfe minne
ad brudgumen byggest til ad grata.

'I have seen many maidens sad though they were engaged to a man. But never in my life have I seen the groom about to cry.'

28.1 sied: 'vitad' added above the line 28.3 þo: 'þegar' added above the line 28.3 være: 'hafa vered' added above the line 28.7 JH reads a crossed-out 'rner' above the line 28.8 byggest: JH reads 'hann bidest' above the line

J-29 (Þ-22)

Hvar er þad gulled sem gumnastiorenn
blidur landrekenn gaf brudenne sinne
hefde mier alldrei i hug komed
hringur sa milldingur meyunne atladur.

'Where is the gold which the lord of men, the gentle land-ruler, gave to his bride?' — 'That ring, prince, intended for the maiden, would never have entered my mind.'

J-30 (V-49)

Þa tok drottning vid dyrre snot
og sveipade hana i silkeduke
lagde hana sidann i sæng nidur
fyrir ofann lofdung hun laust sofnade.

Then the queen received the precious lady and wrapped her in a silken cloth. After that she laid her down onto the bed. She fell lightly asleep to the wall side of the prince.

30.5 vertical lines around 'sidann' in J, unclear why

J-31 (V-51, Þ-25)

Vid þad vaknade visers dotter
ad hun þottest helldur heitt kenna
hver velldur heitum hiriar ellde
verdur mier sialldan angurs a mille.

Then the princess woke up feeling rather hot. 'Who is causing a hot, flaming fire? There is seldom a long time between my troubles.'

31.5–6 corrected to 'hver velldur mier so heitum elldi', 'hiriar' is crossed out but seems reasonably clear

J-32 (V-52, Þ-26)

Vomb hefe eg steikta visers dotter
þo ecke sie hun til ats buenn
hier mun ollum elldslitrum linna
enn siklinge segdu hvad þu heiter.

'I have roasted a stomach, princess, but not for eating. Now all the *elldslitrum* will come to an end. Tell the prince your name.'

32.6: see section on textual difficulties 32.7 siklinge: corrected from 'siglinge'

J-33

Þier a eg milldingur miked ad þacka
og mætre jofur modur þinne
þid hafed mig ur anaud þeiged
segger mig Signyu nefna.

'I have much to thank you for, lord, and your esteemed mother. You two have rescued me from distress. I am called Signý.'

J-34 (V-55)

Sende hann sinn þa frægsta riddara
þann er mestu mannvite stirde
bæde for dogling daga sem nætur
og til hallar kom Hrings ad kvellde.

Then he sent his most famous knight of greatest wisdom. The prince travelled both day and night and reached the hall of Hringr one evening.

J indicates that material is missing after stanza 33 with 'def'.

J-*1 (V-58, Þ-27)

Þaug eru tidenden best ad fretta
ad Signy situr i solum vorum
bad hun a bale ad brenna hana Jssu
og a ægenn ut oskunne ad kasta.

'The best news is that Signý is sitting in our halls. She asked for Yrsa to be burnt on a pyre and the ash thrown out on the sea.'

*1. The beginning of the additional material on the other leaf; 'def A' is written to the left of the first two long lines.

J-*2 (V-18, Þ-5)

Þa var hun ute ein a skogie
þar kom hun Jssa ad gangande.

She was alone out in the woods when Yrsa approached her.

Between *2 and *3 the word 'def' is written.

J-*3 (V-11)

Jssa eg heite Jofurs er eg dotter
margt hefe eg numed i mannvite
frett hefe eg odling all lit heilann
mun eg skiott a þvi bæturnar vinna.

'My name is Yrsa — I am a ruler's daughter. Much wisdom have I learned. I have been told that the king is not at all well and I will quickly remedy that.'

*3.7 skiott: corrected to 'bratt' above the line

J-*4 (V-14)

Settu þig nidur hia mier og segdu tidende
þvi eg margt vid þig mæla villde.

'Sit down by my side and tell me news since I would like to say many things to you.'

J-*5 (V-4)

Gieck a haänn haug alþrudar
mirgenn hvern medlands drekenn.

Each morning the dragon of Meðland walked upon the high mound of Alþrúðr.

*5.4 medlands: This is a hapax, perhaps to be thought of as a toponym (cpr. *Meðalland*). Presumably the verse is a corruption of something like V4.4 'mætr landreke'. *5: The strophe is preceded by 'def B'. *5.4 drekenn: The first three letters are unclear.

J-*6 (V-13, Þ-3)

Hriste hun sinar handa gerfur
þa hraut vindrope a vor grame
fyste fylker meira ad drecka
þa gaf hun honum horn fullt miadar.

She shook her gloves and then a drop of wine fell onto the king's lip. Now the ruler desired to drink more — then she gave him a horn full of mead.

J-*7 (V-14)

Drack af kalke kongur vidrisenn
so til alþrudar hann ecke munde.

The renowned king drank from the goblet so that he did not remember Alþrúðr.

J-*8 (V-12)

Þad er flagda sidur ad fara miog seint
nu true eg solu setta vandlega.

'It is the custom of troll-women to go about very late. Now I believe the sun has set completely.'

J-*9 (V-23, Þ-10)

Enn hun Jssa geck aptur til bær.
Sagde hun konge hvarf Signyar.
hann kvadst i þvi einkis sakna.

And Yrsa went back to the settlement. She told the king that Signý had disappeared. He said that was no loss to him.

*9: The arrival of internal punctuation seems to be a reaction to less space on the page at this point, preventing the long lines from being written out as a whole.

Fragment Vambarlióda (Þ version)

Prose introduction

Hríngur het Kongur oc Signi dótter hans. hann sirde jafnan epter Drottníngu ok sat á leide hennar ok villde dótter hans koma hǫnum þadan:

A king was named Hringr and Signý was his daughter. He grieved constantly for his queen and sat on her grave. His daughter wanted to bring him from there.

Þ-1 (V-6)

Fardu heim hedan heillin góda
hafdu þǫck fyrer þína gaungu
mey veit ek ǫngva ne mans konu
sem bǫlstǫfunum bregde mínum.

'Go home from here, dearest. Thank you for your visit. I know no maiden nor man's wife who might alter my baleful staves.'

1.7 sem: þeim 430

Þ-2 (V-9)

Kom þar ad haugi kona gángande
þegar hilmirs mær hvarf í skemmu
kvadde hún Ǫdlíng med ordum blídum
sittu heill Kóngr med hyrd glǫdu.

A woman came walking to the mound when the princess returned to the bower. She greeted the king with sweet words: 'Sit in good health, king, with the happy court.'

Þ-3 (V-13, J-*6)

Hún bad hilmer af harmi láta
ecke skyllde hann audgrund optar syrgia
hriste hún sína handa gerfu
þá hraut hagl á varer tiggia.

She asked the prince to desist from sorrow — he should grieve no more over the ground of wealth [woman]. She shook her glove and a hailstone was flung onto the ruler's lips.

3.2 láta: at láta 430 3.6 gerfu: gyrfu 430

Þ-4

Heim geck sídan hilmir med henne
ok til brullaups let búa vandlega
ei villde hún Signí sitia veitslu
því Issa þótte henne ógód vera.

Then the ruler went home with her and had a wedding carefully prepared. Signý did not want to attend the feast since she thought Yrsa was evil.

Þ-5 (V-18, J-*2)

Út geck Signí enn til skóga
Epli ad sækia ok alldin at velia
þar kom hún Issa ad gángande
mællte til meyar mundu hvad ek sege.

Again Signý walked to the woods to fetch apples and pick fruit. Yrsa approached her there and spoke to the maiden: 'Remember what I say!'

Þ-6 (V-19, J-4)

Angr er mer ad því meir enn mikit
at þú fegri ert fliódinu hvôriu
mær skalltu hafa Vambar líki
ok úr naud þeirre komast alldrei.

'It bothers me more than much that you are fairer than any girl. You shall have the shape of a stomach and never get out of that duress.'

Þ-7 (V-20, J-5)

Þik skulu Úlfar ok ôll ônnr grei
kall griót stafer qvika slíta
nema þú legger mer líkn nockra med
um dapurlega æfina mína.

'Wolves and all other bitches, a man, rocks and staves will shred you alive if you do not grant me some mercy along with this for this sad life of mine.'

7.3 kall griót: 'kastgrjót' is a tempting conjecture

Þ-8 (V-21, J-7)

Þad skal til líknar línspaungin þer
at þik Kóngsonr kaupa mundi
so til blídrar brullaup drecka
sem hann ætte Ilfa grímu.

'It will be a mercy for you, linen-brooch [woman], if a king's son will buy you and celebrate a wedding with the sweet one as if he had *Ilfa grímu*.'

8.8: see section on textual difficulties

Þ-9 (V-22)

Enn ef so ólíklega verda mætte
þá skal brádr bani bíta þik Issa
Hríngi Kongi se harmi brugdit
verde hónum alldrei neitt ad angri.

'And in that unlikely case, sudden death shall befall you, Yrsa. King Hringr will be released from his sorrow so that nothing will ever grieve him.'

Þ-10 (V-23, J-*9)

Vallt síd árla Vómb til heida
enn hún Issa geck aptr til bæjar
sagde hún Kónge hvarf Signíar
hann qvadst ad því einskis sakna.

The stomach rolled late and early to the heaths and Yrsa went back to the settlement. She told the king that Signý had disappeared. He said that was no loss to him.

10.5 sagde: hermdi 430 10.7 hann: enn hann 430

Þ-11 (V-26)

Kall hefr búit nærri Kongs velldi
sá er audæfin átte lítil
hann var gengin á grænar follder
geitur heim reka ok gamlar kýr.

A man of little wealth lived near the king's estate. He had walked over green ground to drive home goats and old cows.

Þ-12 (V-27, J-8)

Vómb sá hann liggia under vidarburde
so sem úr ní drepnu naute væri
stack á framan fæte sínum
þá red snót vid hann margt ad mæla.

He saw a stomach lying under a pile of wood — as if from a freshly killed bull. He nudged the front of it with his foot. Then the girl spoke many things to him.

Þ-13 (V-28, J-9)

Hlífdu mer fader ad ek hugda mundi
minni módr miǫk þǫrf vera
ek kann ad birda ok búa ad gulli
enn úmægin ecke þikist.

'Spare me, father! I think I would be very useful to my mother. I can embroider and decorate with gold. I am no freeloader.'

Þ-14 (V-30)

Kall skundade til hússstada
fann kellíngu káta sína
sagde hann henni slíkt þad hann visse
ní tídinde nú sked í lande.

The man hurried to the houses from there and found his cheerful old lady. He told her what he knew — new tidings that had just happened in the land.

Þ-15

Kelling red mæla vid kall sinn
ecke þurfte henne allt ad segia
finn ek minn hvǫrge hug rísa vid
þó fádæmin slík her fare ad garde.

The old lady spoke to her man. There was no need to tell her everything. 'My mind does not shudder though abnormal events have visited us.'

15.6 rísa: an alternative to *hrjósa* in this fixed expression

Þ-16

Kellíng fagnade sinni dóttur
vertu fliód komit med fagnade
her skalltu bída þinnar betri æfe
skalltu ein med ockr ǫllu ráda.

The old lady celebrated her daughter. 'Be welcome, girl! Here you shall wait for your better life. You alone will be in charge of everything with us two.'

Þ-17

Þá tók hún Vǫmb víst at geima
fenad Kellíngar ok fór so laungum
yfergáng veitte hún íta lidi
því hún alla akra beitte.

Then Stomach began in earnest to take care of the old lady's flocks. She took to tyrannizing the people for she grazed all the fields.

Þ-18 (V-34, J-15)

Heim kom sídan hilmer drótta
enn þeir hǫnum ákaft sǫgdu
beitt hefr alla akra þína
Kellíngar jód þó kým leg væri.

Then the prince of the troops came home and they told him vehemently: 'An old lady's child has grazed all your fields, though she looks ridiculous!'

18.8 kým leg: kímilig 430

Þ-19 (V-40, J-21)

Her skalltu um alla æfena þína
budlúng vid mik bundin vera
engi madr skal ockr skilja
fyrr enn vid afgǫmul ǫndunzt bæde.

'You will be bound to me for all your life, lord. No-one shall separate us two until we die of ripe old age.'

19: There is some extra space after stanza 18 in Þ, perhaps to indicate missing material. 19.1 um: appears to be corrected from 'vid' in Þ 19.1 alla: seems to be corrected from something else in Þ 19.8 ǫndunzt: ǫndustum 430

Þ-20 (V-39, J-20)

Vallt óþvegin Vǫmb til nauta
þar vard hann Ǫdlíngr epter ad snauta
þad þótte Kónge mínkunin mesta
bradlega sagde brúde at festa.

The unwashed stomach rolled to the bulls and the prince had to lumber behind. The king felt the greatest humiliation. Soon he was asking for an engagement.

Þ-21 (V-37, J-26)

Villtu víf med mer í vagn fara
úgódliga ok til bæjar
fardu heim undan heillin góda
ek mun í kvǫlld helldr síd koma.

'Would you, unkindly woman, go with me in the wagon and to the settlement?' — 'Go home first, dearest, I will come rather late tonight.'

21.3–4 ok gódliga / aka til bæar 430 21.3 úgódliga: I take this to be an adjective standing with *víf* but it could also be an adverb; the negative prefix ú- also occurs in 13.7

Þ-22 (V-46, J-29)

Valt þá sídla Vǫmb um gætter
inn fyrer hásæte hilmers inna
mer hefur alldrei hríngrin sá í huga komit
milldíngs sonur hefur meyunne ætlad.

Stomach came late rolling through the doors, in before the high seat of the prince's dwellings. 'That ring which the ruler's son intended for the maiden has never entered my mind.'

22.4 inna: I take this to be genitive plural of *inni*, 'dwelling' though the word is usually in the singular. Taking it to be the infinitive of *inna*, 'to speak', seems even more difficult. 22.5 alldrei: Þ has an additional line break after this word.

Þ-23 (V-47, J-28)

Margar vissa ek meyarnar daprar
þegar fliód var fastnad manni
enn hitt vissak alldrei á æfe minni
ad brúdgumin biggist til ad gráta.

'I knew many maidens that were sad when they were engaged to a man. But never in my life have I known the groom about to cry.'

23: Þ has some additonal space after stanza 22.

Þ-24

Var þá Vǫmb af virdum borin
í hilmirs hvílu helldr vandlega
þar skal drottníng dýrust sitia
yfer arfa sínum ok úngri meyu.

Then Stomach was carried by the men to the prince's bed, rather carefully. There the worthy queen shall sit watching her heir and the young maiden.

24.1: Þa var 430

Þ-25 (V-51, J-31)

Vaknade hún Signí vid draum þennan
at hún þóttist í bálinu brenna ǫll saman
hvǫr velldr heitum hyriar elldi
mer verdr alldrei ángrs á milli.

Signý woke up from a dream, feeling as if she was burning in fire. 'Who is causing a hot flaming fire? There is never long between my troubles.'

25: Þ has some additional space after stanza 24.

Þ-26 (V-52, J-32)

Vǫmb hef ek steikt qvad Vísers móder
ek þó eigi til alls búin
her munu fretter fást vænlegar
segdu hǫnum siklíng hvad þú heiter.

'I have roasted a stomach', said the mother of the prince, 'and yet not everything is ready. There will be favorable news to be had. Tell the king what you are called.'

Þ-27 (V-58, J-*1)

Asmundr sende íta marga
Hríng ad finna ok hǫnum ad bióda
bad hún á bále at brenna hana *Issu
ok á ægin út auskunni at kasta.

Ásmundr sent many men to find Hringr and invite him to visit. She asked for Yrsa to be burnt on a pyre and the ash thrown out on the sea.

27: Þ has some additional space after stanza 26. 27.6 Issu 430, Ilsu Þ

Reviews

A New Companion to Malory, ed. by Megan G. Leitch and Cory Rushton. Cambridge: Brewer, 2019. xiv + 330 pp. ISBN 9781843845232.

The *Morte Darthur* by the 'knyght prisoner' Sir Thomas Malory continues to captivate scholarly imagination into the twenty-first century as an ever-influential staple of the English literary canon. It has now been over twenty years since the publication of the landmark 1996 *A Companion to Malory*, edited by Elizabeth Archibald and A. S. G. Edwards. This *New Companion to Malory* is, in the words of its editors, 'a new series of [fifteen] essays […] providing a synthetic overview of, and fresh perspectives on' the *Morte Darthur* and topics like gender, geography, religiosity, violence and the postcolonial and its textual, literary, cultural and historical milieux (p. 1). In this learned endeavour, aimed at 'upper-level undergraduates or new postgraduates', the *New Companion* constitutes a worthy update: it bears the fruit of the seeds set by its precursor in positioning Malorian studies firmly at the forefront of exciting critical approaches (p. 1). In so doing, the *New Companion* points to further avenues of research, particularly concerning martial violence and gender.

Malorian studies has grown and changed enormously as a field since the publication of the 1996 precursor to the present volume: no fewer than eight new editions of the *Morte Darthur* have appeared. P. J. C. Field's 2013 two-volume *Morte* is now considered the pre-eminent critical edition, a position formerly held for over half a century by Eugène Vinaver's three-volume *The Works of Sir Thomas Malory* (1947, 1967, 1990). As the editors of the *New Companion* tell us, decades of critical work 'proceeded according to the rules and impulses of twentieth-century literary criticism' (p. 11). But this *New Companion* comes at a time when 'relative agreement' has been achieved on long-standing authorship debates, enabling scholars to turn their focus to interrogating the *Morte Darthur* through the lens of recent critical approaches (p. 2); a paperback edition has also recently been published. Accordingly, the volume's essays are split into three sections: five in The *Morte Darthur*: Text(s) and Contexts; seven in Approaches to Malory; and three in Malory's Afterlives.

In re-examining the *Morte*'s text(s) and contexts, Catherine Nall re-contextualises the *Morte* in a more nuanced reading of the text as implicitly a political allegory, whose content would still have produced an 'uncomfortable resonance' for people in the long fifteenth century (p. 31). Ralph Norris considers how recent advances in source studies are reshaping our understanding of Malory's *Morte* and major points of debate in Malory scholarship over

Leeds Medieval Studies 3 (2023), 137–38 DOI: 10.57686/256204/27 (ISSN: Print 2754-4575/ Online 2754-4583)
© 2023 James McHale
This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License

the last two decades. Significantly, Norris' discussion underscores the wider mission of the volume to re-evaluate present methodological approaches.

The Approaches to Malory section begins with Dorsey Armstrong's contribution in which she re-examines individual episodes and characters according to five themes of knighthood, gender, kinship, religion and kingship as well as how Malory manipulates his sources. Malory's 'dual manipulation' of both 'individual episodes and sources' skilfully achieves a deeper re-reading of the *Morte* in which his characters *evolve* so that we as readers are compelled to engage and care and can see its many trees while not losing sight of the forest (p. 163).

Amy S. Kaufman re-evaluates the recent historiographical consensus concerning the profundity of Malory's supposed misogyny. Kaufman interrogates the definition of 'agency' and proposes a new definition that centres on 'transformative and interpretive power rather than unlimited freedom of self-definition'; in other words, Kaufman focuses not on what women signify, but on what women *do* in Malory's text (p. 176). Through this new, and hopefully influential, lens, scholars should employ gender more widely as an analytical category in Malorian studies, 'transcend[ing] our strict critical categories' (p.176) and thereby produce multiple gendered readings of different elements in the *Morte* through intersectional methodological approaches.

Since the linguistic and affective turns of the mid- to late twentieth century, emotion has strongly emerged as a category of historical study for the medieval period (whose characterisation as an age of uncontrollable emotional outburst has only recently been thoroughly refuted by Professor Barbara H. Rosenwein, William M. Reddy, and others). And in this innovative spirit of advancing critical readings of Malory's text — long acknowledged as a deeply emotional work, touching 'joy, grief, anger, envy, pity, love, shame, hope and fear' (p. 177) — both Andrew Lynch and Raluca L. Radulescu separately examine emotions concerning the text's structures of power, community and gender, and spirituality.

However, the *New Companion* is too light on postcolonial readings — especially considering their relevance to Malorian studies — for its assertion that it provides an 'up-to-date guide to match Malory's centrality […] to critical discourse' (p. 1). By the twelfth century, the British Isles had already been invaded by several peoples in the historical period and the fifteenth century was a politically tumultuous time. The *Morte Darthur*, then, is a text steeped in violence. Meg Roland, in 'Malory and the Wider World', has re-captured its martial nature: she reads Arthur as a king seeking to preside over a wider 'militant Christendom', but deeper postcolonial readings would bear more fruit (p. 227). Indeed, while the exploration of diverse medievalisms in the final section's three essays is welcome — including studies of Malory's reception in wartime Britain, America and Japan — more surely could have been included concerning medievalisms and later constructions of Arthuriana and empire.

Medieval Studies, a still intellectually conservative field, has proven frustratingly resistant to waves of critical theory in recent decades. But the dam has finally broken, and this *New Companion* to Malory's *Morte*, central in the English literary canon, proves a worthy successor to the original and is a testament to the changing times in the field and its exciting scholarly potential.

James McHale (University of Leeds)

Cædmon's Hymn: A Multimedia Study, Edition and Archive, ed. by Daniel Paul O'Donnell, Version 1.1: Internet reprint, SEENET Series A — Editions, 8. Charlottesville, Virginia: SEENET, 2018. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.1198856.

Daniel O'Donnell comments, tactfully, that 'few modern scholars have shared Bede's enthusiasm for the intrinsic aesthetic quality of Cædmon's work' (§3.1). He makes little attempt to disabuse us of the implication that *Cædmon's Hymn* is quite a pedestrian composition, despite its fame as one of the earliest and most widely attested Old English poems, or its fame for being claimed by Bede as the first Christian Old English poem. I share my colleagues' scepticism as to the poem's literary merits, and this is one of the reasons why, when O'Donnell's edition of the text was originally published in 2005, I did not pay it any attention.[1] Forced by its place in the English canon to deliver a lecture on *Cædmon's Hymn*, however, I belatedly gave O'Donnell's work the attention it deserved, in its 2018 online reissue.

The preface to the reissue says that the work has not been updated, so one might expect a review to focus on comparing the user experience of working with the 2018 internet publication with its precursor, a book with CD-ROM. The fact that I have not attempted this comparison tells its own story: though well stocked, Leeds University Library does not hold the 2005 first edition, and even if it did, I would have had to find a computer with a CD drive with which to consult it. The free-access 2018 internet edition is, then, self-evidently a valuable improvement on its closed-access and technologically outdated predecessor. Moreover, the fact that O'Donnell and his colleagues have succeeded in transferring their electronic edition of 2005 to the Internet with what appears to have been little trouble (§2018.2) indicates that the coding decisions taken twenty years ago were future-proof, and suggests that they will remain so. In this, both the 2005 and 2018 editions of *Cædmon's Hymn* compare favourably with the contemporary *A Digital Facsimile of Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Junius 11*, ed. by Bernard J. Muir (Oxford: Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, 2004) (CD-ROM; software by Nick Kennedy), which was unusable on many machines and browsers even when published, and swiftly descended further into obsolescence.[2]

And whereas it was unthinkable that I might routinely send even my postgraduate students to consult the 2005 edition, the accessibility of the 2018 version makes it a cornucopia of opportunities for helping students study linguistic variation in Old English, palaeography, and scribal transmission, to which we can readily include deep links in our course materials (not to mention *Wikipedia*, whose English entry for *Cædmon's Hymn* is currently replete with links to O'Donnell's edition). Admittedly the image-files that comprise the manuscript facsimiles are by current standards quite low-resolution, and since quite a few of the manuscripts of the *Hymn* are now available in their entirety online, it would have been very helpful to link through to them: this is one of the few ways in which Martin Foys's recent *'Cædmon's Hymn': The Seven West Saxon Versions* supersedes O'Donnell's edition.[3] But O'Donnell's image files remain useful for most purposes — they were indeed evidently good enough for Bernard Muir, reviewing the first edition, to pick up some palaeographic details which

[1] First published as *Cædmon's Hymn: A Multimedia Study, Edition and Archive*, ed. by Daniel P. O'Donnell, Society for Early English and Norse Electronic Texts, Series A, 7 (Cambridge: Brewer, 2005).

[2] Cf. Murray McGillivray's review of Muir's edition in *Digital Medievalist*, 2 (2006), http://doi.org/10.16995/dm.14. In this respect, Muir's comment in his review of O'Donnell's edition that it 'has missed the opportunity to become a standard reference work' is rather ironic: *Early Medieval Europe*, 15 (2007), 466–69 (p. 469).

[3] ed. by Martin Foys (Wisconsin, Madison: The Center for the History of Print and Digital Culture, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2019), https://uw.digitalmappa.org/12.

Leeds Medieval Studies 3 (2023), 139–41 DOI: 10.57686/256204/26 (ISSN: Print 2754-4575/ Online 2754-4583)
© 2023 Alaric Hall (ORCID iD: 0000-0002-1479-4441)

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Zero 4.0 International License

O'Donnell had overlooked. On the one hand this indicates that O'Donnell's transcriptions and palaeographical analyses are not perfect, and it would have been good to see the 2018 edition incorporating reviewers' corrections, but on the other Muir's comments indicate that in some ways O'Donnell's edition has done the job it set out to do in making its claims readily checkable.[4] The bibliography of the 2018 edition does include an addendum listing reviews of the 2005 version, which at least provides a starting point for readers wanting to hunt for reviewers' additional insights.

One inconvenience of the 2018 edition is that it does not indicate the page numbers of the 2005 print copy of the edition. Looking back on the 2005 edition in 2010, O'Donnell commented that 'despite our request that readers cite the introduction by paragraph number, most in fact seem to cite by page', and correspondingly it is difficult to track past scholars' citations of the 2005 edition in the 2018 one.[5] O'Donnell's plaintive tone here is perhaps unearned: no Old Anglicist should have been surprised to find that their colleagues' scholarship was conservative, least of all when it came to footnotes; moreover, my search of the 2018 edition (including an electronic search for the word 'paragraph') has not turned up the injunction that O'Donnell refers to, so, if it was in the 2005 edition, it may have been hard to find. But I recognise that introducing page numbers to the 2018 edition would have been fiddly, and, on the bright side, the complete absence of page numbers from this text may mean that O'Donnell at last gets his wish that scholars cite by paragraph number, leading to more useful (and precise) citations in the future.

A more serious omission is a clear indication of paragraph numbers in the table of contents, which will mean that even where they are following up the citation of a paragraph number, readers unfamiliar with the numbering system have to click around the site for a while to track down citations — this would be easy to fix, so one hopes that it will be. Indeed, it took me a while to get a feel for the navigation of the site in general. On the other hand, as I got used to its structure, I was bowled over by the extent and care of its internal hyperlinking. Shortly before reading O'Donnell's edition, I read the (impressive and interesting) discussion of the oral and scribal transmission of *Cædmon's Hymn* by Paul Cavill from 2000.[6] Trying to follow Cavill's arguments without having transcriptions of all his key manuscripts to hand was all but impossible: reading Cavill's article essentially required a programme of primary reading to understand the arguments he was making. By comparison, following O'Donnell's arguments about the transmission of *Cædmon's Hymn* was joyously straightforward, as it was easy at every turn to click through to his manuscript sources and critical editions of different recensions. While I have not formed an opinion as to whether he is right or not, O'Donnell's argument that the recension of *Cædmon's Hymn* least like Bede's Latin paraphrase of the poem — the '*Æ*' or '*eorðan*' recension, found in the Old English translation of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History* — is the closest in content to the archetype of the *Cædmon's Hymn* tradition (§5) is, more than fifteen years after its publication, still a stimulating reading of the evidence.[7]

The open-access 2018 edition of *Cædmon's Hymn: A Multimedia Study, Edition and Archive* is a no-nonsense, future-proof website that, while quite inconvenient to navigate,

[4] See fn. 1.

[5] Daniel Paul O'Donnell, 'Different Strokes, Same Folk: Designing the Multi-Form Digital Edition', *Literature Compass*, 7.2 (2010), 110–19 (p. 112), https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-4113.2009.00683.x.

[6] 'The Manuscripts of *Cædmon's Hymn*', *Anglia: Zeitschrift für englische Philologie*, 118 (2000), 499–530.

[7] On this point, I am in agreement with Scott DeGregorio's review for the 2005 edition in *Speculum*, 82 (2007), 223–24 (p. 224) and Peter A. Stokes's in *Digital Medievalist*, 5 (2009), http://doi.org/10.16995/dm.21 (§6).

embraces the potential of HTML publication in ways that are still seldom realised in humanities publishing. Its scholarly contributions have not dated appreciably since 2005, but its usefulness as a teaching resource has grown dramatically.

Alaric Hall (University of Leeds)

The Bearded Bride: A Critical Edition of 'Þrymlur', ed. by Lee Colwill and Haukur Þorgeirsson. London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2020. xli + 58 pp. ISBN 9780903521987.

Þrymlur is an Icelandic *rímur* cycle that consists of three *rímur* totalling 79 stanzas describing the theft of Þórr's hammer and his efforts to retrieve it. This is a myth that is also found in the Eddic poem *Þrymskviða* and in a ballad that exists in different versions across Scandinavia and the Faroe Islands (known in Norwegian as *Torsvisen*). *The Bearded Bride: A Critical Edition of 'Þrymlur'* comprises an edition of the Icelandic *rímur* based on the earliest, sixteenth-century manuscript (Reykjavík, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, AM 604 g 4to);[1] the first published English translation of the poem along with detailed editorial notes following most stanzas (pages 1–32); and a critical exploration of its literary and social significance. Since it is usually the Eddic poems that draw attention from scholars, and these continue to attract translations, it is refreshing to see other areas of medieval Nordic poetry being given such meticulous attention. *The Bearded Bride* acknowledges the influence of the Eddic tradition but also draws together motifs and parallels from across the globe and situates *Þrymlur* within this panoply of influences and storytelling. The book is valuable as a resource for further scholarly study of later medieval Icelandic culture.

The substantial introduction to the book offers a thorough examination of *Þrymlur* and its historical and literary context. It includes a brief, but detailed, introduction to the *rímur* genre, which is informative to readers unfamiliar with the genre and situates the poem in relation to Icelandic poetry more generally. While drawing on previous research on *Þrymlur*, the introduction also offers new insights. Colwill and Þorgeirsson draw, for example, on Jón Helgason's observations that the composition and occasional omissions show the poem's oral preservation and transmission.[2] This is also evident in the poetic language, which Colwill and Þorgeirsson describe as being overall 'relatively straightforward and typical of early *rímur*' but nevertheless presents occasional confusion which is dealt with in the editorial notes. For example, in stanza 1.20, there is a detailed discussion of the translation of the phrase 'logu sem geima' (Colwill and Þorgeirsson translate this to '[over] land as sea') and the way that the original manuscript showcases a mixture of formulaic ways to phrase 'land and sea' (p. 8).

The introduction also includes a discussion of the different motifs and parallels drawn between *Þrymlur* and other folk-tale motifs and myths around the world. Although going into too much detail would send this review into a long (but undoubtedly interesting) rabbit hole, I will highlight a particular observation Colwill and Þorgeirsson make about *Þrymlur* in relation to the Eddic poem *Þrymskviðja* and the Scandinavian ballad with the same story. They argue that *Þrymskviða* 'assum[es] its audience's knowledge of the characters, [and thus] sees no need to educate that audience', whilst the ballads on the other hand 'remove events from the mythological sphere entirely […] [T]he audience do not need to be informed of any

Leeds Medieval Studies 3 (2023), 141–42 DOI: 10.57686/256204/33 (ISSN: Print 2754-4575/ Online 2754-4583)
© 2023 Annika Christensen (ORCID iD: 0000-0001-9143-2746)

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (CC BY SA)

background' (p. xxxix). Colwill and Þorgeirsson argue that it is in the middle of 'these two extremes' that *Þrymlur* is situated (p. xxxix):

> *Þrymlur* seems designed to convey information as well as to entertain, and therefore occupies a unique position amongst the extant poetry concerned with the theft of Þórrs hammer. […] [T]he mythological world is not inhabited to such a degree as to make explanation unnecessary, but nor is it abandoned. The *rímur* poet seems to target an audience on the edge of forgetting; by including the lists of giant names alongside colorful scenes of the giants' (lack of) table manners, the poet both entertains the audience and shores up collective memory of the mythological world.

Þrymlur is therefore an important part of a wider exploration of poetic compositions and enduring motifs that poets reworked into their materials in the post-Conversion period, and shows the variety of interpretations poets made from an existing narrative.

With *The Bearded Bride*, Colwill and Þorgeirsson present, as well as a critical edition of the cycle, the first English translation of *Þrymlur*. This is an undertaking that has been done with care and that draws on the extensive work of earlier researchers. Although the review of previous editions does not take up much space in the introduction, knowledge of previous editions is clear through the translation and normalisation process evident in the notes accompanying the *Þrymlur* text. Colwill and Þorgeirsson clearly state their approach to the translation at the end of the introduction, but I want to draw attention to the fact that, in addition to a translation and glossary, many of the stanzas are accompanied by detailed commentary 'which aim to explain our emendations' and to 'clarify (or at least point out) points of ambiguity in the text', as well as references to other relevant material. Colwill and Þorgeirsson take the reader through their process of translating and, in addition, the processes undertaken by other previous attempts at normalising the original manuscript text.

By presenting the first published English translation of *Þrymlur*, Colwill and Þorgeirsson have created a fundamental text that invites further studies, explorations, and translations. This edition attempts (and succeeds) to reach two goals: to provide an accurate translation of the source material and to situate the text matter within a wider context of 'poetic compositions' (p. v). The book is an extensive exploration of *Þrymlur,* which is both accessible to a layperson as well as a valuable resource for academic exploration.

Annika Christensen (University of Leeds)

Dominican Resonances in Medieval Iceland: The Legacy of Bishop Jón Halldórsson of Skálholt, ed. by Gunnar Harðarson and Karl G. Johansson, The Northern World, 91. Leiden: Brill, 2021. ix + 337 pp. ISBN 9789004448797.

Dominican Resonances in Medieval Iceland: The Legacy of Bishop Jón Halldórsson of Skálholt is an interdisciplinary volume which explores the ecclesiastical and literary history, textual culture, and liturgy of Iceland during the early and mid-fourteenth century. As noted in the introduction, the volume stems ultimately from discussions at the 2014 New Chaucer Society Conference in Reykjavík, which led to a conference at Skálholt in 2016. While not without flaws, this book represents a significant contribution to a period of history with great potential

Leeds Medieval Studies 3 (2023), 142–45 DOI: 10.57686/256204/25 (ISSN: Print 2754-4575/ Online 2754-4583)
© 2023 Ryder Patzuk-Russell (ORCID iD: 0000-0002-8232-1275)

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (CC BY SA)

for new research. Considering the title, it offers a surprisingly broad and comprehensive exploration of issues and themes, with some chapters only peripherally relating to Bishop Jón.

Dominican Resonances is divided into five thematic sections, beginning with 'Educational and Cultural Context'. The first chapter, 'Canon, Dominican and Brother: The Life and Times of Jón Halldórsson in Bergen', by Christian Etheridge, sets the stage for the rest of the book by constructing an outline of Jón's life before his election as bishop of Skálholt in 1322. Etheridge successfully draws together a wide variety of sources and scholarship, situating the reader in Jón's life and time in the context of the sources. An appropriate level of source criticism is sometimes lacking, however, above all in the treatment of *Jón þáttr biskups Halldórssonar* [The Story of Bishop Jón Halldórsson] as an actual narrative of Jón's life, rather than a series of *exempla* in a biographical frame. The use of details in the first *exemplum* to support the argument that Jón studied theology rather than liberal arts (pp. 17–18) is problematic in light of the entirely formulaic nature of the story. Despite these flaws, the key arguments of the chapter, particularly that Jón probably did not become a Dominican until late in his career, are not unpersuasive.

The second chapter, 'Bishop Jón Halldórsson and Clerical Culture in 14th-Century Iceland', by Viðar Pálsson, continues the focus on Jón's intellectual background, providing the reader with valuable additional historical background for Jón's activities. The main focus is on his education and his relationship to discourses in canon law. The chapter examines the implications of and reasons for his attendance at the University of Bologna. The arguments here have interesting intersections with the first chapter and both scholars show clearly how Jon's status as friar and/or canon determines what we can assume about his education.

Part two of *Dominican Resonances* is entitled 'Dominican Exempla and Saga Literature'. The section commences with Gottskálk Jensson's 'Bishop Jón Halldórsson and 14th-Century Innovations in Saga Narrative: The Case of *Egils saga einhenda ok Ásmundar berserkjabana*'. This chapter paints a persuasive image of Jón as a mediator between continental and Icelandic literature, while also emphasising that Icelandic literature had always been in dialogue with Latin writing from abroad; Jón's influence had an impact but was not revolutionary. Gottskálk explores the range of Jón Halldórsson's possible literary impacts, focusing on the influence of the Seven Sages legend in Iceland. The specific argument about Jón's authorship of *Egils saga einhenda* is partly undercut by a mix-up between *Clári saga* and the *ævintýri* 'Of Master Parus and his Delusions' (pp. 72–73), but the idea that Jón at least had an impact on the saga remains quite convincing. In addition to a nuanced analysis of Jón Halldórsson's place in Icelandic literature history, this chapter is an excellent example of why *Egils saga einhenda* has drawn so much interest in recent scholarship.

From there the focus narrows to *exempla* with Hjalti Snær Ægisson's 'Holy Ministry in Old Norse *ævintýri*'. This chapter categorises *exempla* attributed to Jón Halldórsson and proceeds to illuminate their intersections with other Old Norse texts; these comparisons allow brief explorations of Icelandic attitudes towards clergy, monks, and ecclesiastical activity in the fourteenth century. Hjalti Snær is appropriately careful and critical in offering historical conclusions using literary sources, while insightfully showing how much the *exempla* can reveal about religious and ecclesiastical discourses in medieval Iceland.

The final chapter of part two is '*Clári saga* and Its Continental Siblings: A Comparative Literary Approach to an Old Problem' by Védís Ragnheiðardóttir. *Clári saga* and Jón's possible authorship of it are discussed in earlier chapters, particularly Jensson's, and there

is a significant amount of response to Shaun Hughes' important 2008 article, '*Klári saga* as Indigenous Romance'. Védís offers the most thorough analysis of the saga in the volume, making use of tale types and motifs. *Clári saga* is identified as ATU 900 'King Thrushbeard' and is compared to other early versions of this tale. While Védís does not argue that Jón actually wrote *Clári saga*, she successfully offers new reasons why he was probably connected to it and proposes new avenues of comparative literary research using the saga.

Part three of *Dominican Resonances* focuses on 'Manuscripts and Illuminations' beginning with Stefan Drechsler's 'Jón Halldórsson and Law Manuscripts of Western Iceland c. 1320–1340'. The chapter's goal is to link Jón to the fourteenth-century manuscripts AM 671 4to and AM 343 fol., as well as the production of Icelandic *máldagar* [church charters]. While Drechsler's conclusions are presented as preliminary, intended as a 'theoretical framework only', (p. 125) more thorough analysis of the material at hand would have helped to make the chapter more complete. The argument that Jón was present at Helgafell in 1324 and involved with the production AM 671 4to is interesting but not sufficiently developed and remains unconvincing for now. The proposed connection between Jón and AM 343 fol., already tenuous, is undercut by a misreading of the third chapter of *Jóns þáttr*, where Drechsler presents the *exemplum* as condemning a certain killing, when it is in fact defending its righteousness (pp. 137–38). Overall, while the chapter boasts an interesting premise, drawing connections between Jón's tenure as bishop and specific manuscripts through an analysis of ecclesiastical administration and ideology, more thorough source criticism and rigorous argumentation are needed to support its conclusions.

Part three then concludes with Karl G. Johansson's 'AM 657 a–b 4° and the Mouvance of Medieval Texts: Roles and Functions in the Transmission of Texts in a Manuscript Culture'. This chapter offers a careful and nuanced critique of how ideas like 'author', 'compiler', and 'translator' are constructed and used, focusing on the case of AM 657 a-b 4to and its relationship to Arngrímr Brandsson and Jón Halldórsson. The key points of the chapter do lack some clarity in their presentation, and the arguments can be difficult to follow, but they intersect in thought-provoking ways with the other discussions of *exempla*, *Clári saga*, and manuscript culture in *Dominican Resonances*.

Part four, 'Music and Liturgy', is a high point of the volume, albeit one particularly distant from most discussions of Jón Halldórsson. Here Astrid Marner provides a much-needed reframing of our conception of Icelandic liturgy in 'Liturgical Change and Liturgical Plurality in the Province of Nidaros: New Light on the *Ordo Nidrosiensis Ecclesiae*'. Marner reevaluates Gjerløw's classic edition of the *Ordo Nidrosiensis* and the manuscripts behind it, calling for a much overdue acknowledgement of liturgical plurality in the archdiocese of Niðarós. Jón Halldórsson's introduction of the feast of Corpus Christi to Iceland in 1326 is presented as evidence for significant liturgical plurality on the island; otherwise the bishop has no real role in Marner's argument. The chapter is nonetheless a reminder of the centrality of the liturgy in any consideration of the life and career of a bishop.

Gisela Attinger continues in a closely related vein with 'Some Reflections on the Liturgy for St Þorlákr'. While dealing with the Office(s) of St. Þórlákr rather than the *Ordo*, the core argument overlaps significantly with the previous chapter: even the few surviving manuscript fragments are enough to show that there were significant local variations in liturgical practice in Iceland and the archdiocese of Niðarós as a whole. The specificity of Attinger's work highlights the significance of these conclusions, showing how variation existed even within liturgical celebrations of a minor local saint like Þorlákr. Here the connection to Jón

Halldórsson is slightly more significant, as the chapter shows Dominican models for melodies in an Office for St. Þorlákr, which may have come to Iceland through Jón.

At the end of the volume, part five, 'Manuscript Practice and Multiple Careers', examines two other important figures from Jón Halldórsson's time. Embla Aae begins the section with 'Elucidating Charter Practice and Administrative Literacy in Four Works by Einarr Hafliðason'. The scope of this chapter is ambitious, but Aae takes the time and space to properly explore the intertextuality of Einarr's works and insightfully highlights the presentation of administrative writing and literacy in these four texts. The miracle story in AM 194 8vo, 'Atburðr á Finnmörk', provides a particularly fascinating case study of the complex agencies involved in textual transmission and intersects well with Johannsson's earlier chapter.

Finally, Gunnar Harðarson outlines the life and career of Arngrímr Brandsson in 'Music and Manuscripts in Skálholt and Þingeyrar'. This is an ideal conclusion to the book, mirroring the first chapter in its reconstruction of a particular life and career, as well as presenting a nuanced image of Arngrímr Brandsson, who is shown throughout *Dominican Resonances* to be a key link between Jón Halldórsson and Icelandic literary production. There is a strong emphasis on the complexity of Arngrímr Brandsson as a person and care is taken not to overemphasise or misrepresent the more speculative conclusions of the chapter. Harðarson adds significantly to the overall impact of the volume by offering such a complete and up-to-date biography of this vital figure of fourteenth-century Icelandic textual culture.

Dominican Resonances includes four appendices: an English translation of *Jóns þáttr* entitled 'The Account of Bishop Jón Halldórsson'; a 1338 letter of bishop Hákon of Bergen to Jón Halldórsson; a commentary on a booklist generally attributed to Bishop Árni Sigurðsson (d. 1314); and finally, a list of the contents of manuscript AM 671 4to, the Helgafell manuscript discussed in Drechsler's chapter. All of these are interesting reference points, but the translation of *Jóns þáttr* is most relevant to the volume and likely to be useful to most readers. While the translation is a revision of Marteinn H. Sigurðsson's translation from his 1997 MPhil, and thus appears to have the accuracy expected of a text revised by several talented Old Norse experts, the English used is sometimes clunky or unidiomatic and in places the translation can be difficult to read.

There is very little missing from *Dominican Resonances*, though the completeness of the volume might have been enhanced by a biography of Jón's tenure as bishop of Skálholt, mirroring Etheridge's outline of his earlier life. But the range of texts and topics examined — all of which touch in some way upon Jón's life and career — is truly impressive. Furthermore, the relationship between the topics discussed and Jón is not inconsequential: his presence provides a compelling historical link that emphasises the intersections between very different areas of research. It is all the more impressive, from a literary and textual perspective, that his significance stands independently of whether he actually authored or compiled any works himself, and in spite of how limited the evidence for his life is. This book is an important step forward in our understanding of late medieval Iceland and, despite some flaws, remains highly recommended to anyone interested in the subject.

Ryder Patzuk-Russell (University of Silesia in Katowice)