

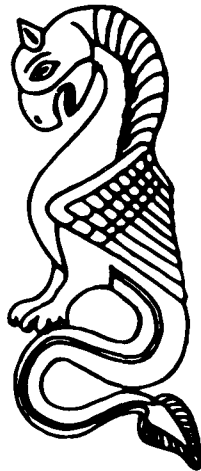
Leeds Studies in English

New Series XXXIV

2003

Edited by

Catherine Batt and Andrew Wawn



Leeds Studies in English

School of English

University of Leeds

2003

Leeds Studies in English

New Series XXXIV

Leeds Studies in English

Leeds Studies in English is an annual publication from the School of English, University of Leeds, England. An international refereed journal, *Leeds Studies in English* publishes articles on Old and Middle English literature, Old Icelandic language and literature, and the historical study of the English language.

Editorial Board: Catherine Batt, *Editor, Chair*
Paul Hammond
Alfred Hiatt
Rory McTurk
Oliver Pickering
Mary Swan
Andrew Wawn

Notes for Contributors

Contributors are requested to follow the *Modern Humanities Research Association Style Guide* (London: MHRA, 2002). The language of publication is English and translations should normally be supplied for quotations in languages other than English. Each contributor will receive twenty offprints. If you are sending work from within the UK, please supply a large stamped addressed envelope; if from overseas, please send a large self-addressed envelope and the appropriate value of international reply coupons. Please send all contributions for the attention of: The Editor, *Leeds Studies in English*, School of English, University of Leeds, Leeds LS2 9JT, United Kingdom.

Reviews

Please send copies of books for review to the Editor at the above address.

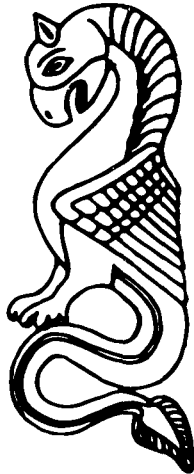
Leeds Studies in English

New Series XXXIV

2003

Edited by

Catherine Batt and Andrew Wawn



Leeds Studies in English
School of English
University of Leeds
2003

© *Leeds Studies in English* 2003
School of English
University of Leeds
Leeds, England

ISSN 0075-8566

Contents

Two versions of Advent: the Benedictional of Æthelwold and <i>The Advent Lyrics</i>	1
Barbara Raw	<i>Oxford</i>
Anglo-Saxon Inscribed Rings	29
Elisabeth Okasha	<i>University College Cork</i>
'Westward I came across the sea': Anglo-Scandinavian History through Scandinavian Eyes	47
Susanne Kries	<i>University of Potsdam</i>
Anglo-Saxon History in Medieval Iceland: Actual and Legendary Sources	77
Magnús Fjalldal	<i>University of Iceland</i>
Lazamon or the Lawman? A Question of Names, a Poet and an Unacknowledged Legislator	109
John Frankis	<i>University of Newcastle upon Tyne</i>
'I this book shal make!' Thomas Hoccleve's Self-Publication and Book Production	133
David Watt	<i>St Anne's College, Oxford</i>
Reviews	161

Two Versions of Advent: The Benedictional of Æthelwold and *The Advent Lyrics*

Barbara Raw

The Benedictional of Æthelwold and *The Advent Lyrics* both belong to the period of the tenth-century monastic revival. The Benedictional, written for the personal use of Æthelwold, bishop of Winchester, and containing the blessings given by the bishop at mass, was produced at Winchester between 971 and 984, possibly in 973.¹ The poem known as *The Advent Lyrics*, or *Christ I*, is the first item in the Exeter Book, dated by Patrick Conner to the period 950-970.² The contents of the manuscript could, of course, date from earlier than c. 950, but the range of exegetical material used by the author of *The Advent Lyrics*, in particular the emphasis on the role of Mary, fits most easily into the period of the monastic revival.³ The Benedictional and *The Advent Lyrics* are not only contemporary with each other: they derive from a similar liturgical background. The Benedictional, described by its scribe as 'this book of the advent of the Son of the loving Father', embodies the idea that Christ's advent is not merely an event from the past but something made constantly present through the liturgy.⁴ *The Advent Lyrics* is a meditation on a wide range of biblical and liturgical texts, in particular, the antiphons sung at the *Magnificat* during the week before Christmas. But although the Benedictional and *The Advent Lyrics* both belong to the same period, and draw on the ideas associated with the tenth-century revival of learning, they present very different interpretations of the season of Advent.

In the early Anglo-Saxon period Advent came at the end of the liturgical year, which began with either the first mass of Christmas or the mass of the Vigil of Christmas. By the tenth century the beginning of the Church's year had been moved back to the First Sunday of Advent.⁵ The system was not consistent, however, as Ælfric notes:

Nu ongynd̥ ure gerim æfter Romaniscre gesetnysse on þysum dæge [1 January], for nanum godcundlicum gesceade, ac for þam ealdan gewunan. Sume ure þeningbec onginnað on Adventum Domini. Nis þeah ðær for ðy þæs geares ord, ne eac on þisum dæge nis mid nanum gesceade, þeah ðe ure gerimbec on þyssere stowe geedlæcon.

[Now our reckoning begins on 1 January, according to the Roman practice, not for any religious reason but simply because of old custom. Some of our service-books begin with the Advent of the Lord. However, that is not, therefore, the beginning of the year, nor is there any reason for choosing today, even though our calendars place the beginning of the year at this point.]⁶

Graduals and antiphoners normally began with the First Sunday of Advent; Anglo-Saxon lists of pericopes, on the other hand, continued to begin the year with the Nativity or its Vigil until the mid-eleventh century.⁷ There is no consistency, however, even within the same type of manuscript. The Benedictional of Æthelwold begins the year with the blessings for Advent, whereas the Benedictional of Archbishop Robert, the paintings in which were copied from Æthelwold's Benedictional or a related manuscript, places them at the end.⁸ Of other manuscripts, the ninth- to tenth-century Leofric Missal and the early-eleventh-century Sacramentary of Robert of Jumièges place the Advent texts at the end of the year.⁹ The Leofric Collectar, the Winchester and Canterbury Tropers, the Canterbury Benedictional, Claudius Pontifical I and the Portiforium of St Wulstan, on the other hand, start the year with Advent.¹⁰

The sense that Advent signified an ending rather than a beginning is reflected in the readings for the season. The epistle for the First Sunday of Advent in the Roman rite was St Paul's warning that the last days had already arrived (Romans 13. 11-14), while the gospel for the following Sunday was St Luke's description of the disasters signalling the end of the world and the return of Christ in the clouds (Luke 21. 25-33).¹¹ Other readings, though messianic in theme or concerned with the inauguration of Christ's ministry, seem unrelated to what might be considered the main theme of Advent: the expectation of Christ's birth in time. The gospel for the First Sunday of Advent is the account of Christ's entry into Jerusalem (Matt. 21.1-9).¹² The gospels for the Third and Fourth Sundays of Advent and for the Saturday of the final week are concerned with John the

The Benedictional of Æthelwold and The Advent Lyrics

Baptist's role as a witness to Christ (Matt. 11.2-10, John 1.19-28 and Luke 3.1-6).¹³ By contrast, St Luke's account of the Annunciation and Visitation (Luke 1.26-38 and 39-47) is relegated to the Wednesday and Friday of Ember Week.¹⁴ This choice of gospel readings is reflected in Gregory the Great's homilies on the gospels, four of which were included in the Advent section of Paul the Deacon's Homiliary, which was one of Ælfric's main sources.¹⁵ Gregory's homilies for Advent include expositions of the signs of the world's ending (Luke 21.25-33) and the passages on John the Baptist (John 1.19-27, Matt. 11.2-10 and Luke 3.1-11) but nothing on the Annunciation.¹⁶ Bede, on the other hand, includes two homilies on the Annunciation and Visitation, based on the readings from Luke 1.26-55, as well as two on John the Baptist, based on Mark 1.4-8 and John 1.15-18, in his Advent series.¹⁷ It seems likely that he was following a Neapolitan series of gospel readings, in which the account of the Annunciation was read on the Third Sunday in Advent,¹⁸ rather than the Roman series used by Gregory, though there is also evidence from Spain and northern Italy for a Marian feast in the period immediately before Christmas¹⁹ and Alcuin's *De laude Dei* includes an antiphon for a Marian feast assigned by Constantinescu to 18 December.²⁰ Bede does not, incidentally, include a homily for the Feast of the Annunciation on 25 March, even though he knew the feast.²¹ Ælfric, unlike Bede, preached on the Annunciation on 25 March²² and followed Gregory in preaching on the last days of the world and on Christ's return to earth in his homilies for the first two Sundays of Advent.²³

Ælfric's homily for the First Sunday in Advent²⁴ opens with a brief reference to Advent as the period when Christians recall Christ's coming to earth in human form, but moves quickly to define this coming as twofold: at his birth and at his return in judgement. Even the Old Testament prophets are seen as referring to both advents:

Ða halgan witegan witegodon æigðer ge þone ærran tocyme,
on þære acennednysse, and eac þone æfran æt þam micclum
dome.

[The holy prophets prophesied both about the first coming, at
the Incarnation, and also about the second coming, at the
great judgement.]²⁵

The church's remembrance of Christ's first coming, Ælfric says, serves as a reminder of the need to be ready for his return. This theme of the imminence of

Christ's return is elaborated in Ælfric's homily for the Second Sunday in Advent, based largely on Gregory's homily for the same day, on Luke 21.25-33,²⁶ but with additional material from Matthew 24.27-42²⁷ and a passage in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians (4.14-18) which describes how Christians will be caught up in the clouds to meet the returning Christ.

This theme of Christ's twofold coming and of the need to prepare for his return in judgement appears repeatedly in the blessings for the Advent season in both the Benedictional of Æthelwold and the related Benedictional of Archbishop Robert. Belief in Christ's first advent is linked to trust that release from sin will allow the believer to face the coming judgement without fear:

Omnipotens Deus, cuius unigeniti adventum et praeteritum creditis et futurum expectatis, eiusdemque adventus vos illustratione sua sanctificet, et sua benedictione locupletet. Amen.

In presentis vitae stadio vos ab omni adversitate defendat, et se vobis in iudicio placabilem ostendat. Amen.

Quo a cunctis peccatorum contagiis liberati, illius tremendi examinis diem expectetis interriti. Amen.

[May Almighty God, the advent of whose only-begotten Son you believe to have happened in the past and whose return you look for in the future, sanctify you through the light of the same Son's coming, and enrich you with his blessing. Amen. May he defend you from all adversity in the race of the present life, and show himself merciful to you at the judgement. Amen. That, freed by him from all stain of sin, you may await the day of his great judgement unafraid. Amen.]²⁸

These hopes, expressed here in the first of Æthelwold's two sets of blessings for the First Sunday in Advent, are repeated Sunday by Sunday. The blessings for the Second Sunday open with the words:

Deus cuius adventus incarnationis preteritus creditur, et iudicii venturus expectatur, vos antequam veniat expiet ab omni contagione delicti. Amen.

The Benedictional of Æthelwold and The Advent Lyrics

Prius in vobis deluat omne quod illa futura examinatione puniturus est, ut cum iustus advenerit iudex, non in vobis inveniatur quod condemnet. Amen.

[May God, who, we believe, became incarnate in the past, and whose return in judgement we expect, cleanse you from all stain of sin before he comes. Amen. May he wash away everything in you which will be punished at that future judgement, so that when the just judge comes, he will not find in you anything to condemn. Amen.]²⁹

In the blessings for the Third Sunday the stress on judgement is changed to a hope that those who recall Christ's first coming to earth will gain their reward, namely eternal life:

Ut qui de adventu redemptoris nostri secundum carnem devota mente laetamini, in secundo cum in maiestate sua advenerit, praemiis vitae aeternae ditemini. Amen.

[So that you who rejoice with devout minds at the advent of our Saviour in the flesh, may be enriched with the rewards of eternal life when he comes again in majesty. Amen.]³⁰

The same theme is taken up at greater length in the blessings for the Fourth and final Sunday with their references to the gifts of grace and salvation offered at Christ's incarnation:

Deus qui vos et prioris adventus gratia reparavit, et in secundo daturum se vobis regnum cum sanctis angelis repromisit, adventus sui vos inlustratione sanctificet. Amen.

Vincula vestra dissolvat antequam veniat, ut liberati a vinculis peccatorum, interriti tremendum eius expectetis adventum. Amen.

Et quem venisse in terris pro vestra salute creditis, venturumque ad iudicium sustinetis, eius adventum inpavidi mereamini contueri. Amen.

[May God who restored you through the grace of his first coming, and promised to give you a kingdom with the holy angels at his second, sanctify you through the light of his

coming. Amen. May he loosen your fetters before he comes, so that freed from the bonds of sins, you may await his great coming without fear. Amen. And that you may endure his return in judgement, whom you believe to have come to earth for your salvation, and be worthy to contemplate his coming without fear. Amen.]³¹

Given this link between Christ's incarnation as a means of saving the human race, and his return, when those who had followed him would receive the reward he had gained for them, it is not surprising that the paintings for the season of Advent in Æthelwold's Benedictional should consist of representations of the Annunciation and the Second Coming.³²

The choice of subjects for the Benedictional's illustrations for the Advent season, therefore, corresponds to the contrast set up in the texts between Christ's first and second comings; the details of the two paintings, however, relate to a much wider selection of liturgical and exegetical texts. The painting of the Annunciation which is placed next to the blessings for the First Sunday in Advent is headed,

Nuntius e caelo hic stat praedicando Mariae.

Ecce Deum paries hominemque simul benedicta.

[The messenger from heaven stands here announcing to Mary, Behold, you who are blessed will bear one who is both God and man.]

Liturgically, the painting recalls the third responsory at the night office of the feast:

R. Missus est Gabriel angelus ad Mariam virginem desponsatam Joseph, nuntians ei verbum: et expavescit Virgo de lumine: Ne timeas, Maria, invenisti gratiam apud Dominum; ecce concipies et paries, et vocabitur Altissimi Filius.

V. Dabit ei Dominus Deus sedem David patris eius, et regnabit in domo Jacob in aeternum. Et vocabitur [Altissimi Filius]. Gloria Patri. Et vocabitur [Altissimi Filius].

[R. The angel Gabriel was sent to Mary, a virgin betrothed to Joseph, announcing the word to her: and the virgin was afraid at the light. Do not be afraid Mary, you have found grace with the Lord; behold, you will conceive and give birth, and he will be called the son of the Most High. V. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will rule over the house of Jacob for ever. And he will be called the son of the Most High. Glory be to the Father. And he will be called the son of the Most High.]³³

The details of the painting do not correspond to this text, however: there is no indication in the painting that Mary is afraid nor is there any reference to her betrothal to Joseph or her descent from David. Instead, the artist has placed the gospel event within a symbolic and prophetic context. Mary is shown seated under a baldacchino with an open book in front of her, a detail which refers to the belief that at the time of the Annunciation she was reading Isaiah's prophecy, read at Vespers on the First Sunday of Advent: 'The maiden is with child and will soon give birth to a son whom she will call Immanuel' (Isaiah 7.14).³⁴ The point is made by Bede in his commentary on St Luke's Gospel:

Quia ergo legerat, Ecce virgo in utero habebit et pariet filium, sed quomodo id fieri posset non legerat, merito credula his quae legerat, sciscitatur ab angelo quod in propheta non invenit.

[For she had read, Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, but how this would come about she had not read; believing these things she had read, she asked the angel about what she had not found in the prophet.]³⁵

The gospel event being commemorated is therefore worthy of belief because it fulfils the prophecy.³⁶ The oval, gold object in Mary's left hand has been identified variously as a weaving shuttle, a distaff, a paten or the vessel containing the bitter waters which the *Protevangelium Jacobi* claims that Mary and Joseph were made to drink in order to prove their innocence.³⁷ Deshman favours the identification of the object as a paten, emphasizing the symbolic connection between the Incarnation and the eucharist.³⁸ If, on the other hand, the object is a distaff or shuttle, it may be intended to recall the apocryphal account of Mary

helping to weave the veil for the Temple,³⁹ or, more importantly, her role as the second Eve.⁴⁰

The most important symbols in the painting, however, are the cloud which surrounds Gabriel in the painting and which is extended to create a cloud-like halo round Mary's head, and the baldacchino under which she is seated.⁴¹ Deshman relates the cloud to the cloud which accompanied God's manifestations of himself in the Old Testament and at Christ's transfiguration (Matt. 17.5, Mark 9.7 and Luke 9.34), to the overshadowing of Mary by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1.35), and to a passage from Isaiah sung as a versicle and response at Vespers throughout Advent:

V. Rorate caeli desuper, et nubes pluant Justum.

R. Aperiatu terra, et germinet Salvatorem.

[*V. Drop down dew, you heavens, and let the clouds rain the just. R. Let the earth be opened and bud forth a saviour.*]⁴²

The baldacchino, which resembles the altar-covering in the final painting in the Benedictional, suggests a parallel between Mary's conception of Christ and Christ's descent on the church's altar at the eucharist.⁴³ The point is made explicitly by Paschasius Radbertus, whose writings were certainly known at Winchester.⁴⁴ Moreover, the fact that the cloud fills the arch above Mary's head recalls her role as the new tabernacle: just as the tabernacle made by Moses was filled by the glory of Yahweh (Exodus 40.34-5), so Mary is filled with the glory that is God.⁴⁵

As was said earlier, the texts of the Benedictional link the Annunciation and the Second Coming in terms of a contrast between mercy and judgement, but there is a further connection. Gabriel's words to Mary, 'The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end' (Luke 1.32-3) recall God's promises to David in the Old Testament.⁴⁶ The restoration of the Davidic line in the person of the Messiah is made explicit in the description of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem in all four of the gospels (Matt. 21.5 and 9, Mark 11.9-10, Luke 19.38 and John 12.13). Bede clearly had this connection in mind when he interpreted Gabriel's words in relation to the gospel description of Christ's entry into Jerusalem, when the crowds welcomed him as king of Israel, but he also saw a link to Christ's reign in heaven, when he would lead the redeemed into their true

home.⁴⁷ The point is echoed by Ælfric in his homily for the Feast of the Annunciation:

Crist heold Davides cynesetl, na lichamlice, ac gastlice, for ðan þe he is ealra cyninga cyning, and rixað ofer his gecorenum mannum, æigðer ge ofer Israhela folce, ge ofer eallum oðrum leodscipum. Ða ðæ on rihtum geleafan wuniað, and Crist hi ealle gebrincð to his ecan rice.

[Christ held David's throne spiritually rather than physically, because he is the king of all kings and rules over his chosen people, both the people of Israel and all other nations who live in right belief, and Christ will bring them all to his eternal kingdom.]⁴⁸

There is, therefore, an unstated link between the paintings of the Annunciation and the Second Coming which is quite independent of the texts of the Benedictional, with their emphasis on the contrast between Christ's advent as saviour and as judge.

The Benedictional's painting for the Third Sunday in Advent shows Christ coming in the clouds, surrounded by angels carrying the symbols of the passion: the cross, spear and sponge. There are no close artistic parallels to this scene, though it is sometimes compared to a painting in the Athelstan Psalter, which shows the enthroned Christ among choirs of angels, patriarchs, prophets and apostles, and with the symbols of his passion — the spear, sponge and cross — behind his throne.⁴⁹ The lowest register of this scene, which shows Mary among the apostles, resembles that in representations of the Ascension such as that on folio 120v of the Psalter⁵⁰ and it is therefore possible that the Athelstan painting, like that in the Benedictional, was intended to show Christ's Second Coming 'in the same way as you have seen him go' (Acts 1.11). It is more likely, however, that the scene represents Christ as judge, displaying his wounds as a reproach to those who have failed to repay him for his sufferings on their behalf, an event described in several Old English sermons and in the Old English poem *Christ III*.⁵¹ The painting in the Benedictional of Æthelwold, by contrast, focuses on Christ's return to earth as 'Rex regum et Dominus dominantium' (Apoc. 19.16), a text written on his thigh in the painting.⁵² It is an imperial *adventus* similar to the entry into Jerusalem.⁵³

Protocol required that kings and emperors should be met some distance outside a city. When Charlemagne came to Rome in 774, Pope Hadrian I sent the judges of the city to meet him with a banner thirty miles outside the city and, when he was only a mile from Rome,

Direxit universas scholas militiae una cum patronis simulque et pueris qui ad didicendas litteras pergebant, deportantes omnes ramos palmarum adque olivarum, laudesque illi omnes canentes, cum adclationum earundem laudium vocibus ipsum Francorum susceperunt regem; obviam illi eius sanctitas dirigens venerandas cruces, id est signa, sicut mos est exarchum aut patricium suscipiendum, eum cum ingenti honore suscipi fecit.

[He sent all the *scholae* of the militia, along with the *patroni* and the children who were just starting out to learn their letters, all bearing branches of palm and olive, and all chanting his praises; with shouts of acclamation and praise they welcomed the king of the Franks. His Holiness despatched venerable crosses, that is to say standards, to meet him, just like greeting an exarch or patrician and had him welcomed most honourably.]⁵⁴

The account of Christ's entry into Jerusalem in St John's gospel (12.12-19) describes the crowds as going out to meet him; in the same way, in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians (4.17), those who are still alive when Christ returns to earth will go out to meet him in the clouds. The same image is found in the first responsory for the first Sunday in Advent: *Aspiciens a longe, ecce video Dei potentiam venientem, et nebulam totam terram tegentem. Ite obviam ei, et dicite: Nuntia nobis, si tu es ipse qui regnaturus es in populo Israel* [Watching from afar, behold I see the power of God coming, and a cloud covering the whole earth. Go out to meet him, and say, Tell us if you are the one who is to rule over the people of Israel].⁵⁵

The entry of Christ into Jerusalem was frequently portrayed not simply as a royal progress but as a military triumph. The Blickling homily for Palm Sunday, for example, describes the scene in terms of the reception of a king returning from battle:

þa bæron hie him togeanes blowende palmtwigu; forþon þe hit wæs Iudisc þeaw, þonne heora ciningas hæfdon siges geworht on heora feondum, and hie wæron eft ham hweorfende, þonne eodan hie him togeanes mid blowendum palmtwigum, heora siges to wyorþmyndum. Wel þæt gedafenode þæt Drihten swa dyde on þa gelicnesse; forþon þe he wæs wuldres cyning.

[Then they carried waving palm-branches before him, because it was the Jewish custom, when their kings had won a victory over their enemies and they were returning home again, to go towards them with waving palm-branches in honour of their victory. It was very fitting that the Lord should act in the same way, because he was the king of glory.]⁵⁶

Paschasius Radbertus linked the crowd's question about Christ, 'Quis est iste?' (Matt. 21.10), to the psalm verse, 'Quis est iste rex gloriae?' (Psalm 23.8),⁵⁷ and the artists of the Utrecht Psalter, and of its Anglo-Saxon copy (British Library, Harley 603), illustrated verse 7 of this psalm, 'Attollite portas, principes, vestras, et elevamini, portae aeternales, et introibit rex gloriae' [Gates raise high your arches, rise you ancient doors, let the king of glory in!], by a drawing of Christ, dressed in armour and followed by his spear-bearing army, being welcomed at the gate of a city.⁵⁸ The same military imagery is seen in the Bury Psalter, where the 'rex gloriae' of Psalm 23 is depicted holding spear and shield.⁵⁹

The painting of the Second Coming in the Benedictional does not show the meeting in the clouds mentioned in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians, but it does depend on the *adventus* ceremonial in another respect. The king entering a city was accompanied by soldiers carrying his banners; similarly, the victorious Christ would be accompanied by angels carrying the banner of the cross:

Quemadmodum enim ingredientem regem in civitatem, exercitus antecedit, praeferens humeris signa atque vexilla regalia . . . ita Domino descendente de coelis praecedet exercitus angelorum, qui signum illud, id est, triumphale vexillum sublimibus humeris praeferentes, divinum regis coelestis ingressum terris trementibus nuntiabunt.

[Just as the army precedes the king entering a city, carrying on their shoulders the royal standards and banners . . . so, as the Lord descends from the skies, there precedes him an army of angels, who, carrying on their sublime shoulders that standard, the triumphal banner, announce the divine entry of the heavenly king to the trembling earth.]⁶⁰

Ælfric, talking of the Second Coming and the Last Judgement, describes the armies of angels who precede Christ, carrying his cross: 'Engla werod berað þa beorhtan rode him ætforan' [Armies of angels carry the shining cross before him].⁶¹ The passage is based on part of the *Prognosticon Futuri Saeculi* of Julian of Toledo, which states:

Exercitus denique angelorum et archangelorum precedent eum, illud triumphale vexillum miro fulgore coruscans preferentes.

[Finally, armies of angels and archangels precede him, carrying that triumphal banner, shining with wonderful brightness.]⁶²

The artist of the Benedictional added two further *vexilla*: the spear and sponge.

The paintings of the Annunciation and the Second Coming, like the others in the Benedictional, are not simply beautiful decorations for an exceptionally sumptuous book; they are aids to meditation for its user. The verses placed opposite the painting of the Annunciation and before the opening words of the blessing for the First Sunday of Advent address the user of the book directly:

Quisque caput cernis presto est benedictio presul

Libri huius nati adventus tibi nam patris almi.

[O bishop, whoever you are who look on this heading, a blessing is at hand for you from this book of the advent of the Son of the loving Father.]⁶³

This address has to be read in conjunction with the poem at the beginning of the book, which explains why it was written.⁶⁴ In the poem, the scribe, Godeman, explains that Æthelwold ordered the book to be made so that, at the Last Judgement, he would be able to render an account of his stewardship and present

the congregation entrusted to him to Christ. The blessing referred to in the address to the user promises that he, and his congregation, will eventually share in the eternal life of heaven, symbolised by the figures of the saints which decorate the first seven pages of the manuscript.⁶⁵ The focus of the Benedictional, therefore, is on the future judgement rather than Christ's birth. *The Advent Lyrics*, on the other hand, are concerned with God's intervention in human history through one who, unbelievably, was both God and man.

As is well known, *The Advent Lyrics* are partly based on the antiphons sung at the *Magnificat* in the week leading up to Christmas. They are not paraphrases of these antiphons, however, but meditations on the mystery of the Incarnation, expressed in language drawn from a wide range of biblical texts and exegetical material. Moreover, the way in which the text of the poem is arranged in the manuscript shows that it is not to be considered, as is sometimes argued, as a series of twelve lyrics, each based primarily on one antiphon, but as five sections, each of which draws on many different sources and analogues.

The first section of the poem (lines 1-70) introduces two major themes: the hope of heaven and the mystery of Christ. The poet calls on Christ, who holds the key to heaven, to reveal the light to those in prison and to make those who have been exiled from heaven worthy to return there:

we in carcerne
sittað sorgende, sunnan wenað,
hwonne us liffrea leoht ontyne,
weorðe ussum mode to mundboran,
ond þæt tydre gewitt tire bewinde,
gedo usic þæs wyrðe, þe he to wuldre forlet,
þa we heanlice hweorfan sceoldan
to þis enge lond, eðle bescyrede. (*Advent Lyrics* 25-32)

[We sit sorrowing in prison, hope for the sun, when the Lord of life will reveal the light to us, become a protector to our spirit, and enfold that fragile understanding with glory, make us worthy of what he gloriously forsook, when we, deprived of our homeland, were forced to turn wretchedly to this narrow land.]⁶⁶

There is probably a play on the words *sunne* (sun, line 26) and *sunu* (son): Christ is the sun of justice, who comes to illuminate the world, as he is described in the

antiphon, *O Oriens, splendor lucis aeternae, et sol iustitiae; veni, et illumina sedentes in tenebris et umbra mortis* [O rising sun, splendour of the light eternal and sun of justice, come and enlighten those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death] which lies behind a later section of the poem. The three antiphons which underlie the first section of the poem (*O Rex gentium, O clavis David* and *O Hierusalem*) make no mention of Christ as the source of light, a theme which will be taken up later in the poem when Christ's divine nature is explored. The poet's freedom from his apparent sources is seen again in his treatment of the antiphon *O Hierusalem, civitas Dei summi, leva in circuitu oculos tuos et vide Dominum Deum tuum, quia jam veniet solvere te a vinculis* [O Jerusalem, city of the highest God, lift up your eyes round about and see your Lord and God, for now he comes to free you from your chains].⁶⁷ In the poem, Jerusalem becomes the heavenly city, the seat of angels (*engla eþelstol*, line 52) in which the souls of the faithful rest (lines 50-54), and Christ's advent is both his descent to earth and his return to heaven. This temporal complexity is typical of the poem. Despite echoes of Old Testament time, the tenses used by the poet make clear that Christ has already come (line 66); he chose a virgin as his mother (line 36); those who speak truth will say that he freed the human race (*ahredde* past tense, line 34); he must release the wretched *swa he oft dyde* (line 17, 'as he has often done in the past'). And this whole process is a mystery:

þæt degol wæs, dryhtnes geryne.
 Eal giofu gæstlic grundsceat geondspreot;
 þær wisna fela wearð inlihted
 lare longsume þurh lifes fruman
 þe ær under hoðman biholen lægon,
 witgena woðsong. (*Advent Lyrics* 41-6)

[That was hidden, a mystery of God, all spiritual gifts spread throughout the world; there many shoots were brought to light, through the giver of life, long-lasting teachings, the songs of the prophets, which had previously lain concealed under the earth.]

The passage echoes the Epistle to the Colossians: 'the message which was a mystery hidden for generations and centuries . . . The mystery is Christ among you' (Col. 1.26-7).

The Benedictional of Æthelwold and The Advent Lyrics

This theme of the Incarnation as the great mystery, prophesied over the ages and now revealed in the person of Christ, permeates the rest of the poem.⁶⁸ The second section (lines 71-163) begins with an address to Mary, based on the antiphon *O Virgo virginum*, in which she is asked to explain the mystery which came to her from heaven (lines 71-7). But this human curiosity cannot be satisfied:

Forþan þæt monnum nis
cuð geryne. (*Advent Lyrics* 94-5)
[Understanding of that mystery is not given to men.]

In this passage Mary is a figure of authority, already in heaven, and offering those who question her the hope that they may follow her:

Hyht is onfangen
þæt nu bletsung mot bæm gemæne,
werum ond wifum, a to worulde forð
in þam uplican engla dreame
mid soðfæder symle wunian. (*Advent Lyrics* 99-103)
[There is now hope that a blessing may be common to both
men and women, world without end, to live forever with the
true Father in the joy of the angels above.]

The mystery which Mary refuses to explain is elaborated in a passage reminiscent of the antiphons *O Oriens* and *O Emmanuel* (lines 104-63). The reference earlier in the poem to Christ giving light to his creation is extended to give a clear reference to his divine origin:

Swa þu, god of gode gearo acenned,
sunu soþan fæder, swegles in wuldre
butan anginne æfre wære. (*Advent Lyrics* 109-11)
[As you, God from God, truly begotten, son of the true
Father, were always, without beginning, in the glory of
heaven.]

Christ is truly God, without any beginning. He is the Word of God, who was in the beginning with God and now is made flesh (lines 120-24). So 'the mighty Son

of God and the son of man' were present together on earth (lines 126-7); God himself is with us (lines 134-5). As was the case in the first section of the poem, the speakers are not the patriarchs in limbo but the Christian congregation who believe in salvation and who remember how men in the past believed that Christ would eventually come and visit the depths, to release those imprisoned there (lines 140-59).

The third section of the poem (lines 164-274) again focuses on Mary, and, once more, she reveals the truth to those who doubt. This time it is Joseph who needs reassurance and explanation but the message is the same: Mary has become the mother of God's Son (lines 204-10) and prophecy has been fulfilled. And, once again, the poet expands this simple statement into a meditation on the nature of Christ. No-one can explain the mystery of Christ's divine parentage, how he was with his Father before anything else existed, before God, the source of life, divided the light from the darkness (lines 215-38). It is because these things are beyond understanding that the speakers need to understand Christ's human parentage (lines 245-8). And again, the petition is the same: that Christ will open the gates of heaven and lead those he bought with his blood back to the place from which they were exiled (lines 251-71).

The fourth section of the poem (lines 275-377) addresses Mary once more. Now she is not simply the figure of authority, explaining the Incarnation to the questioners in the guise of the sons and daughters of Jerusalem and the doubting Joseph; she is queen of heaven, earth and even hell (lines 275-86). In earlier sections of the poem Mary has been shown as the second Eve (line 97), and the true temple in which God comes to rest (lines 206-8); now she is the bride of Christ (lines 280-1) and the locked gate of Ezekiel through which he passed on his way to earth and which he locked after him (lines 306-34). Here the poet departs quite radically from the text of the relevant antiphon. The antiphon reads: *O mundi Domina, regio ex semine orta, ex tuo jam Christus processit alvo tamquam sponsus de thalamo, hic jacet in praesepio qui et sidera regit* [O lady of the world, born from a royal line, Christ came forth from your womb like a bridegroom from his chamber; the one who rules the stars lies in a manger]. The poet, however, turns to Mary as an advocate:

Gefinga us nu þristum wordum
þæt he us ne læte leng owihte
in þisse deaðdene gedwolan hyran,
ac þæt he usic geferge in fæder rice,

þær we sorgleas sippān motan

wunigan in wuldre mid weoroda god. (*Advent Lyrics* 342-7)

[Plead for us now with confident words, that he will no longer let us pursue error in this valley of death, but that he will carry us to the Father's kingdom, where we may afterwards live in glory, and without sorrow, with the God of hosts.]

When the speakers look upon the Child at her breast (line 341) this is not a reference to Christ's birth, a variant on the antiphon's reference to the ruler of the stars who lies in the manger. The image is that of a drawing in the *Ælfwine Prayerbook*, where Mary is shown in heaven, standing at the right hand of Christ, and holding the Christ-child as an emblem: a reminder of the reason for her presence in heaven.⁶⁹ But, after soliciting Mary's help, the poet returns once again to his theme of Christ the creator, present with the Father and the Holy Spirit before time began, drawing on the antiphon, *O coelorum Domine, qui cum Patre sempiternus es una cum Sancto Spiritu, audi tuos famulos; veni ad salvandum nos, iam noli tardare* [O Lord of the heavens, who live eternally with the Father and the Holy Spirit, hear your servants, come to save us, do not delay].⁷⁰ Redemption, the poet says, is entirely dependent on Christ (lines 365-6).

Much of the poem, then, focuses on Mary's role in the story of redemption, but in the fifth and final section of the poem (lines 378-439) the poet returns to his main theme, the dual nature of Christ, who is both God and man. This section opens with a hymn of praise to God, the three in one (lines 378-415). Now that God has revealed himself to those on earth, in accordance with his covenant, they can join the angels and seraphs in praising their king and creator, who came to earth to save the human race and to lead those who honour him to a place of everlasting life. This passage echoes two texts. The first is the *Sanctus* of the mass: *Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Pleni sunt caeli et terra gloria tua. Hosanna in excelsis. Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini. Hosanna in excelsis* [Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest]. The second is an antiphon for the Octave of Christmas: *O admirabile commercium! Creator generis humani, animatum corpus sumens, de virgine nasci dignatus est; et procedens homo sine semine, largitus est nobis suam deitatem* [O wonderful exchange: the creator of the human race, assuming a living body, deigned to be born of a virgin; and

becoming man without a human father, he bestowed on us his divine nature].⁷¹ The second part of the *Sanctus, Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini*, is taken from Psalm 117.26, and echoes the welcome given by the crowds to Christ as he entered Jerusalem (Matt. 21.9, Mark 11.9-10, Luke 19.38 and John 12.13). This psalm was interpreted from New Testament times with reference to both the Ascension and the Second Coming. In St Matthew's Gospel Christ laments over the city of Jerusalem:

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you! How often have I longed to gather your children, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you refused! So be it! Your house will be left to you desolate, for, I promise, you shall not see me any more until you say: Blessings on him who comes in the name of the Lord! (Matt. 23.37-9)

So, at Christ's return he will be welcomed once more into the city as the Messiah. But this city is not only the earthly Jerusalem. Paschasius Radbertus, commenting on chapter 21 of St Matthew's Gospel, identifies the city approached by Christ with the heavenly Jerusalem and the crowd's question, 'Who is this?' (Matt. 21.10) with the questions in Psalm 23.8, 'Who is this king of glory?', and Isaiah 63.1, 'Who is this coming from Edom, from Bozrah in garments stained with crimson, so richly clothed, marching so full of strength?'⁷² Psalm 23 was traditionally interpreted with reference to Christ's triumphant return to heaven at his ascension; Bede, for example, imagined heaven's inhabitants questioning the angels who accompany the risen Christ, and who demand entry to the heavenly city for the king of glory.⁷³ The blood-stained garments of Isaiah's triumphant figure (Isaiah 63.1-6) are echoed in the Apocalypse's description of the Word of God who is not simply *Rex regum* [king of kings] but whose cloak is soaked in blood (Apoc. 19.13). The passage from Isaiah is therefore interpreted as a prophetic reference to Christ's retention of the marks of his passion at his triumphal return, a standard theme of treatments of the Second Coming. This final section of the Old English poem, then, reflects back on part of the first of the five sections, based on the Advent antiphon, *O Hierusalem, civitas Dei summi, leva in circuitu oculos tuos et vide Dominum Deum tuum, quia jam veniet solvere te a vinculis*.⁷⁴ Whereas the antiphon could refer to the earthly city, awaiting redemption, the Old English poem makes it plain that Christ comes to make his home in the city above:

Eala sibbe gesihð, sancta Hierusalem,
cynestola cyst, Cristes burglond,
engla eþelstol, ond þa ane in þe
saule soðfæstra simle gerestað,
wuldrum hremge. Næfre wommes tacn
in þam eardgearde eawed weorþeð,
ac þe firina gehwylc feor abugeð,
wærgðo ond gewinnes. Bist to wuldre full
halgan hyhtes, swa þu gehaten eart.
Sioh nu sylfa þe geond þas sidan gesceaft,
swylce rodores hrof rume geondwlitan
ymb healfa gehwone, hu þec heofones cyning
siðe geseceð, ond sylf cymeð,
nimeð eard in þe, swa hit ær gefym
witgan wisfæste wordum sægdon. (*Advent Lyrics* 50-64)

[O vision of peace, holy Jerusalem, greatest of royal thrones, Christ's city, native seat of angels, in you alone the souls of the faithful rest eternally, exulting in glory. No sign of sin is ever seen in that land, but all violence, sin and conflict, goes far away. You are gloriously full of holy hope, just as you are described. Look now about you at this wide creation, gaze far and wide on every side across the roof of heaven, and see how the king of heaven seeks you in his journey, comes himself, takes up his dwelling in you, as wise prophets announced long ago.]

The same meaning is found in the responsory for the first Sunday in Advent, *Aspiciens a longe*, quoted above.⁷⁵

But Psalm 117 has a further relevance to the themes of *The Advent Lyrics*, for it includes the passage on the cornerstone referred to in the antiphon which lies behind the opening lines of the poem: *O Rex gentium et desideratus earum, lapisque angularis, qui facis utraque unum: veni, salva hominem quem de limo formasti* [O king of the nations and the one they long for, the cornerstone which makes both one: come and save man whom you formed from the earth]. In the psalm, the reference to the stone 'rejected by the builders that proved to be the keystone' is followed immediately by the words, 'This is the day made memorable

by Yahweh' (Ps. 117.22-4), a verse used as the Gradual for Easter Day.⁷⁶ These verses are quoted by Christ in St Matthew's gospel immediately after the description of the entry into Jerusalem (Matt. 21.42) and appear several times in the New Testament. In Peter's speech in the Acts of the Apostles they are applied specifically to Christ's death and resurrection (Acts 4.11). In the First Epistle of Peter (1 Pet. 2.4-8) the stone is both the precious cornerstone for those who believe in Christ and, at the same time, the stone over which unbelievers stumble. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, as in the antiphon, the stone forms part of the building which is the church, whose foundations are the apostles and prophets and whose stones are the Christian believers (Ephes. 2.20-22); this cornerstone unites Jews and gentiles, who were previously at war with each other, into a single body (Ephes. 2.11-18).

The Old English poet combined the reference in the antiphon to the stone which joins the two walls together, with the psalm's reference to the stone rejected by the builders (Ps. 117.22) and interprets both in relation to the Christian church. The building held together by the cornerstone is the church of which Christ is the head.⁷⁷ And this ruined building is also the human body, since Christ's church is built from living stones (1 Pet. 2.4-8). The theme is that set out by Ælfric in a homily for the dedication of a church.⁷⁸ Ælfric ignores the most common interpretation of the two walls as the Jews and gentiles (Ephes. 2.11-18), choosing instead to develop the passage in the First Epistle of Peter (1 Pet. 2.4-8). Christ, he says, is the living stone who holds the building together. And this building, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit, is formed from the bodies of the righteous and unites angels with men. Augustine makes a similar point in his commentary on Psalm 117 where the one who comes in the name of the Lord is also the cornerstone, Christ Jesus, the mediator between God and man, who himself is both God and man.⁷⁹ The vision of heaven in the final section of the poem, with its promise to humans of eternal happiness, is therefore the culmination of a series of references to Christ as the one who unites the divine and the human in his own person and who can therefore mediate between God and man. He is not simply some heroic figure, descending from heaven to rescue the unfortunates from some dark prison, but a mystery to which the only response is thanksgiving.

The treatment of the theme of Advent in the Old English poem, *The Advent Lyrics*, is therefore very different from that in Æthelwold's Benedictional. The texts of the Benedictional reveal a clear sense of the passing of time: the congregation recalls the Annunciation as an event from the past and looks

The Benedictional of Æthelwold and The Advent Lyrics

forward to Christ's return in the future. In the poem, there is no such clear time sequence. Its audience exists in a world where Christ is both awaited and has already come, and where his release of the patriarchs and prophets from Limbo merges with the longing of the hearers for their own release. Whereas the texts of the Benedictional focus on the celebration of Christ's birth as a preparation for the coming judgement, *The Advent Lyrics* do not mention judgement; instead, they focus on the hope of heaven. The Benedictional emphasises the gulf between the divine and the human. In the painting of the Annunciation,⁸⁰ Gabriel appears to be moving further into the painting and away from the viewer. He is focused entirely on the figure of Mary and she, in turn, is concerned solely with what passes between them; there is no interaction between the picture and those looking at it. Similarly, in the blessings, it is God himself who is addressed, and who is asked to sanctify and defend Christians in this world and to offer eternal happiness in the next. The poet of *The Advent Lyrics*, on the other hand, addresses his petitions to Christ and to his mother, establishing a relationship of dialogue and intimacy. Finally, the Benedictional presents a world which is static, whereas the poem develops its complex theme of the mystery which is Christ, to reach a climax in its closing section.

NOTES

¹ British Library, Add. 49598; complete facsimile, *The Benedictional of St Æthelwold: a Masterpiece of Anglo-Saxon Art. A Facsimile Introduced by Andrew Prescott* (London: British Library, 2002); the miniatures are discussed in detail in Robert Deshman, *The Benedictional of Æthelwold*, *Studies in Manuscript Illumination* 9 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995). For the texts see *The Benedictional of Saint Æthelwold Bishop of Winchester 963-984*, ed. by G. F. Warner and H. A. Wilson (Oxford: Roxburghe Club, 1910), and Andrew Prescott, 'The Text of the Benedictional of St Æthelwold', *Bishop Æthelwold: his Career and Influence*, ed. by Barbara Yorke (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1988), pp. 119-47.

² Exeter, Cathedral Library, 3501; Patrick W. Conner, *Anglo-Saxon Exeter: a Tenth-Century Cultural History* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1993), pp. 54 and 94. The manuscript was written in three sections: section 1 (fols. 1-52), which includes the poems *Christ I* (i.e. *Advent Lyrics*), *Christ II*, *Christ III*, *Guthlac A* and *Guthlac B*, was the last of the three to be copied (Conner, *Exeter*, pp. 95-147, 148 and 162-4). The poem referred to as *The Advent Lyrics* in the present article is printed in *The Exeter Book*, ed. by George Philip Krapp and Elliott van Kirk Dobbie, ASPR III (London and New York: Columbia University Press, 1936), as *Christ 1-439*, and, as *The Advent Lyrics*, in Robert B. Burlin, *The Old English Advent: a Typological Commentary*, *Yale Studies in English* 168 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968).

³ See Rosemary Woolf, review of Burlin, *Old English Advent*, *Medium Ævum* 40 (1971), 60-1, Milton McC. Gatch, review of M. Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England*, *Speculum* 68 (1993), 733-5 (pp. 734-5), and Conner, *Exeter*, pp. 162-4. Susan Rankin, on the other hand, prefers a much earlier date: see Susan Rankin, 'The Liturgical Background of the Old English Advent Lyrics: A Reappraisal', in *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England; Studies Presented to Peter Clemoes on the Occasion of his Sixty-fifth Birthday*, ed. by Michael Lapidge and Helmut Gneuss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 317-40 (p. 334).

⁴ 'Libri huius nati adventus tibi nam patris almi', see Deshman, *Benedictional*, p. 16.

⁵ See Cyrille Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy: an Introduction to the Sources*, trans. W. G. Storey and N. K. Rasmussen (Washington, DC: Pastoral Press, 1986), pp. 311-16; W. H. Frere, *Studies in Early Roman Liturgy II, The Roman Gospel-Lectionary*, *Alcuin Club Collections* 30 (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), pp. 62-3, and Ursula Lenker, *Die westsächsische Evangelienversion und die Perikopenordnungen im angelsächsischen England*, *Münchener Universitäts-Schriften, Texte und Untersuchungen zur Englischen Philologie* 20 (Munich: Fink, 1997), pp. 78-80.

⁶ *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: the First Series*, ed. by Peter Clemoes, EETS s.s. 17

The Benedictional of Æthelwold and The Advent Lyrics

(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), no. vi, p. 228. See also Kenneth Harrison, 'The Beginning of the Year in England, c. 500-900', *Anglo-Saxon England* 2 (1973), 51-70 (p. 51).

⁷ Lenker, *Pericopenordnungen*, pp. 79-80 and 110-11.

⁸ *Benedictional of Æthelwold*, ed. Warner and Wilson, pp. 2-4 (In Adventu Domini), p. 4 (Vigilia Natalis Domini); *The Benedictional of Archbishop Robert*, ed. by H. A. Wilson, Henry Bradshaw Society (hereafter HBS) 24 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1903), p. 5 (Vigilia Natalis Ihesu Christi) and pp. 29-30 (Adventus Christi Ihesu). Elzbieta Temple, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts 900-1066*, A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles 2 (London: Harvey Miller, 1976), no. 24, p. 53, dates the Benedictional of Archbishop Robert to the 980s. David N. Dumville, 'Liturgical Books for the Anglo-Saxon Episcopate: a Reconsideration', in his *Liturgy and the Ecclesiastical History of Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1992), pp. 66-95 (p. 87), however, argues that the script dates the manuscript to the second quarter of the eleventh century.

⁹ *The Leofric Missal*, ed. by Nicholas Orchard, 2 vols, HBS 113-14 (London: Boydell Press, 2002), II 105 (Vigilia Nativitatis Christi) and 228-35 (De Adventu Domini); *The Missal of Robert of Jumièges*, ed. by H. A. Wilson, HBS 11 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1896), pp. 48 (Vigilia Natalis Domini) and 138-44 (De Adventu Domini).

¹⁰ *The Leofric Collectar (Harl. MS. 2961)*, ed. by E. S. Dewick and W. H. Frere, HBS 45 and 56 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1914 and 1921), I, cols 1-16 (De Adventu Domini), cols 16-19 (In Vigilia Natalis Domini); *The Winchester Troper from MSS of the Xth and XIth Centuries*, ed. by W. H. Frere, HBS 8 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1894), p. 3 (De Adventu Domini), and p. 4 (De Nativitate Christi in Gallicantu); *The Canterbury Benedictional (British Museum, Harley MS 2892)*, ed. by Reginald Maxwell Woolley, HBS 51 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1917, repr. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1995), pp. 3-6 (De Adventu Domini), p. 6 (In Vigilia Domini); *The Claudius Pontificals (from Cotton MS Claudius A. iii in the British Museum)*, ed. by D. H. Turner, HBS 97 (London: Moore and Tillyer, 1971), pp. 1-2 (De Adventu Domini), pp. 2-3 (In Vigilia Domini); *The Portiforium of Saint Wulstan (Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 391)*, ed. by A. Hughes, 2 vols, HBS 89-90 (London: Faith Press, 1958-60), I 1-7 (De Adventu Domini), 7-9 (In Vigilia Natalis Domini).

¹¹ W. H. Frere, *Studies in Early Roman Liturgy III: the Roman Epistle-Lectionary*, Alcuin Club Collections 32 (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), p. 19; Frere, *Gospel-Lectionary*, pp. 24 and 56; Lenker, *Perikopenordnungen*, p. 342. For a table showing the Roman series of readings see Margot E. Fassler, 'Sermons, Sacramentaries, and Early Sources for the Office in the Latin West: the Example of Advent', *The Divine Office in the Latin Middle Ages: Methodology and Source Studies, Regional Developments, Hagiography*, ed. by Margot E. Fassler and Rebecca A. Baltzer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 15-47, Table 1.1, pp. 29-30.

¹² Frere, *Gospel-Lectionary*, pp. 24 and 55; Lenker, *Perikopenordnungen*, p. 341.

¹³ Frere, *Gospel-Lectionary*, pp. 24-5 and 56; Lenker, *Perikopenordnungen*, pp. 342-3.

¹⁴ Frere, *Gospel-Lectionary*, pp. 25 and 56; Lenker, *Perikopenordnungen*, p. 343.

¹⁵ *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: Introduction, Commentary and Glossary*, ed. by Malcolm Godden, EETS s.s. 18 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. xli. For Paul the Deacon's Homiliary, see Réginald Grégoire, *Les homéliaires du moyen âge: inventaire et analyse des manuscrits*, *Rerum ecclesiasticarum documenta, Series Maior, Fontes 6* (Rome: Herder, 1966), pp. 71-114.

¹⁶ Gregory, *Homiliae .xl. in evangelia*, PL 76, 1075-1312, nos. 1, 7, 6 and 20, rearranged as nos. 3-6 in David Hurst, *Gregory the Great, Forty Gospel Homilies, Translated from the Latin* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1990), pp. 15-49. The Feast of the Annunciation on 25 March was not celebrated in Rome until about 650 AD, see Mary Clayton, *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 28-9.

¹⁷ Bede, *Homelie evangelii*, ed. by D. Hurst, CCSL 122 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955), I.1-4, pp. 1-31. Bede's Homilies 3-4 are included in Paul the Deacon's Homiliary for the Wednesday and Friday before Christmas, the days on which the corresponding gospel passages were read in the Roman Series. In modern editions, Bede's four homilies for Advent are placed at the beginning of the year; the earliest complete manuscript of the homilies, however (Boulogne, Bibliothèque municipale 75, s. ix), places homilies 1 and 2 at the end of Book II, with nos. 3-4 at the beginning of Book I; John Chapman, *Notes on the Early History of the Vulgate Gospels* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908), pp. 66 and 68, states that Bede probably began the liturgical year with Christmas, and that all four Advent homilies were originally placed at the end of the series.

¹⁸ Bede, *Homelie*, ed. Hurst, p. ix. For an account of the Neapolitan lectionary and its influence on the Lindisfarne Gospels see Chapman, *Vulgate Gospels*, pp. 51-67; the readings are listed in Fassler, 'Sermons', Table 1.2, p. 32.

¹⁹ Clayton, *Cult of the Virgin Mary*, pp. 28 and 38. See also Radu Constantinescu, 'Alcuin et les "Libelli Precum" de l'époque carolingienne', *Revue d'histoire de la spiritualité* 50 (1974), 17-56.

²⁰ Constantinescu, 'Alcuin et les "Libelli Precum"', p. 42; Clayton, on the other hand, believes that the antiphon is more likely to have belonged to a feast of Mary on the last Sunday of Advent, *Cult of the Virgin Mary*, p. 38.

²¹ See Clayton, *Cult of the Virgin Mary*, p. 36.

²² *CHI*, no. xiii, ed. Clemons, pp. 281-9.

²³ *Ibid.*, nos. xxxix and xl, pp. 520-30.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, no. xxxix, pp. 520-3. The homily is based on the epistle for the First Sunday in

The Benedictional of Æthelwold and The Advent Lyrics

Advent, Romans 13.11-14; for its sources see *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: Introduction*, ed. Godden, pp. 329-34.

²⁵ *CHI*, no. xxxix, ed. Clemoes, p. 520.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, no. xl, pp. 524-30; Gregory, *Homiliae*, I.1, PL 76, 1077-81, trans. Hurst, *Gregory the Great*, pp. 15-20; for the sources see *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: Introduction.*, ed. Godden, pp. 334-44.

²⁷ In Anglo-Saxon pericope lists, this is the gospel for the Saturday of the fifth week before the Nativity, see Lenker, *Perikopenordnungen*, p. 341.

²⁸ *Benedictional of Æthelwold*, ed. Warner and Wilson, p. 2, First Sunday in Advent; *Benedictional of Archbishop Robert*, ed. Wilson, p. 29.

²⁹ *Benedictional of Æthelwold*, ed. Warner and Wilson, p. 2; *Benedictional of Archbishop Robert*, ed. Wilson, p. 29.

³⁰ *Benedictional of Æthelwold*, ed. Warner and Wilson, p. 3; *Benedictional of Archbishop Robert*, ed. Wilson, p. 29.

³¹ *Benedictional of Æthelwold*, ed. Warner and Wilson, p. 3; *Benedictional of Archbishop Robert*, ed. Wilson, p. 30.

³² British Library, Add. 49598, 5v and 9v, reprod. Deshman, *Benedictional*, pls. 8 and 10.

³³ *Corpus antiphonalium officii*, ed. by René-Jean Hesbert, 6 vols, *Rerum ecclesiasticarum documenta*, Series maior, Fontes 7-12 (Rome: Herder, 1963-79), I 4-5 (no. 1b), II 2-3 (no. 1a), and IV 292 (no. 7170).

³⁴ Biblical quotations are taken from the Jerusalem Bible unless otherwise stated, but psalm numbers are taken from the Vulgate.

³⁵ Bede, *In Lucae evangelium expositio* I.i.34, ed. by D. Hurst, CCSL 120 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1960), p. 33. See also *Portiforium of St Wulstan*, ed. Hughes, I 2; Barbara C. Raw, *Anglo-Saxon Crucifixion Iconography and the Art of the Monastic Revival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 28-9, and *The St Albans Psalter (Albani Psalter)*, ed. by Otto Pächt, C. R. Dodwell and Francis Wormald (London: Warburg Institute, 1960), pp. 63-7.

³⁶ Raw, *Crucifixion Iconography*, p. 31.

³⁷ Elizabeth Coatsworth, 'Cloth-making and the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon Literature and Art', in *Medieval Art: Recent Perspectives. A Memorial Tribute to C. R. Dodwell*, ed. by Gale R. Owen-Crocker and Timothy Graham (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), pp. 8-25 (pp. 20-21). The passage about the bitter waters is printed in J. K. Elliott, *The Apocryphal New Testament. A Collection of Apocryphal Christian Literature in an English Translation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 63, *The Protevangelium of James*, 16.1.

³⁸ Deshman, *Benedictional*, p. 17, n. 52.

³⁹ *Protevangelium of James*, 10.1, Elliott, *Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 61.

⁴⁰ Eve holds a spindle-whorl in the drawing of the expulsion from Eden in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Junius 11, p. 45, reprod. in Thomas H. Ohlgren, *Anglo-Saxon Textual Illustration. Photographs of Sixteen Manuscripts with Descriptions and Index* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 1992), pl. 16.22.

⁴¹ Deshman, *Benedictional*, pp. 10-17. The painting of the Annunciation is one of three scenes in the Benedictional which are related iconographically to scenes on the ninth-century Brunswick Casket (Deshman, pp. 9-10, 262-6 and fig. 1); the cloud, however, seems to be an Anglo-Saxon addition.

⁴² Isaiah 45.8; *Portiforium of St Wulstan*, ed. Hughes, I 1-6 (all four Sundays); *Leofric Collectar*, ed. Dewick and Frere, I, cols 1-15 (all four Sundays); *Corpus antiphonarium*, ed. Hesbert, IV 499 (no. 8188).

⁴³ Deshman, *Benedictional*, p. 17 and pl. 35.

⁴⁴ *De corpore et sanguine Domini*, ed. by B. Paulus, CCCMed 16 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1969), iv, p. 30, Raw, *Crucifixion Iconography*, pp. 122 and 154. For knowledge of Paschasius at Winchester see *Ælfric's Catholic Homilies: Introduction*, ed. Godden, p. lviii, Raw, *Crucifixion Iconography*, pp. 22 and 97, and Barbara C. Raw, *Trinity and Incarnation in Anglo-Saxon Art and Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 153-60 and 165.

⁴⁵ Hilda Graef, *Mary, a History of Doctrine and Devotion*, I (London: Sheed and Ward, 1963), p. 10. Cf. *Advent Lyrics* 206-8, below, p. 16.

⁴⁶ See 1 Chron. 17.11-14, Psalm 131.11 and Raw, *Trinity*, pp. 150-1.

⁴⁷ *Homelieae*, I 3, ed. Hurst, p. 17.

⁴⁸ *CHI*, no. xiii, ed. Clemoes, p. 285.

⁴⁹ British Library, Cotton Galba A. xviii (Winchester, Old Minster, 2nd quarter of s. x), 2v, reprod. Ohlgren, *Textual Illustration*, pl. 1.1; possible models for the painting in the Benedictional are discussed by Deshman, *Benedictional*, pp. 62-4.

⁵⁰ Reprod. Ohlgren, *Textual Illustration*, pl. 1.17.

⁵¹ See Raw, *Crucifixion Iconography*, pp. 38-9 and 65-6. The texts are: *The Homilies of Wulfstan*, ed. by Dorothy Bethurum (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), no. ii, pp. 121-2; *The Blickling Homilies*, ed. by R. Morris, EETS o.s. 58, 63 and 73 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1874-80, repr. as one vol. 1967), no. vii, p. 91; *The Vercelli Homilies and Related Texts*, ed. by D. G. Scragg, EETS o.s. 300 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), no. viii, p. 146; *Christ*, 1454-88 (*Exeter Book*, ed. Krapp and Dobbie, pp. 43-4). The source is *Sancti Caesarii Arelatensis sermones*, ed. by G. Morin, 2 vols, CCSL 103-4 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1953), vol. 103, p. 253, *Sermo* lvii.4.

⁵² On the phrase 'rex regum' see Raw, *Trinity*, pp. 117-18, 125 and 141.

The Benedictional of Æthelwold and The Advent Lyrics

⁵³ Kantorowicz points out that similar terms are used for both events in the New Testament: *hypantesis* for the entry into Jerusalem (John 12.13) and *apantesis* for Christ's return to earth (1 Thess. 4.17). See E. H. Kantorowicz, 'The "King's Advent" and the Enigmatic Panels in the Doors of Santa Sabina', in his *Selected Studies* (Locust Valley, New York: J. J. Augustin, 1965), pp. 37-75 (p. 43).

⁵⁴ *Le Liber pontificalis: Texte, introduction et commentaire*, Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 2nd series (Paris: Thorin, 1886), ed. L. Duchesne, I 497; *The Lives of the Eighth-Century Popes (Liber Pontificalis)*, trans. Reginald Davis (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1992), item 97, para. 35, p. 139. Cf. the description of the reception of a king at Cluny in the eleventh century: *Liber Tramitis aevi Odilonis Abbatis*, ed. P. Dinter, CCM 10 (Siegburg: Schmitt, 1980), II.xxvii.169, pp. 242-3.

⁵⁵ *Corpus antiphonarium*, ed. Hesbert, I 4-5 (no. 1b), II 2-3 (no. 1a).

⁵⁶ *Blickling Homilies*, ed. Morris, no. vi, p. 67. For discussion of the theme of Christ's kingship see Raw, *Crucifixion Iconography*, pp. 129-46.

⁵⁷ Paschasius Radbertus, *Expositio in Matheo Libri XII*, ed. by B. Paulus, 3 vols, CCCMed. 56-56B (Turnhout: Brepols, 1984), vol. 56B, p. 1021. See also below, n. 72.

⁵⁸ Utrecht, Universiteitsbibliothek, 32 (Hautvillers, 816-35), 15v, reprod. K. van der Horst and J. H. A. Engelbrecht, *Utrecht-Psalter: Vollständige Faksimile-Ausgabe im Originalformat der Handschrift 32 aus dem Besitz der Bibliothek der Rijksuniversiteit te Utrecht*, 2 vols (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1984); British Library, Harley 603 (Canterbury, Christ Church, 2nd quarter of s. xi), 13v, reprod. Ohlgren, *Textual Illustration*, pl. 2.23.

⁵⁹ Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Reg. lat. 12, 37v (Canterbury, Christ Church, xi, provenance Bury St Edmunds), reprod. Ohlgren, *Textual Illustration*, pl. 3.14.

⁶⁰ Ps.-Augustine, *Sermo clv (a) De passione Domini*, vi, 10, PL 39, 2047-53, at cols 2051-2. See also *Ibid.* 9, 'Crux insigne regni'. The passage is quoted in Kantorowicz, 'King's Advent', p. 63, n. 107, and Barbara C. Raw, 'The Dream of the Rood and its Connections with Early Christian Art', *Medium Ævum* 39 (1970), 239-56 (p. 247).

⁶¹ *Homilies of Ælfric, A Supplementary Collection*, ed. by John C. Pope, EETS 259 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), no. xi, 'Sermo ad populum in octavis Pentecosten dicendus', p. 430.

⁶² *Ibid.* p. 430.

⁶³ British Library, Add. 49598, 6r; *Benedictional of Æthelwold*, ed. Warner and Wilson, p. 2, and Deshman, *Benedictional*, pl. 9.

⁶⁴ British Library, Add. 49598, 4v-5r, trans. Prescott, *Benedictional*, p. 5.

⁶⁵ British Library, Add. 49598, 1r-4r, reprod. Deshman, *Benedictional*, pls. 1-7.

⁶⁶ The antiphons are printed in Burlin, *Advent*, pp. 40-1 and 43, and listed in *Leofric Collectar*, ed. Dewick and Frere, I, cols 15-16. A list of texts containing the Advent antiphons (but not *O admirabile commercium*) is given in Rankin, 'Advent Lyrics', pp. 338-40.

⁶⁷ See also below, p. 18.

⁶⁸ The word *geryne*, 'mystery', occurs in lines 41, 74, 95, 196, 247 and 423.

⁶⁹ BL, Cotton Titus D. xxvii (Winchester, New Minster, 1023-35), 75v; see Raw, *Trinity*, pp. 151-60, pl. XV (b).

⁷⁰ See Simon Tugwell, 'Advent Lyrics 348-77 (Lyric No. X)', *Medium Ævum* 39 (1970), 34. The antiphon is found only in the Ivrea Antiphoner, Ivrea, Chapter Library, 106; see *Corpus antiphonale*, ed. Hesbert, I 31 (no. 16b) and III 366 (no. 4012).

⁷¹ See *Leofric Collectar*, ed. Dewick and Frere, I, cols 35-6, and *Corpus antiphonale*, ed. Hesbert, I 58 (no. 23a), II 94-5 (no. 23b) and III 362 (no. 3985). The Old English poem omits the reference to the second element of the exchange, that God became man to make man god. For the teaching, 'Factus est Deus homo, ut homo fieret deus', see Augustine, *Sermo cxxviii*, 1 (PL 39, 1997) and Raw, *Trinity*, pp. 43-4.

⁷² Paschasius Radbertus, *Expositio in Matheo*, ed. Paulus, vol. 56B, p. 1012 (on Matt. 21.1-2), and p. 1021 (on Matt. 21.10). Cf. above, p. 11, and n. 57.

⁷³ Bede, *In Ascensione Domini*, ed. by D. Hurst, CCSL 122 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1955), pp. 419-23, trans. M. J. B. Allen and D. G. Calder, *Sources and Analogues of Old English Poetry* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1976), pp. 81-3.

⁷⁴ Above, p. 14.

⁷⁵ Above, p. 10.

⁷⁶ *Antiphonale Missarum Sextuplex*, ed. by René-Jean Hesbert (Brussels: Uromant, 1935), pp. 100-101 (no. 80); *Leofric Collectar*, ed. Dewick and Frere, I, col. 134.

⁷⁷ *Advent Lyrics* 4: 'heafod . . . healle mære'; cf. Ephes. 5.23: 'Christ is head of the church'.

⁷⁸ *Elfric's Catholic Homilies, the Second Series*, ed. by Malcolm Godden, EETS s.s. 5 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), no. xl, pp. 337-9.

⁷⁹ *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, ed. by E. Dekkers and J. Fraipont, CCSL 38-40 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1956), vol. 40, p. 1663, Ps. 117.22: 'mediator ille Dei et hominum homo Christus Iesus, Deus est.'

⁸⁰ British Library, Add. 49598, 5v, reprod. Deshman, *Benedictional*, pl. 8.

Anglo-Saxon Inscribed Rings

Elisabeth Okasha

There are in existence twenty-two inscribed rings from the Anglo-Saxon period. In addition, there are four inscribed rings which are now lost. These four were recorded within the last two hundred years in sufficient detail that they can be included in the following discussion. Some of the inscribed rings have texts in Old English, some in Latin. Some are inscribed in runes but the majority have texts in roman script. Two have proved to be of particular interest to scholars because their texts contain an Anglo-Saxon royal name and title and are therefore datable: see plates 1, 2. A rather larger number of uninscribed rings are recorded from Anglo-Saxon England. The majority of the rings, and a large majority of the inscribed ones, date from the ninth or tenth centuries.

The twenty-six inscribed rings are listed below. In each case the following information, where it is known, is given in brief: circumstances and date of finding; present location; material; approximate diameter of ring in mm; date of ring; language of text; reading of text. The readings of the texts are given with word-division added and with diacritics as on the artefacts; damaged, or otherwise doubtful, letters are enclosed within square brackets and loss of text is indicated by a dash. Numbers 1-19 contain, or contained, texts in roman script, numbers 20-26 texts in runic script:

1. Attleborough: chance find, pre 1848; now in Norwich Castle Museum; silver; *c.* 20 mm diameter; ?11th century; probably Old English; *ethraldric on lvnd*, probably 'Ethrald...in London'¹

2. Bodsham: chance find, 1968; now in BM; gold, with niello; *c.* 22 mm diameter; 9th century; Old English; + *[g]armvnd mec ah im*, '[G]armund owns me...'²

3. Bossington: chance find, pre 1845; now in Ashmolean; gold; c. 25 mm diameter; 9th century; Latin; *in xpō nomen c[u]lla fiċ*, 'in Christ my name has been changed to C[u]lla'³
4. Driffield: chance find, 1867; now lost; gold, with ?enamel; c. 22 mm diameter; ?9th century; Latin; + *ecce agnv[s] dī*, 'behold the Lamb of God'⁴
5. Essex: pre 1846; now lost; silver; dimensions and date unknown; probably Old English; *dolgbot*, probably 'compensation for a wound'⁵
6. Flixborough: found during excavation, 1989; now in Scunthorpe Museums; silver, with gilding; c. 20 mm diameter; 8th-9th century; partial alphabet; + *abcdefghijkl*⁶
7. Lancashire (plate 3): pre 1705, in possession of Hans Sloan; now in BM; gold, with niello; c. 22 mm diameter; 9th century; Old English; + *ædred mec ah eanred mec agrof*, 'Aedred owns me; Eanred engraved me'⁷
8. Laverstock (plate 1): chance find, c. 1780; now in BM; gold, with niello; c. 27 mm diameter; 9th century; Latin; + *ethelwvlf rx*.; 'King Ethelwulf'⁸
9. Llysfaen: chance find, ?1753, certainly pre 1771; now in V&A; gold, with niello; c. 29 mm diameter; 9th century; personal name; + *alhstan*⁹
10. Rome: found with coins, pre 1859; now in V&A; gold; c. 22 mm diameter; ?9th century; personal name; + *a[v]fret*¹⁰
11. Sherburn (plate 2): chance find c. 1870; now in BM; gold, with niello; c. 32 mm diameter; 9th century; Latin; *ā ð*; + *eaðelsvið regna*, 'Queen Eaðelswið'¹¹
12. Sleaford: chance find c. 1992; present owner unknown; silver, with gilding; c. 22 mm diameter; ?8th century; Latin; + *anulum fidei*; + *eadberht*, 'ring of faith; eadberht'¹²
13. Steyning: found during excavation, 1989; now in Worthing Museum; gold; c. 20 mm diameter; 9th century; Old English; *æscwvlf mec ah*, 'Aescwulf owns me'¹³
14. Suffolk: found pre 1911; now in Moyse's Hall Museum, Bury St Edmunds; silver alloy; c. 22 mm diameter; date uncertain, possibly post-Conquest; probably Old English; *iohnse beveriy arceb*; [*a.e.sta.*] *r[-] g[-]n*, probably 'John of Beverley archbishop; [athelstan]...'¹⁴
15. Swindon: found pre 1912; now in BM; gold; c. 22 mm diameter; 9th-10th century; Latin; + *bvredrvð* + : *w : a* ; 'Buredruð; *omega, alpha*¹⁵
16. unprovenanced, 'eawen' ring: found pre 1897 ; now in BM; gold, with niello; c. 29 mm diameter; 9th-10th century; Old English; + : *eawen* : *mie*

ah s petrvs : stan ces, probably 'Eawen owns me; may St Peter the Rock choose her'¹⁶

17. unprovenanced, 'in deo' ring: found *c.* 1991; present owner unknown; gold; dimensions uncertain; late 11th - early 12th century; Latin; *in dō bī dēs in aiūm līmīn ī dē lilioō* :, probably 'in God, O God blessed eternally, pure in the light of God'¹⁷

18. unprovenanced, 'sigerie' ring: found pre 1850; now in Ashmolean; silver; *c.* 25 mm diameter; date uncertain; Old English; : *sigerie heð mea gevvircan*, 'Sigerie ordered me to be made'¹⁸

19. unprovenanced, 'ðancas' ring: found pre 1851; now lost; silver; dimensions and date unknown; Old English; + *ðancas* +, 'thanks'¹⁹

20. Bramham Moor, Yorkshire: chance find, pre 1736; now in Danish National Museum; gold, with niello; *c.* 29 mm diameter; 9th century; string of letters (runic); *ærkriufli kriuriþon glæstæpontol*²⁰

21. Coquet Island, Northumberland: chance find, pre 1866; now lost (disintegrated); lead; *c.* 26 mm; date uncertain; Old English (runic); + *þis is-*, 'this is ...'²¹

22. Cramond, Edinburgh: chance find in churchyard 1869-70; now in National Museum of Scotland; leaded bronze; *c.* 22 mm diameter; 9th -10th century; uninterpreted (runic); [*Jewor*][*jel*][*ju*]²²

23. Kingmoor, Carlisle: chance find, 1817; now in BM; gold, with niello; *c.* 27 mm diameter; 9th century; string of letters (runic); *ærkriuflikriuriþonglæstæpon tol*²³

24. Linstock Castle, Cumbria (probable find-place): first mentioned 1824; now in BM; agate; *c.* 29 mm diameter; possibly 9th century; string of letters (runic); *ery.ri.uf.dol.yri.uri.þol.wles.te.pote.nol*²⁴

25. Thames Exchange, London: metal-detector find on archaeological site 1989; now in Museum of London; copper alloy; *c.* 15 mm diameter; date uncertain; possibly partial *fuborc* and personal name (runic); [*Jfupni ine*]²⁵

26. Wheatley Hill, Durham: chance find, 1993; now in BM; gilded silver alloy; *c.* 19 mm diameter; late 8th century; Old English; runic: [*h*]ring ic hatt[æ], 'I am called a ring'²⁶

Some of these rings have had more scholarly attention than others. This may well be because some are more aesthetically pleasing than others, or because some of them have been on display for many years in well-visited museums. Almost all the inscribed rings have been previously published, some on many

occasions, but they have not previously been examined as a complete group. In this paper the inscribed rings are discussed as a group and the question is posed as to why a ring would be inscribed. Anglo-Saxon rings in general are also discussed, both their function and their relationship to the rings mentioned with such frequency in Old English literature.

Where any details survive of the early history of the inscribed rings, it is clear that the majority of them were chance finds. This is unsurprising since the objects are small and easily lost. Two of the rings, those from Llysfaen and Cramond, were indeed found outside the borders of Anglo-Saxon England, in Wales and Scotland respectively. Only two of the more recent finds, those from Flixborough and Steyning, both found in 1989, were discovered during excavation, and in neither case do the circumstances of their discovery yield much information: Flixborough was an unstratified find from top soil and Steyning was discovered in a rubbish pit. The find-places of the group of inscribed rings do not therefore furnish much useful information about the rings, their owners or their functions.

Most of the inscribed rings that can be dated on artistic grounds are from the ninth or tenth centuries, although the rings from Flixborough, Sleaford and Wheatley Hill are more likely to be eighth-century in date, while the ring from Attleborough may be eleventh-century and the 'in deo' and Suffolk rings are likely to date from the early post-Conquest period. As noted above, uninscribed rings have been found from Anglo-Saxon England, but not in large numbers. Wilson, for example, lists only some fifteen examples from outside the British Museum, as opposed to eleven inscribed ones.²⁷ Some further examples are given by Oman, including some of Viking date.²⁸ Taking inscribed and uninscribed rings together, Hinton lists over forty dating from the eighth to ninth centuries, and a similar number from the tenth to eleventh centuries.²⁹ Some further examples have been found in the last twenty years, especially through metal-detector finds.

The dates mentioned are in accordance with the evidence provided for Anglo-Saxon rings from archaeological finds and manuscript drawings. Using such evidence, Owen-Crocker suggested that in the fifth and sixth centuries finger-rings were rarely worn by men or women.³⁰ During the seventh and eighth centuries women's rings were still not common but they 'seem to have enjoyed a limited revival from the ninth century onwards'; there are also some men's examples.³¹ In the tenth and eleventh centuries, rings remained more popular for women than for men.³²

Most of the existing rings were made of gold or silver. That is, they were costly and prestigious objects, manufactured for the rich and powerful in society. Some of the gold rings were further decorated with niello, both as an ornamental device and, where there is a text, to make it stand out from the background. Eight of the inscribed rings were made of silver or silver alloy and three of them, those from Flixborough, Sleaford and Wheatley Hill were then gilded. Interestingly, these three rings are all likely to date from the eighth, rather than the ninth, century, although whether this is more than coincidence is unclear. In addition to its gilding, the Wheatley Hill ring contained settings for three gems; only one of these is now filled and the filling is red glass, not a jewel. These settings appear to date from after the inscribing of the runic text since two of them obscure two of the runes.

A few of the uninscribed rings were made from less prestigious material, for example bronze.³³ Four of the seven rings with runic texts were made from material other than gold or silver: one, from Coquet Island, was of lead although it has now disintegrated; the others are made from leaded bronze, from copper alloy and from agate. Although clearly seven runic rings are too few for generalisation to be valid, we could perhaps suggest that runic rings seem more likely than other inscribed rings to have been made of base material. This in turn might indicate that some at least of them were less prestigious and made for a less elite section of society than were the gold and silver rings.

It is usually assumed, from the size of the hoops, that these rings were finger-rings. The inscribed rings vary in size, the smallest hoop being some 15 mm in diameter, the largest some 32 mm. Those with the smaller diameters, for example 15 to 22 mm, were probably intended for women as they would be unlikely to have fitted a male hand. Indeed, the Thames ring (diameter 15 mm) would probably only have fitted the smallest finger on a female hand. Those with the larger diameters, 29 to 32 mm, may have been made for men since they would probably have been too loose on most women's hands, unless they were worn on the thumb. This leaves a group of rings with diameters in the middle of the range where we cannot be sure whether they were intended for men or for women.

It is of course possible that some rings were not made to be worn on the hands at all but, for example, to be attached to a larger object, or to be fastened on to a pendant to be worn around the neck. Gosling suggested that the Thames ring could have been 'some sort of hilt-band'.³⁴ However, unless there is evidence to the contrary, it seems safer to assume that finger-rings were normally intended to

be worn on the hands. Indeed some rings, notably those from Laverstock and Lancashire, both show signs of normal wear.³⁵

It is possible that, at least on occasion, amulet rings were designed to be worn not on the hands but around the neck on pendants. Certainly this was sometimes the case when medical charms were written on other objects designed to be worn as amulets. The eleventh-century *Lacnunga* gives instances of such objects. Against an illness named *dweorh*, 'dwarf', for example, seven Mass wafers are to be inscribed, one with each of the names of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus; a *mædenman*, 'virgin', is then to approach the sufferer and place one of these *on his sweoran*, 'on his neck'.³⁶ As a remedy against diarrhoea, one should take *swa langum bocfelle þæt hit mæge befon utan þæt heafod*, 'a piece of vellum long enough to surround the (patient's) head' and write on it a given text which contains Hebrew, Greek, Latin and possibly Irish: this text is described as *þysne pistol se ængel brohte to rome*, 'this epistle the angel brought to Rome'. This is then to be hung *on þæs mannes sweoran*.³⁷

Three of the runic rings, those from Bramham Moor, Kingmoor and Linstock Castle, form a small group of apparently amulet rings. They all contain very similar texts consisting of a string of letters: the Bramham Moor texts reads, for example, *ærkriufst kriuripon glæstæpontol*.³⁸ These texts do not seem to form words in either Old English or in Latin. They are generally interpreted as 'magical gibberish' and hence the rings taken to be amulet rings.³⁹ The magic emanates from the actual runes, from the use of the number three and its multiples, and from the association of the texts with similar groups of letters in Anglo-Saxon medical charms.⁴⁰ The text on the Cramond ring is now largely illegible, but what can be read suggests that it was different from the other runic texts. It is possible, however, that its text was also a string of letters, in which case it might fit into this small group of amulet rings.

Some of the texts inscribed in non-runic script are in Latin while some are in Old English and some contain only a personal name. The Flixborough ring has a text containing a partial alphabet, which can be compared with the runic Thames ring, which might contain a partial *fuporc*. A small group contains texts that use maker, owner or commissioner formulae, personifying the ring by the use of the pronoun *me*. So, for example, the Steyning ring has a text reading *æscwulf mec ah*, 'Aescwulf owns me', while the unprovenanced 'sigerie' ring has one reading *sigerie heð mea gevvircan*, presumably 'Sigerie ordered me to be made'. The unprovenanced 'eawen' ring, the ring from Bodsham and the ring from Lancashire all have variations on these forms of words. A similar text occurs on

the Wheatley Hill runic ring, using the word *ic* rather than *me*. Maker, owner and commissioner formulae occur on other objects as well as finger-rings, for example on other jewellery, on stones and on weapons.⁴¹

The other Old English texts on the rings are all different from each other, a situation not at all unusual in the context of Anglo-Saxon inscriptions. The Attleborough ring has a text which is similar to those on some eleventh-century coins where *on lvnd(e)* might mean 'in London'. The lost Essex ring apparently had a text reading *dolgbot*, 'compensation for a wound', unless this is an odd and unrecorded personal name. The lost and unprovenanced 'ðancas' ring is said to have had a text reading *ðancas*, presumably for 'thanks', and the lost Coquet Island ring apparently had a runic text beginning *bis is-*, 'this is...'. Parts of the texts on the Suffolk ring may have been in Old English or early Middle English. One text is clear: *iohnse beveriy arceb*, probably 'John of Beverley archbishop'. The other text is very worn but might have read [*a.e.sta.*] *r[-] g[-]n* and have referred to King Athelstan.

The rings with texts in Latin are also heterogeneous in character. The text on the unprovenanced 'in deo' ring is heavily abbreviated but may perhaps be expanded to *in d(e)o b(ea)t(us) d(eu)s in ait(ern)um l(u)min(e) i(n) de(o) lilios(us)*. This might be interpreted as 'in God, O God blessed eternally, pure in the light of God'. The text on the Driffield ring apparently read *ecce agnv[s] dī* and thus is similar to part of the Sherburn text. On the Sherburn text, *ā* *ō* are clearly to be read. Since the two letters are set around a representation of the Lamb of God, this is presumably an odd, indeed unparalleled, abbreviation for *agnus dei*. The Sleaford ring has *anulum fidei*, 'ring of faith', probably referring to religious faith, and the Swindon ring contains *w a*, presumably for *omega* and *alpha*. The Bossington text reads *in xpō nomen c[u]lla fiċ*; if *fiċ* is expanded to *fiċ(tum est)*, this could be interpreted 'in Christ my name has been made (*that is*, changed to) C[u]lla'.

Eight of the twenty-four rings under discussion thus contain texts that are, at least in part, explicitly religious. The initial cross that begins many of the texts is also of course an explicitly Christian symbol, but since almost all Anglo-Saxon inscribed texts start with a cross, this is not of particular relevance here. One text, on the unprovenanced 'in deo' ring, is a completely religious text which includes the abbreviated word *dues*, 'God', three times. Other ring texts include a specific mention of Christ by name (Bossington) as well as three texts referring to Christ or God by symbol, two as the *agnus dei* (Driffield and Sherburn) and one as *alpha* and *omega* (Swindon). There are references to St Peter ('eawen' ring) and to an

archbishop, probably John of Beverley (Suffolk). The Sleaford text *anulum fidei*, 'ring of faith', probably refers to religious not to secular faith. A ninth text, on the now lost 'ðancas' ring, apparently had a text reading *ðancas*, 'thanks'. If this text was accurately read, it is possible that it too was religious, referring to gratitude directed towards God rather than towards a human individual.

Explicitly religious texts are more common than not amongst Anglo-Saxon inscriptions in general. However many Anglo-Saxon inscriptions are on stone and such stones are likely to be religious: frequently they are grave-stones, memorial stones or church dedication stones. Even on Anglo-Saxon inscriptions on material other than stone, explicitly religious texts and non-religious texts occur about as frequently as each other. Yet on the rings, explicitly religious texts are rather less common, forming only one third of the group.

This is perhaps the more surprising in the light of the two Old English riddles, nos 48 and 59, which describe the object to be identified as a *hring*. The objects to be guessed in Old English riddles are usually fairly typical examples of their class. In both these riddles, the *hring* is described as a valuable object of gold which is inscribed with a religious text. In addition, the *hring* of Riddle 59 is small enough to be passed from hand to hand and may have a personal name inscribed on it. I have argued elsewhere⁴² that the *hring* in these two texts is an inscribed finger-ring, and this remains my view. However, this would suggest that typical Anglo-Saxon inscribed rings contained religious texts and, as demonstrated above, although religious texts are not uncommon on finger-rings, they are less usual than on other classes of inscribed object.

The complete text inscribed on the *hring* of Riddle 59 is not given but we are told that it named *hælend...tillfremmendra*, 'the saviour of those doing good deeds' (lines 6-7) and also *his dryhtnes naman*, 'the name of his lord' (line 8). The lord of the ring could, in the latter line, refer to God, to an earthly lord, or to both, but the former reference is clearly religious. The text on the *hring* of Riddle 48 is quoted exactly: *gehæle mec helpend gæste*, 'save me, helper of souls' (line 5). This text resembles the texts of existing Anglo-Saxon rings in its use of the pronoun *mec*, 'me', and in the religious purport of its text. The fact that its text is not exactly paralleled on any of the existing rings is no cause for concern since, as already noted, it is rare to find the same text repeated from one inscribed object to another.

Inscribed and decorated rings are not otherwise prominent in written sources from Anglo-Saxon England, although there is the occasional reference. For example, Wynflaed, in her will, bequeaths to her daughter Aethelflaed *hyre*

archbishop, probably John of Beverley (Suffolk). The Sleaford text *anulum fidei*, 'ring of faith', probably refers to religious not to secular faith. A ninth text, on the now lost 'ðancas' ring, apparently had a text reading *ðancas*, 'thanks'. If this text was accurately read, it is possible that it too was religious, referring to gratitude directed towards God rather than towards a human individual.

Explicitly religious texts are more common than not amongst Anglo-Saxon inscriptions in general. However many Anglo-Saxon inscriptions are on stone and such stones are likely to be religious: frequently they are grave-stones, memorial stones or church dedication stones. Even on Anglo-Saxon inscriptions on material other than stone, explicitly religious texts and non-religious texts occur about as frequently as each other. Yet on the rings, explicitly religious texts are rather less common, forming only one third of the group.

This is perhaps the more surprising in the light of the two Old English riddles, nos 48 and 59, which describe the object to be identified as a *hring*. The objects to be guessed in Old English riddles are usually fairly typical examples of their class. In both these riddles, the *hring* is described as a valuable object of gold which is inscribed with a religious text. In addition, the *hring* of Riddle 59 is small enough to be passed from hand to hand and may have a personal name inscribed on it. I have argued elsewhere⁴² that the *hring* in these two texts is an inscribed finger-ring, and this remains my view. However, this would suggest that typical Anglo-Saxon inscribed rings contained religious texts and, as demonstrated above, although religious texts are not uncommon on finger-rings, they are less usual than on other classes of inscribed object.

The complete text inscribed on the *hring* of Riddle 59 is not given but we are told that it named *hælend...tillfremmendra*, 'the saviour of those doing good deeds' (lines 6-7) and also *his dryhtnes naman*, 'the name of his lord' (line 8). The lord of the ring could, in the latter line, refer to God, to an earthly lord, or to both, but the former reference is clearly religious. The text on the *hring* of Riddle 48 is quoted exactly: *gehæle mec helpend gæste*, 'save me, helper of souls' (line 5). This text resembles the texts of existing Anglo-Saxon rings in its use of the pronoun *me*, 'me', and in the religious purport of its text. The fact that its text is not exactly paralleled on any of the existing rings is no cause for concern since, as already noted, it is rare to find the same text repeated from one inscribed object to another.

Inscribed and decorated rings are not otherwise prominent in written sources from Anglo-Saxon England, although there is the occasional reference. For example, Wynflaed, in her will, bequeaths to her daughter Aethelflaed *hyre*

agrafenan beah, 'her engraved ring'.⁴³ Whitelock, however, translates *beah* as 'bracelet'⁴⁴ and the Old English word can certainly have this meaning. In modern English the word 'ring' generally refers to a finger-ring, but the same is not true of *beag* and *hring* in Old English. There are, indeed, at least eleven different meanings or shades of meaning of *hring* alone.⁴⁵ What the majority of these share is the notion of circular shape: ornaments such as bracelets, brooches, even possibly necklets, could all be considered as circular.

Old English poetry abounds in references to the giving of rings as a part of the heroic code: there are a large number of such references in *Beowulf* alone. Instances of *hring* and *beag* occur both as simplexes⁴⁶ and in compounds.⁴⁷ It is not clear, however, whether such rings actually existed in Anglo-Saxon England or whether the references are to the heroic tradition, to literary convention, or to both.⁴⁸ If such rings did exist, it is also uncertain what size they were. Presumably on at least some occasions they were considerably larger than finger-rings. The imbalance between the large number of literary references to rings in Old English, and the rather small number of actual rings found, supports Hinton's view that these literary references are largely conventional.

The majority of the texts on the inscribed rings include a personal name, which fits the evidence of Riddle 59 as mentioned above. On the actual rings, the rings without personal names are the amulet rings with their strings of letters, the Wheatley Hill ring, the Flixborough ring with its partial alphabet, and the unprovenanced 'in deo' ring. The only other texts that do not appear to have contained personal names are those on the four rings which are now lost, those from Drifffield, Coquet Island, the unprovenanced 'ðancas' ring and the Essex ring. This last observation casts some doubt on the texts of these lost rings, making it at least possible that some readings, made in the nineteenth century and not now verifiable, are less than reliable.

The personal names occurring in the texts are predominantly those of men. Of those where the reading is reasonably certain, three are the names of women, eleven apparently those of men. Gender imbalance in the primary sources for Anglo-Saxon England is well-documented.⁴⁹ What is more surprising is that the archaeological evidence mentioned above suggests that finger-rings were more often worn by women than by men. This seems to demand further scrutiny.

It was suggested above that those rings with diameters in the range of 15 to 22 mm were probably intended for women. The rings of this size that contain personal names are those from Attleborough, Bodsham, Lancashire, Rome, Sleaford, Steyning, Suffolk, Swindon and possibly the Thames ring. In only one

case, on the Swindon ring, is there a woman's name, *Buredruð*, and she is not actually stated to be the owner. On the other hand, three of these rings seem to state that their owner was a man: Bodsham was owned by [*G*]armund, Lancashire by *Aedred* and Steyning by *Aescwulf*. In addition, the Sleaford ring contains the male name *Eadberht* and the Thames ring may contain the male name *Ine*.

Four of the rings fall in the range of diameter 29 to 32 mm, a size suggested above as being too large for female fingers. Two of these rings contain male names, Laverstock and Llysaen, while one, Sherburn, contains a female name and one, the unprovenanced 'eawen' ring, names *Eawen* as the female owner. Could Eawen have worn her ring on her thumb, or fastened to another object? There is no evidence to substantiate such practices, but they do not seem any more unreasonable than envisaging Eawen in continual danger of losing her ring through its slipping from her finger.

In some of these cases, the personal names on the rings may not indicate personal possession. The Suffolk ring, for example, could have been a gift presented at the shrine of John of Beverley or a trophy brought from it.⁵⁰ In the case of the Laverstock and Sherburn rings, Wilson suggested that it 'would be too much of a coincidence to have the personal rings of two Anglo-Saxon monarchs' and that these rings might instead have been 'gifts of that monarch to a person or institution'.⁵¹ In this case, the wear on the ring from Laverstock would represent use by the recipient rather than by the donor. Wilson's suggestion is perfectly possible when the text on a ring consists of a name only, and this may well be the explanation for Queen Eaðelswið's name on the large Sherburn ring. However this seems rather less likely when the personal name on the ring identifies that person as the actual owner of the ring.

There seems to be no reason why personal names inscribed on finger-rings should always have had the same function. Some could have indicated ownership while others had a different purpose. As suggested above, some could have recorded the name of the donor. One, the unprovenanced 'sigerie' ring, certainly gives the name of the commissioner of the object: *sigerie heð mea gevvircan*, 'Sigerie ordered me to be made'. Part of the text on the Lancashire ring gives the name of the engraver of the ring as *Eanred*.

Another possibility is that modern scholars have been too quick to think that they have fully understood the theory underlying Anglo-Saxon nomenclature. It is generally accepted by scholars as a clear principle that Old English dithematic names are male if the second element is grammatically masculine, female if it is grammatically feminine. The same connection between sex and

grammatical gender is held to be true in the case of monothematic names. This principle may not have been quite so clear to the Anglo-Saxons themselves, and indeed has now been questioned by some people, for example Colman.⁵²

Evidence for concern lies in the fact that a small group of names, for example those with second elements *-noð* or *-mund*, seem always to refer to men although the Old English words *mund*, 'hand, power', and *noð*, 'temerity', always appear in manuscript texts as grammatically feminine.⁵³ In other cases the second elements of male names are formed from adjectives, like *heah*, 'high', or from neuter nouns, for example *wig*, 'war'.⁵⁴ Colman's evidence is based on the names of moneys of the coins of Edward the Confessor (1042-1066). Since we know of no recorded instance in Anglo-Saxon England of a female moneyer, this evidence has seemed fairly conclusive. However an argument *ex silentio* can certainly be questioned.

Why should women not have been moneyers? The striking of coins required quite hard physical labour and it is likely that at all periods this was undertaken by men. When coins were first struck in Anglo-Saxon England, it is assumed that the actual striking was done by the moneyers named on the coins. In the later Anglo-Saxon period, however, moneyers appear to have 'enjoyed a higher status. In Winchester, for example, the names of five moneyers who held land T.R.E are noted;⁵⁵ Biddle describes them as a 'relatively wealthy group' and probably 'of burgess rank'.⁵⁶ Osulf, a late tenth-century York moneyer of Ethelred II, is described as *thein*, probably for *ðegn*.⁵⁷ Such moneyers presumably did not themselves physically strike coins. Moreover, there is the occasional moneyer's name which appears to be female, for example *Hild* in Stamford⁵⁸ and *Gife* in Lincoln⁵⁹. Why could not the role of a moneyer, whose job in the later period may have been primarily to oversee the work, be undertaken by a woman as well as by a man?

As noted above, when male names appear to contain a feminine second element, the strategy in the past has been to assume that Old English nouns like *mund* and *noð* must have been grammatically masculine when forming personal names and grammatically feminine on all other occasions. This is a possible, if a somewhat implausible argument. In any case, it seems inherently unlikely that most parents would have been knowledgeable about the theoretical grammatical structure of their language. Choice of personal name is much more likely to have been governed by convention as to what were suitable names for females and males. It seems quite possible that we do not fully understand the conventions underlying Anglo-Saxon naming practices.

The apparently male owners' names on five of the small rings should then be re-examined. They are [G]armund, Aedred, Aescwulf and possibly Eadberht and Ine. It does not seem improbable, as suggested above, that the element *-mund* should on occasion form a female name, since Old English *mund* is a feminine noun. Although the Old English adjective *beorht*, 'bright', is always assumed to form male names, there is no actual evidence that female names could not be formed from it. In the case of *Aedred*, instead of the second element's being *-red*, could it be *-dred*, a recorded variant spelling of the feminine *-thryth*?⁶⁰ Although the Old English noun *wulf* is masculine, the feminine form *wylf*, 'female wolf', occurs. *Aescwulf* could possibly be a variant spelling of an unrecorded female name **Aescwylf*. The name *Ine* is known to us as the name of a seventh-century king, but could it conceivably be a spelling of the feminine name *Hune*?⁶¹

One question that remains to be addressed is why anyone in Anglo-Saxon England would want to inscribe a finger-ring. In a society with a limited level of literacy, such an undertaking does not appear to have enormous practical advantage. Certainly it would seem anachronistic to consider the texts containing personal names as comparable to modern name-tags, inscribed to aid identification and claim of lost rings.

It may be that sometimes an inscribed text was added to enhance the decorative appeal of the ring. This might well be the explanation for the $\bar{a} \bar{d}$ on the Sherburn text. As noted above, these letters are presumably an abbreviation for *agnus dei* since the two letters are set around a representation of the Lamb of God. The letters do not label the figure of the Lamb in any helpful way. Indeed, we can only interpret the text because we can identify the picture, not vice versa, and no doubt the original audience would have been in the same position.

On other rings, some of the texts are functional in the sense that they provide information, for example, in giving the name of the maker or owner of the ring. These texts may have been inscribed out of pride in craftsmanship or ownership, even if the audience likely to benefit from this information was rather limited. If the rings containing royal names and titles were presents made to others, as opposed to being personal possessions, the texts would presumably have added to their value as royal gifts.

In conclusion, it is clear that the numbers of rings, both inscribed and uninscribed, that remain from Anglo-Saxon England is not large. This does not accord well with the frequent references in Old English poetry to rings and ring-giving. These poetic references to the giving of rings may then be primarily a literary convention, rather than a description of actual Anglo-Saxon practice.

Anglo-Saxon Inscribed Rings

Such a convention could of course have had its origins in actual practices, but in those dating from the pre-invasion period. It is possible that, insofar as Anglo-Saxon poets had actual objects in mind, the 'rings' they referred to were not necessarily finger-rings. They could have been thinking of any of a variety of circular objects of gold or silver, including not only finger-rings but also bracelets, necklets, perhaps even bowls or plates.

Although finger-rings made from base metal are known, the majority are made from more prestigious material. These must therefore have been the possessions of the well-to-do in society, those who could afford to purchase and own expensive items of jewellery. In mid to late Anglo-Saxon England, literacy itself seems to have been a mark of prestige. It has been suggested that, even in the eighth century, writing was taken as a symbol of power and authority.⁶² By the late Anglo-Saxon period, the society has been described as one 'in which considerable respect was accorded to the written word'.⁶³ I have argued elsewhere that Anglo-Saxon inscriptions in general illustrate well these attitudes of respect for the power and prestige of literacy.⁶⁴

As far as the inscribed finger-rings are concerned, explicitly religious texts are rather rarer than would be expected by comparison with other contemporary inscribed objects. This might suggest that inscribed finger-rings were, or became, fashionable amongst the secular elite of mid to late Anglo-Saxon England. Perhaps the rich and powerful, particularly those in secular society, were increasingly aware of the importance of writing and were not averse to being associated with it by having their own names, or other texts, inscribed on their expensive finger-rings.



Plate 1. Finger-ring from Laverstock, Wiltshire, now in the British Museum



Plate 2. Finger-ring from Sherburn, Yorkshire, now in the British Museum

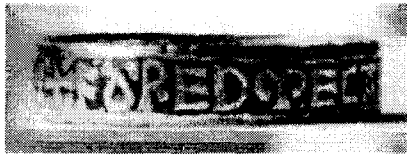


Plate 3. Finger-ring from Lancashire, now in the British Museum

Anglo-Saxon Inscribed Rings

NOTES

I am most grateful to Dr Veronica Smart, University of St Andrews, for her help with the coin evidence cited and for her stimulating discussion of its implications. I acknowledge with thanks the financial help given me by the Faculty of Arts Research Fund, University College Cork.

- ¹ Elisabeth Okasha, *Hand-list of Anglo-Saxon Non-runic Inscriptions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), no. 5, pp. 49-50.
- ² Okasha, *Hand-list*, no. 13, p. 55.
- ³ Okasha, *Hand-list*, no. 14, p. 55.
- ⁴ Okasha, *Hand-list*, no. 33, p. 67.
- ⁵ Okasha, *Hand-list*, no. 36, p. 70.
- ⁶ Elisabeth Okasha, 'A second supplement to *Hand-List of Anglo-Saxon Non-Runic Inscriptions*', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 21 (1992), no. 192, pp. 45-6.
- ⁷ Okasha, *Hand-list*, no. 66, p. 89.
- ⁸ Okasha, *Hand-list*, no. 70, pp. 91-2.
- ⁹ Okasha, *Hand-list*, no. 86, pp. 98-9.
- ¹⁰ Okasha, *Hand-list*, no. 103, pp. 107-8.
- ¹¹ Okasha, *Hand-list*, no. 107, pp. 112-13.
- ¹² This ring is unpublished.
- ¹³ Okasha, 'second supplement' (as n. 6), no. 204, pp. 53-4.
- ¹⁴ Elisabeth Okasha, 'A rediscovered medieval inscribed ring', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 2 (1973), 167-71.
- ¹⁵ Okasha, *Hand-list*, no. 115, p. 117.
- ¹⁶ Okasha, *Hand-list*, no. 155, p. 136.
- ¹⁷ This ring is unpublished.
- ¹⁸ Okasha, *Hand-list*, no. 156, pp. 136-7.
- ¹⁹ Okasha, *Hand-list*, no. 157, p. 137.
- ²⁰ R. I. Page, *An Introduction to English Runes* 2nd ed. (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1999), p. 112.
- ²¹ Page, *English Runes*, pp. 158-60.
- ²² Page, *English Runes*, p. 157.
- ²³ Page, *English Runes*, p. 112.
- ²⁴ Page, *English Runes*, p. 112.
- ²⁵ K. Gosling, 'Recent finds from London', in *Old English Runes and their Continental Background*, ed. by Alfred Bammesberger (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1991), pp. 191-4 (pp. 191-3).
- ²⁶ R. I. Page, 'An Anglo-Saxon Runic Ring', *Nytt om runer*, 12 (1998), 11-12.

- ²⁷ David M. Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Ornamental Metalwork 700-1100 in the British Museum* (London: British Museum, 1964), pp. 99-116.
- ²⁸ C. C. Oman, 'Anglo-Saxon Finger-Rings', *Apollo*, 14 (1931), 104-8.
- ²⁹ David A. Hinton, 'Late Saxon Treasure and Bullion', in *Ethelred the Unready: Papers from the Millenary Conference*, ed. by David Hill, *BAR British Series 59* (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 1978), pp. 135-58 (pp. 150-8).
- ³⁰ Gale R. Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), pp. 56-7, 83.
- ³¹ Owen-Crocker, *Dress*, pp. 96-7, 129.
- ³² Owen-Crocker, *Dress*, pp. 134, 173.
- ³³ Oman, 'Finger-Rings' (as n. 28), p. 105; Hinton, 'Late Saxon Treasure' (as n. 29), p. 158.
- ³⁴ Gosling, 'Recent finds' (as n. 25), p. 192.
- ³⁵ Ronald Jessup, *Anglo-Saxon Jewellery* (Aylesbury: Shire Publications, 1974), pp. 80, 82.
- ³⁶ J. H. G. Grattan and C. Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine* (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1952), pp. 160-3, *Lacnunga* XCIII b.
- ³⁷ Grattan and Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic*, pp. 188-9, *Lacnunga* CLXVIII c.
- ³⁸ Page, *English Runes* (as n. 20), p. 112.
- ³⁹ Page, *English Runes*, p. 112.
- ⁴⁰ B. Dickins, 'Runic Rings and Old English Charms', *Archiv für das Studium der Neueren Sprachen*, 167 (1935), 252.
- ⁴¹ For a full discussion see Elisabeth Okasha, 'The Commissioners, Makers and Owners of Anglo-Saxon Inscriptions', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 7 (1994), 71-7.
- ⁴² Elisabeth Okasha, 'Old English *hring* in Riddles 48 and 59', *Medium Ævum*, 62 (1993), 61-9.
- ⁴³ Christine E. Fell *et al.*, *Women in Anglo-Saxon England and the Impact of 1066* (London: British Museum, 1984), p. 107.
- ⁴⁴ *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, ed. by Dorothy Whitelock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930), pp. 10-11.
- ⁴⁵ Okasha, 'Old English *hring*' (as n. 41), p. 64.
- ⁴⁶ For example, *se beag*, line 1211; *beages*, line 1216; *hring*, line 1203; *hringas*, line 1195; *beaga bryttan*, lines 35, 352 etc, 'giver of rings, lord'.
- ⁴⁷ For example, *hringsele*, line 2010 and *beahsele*, line 1177, 'hall where rings are given'; *beaggyfa*, line 1102, 'ring-giver, lord'.
- ⁴⁸ See the discussion in D. A. Hinton, 'Late Anglo-Saxon metal-work: an assessment', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 4 (1975), 171-80 (pp. 177-8).

Anglo-Saxon Inscribed Rings

⁴⁹ Elisabeth Okasha, 'Anglo-Saxon women: the evidence from inscriptions', in *Roman, Runes and Ogham: Medieval Inscriptions in the Insular World and on the Continent*, ed. by J. Higgitt et al. (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2001), pp. 79-88.

⁵⁰ Okasha, 'rediscovered ring' (as n. 14).

⁵¹ Wilson, *Ornamental Metalwork* (as n. 27), p. 56.

⁵² Fran Colman, *Money Talks: Reconstructing Old English* (Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1992), pp. 54-5.

⁵³ See for example Colman, *Money Talks*, pp. 91, 77.

⁵⁴ For example Colman, *Money Talks*, pp. 76, 78.

⁵⁵ For example *Alwardus* and *Alestanus*: Martin Biddle ed., *Winchester in the Early Middle Ages: An Edition and Discussion of the Winton Domesday* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 50, 56.

⁵⁶ Biddle, *Winchester*, pp. 401 and 421 respectively.

⁵⁷ Elizabeth J. E. Pirie, *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles, 21 Coins in Yorkshire Collections* (London: British Academy and Oxford University Press, 1975), plate III, no. 75 and p. lii.

⁵⁸ Veronica Smart, *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles, 41 Cumulative Index of Volumes 21-40* (Oxford: British Academy and Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 74; Anthony Gunstone, *Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles, 27 Coins in Lincolnshire Collections* (London: British Academy and Oxford University Press, 1981), plates XXXIX, nos. 1086-90.

⁵⁹ Smart, *Sylloge 41*, p. 64; Gunstone, *Sylloge 27*, plate II, no. 47 and plate XXVII, no. 746.

⁶⁰ See examples in Maria Boehler, *Die altenglischen Frauennamen* (Berlin: Germanische Studien, 1930), pp. 31-2, 152.

⁶¹ Mats A. Redin, *Studies on Uncompounded Personal Names in Old English* (Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 1919), p. 115; Boehler, *Frauennamen*, p. 223.

⁶² Susan Kelly, 'Anglo-Saxon lay society and the written word', in *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe* ed. by Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 36-62.

⁶³ Simon Keynes, 'Royal government and the written word in late Anglo-Saxon England', in *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe* ed. by Rosamond McKitterick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 226-57 (p. 248).

⁶⁴ Elisabeth Okasha, 'Literacy in Anglo-Saxon England: the evidence from inscriptions', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 8 (1995), 69-74.

'Westward I came across the Sea': Anglo-Scandinavian History through Scandinavian Eyes

Susanne Kries

The co-existence of Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians in the Anglo-Saxon period has traditionally been evaluated on the basis of Anglo-Saxon written sources, and above all by recourse to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.¹ The *Chronicle* is significant as an ideological work in creating cultural identity and defining national culture. Martin Irvine² and Janet Thormann³ convincingly presented the tenth-century poems incorporated in the various manuscripts of the *Chronicle* as promoting an 'Englishness' constituted through West Saxon rule.⁴ Those scholars who have turned to Scandinavian poetic records have, however, generally been sceptical about the 'historical' content that skaldic testimony might provide.⁵ The wider cultural-historical implications of the Scandinavian sources have largely been ignored and their status as testimony to a specifically 'Scandinavian' point of view neglected.

This paper seeks to provide a re-evaluation of the question of Anglo-Scandinavian inter-cultural communication by examining a fragmentary poem of the tenth century, Egill Skallagrímsson's *Aðalsteinsdrápa*, which was composed in praise of the West-Saxon King Æthelstan. The poem is a potentially valuable witness since its origin can be traced back to an English context. *Aðalsteinsdrápa* might thus invite us to examine how Scandinavians and English negotiated their identities against a backdrop of ongoing competition. 'Westwards I came across the sea' translates the first line of another poem that is attributed to Egill, *Hofuðlausn*. The poem's geographic reference to England has been appropriated for the title of this article to encourage us to include a Scandinavian perspective in our efforts to understand Anglo-Scandinavian co-existence in ninth- to eleventh-century England.

At this point, it is necessary to give some explanation of the ethnic terminology used in this paper. I am, of course, aware that attributing a 'Scandinavian' perspective to a text like *Aðalsteinsdrápa* is a dangerous venture. I have no wish to project the idea of a modern Scandinavian nation state onto a medieval situation. The term 'Scandinavian' is used here rather as a relative term, defined in reference to the 'English' population of the territory which from the end of the tenth century came to be referred to as England. Expressions of English self-identification can be detected from the late ninth century onward. They are to begin with principally associated with the West-Saxon King Alfred the Great (871–99), who has been credited with promoting the use of the term *Angelcynn* 'English kin' in the vernacular writings associated with his court, including the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.⁶ The use of the label 'English' in this article thus renders that specific identity. The term 'Scandinavian' is used essentially to describe both the Norwegian and Danish population of England, the two ethnic groups that the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* identifies by the terms of *Dene* and *Northmen* in its narrative. This general term will give way to a more specific ethnic distinction where the sources justify such a perspective. That medieval Scandinavia, and here especially Iceland, placed a strong premium on individual and collective identities is especially evident in the saga literature that recounts the stories of Norwegian kings and Icelandic farmers, poets and adventurers. Similar traits can be discovered in medieval Icelandic skaldic poetry that, in contrast to the anonymous *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, is usually accompanied by an authorial signifier, a name that evokes certain expectations in the audience — expectations which anonymously transmitted texts would not have evoked. In the case of *Aðalsteinsdrápa*, the credited author is the Icelander Egill Skallagrímsson whose poetry is transmitted, mainly if not exclusively, within *Egils saga*, the text that recounts his life.

The following discussion about the specific value of *Aðalsteinsdrápa* as a witness to the competitive interests in Anglo-Scandinavian England will focus very much on the figure of Ælle, an English king, whose identity can be inferred both from Scandinavian as well as English sources. In the first instance we shall see which English and Scandinavian sources deal with 'King Ælle'. As will become evident, the figure of the king has been very differently inscribed into the shared history of the two ethnic groups. Secondly, we shall discuss how the occurrence of the name Ælle in *Aðalsteinsdrápa* influences the interpretation of the text and will analyse how a Scandinavian audience might have understood the poem. While Scandinavian tradition apparently knew only one English King

Ælle, English sources recognise three kings of that name. It will thus be suggested that the different identification of 'King Ælle' in English and Scandinavian tradition allows for a double reading of *Aðalsteinsdrápa*, satisfying both an English as well as a Scandinavian audience. The final section of this paper deals with the consequences of our interpretation in the wider perspective of Anglo-Scandinavian co-existence and identifies the poem as an important witness for the competitive nature of English-Scandinavian relations.

'King Ælle' in Scandinavian and English sources

As Matthew Townend remarks, the name Ella repeatedly occurs in Old Norse poetry, 'making its bearer by far the most frequently named Anglo-Saxon in skaldic verse'.⁷ However, while Ella/Ælle acquired a prominent role in Scandinavian medieval literature beyond that of any other English king, the English sources seem overwhelmingly to discredit his reputation and his status as a legitimate royal representative.

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* mentions three kings with the name Ælle: a South Saxon one of the last quarter of the fifth century (cf. entries for 477, 485 and 491), a Deiran one of the later sixth century who much later even made it into the writings of Gower and Chaucer⁸ (cf. entries for 560 and 588) and a Northumbrian king of the ninth century. This last king is also found in Scandinavian sources, where he occurs as part of the literary tradition associated with King Ragnarr loðbrók and his sons. We shall first turn to the Scandinavian sources and then to the English ones to see how they each deal with this historic king, before we address the interpretation of *Aðalsteinsdrápa* and the function of Ælle in the poem.

The literary sources for Ragnarr's career are two Icelandic prose works — the thirteenth-century *Ragnars saga loðbrókar* and the slightly later *Ragnarssona þátr* — and the skaldic poem *Krákumál*, which is believed to have been composed in the late twelfth century. All of these sources deal with Ragnarr's death in King Ælle's snake pit in Northumbria, an unhappy end which is also recounted in the work of the Danish historian Saxo Grammaticus, who devotes book nine of his *Gesta Danorum* to the life and death of the legendary hero. And Saxo's text even presents the raid of the Scandinavian army on England in 866/67 as an act of vengeance on the part of Ragnarr's sons against King Ælle of Northumbria.⁹ Alfred P. Smyth attributes a similar ideological intent to

Krákumál. From the outset, Ragnarr's mission to attack England is presented in the poem as doomed to failure, so that Smyth interprets Ragnarr's loss of the battle and of his life as follows:

The entire episode presents the reader with the strong impression that it was created solely to account for the subsequent invasion of Northumbria by the sons of Ragnarr loðbrók, and for their slaying of King Ælla, in A.D. 867.¹⁰

The question as to whether the snake pit episode has any historical basis need not detain us here, nor its similarity to Gunnarr's death in a snake pit in *Völsunga saga*.¹¹ It is of more relevance to see how the death of Ælle is presented in English and Scandinavian sources respectively.

The story of Ælle's death at the hands of Ragnarr's sons also features in the skaldic poetry of Scandinavia before *Krákumál*. Nine poems mention the eponymous English king.¹² They are Egill Skallagrímsson's *Aðalsteinsdrápa*, Eilífr Goðrúnarson's *Þórsdrápa*, Sighvatr Þórðarson's *Víkingarvísur* and his *Knútsdrápa*, Hallvarðr háreksblesi's *Knútsdrápa*, Þjóðólfr Arnórsson's *Magnúsflokkur*, *Háttalykill* by Hallr Þórarinsson and Jarl Rögnvaldr, Einarr Skúlason's *Haraldsdrápa II* and the anonymous *Krákumál*. Of these poems, five clearly have an English context, even though not all of them were necessarily composed and/or performed in England:¹³ the two *Knútsdrápur* and the *Víkingarvísur* belong to a set of texts dealing with the eleventh-century conquest of England, while the fragmentary *Aðalsteinsdrápa* is a praise poem on the English King Æthelstan. The reference to Ælle in *Magnúsflokkur* also belongs to this group, but will be discussed later. The origins of *Háttalykill* and *Krákumál* are generally associated with the Orkney Islands.¹⁴

Turning first to the three poems associated with Knútr's and Ólafur's conquest of England, we see the following uses of the name Ælle: Hallvarðr's *Knútsdrápa* calls England *Ellu ættleifð* 'Ælle's family inheritance'¹⁵ and the *Víkingarvísur* refer to the English as *Ellu kind*, 'Ælle's kin'.¹⁶ The eponymous King Ælle is thus presented in these sources as the fulcrum for any Scandinavian definition of 'Englishness'. Sighvatr Þórðarson's *Knútsdrápa*, generally assumed to have been composed between the late 1020s and 1038,¹⁷ offers information as to the killing of Ælle. Here we read in stanza one:

Anglo-Scandinavian History through Scandinavian Eyes

Ok Ellu bak,
at, lét, hinn's sat,
Ívarr, ara,
Jórvík, skorit.¹⁸

[And Ívarr, he who resided in York, had Ælle's back cut
by/with an eagle/sword.]

I will leave aside here the question of whether this is a description of the so-called rite of the blood-eagle¹⁹ or whether Roberta Frank is right in assuming that it is an expression for an eagle, a beast of battle, devouring the remains of the slain king.²⁰ A third possible interpretation has been advanced by Rory McTurk, who dismisses both readings of the stanza and instead suggests that *ari*, which is related to the semantically similar *örn* 'eagle', should be taken as meaning 'sword'.²¹ For the time being, suffice it to say here that we have at least one skaldic statement for the confrontation of Ælle and Ívarr, resulting in the latter's victory over the English king.

It becomes clear in the second stanza of Sighvatr's *Knútsdrápa* that the pair Ívarr – Ælle serves as a parallel case for Knútr and his English opponent King Æthelred. Both stanzas also share stylistic similarities, since they are in fact half stanzas, each introduced by the word *ok*, 'and':

Ok senn sonu
sló, hvern ok þó,
Aðalráðs, eða
út flæmði, Knútr.²²

[And Knútr went on to slay Æthelred's sons, and each one to
boot, or chased them out (of the country).]

As Roberta Frank²³ and Alfred Smyth²⁴ have already pointed out, Knútr's Scandinavian conquest thus appears as a re-enactment of former conquest, a reclaiming of 'inherited' property, based on the killing of King Ælle of Northumberland by the *micel here* 'great army', as the *Chronicle* calls the Scandinavian army that landed in England in 866, under Ívarr the Boneless in 867. And it might be added, that the form of the stanza, which is composed in a metre called *tøglag*, gave the verses a specific Cnutian ring, since this metrical form is particularly associated with Knútr's Anglo-Scandinavian court.²⁵ We might thus agree with Matthew Townend that the contexts in which the English

name occurs is usually defined by 'Anglo-Scandinavian confrontations in England'.²⁶ And this is especially apparent in *Magnúsflokkur*, generally thought to have been composed in 1045. Here, the Norwegian King Magnús góði is called *Ellu konr*, 'kinsman of Ella',²⁷ which Matthew Townend convincingly interprets as emphasizing the king's claim to the English throne.²⁸

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* agrees with the Scandinavian sources in maintaining that the *micel here* was responsible for King Ælle's death in York in 867 (MSS A, B, C, D, E).²⁹ However, the *Chronicle* does not mention any connection between Ívarr the Boneless, who was the Scandinavian leader on this venture, and Ragnarr loðbrók.³⁰ In fact, neither Ívarr nor Ragnarr are mentioned in the annals for 867 at all, while most interestingly it is only in the early twelfth-century bilingual MS F of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* that Ingware (that is, Ívarr) is explicitly mentioned as the killer, not of Ælle, but of King Edmund the Martyr (s.a. 870). For Ragnarr, whose very existence depends on legend, this might not come as a surprise, but for Ívarr, who is known from several sources outside Scandinavia, this is indeed worthy of notice.

Other sources, including both Anglo-Saxon and post-Conquest English texts, recount the story of the death of King Ælle at the hands of the Danes as well, even though the presentations differ. These texts are the late tenth-century *Chronicle* of Æþelweard, the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, Geffrei Gaimar's twelfth-century *L'Estoire des Engleis*³¹ and a Latin account dating from the thirteenth century, the *Narratio de Uxore Aernulfi ab Ella Rege Deirorum Violata*. None of the texts, however, names Ragnarr loðbrók in this context, while Æþelweard's *Chronicle* is the first English source to mention Ívarr in connection with the Scandinavian army fighting against the English in Northumbria in 866/67.³²

Egill's *Aðalsteinsdrápa*

Whereas the two *Knútsdrápur* and the *Víkingarvísur* are clearly set against the backdrop of the Scandinavian conquest of England, Egill Skallagrímsson's *Aðalsteinsdrápa* contextualises itself in a very different situation. The text is a praise poem on the English King Æþelstan who ruled the kingdom of Wessex between 924/5 and 939, during which time he managed to conquer some of the territories under Scandinavian rule, including York. *Egils saga* states that Egill fought on King Æþelstan's side in the battle of the Vínheiði. That battle has often

Anglo-Scandinavian History through Scandinavian Eyes

been identified with the battle at Brunanburh, recorded in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for the year 937.³³ The skald spent some time at Æthelstan's court during which — according to *Egils saga* chapter 55 — Egill composed his praise poem on the English king. The saga further states that Egill was rewarded for the poem by the king with two gold bracelets and a valuable cloak that had been worn by the king himself.

Admittedly, only one stanza of *Aðalsteinsdrápa* and the *stef* — or refrain — have survived. The poem thus reads as follows:

Nú hefr foldgnárr fellda,
fells jörð und nið Ellu,
hjaldrsnerandi, harra
höfuðbaðmr, þrjá jöfra;
Aðalsteinn of vann annat,
all's lægra kynfrægjum
hér sverjum þess, hyrjar
hrannbrjótr, konungmanni.³⁴

[Now has the battle-increaser (= warrior = Æthelstan), the lord's/king's³⁵ most important offspring (= Æthelstan), the *foldgnárr* (= he who towers above the earth (?) = Æthelstan) cut down three princes; the land submits to the descendant of Ælle (= Æthelstan). Æthelstan won more, everything/everybody is lower than the king of famous descent — this we swear here(by), breaker of the wave-fire (= gold; 'breaker of the gold' = generous lord = Æthelstan).]

This is followed by the *stef*:

Nú liggr hæst und hraustum
hreinbraut Aðalsteini.³⁶

[Now the highest reindeer-way (= the moor = northern England) belongs to the bold Æthelstan.]

Judith Jesch regards *Aðalsteinsdrápa* as among those skaldic verses that were most probably performed in England and thus renders the historical situation in which the poem is set as authentic.³⁷ We therefore have to assume that both an English and Scandinavian audience was present when the poem was recited.

Aðalsteinsdrápa praises the military success of the English king and calls him 'battle-increaser' and 'breaker of the wave-fire'. These two kennings belong to the standard repertoire of the skalds, describing the one praised as bold and generous. Much more unusual is the kenning *foldgnárr*. And its interpretation has posed enormous difficulties to scholars past and present.

The second element of this kenning seems to echo the name of Gná, a messenger of the goddess Frigg, known for riding a horse that can gallop across the sea and sky. *Foldgnárr* has therefore either been read as a noun expressing something that is aloft — with *fold*, 'earth', describing something that rises above the earth³⁸ — or as a kenning for somebody who moves through the sky, like a valkyrie, and thus an expression for 'battle'.³⁹ The latter interpretation, however, is only possible by a change of the first element *fold*- 'land' to *folk*- 'people, battle, army' (cf. other kennings as *folk-Rán* 'valkyrie') or *fald*- 'head-dress, helmet' ('head-dress of Gná' = 'head-dress of the flying one' = 'head-dress of a valkyrie' = 'helmet' = 'battle'). Since the stanza is transmitted only in the *Egils saga* version in *Möðruvallabók*, which clearly reads *fol(l)dgnarr*, I shall follow the first interpretation in assuming that the kenning refers to something that is aloft, i. e. the elevated status of King Æthelstan.

Aðalsteinsdrápa clearly touches on expressions of hierarchy, both with respect to actual space as well as royal authority as defined by genealogical descent. The first kenning for Æthelstan, *foldgnárr*, designates the spheres of heaven and earth. Further hierarchical expressions are provided by the description that Æthelstan cut *down* three princes and laid *low* a country that in the poem's refrain is referred to as *hæst* 'the highest'. Moreover, *Aðalsteinsdrápa* stresses Æthelstan's descent three times: he is a descendant of Ælle, the king's/lord's most important offspring and he is *kynfrægjum* 'of a famous family' — everybody is lower than the king. And with this in mind we shall revert to our starting point, King Ælle.

Æthelstan, genealogy and royal authority (1):

Aðalsteinsdrápa and the ninth-century English King Ælle

Gabriel M. Spiegel defines the purpose of genealogical constructs as praising a line and legitimising its power; more specifically she argues that a medieval genealogy 'displays a family's intention to affirm and extend its place in political life'.⁴⁰ Genealogy constructs history as a series of biographies linked by 'the

principle of hereditary succession',⁴¹ in which the passing of time is marked by a name — personal history in the true sense of the term. She further observes about the dynastic measuring of time that genealogy 'functioned to secularise time by grounding it in biology, transforming the connection between past and present into a real one, seminally imparted from generation to generation'.⁴² Genealogical (pro)creation thus becomes the very essence of shaping history. Since Æthelstan's power is fatally qualified by his ancestry we will now examine the reputation of the ninth-century King Ælle — whom *Aðalsteinsdrápa* presents as Æthelstan's ancestor — in both English and Scandinavian sources.

The English sources very much doubt the validity of Ælle's rule in Northumberland and thus his role in Anglo-Scandinavian history. They do this essentially by questioning his ancestry and thus his very legitimacy to rule the kingdom. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* calls Ælle an *ungecyndne cyning* 'unnatural king' (MS A)⁴³ and the *Life of Alfred* adds that he was a tyrant and did not belong to the royal line of Northumbrian kings.⁴⁴ From a purely English perspective, a king surrounded by such reservations will hardly have been an appropriate role model for King Æthelstan, who from 931 onwards assumed titles that not only claimed power over the English, but lordship over all of Britain and who generally adopted a remarkably imperial style in his diplomas and correspondence.⁴⁵ We thus find the motto *Rex to(tius) Brit(anniae)* 'king of the whole of Britain' on Æthelstan's coins after the conquest of York in 927.⁴⁶ Although Æthelweard's late tenth-century *Chronicle* does not mention Ælle by name, it states that the Northumbrians 'pariter omnes quondam sibi ignobilem eligunt regem'⁴⁷ [(they) all unanimously elected an ignoble king]. It is generally assumed that this passage is based on a version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* close to MS A. However, we also find independent information. Thus, unlike the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the text names Iguuar (that is, Ívarr) as the leader of the *micl here*. A later source, the twelfth-century *Historia Regum* attributed to Symeon of Durham, confirms the description of the Northumbrian King advanced in the previous sources by calling him a 'tyrannum quendam Ella nomine, non de regali prosapia progenitum'⁴⁸ [a certain tyrant called Ella, not born of royal lineage]. Moreover, Ubbi, Ívarr and Halfdan are mentioned as the leaders of the Scandinavian army.⁴⁹

Contrary to the rather lowly and illegal status attributed to Ælle in the English sources, *Ragnars saga loðbrókar* calls him king of England,⁵⁰ while the *þáttr* more accurately describes him as king of Northumbria.⁵¹ De Vries has already argued that the legend of Ragnarr loðbrók and his sons was first created

among Scandinavians in England in the eleventh century, who, with the recent conquest of England by Svein Forkbeard and Knútr the Great, were anxious to justify their ancestors' deeds in ninth-century England.⁵² Part of that strategy might have involved recasting the images of Ívarr and Ælle by associating Ívarr with more heroic motifs and Ælle with more negative attributes, including greed. At the same time the description of Ælle's power remained unchanged, thus providing the Scandinavian imagination with a useful touchstone against which Scandinavian military success could be measured.

What in the *Knútsdrápur* can be interpreted as references to a successful previous conquest situation (Ívarr – Knútr) has a very different ring in a poem that is dedicated not to a Danish, but an English king. By referring to King Æthelstan as of Ælle's stem, *Aðalsteinsdrápa* creates a point of origin for English royalty: the reign of Ælle the Northumbrian king, slain by Ívarr. English history as seen through Scandinavian eyes thus starts in the ninth century, in a situation of mutual conflict between Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians. This conflict is, however, resolved in favour of the Scandinavians who appear as successors of Ívarr, while Æthelstan's genealogical straitjacket is the unsuccessful King Ælle. The reference to Ælle thus interprets Æthelstan's royal power as depending on Scandinavian supremacy. Read in this way, *Aðalsteinsdrápa* does *not* establish the English king's authority, but rather shows that his authority is challenged by Scandinavian prowess. And since Ælle is made an ancestor of Æthelstan, contested hierarchies are resolved in favour of Scandinavian rule in England. Since Æthelstan continued his West-Saxon predecessors' conquest of Scandinavian controlled territories in England, the fact that the poem reminds the king of previous failure puts an interesting gloss on the ventures of the present.

At this point it is worthwhile to recall Egill's *Hofuðlausn*, which also has an Anglo-Scandinavian context. *Egils saga* chapter 60 recounts the origin of its composition as follows. Egill, on his third voyage to King Æthelstan of England, is shipwrecked at the mouth of the Humber. He decides to surrender himself to Eiríkr Bloodaxe, the Norwegian ruler of the Scandinavian kingdom of York, who back in Norway had proclaimed Egill an outlaw. Egill's death at the hands of the angry king is prevented by his composing and reciting a *drápa* on Eiríkr, *Hofuðlausn* 'Head Ransom'. In this way, and with the help and mediation of his friend Arinbjörn, the poet manages to save himself from death. Thus both *Aðalsteinsdrápa* and *Hofuðlausn* place themselves in an Anglo-Scandinavian context in that they claim to be performed in England by an Icelandic poet.

Anglo-Scandinavian History through Scandinavian Eyes

John Hines interprets the specific Scandinavian cultural world evoked in *Höfuðlausn* as being in stark contrast to what we perceive as the cultural and political climate of Anglo-Scandinavian England. He notes:

Both politically and culturally, assimilation between invader and native had been going on for several generations; in the middle of the tenth century this was a strong and continuing process, against which the uncompromisingly Viking character of Egill's poem stands in sharp contrast.⁵³

The point that John Hines here makes about *Höfuðlausn* is also interesting for our interpretation of *Aðalsteinsdrápa*. Images of the assimilation of the resident Scandinavians into a tenth-century English culture are most strongly evoked by numismatic and archaeological evidence, at least if we take the production of stone crosses in Scandinavian fashion as indicative of the adoption of at least the cultural icons of Christianity. However, we also have evidence suggesting that English-Scandinavian competition did not cease to exist despite the claims of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as to the political integration (by conquest) of the Scandinavian parts of England into the sphere of influence of the kings of Wessex. The Scandinavian rulers of York, for example, not only issued coins that resembled the iconography of their English rivals,⁵⁴ but also those bearing signs of a strong Scandinavian identity. A striking example of the latter is offered by some of Olaf Guthfriðson's (939–41) coins which were struck in the name of 'Olaf cunung' and portrayed a raven 'with outstretched wings signifying victory'.⁵⁵ Whilst the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* paints a picture of steady, uninterrupted West Saxon conquest, first of the Danish areas of Mercia and then of Norwegian Northumberland, *Aðalsteinsdrápa* clearly interrupts this success story by challenging the very basis of Æthelstan's authority, reminding him — at least to the ears of his Scandinavian audience — of the unsuccessful outcome of a previous English-Scandinavian conflict.

It is thus especially interesting to note that *Egils saga* makes Eiríkr Bloodaxe, the exiled son of Haraldr Fairhair and the last Norwegian ruler of York, a contemporary of Æthelstan. Although the saga renders Eiríkr's position as that of a sub-king, Egill's poetry clearly presents him as a dangerous and violent person and Egill's own visit to York as an especially risky venture. In *Arinbjarnarkviða*, a poem that Egill dedicated to his friend Arinbjörn who stood up for the skald at King Eiríkr's court in York, the skald reflects on his visit to

York and the performance of *Hqfuðlausn*. Here, Eiríkr is described as 'ynglings burr' [Yngling's son] (stanza 3.2), as 'allvaldr' (stanza 4.1) [omnipotent] and 'ljóðfrömuðr' [patron of the people] (stanza 4.3), who 'und ýgs hjalmi...at landi sat' [ruled the land under the helm of terror] (stanza 4.2-4), 'við stirðan hug' [with a severe mind] (stanza 4.6). We might therefore argue that within the saga context, the competitive nature of English and Scandinavian rule in England was expressed by two kings, Æthelstan and Eiríkr,⁵⁶ both of whom became subjects of Egill's creative talent.⁵⁷

Saxo Grammaticus seems to expand the revenge motif by having Hame, father of Ælle, slain by Ragnarr first before Ælle murders Ragnarr and is in return killed by Ívarr and his brothers. Smyth might well be right in dismissing Saxo's account. He suggests that Saxo transgressed here beyond his saga sources and that his predating of the Scandinavian-English conflict by a generation is exceptional and outside Scandinavian tradition.⁵⁸ He concludes:

We shall see from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle that Ælla was a newcomer to the Northumbrian kingship at the time when the sons of Ragnarr descended upon Northumbria in 867, and that he was, furthermore, a usurper.⁵⁹

While Smyth thus rejects Saxo's account, he elevates the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as the preferred source for the *historical* rendering of Ælle. This interpretation of the *Chronicle* neglects, however, their specific ideological imperative characterised by the creation of a national community under the kings' of Wessex auspices.

There is another English source that challenges Smyth's interpretation of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as the most reliable 'historical' record of the events. Rory McTurk⁶⁰ — and Jan de Vries⁶¹ before him — point to this interesting, if somewhat isolated, text that changes the appearance of Ælle slightly but with significant consequences for our present discussion. The source is the *Historia de sancto Cuthberto*, anonymously compiled in either the tenth or eleventh centuries. The important change deals with the royal status and background of the king. Whereas the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the *Life of Alfred* vehemently deny Ælle's legal rights to kingship, the *Historia de sancto Cuthberto* presents him as the lawful successor to his brother Osberhtus, King of Northumbria. Ælle's death is still presented as just, occurring as the result of his greediness. He is killed by Danes who in the text assume the role of those sent by God to punish the

sinner.⁶² While the Scandinavian sources embed Ælle in their mytho-historical narrative about the conquest of England, his death receives an altogether different context in the *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto* and is devoid of any historical explanation:

Post haec Osbertus rex abstulit sancto Cuthberto duas uillas, Werceworthe et Tyllemuth. Sed post spacium unius anni, eripuit Deus ab eo uitam et regnum. Cui successit rex Ælle, qui bene promisit sancto confessori sed male egit. Nam abstulit ab eo Billingham, et Illeclif, et Wigeclif, et Creca. Et ideo ira Dei et sancti confessoris accensa est super eum. Nam Ubba dux Fresciorum cum magno Danorum exercitu in regnum eius uenit, et in sancto die palmarum apud Eboracam ciuitatem applicuit. Quod cum audisset Ælle, qui tunc propter odium sancti Cuthberti in Creca morabatur, cum magna superbia surrexit, exercitum cum fratre suo Osberto congregauit, in hostem irruit, sed mox ira Dei et sancti confessoris perterritus, ceso exercitu fugit et corrui, uitamque et regnum perdidit, sicut olim contigit Sauli regi filio Cis, qui cum bene promississet Deo et Samueli prophetae mentitus est et male egit, et iccirco in pugna contra Philisteos cum filio suo Ionathan et melioribus filiorum Israel cecidit.

[After this King Osberht (d. 867) stole from St Cuthbert two villas, Warkworth and Tillmouth. But after the space of one year, God took from him (his) life and kingdom. He was succeeded by King Ælle, who made good promises to the holy confessor but acted badly. For he stole from him Billingham and Cliffe and Wycliffe and Crayke. And this ignited the wrath of God and of the holy confessor against him. For Ubba, duke of the Frisians, entered his kingdom with a great army of Danes and approached the city of York on Palm Sunday. When this news reached Ælle who, out of hatred for St Cuthbert, was then staying at Crayke, he rose up with great arrogance, gathered an army with his brother Osberht, and rushed upon the enemy; but soon, terrified by the wrath of God and St Cuthbert, (his) army having been struck down, he fled, and fell, and lost life and kingdom, just

as once happened to King Saul the son of Kish who, when he had made good promises to God and the prophet Samuel, lied and acted badly, and in consequence fell in battle against the Philistines with his son Jonathan and the best of the sons of Israel.]⁶³

The episode is turned into an ahistorical exemplar that serves as a warning to greedy monarchs, reminding them to obey their promises to God and His representatives.

The community of St. Cuthbert that produced this Latin text was, of course, concerned about maintaining its monastery's independence from the Northumbrian kings. And as South writes in the introduction to his edition of the *Historia*, 'the power and influence of the monks of St Cuthbert seems to have increased as that of the Northumbrian kings declined'.⁶⁴ He thus points out that in the 880s, 'it was the community, rather than the high reeve at Bamburgh, which apparently came to terms with the Danes of York and secured the election of King Guthred' as recounted in paragraph thirteen of the *Historia*. And he adds that the very reason for writing the *Historia* might have been to record the property owned by the monastic community. Cataloguing monastic property seems to have been particularly important in the tenth century, when West Saxon hegemony and the monastic reform could be seen as threatening the independence of St Cuthbert's monastic community.⁶⁵

Whether the text is, as South prefers, a product of the eleventh century, produced during or shortly after the Danish reign in England or whether it originated in the later tenth century, is beyond our scope here. Both possibilities have found favour.⁶⁶ What this text clearly shows, however, is that the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the *Life of Alfred* do not offer the only English versions of the historic conflict between Ælle and the Danes. But where the *Historia de sancto Cuthberto* installs Ælle as legal claimant to the throne of Northumbria, it does not mention Ívarr, but adds a new name: Ubba (or Ubbi). This Ubba is apparently not recorded in English sources before the late tenth century, but he is very much a feature of later texts. He thus also appears in the *Annales Lindisfarnensis*, compiled in the late eleventh or early twelfth century and in MS F, one of the two twelfth-century manuscripts of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. In both the annals and the *Chronicle* version F, Ubba is a leader of the Danish army associated with Ívarr and Hálfðan. Moreover, the twelfth-century *Annals of St Neots*⁶⁷ call him Ívarr's brother and a son of Ragnarr loðbrók.⁶⁸ Abbo of Fleury

further mentions in his late tenth-century *Passio Sancti Eadmundi* that both Ívarr and Ubba took part in the conquest of Northumbria. The consensus of opinion thus seems to be that Ubba was part of the Danish army more prominently associated with Ívarr the Boneless. It is interesting, however, that Ubba is called a *Frisian* duke both in the *Annales Lindisfarnensis* (s. a. 858) and the *Historia de sancto Cuthberto*. Both texts therefore counter in a different way, but with similar results, any Scandinavian claims to English territory, by making the leader of this venture not Danish, as in the earlier *Chronicle* of Æthelweard, but Frisian.

It thus seems that at different times different strategies have been devised in England that apparently served the same purpose, namely to rid Anglo-Scandinavian competition of this celebrated case of English royal failure. While the *Chronicle* and the *Life of Alfred* doubt the validity of Ælle's authority by disqualifying an important aspect of his royal identity, namely his descent, the *Historia de sancto Cuthberto* and the *Annales Lindisfarnensis* change the ethnicity, and thus the identity, of his opponent. However, where the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* avoids giving any prominence to Ælle, the usurper and man without lineage, and while Æthelweard's *Chronicle* does not even mention his name, the Scandinavian sources ascribe to him a much more prominent role. But significantly, and here I want to come to a more explicitly 'English' reading of the poem, *Aðalsteinsdrápa* offers, in addition to the one already discussed, another interpretation of the eponymous Ælle, one that is much more favourable to King Æthelstan.

**Æthelstan, genealogy and royal authority (2):
Aðalsteinsdrápa and King Ælle 'the Bretwalda'**

Dietrich Hofmann has already pointed out that a King Ælle is known from the list of those bearing the title *bretwalda* (MS A)/*brytenw(e)alda* (MSS B, D)⁶⁹ or 'overlords of Britain'.⁷⁰ The king appears here as the first ruler in the list, the historical fifth-century king of Sussex (477–91). A similar list of seven, presumably the chronicler's source, appears in Bede's eighth-century *Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum*. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, apart from introducing the term *bretwalda/brytenw(e)alda*, expands the list of seven monarchs to include an eighth king in the entry for 827: Ecgberht, King of Wessex and King Alfred the Great's grandfather:

& þy ilcan geare geeode Ecgbryht cyning Miercna rice & al þæt be suþan Humbre wæs, & he wæs se eahteþa cyning se þe bretwal'd'a wæs — ærest Elle Subseaxna cyning se þus micel rice hæfde, se æftera wæs Ceawlin Wesseaxna cyning, se þridda wæs Eþelbryht Cantwara cyning, se feorþa wæs Rēdwald Eastengla cyning, fifta was Eadwine Norþanhymbra cyning, siexta wæs Oswald se æfter him ricsode, seofoþa wæs Oswio Oswaldes broþur, eohtoþa wæs Ecgbryht Wesseaxna cyning.⁷¹

[And in that year King Ecgbryht secured the kingship of the Mercian kingdom and of all that was south of the Humber and he was the eighth king who was *bretwalda* [controller of Britain] — the first was Elle king of the South Saxons who had such a large realm, the one afterwards was Ceawlin king of the West Saxons. The third was Eþelbryht king of the Cantuaria, the fourth was Redwald king of the East Anglians. The fifth was Eadwine king of the Northumbrians, the sixth was Oswald, who ruled after him. The seventh was Oswiu, Oswald's brother, the eighth was Ecgbryht king of the West Saxons.]

King Æthelstan, the grandson of King Alfred, could see himself as very much a part of this *bretwalda* line. Whether a specific position of power associated with this term ever existed in Anglo-Saxon England need not concern us here. What matters is the idea of 'bretwaldship' conceptualised in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which built on and expanded Bede's specific group of kings.⁷² The concept of the *bretwalda* connects the Anglo-Saxon present of the *Chronicle* with the Anglian past of Bede and thus with an allegedly golden age in English history. Ian Walker has noted previously that this was achieved by ignoring the Mercian kings in the period between Oswiu (mid seventh century) and Ecgbryht (first half of the ninth century)⁷³ which seems to fit the overall 'pro-Wessex' sentiments expressed by the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Simon Keynes, who prefers not to read the chronicler's silence with regard to the Mercian kings as a calculated activity, deflates the importance of Ecgbryht's inclusion into the list of seven by arguing,

Rather, the chronicler was honouring the achievements of his own West Saxon hero and to that end appropriated Bede's list

of Southumbrian overlords: it was an act of literary plagiarism, not a considered historical statement, and as such the question of the inclusion or omission of the Mercian overlords never arose.⁷⁴

It seems that Simon Keynes in fact redeems the chronicler's reputation⁷⁵ by replacing the question of 'historical credibility' with that of 'literary appropriateness'. Keynes' observations on the discussion about the meta-life of 'bretwaldship' in the scholarly literature since the end of the eighteenth century are very interesting and his desire to banish the misleading expression *bretwalda* once and for all in the light of past discussions understandable. By accusing the chronicler of uninformed literary plagiarism, Simon Keynes thus keeps 'history' undefiled.

The use of the term 'bretwalda' in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for the year 827 is indeed singular. It has been most explicitly commented upon since the renewed interest in the middle ages from the eighteenth century to the present day. It is quite likely that the chronicler's coinage was just as remarkable in his own times. And this is equally valid if the chronicler invented the term in the firm belief that it gave clearest expression to the position of the kings described in Bede's list.⁷⁶ Regardless of the adequacy of the term *bretwalda*, medieval reception shows that the concept of 'bretwaldship' retained importance throughout Anglo-Saxon times and also in post-Conquest England. The list's inclusion within Æthelweard's *Chronicle*⁷⁷ and its further expansion in Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*⁷⁸ both bear witness to the usefulness of this construct. What we can term *Wirkungsgeschichte* is thus transcending any question of historical validity. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as an expression of a specific cultural identity does not invite interpretations limited by historical accuracy.

Since no further name was added to the *Chronicle*'s list of eight monarchs, at least before the Norman Conquest, the supremacy of Wessex as recorded by the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* still prevailed in the tenth century. Seen in this way, the English reading of the reference to Ælle will have differed markedly from the Scandinavian one — and allowed for a positively charged interpretation of the power and prestige of King Æthelstan.

Moreover, if we read the Old English loanword *harri* 'lord' in the poem as referring to God, then further praise is heaped on Æthelstan, 'God's most important offspring'. OE *hearra* is the comparative form deriving from OE *heah* 'high'. Interpreting ON *harri* as God is a specifically 'English' reading since its

equivalent, OE *hearra*, has strong religious connotations in Old English literature, where it most often appears in the Old English *Genesis*.⁷⁹ *Aðalsteinsdrápa* therefore constructs a strong link between English, and more specifically West-Saxon, kingship and Christianity.⁸⁰ In Scandinavian poetic sources, however, the word seems most often to refer to secular kings, as to the King of Scots in Arnórr jarlaskáld's *Pórfinnsdrápa* stanza 9, where Jarl Þórfinnr is described fighting *Skotlands harri*, 'Scotland's lord'.⁸¹ Where the Scandinavian use of the word invites us to read *harri* as another reference to Ælle, the much more religious 'English' reading avoids this association. This double interpretation becomes only possible through the use of an English loanword within the Scandinavian text.

Aðalsteinsdrápa is the earliest poetic source for Old Norse *harri* — and the word does not occur again in skaldic poetry before 1000, when it is used by poets who had contacts with England or the Anglo-Danish court of Knútr.⁸² Dietrich Hofmann assumed that the word was again imported from England after 1000 and that 'also kein direkter Einfluß von Egill, der das Wort nur im Zusammenhang mit dem angelsächsischen König verwendet, auf diese späteren Dichter besteht'⁸³ [Egill, who uses the word only with reference to the Anglo-Saxon king, does therefore not directly influence later poets].

The early English sources: a propagandist counterstrike?

We shall conclude our interpretation of the skaldic testimony by adding a last and necessarily quite speculative thought. Is it possible that already by the time of King Alfred the English — or rather the West Saxon court — had become aware of the propagandist potential of King Ælle for any Scandinavian claims to rule in England? This at least might be inferred from the distancing mechanisms evident in the descriptions of King Ælle in both the *Life of Alfred* and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* quoted above. Since the *Life of Alfred* uses the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as its main source, it might only be expected that both texts share similar expressions. However, the *Life of Alfred* does not content itself with repeating the *Chronicle*'s statement, but expands the negative account of Ælle by adding that he was not only an 'unnatural' king, but also a tyrant.

In fact, the negative expression *ungecynd(n)e*, 'unnatural', is rarely recorded in Old English literature and seems generally to refer to inanimate objects or is used as a qualifier for describing unusual behaviour. Smyth translates the lexeme as 'a king with no hereditary right'.⁸⁴ The adjective occurs only once in

the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, but three times in Alfred's translation of Boethius' *De Consolatione Philosophiae*. The latter calls the plotting of the children against their father, resulting in his death, an 'ungewunelic & ungecyndelic yfel'⁸⁵ [very unusual and unnatural evil]. Moreover, an example from ancient history — presumably the slaying of Laius by Oedipus⁸⁶ — is evoked. Similarly, the text maintains that a plant that is placed *on ungecynde stowe*, 'in an unnatural spot', does not grow at all, but withers away.⁸⁷ It is thus preordained where plants can grow and — by analogy — humans can thrive. 'Unnatural' thus also embraces the notion of 'against God's design'.

Since the term *ungecynd(n)e* clearly incorporates the element *cynd/cynn*, 'origin, generation, race', Ælle's claim to the Northumbrian throne is thus not only illegal and he is not only a tyrant, as the *Life of Alfred* put it, but his very ancestry and his descent make him unfit to rule. However, although the term *ungecynd(n)e* thus verbally negates Ælle's political role and dynastic standing, it is possible that the term also incorporates more than just a statement about the legal nature of kingship. A close look at the English poem *The Battle of Brunanburh* — the praise poem on King Æthelstan and his brother Edmund transmitted in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* — seems to justify an even stronger reading of the term. As noted before by Janet Thormann,⁸⁸ Æthelstan's and Edmund's victory is explained here through their excellent pedigree: 'swa him geæþele wæs'⁸⁹ [as was in accord with their nature]. Their kingship is both justified by and generated through their descent. And that their kingship does not originate in the ninth century, the point of reference of *Aðalsteinsdrápa*, is clearly stated at the end of *The Battle of Brunanburh*, where with reference to the authority of written records by *ealde uðwitan*, 'old scholars', the Anglo-Saxon origin myth is evoked again:

Ne wearð wæl mare
on þis eighlande æfer gieta
folces gefylled beforan þissum
sweordes ecgum, þæs þe us secgað bec,
ealde uðwitan, *sibþan eastan hider*
Engle & Seaxe up becoman,
ofer brad brimu Brytene sohtan,
wlance wigsmiþas, Wealles ofercoman,
eorlas arhwate eard begeatan.⁹⁰

[Never before this was more slaughter in this island, of people killed by sword's edges, as books, old scholars, tell us,

since Angles and Saxons came here from the east, arrived over the broad ocean, sought out Britain, warriors eager for fame, proud battle-smiths, overcame the British, took the country.]

Moreover, it is important to note that no Anglo-Saxon source names both Ælle and Ívarr in the same context. Where Ívarr is mentioned, Ælle's name does not occur and *vice versa*. This is at least true for all English sources before the late eleventh or twelfth centuries. Judging by the English sources, therefore, the conflict stated in the Scandinavian sources never took place. Actively engaged in creating a royal lineage, the kings of Wessex could not afford a political defeat. Deflating Scandinavian claims to power in England must therefore have been of primary importance.

We have some indication that the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* was eager to identify the precise time at which Danish-English conflict began. As has been noted before, the arrival of the Danes in England, recorded in the *Chronicle* for 787, is characterised by its strikingly retrospective view: 'Pæt wæron þa ærestan scipu deniscra monna þe Angelcynnes lond gesohton' [That were the first ships of the Danish men that visited/sought out the land of the English].⁹¹ Those Danes are called 'Norþmanna' in the same entry a few lines above in MSS B, C and D, and are apparently even identified as Norwegian by MS D since they are said to have come from 'Hæreðalande' (i. e. Hörthaland in southwest Norway). This ethnic confusion is very unusual for the *Chronicle*, which otherwise is quite accurate in distinguishing between Norwegians and Danes.⁹² Alfred P. Smyth therefore supports Dorothy Whitelock's⁹³ view that the term 'Northmanna' was in the *Chronicle's* archetype, while the specific reference to the Danes was an addition by the *Chronicle's* later compilers.⁹⁴ The retrospective identification of the Scandinavian boats as Danish suggests that the precise ethnic identification of the ships' crews was especially important. Moreover, the *Chronicle's* entries make it clear that the first victim of Danish aggression was not a king, but the king's reeve, whose duty was to examine those entering the country.⁹⁵ English and Danish views about the historical dimension of their mutual conflict thus apparently differed. The interpretation of the *Chronicle's* retrospective comment shows that it became politically relevant to clarify this difference during the tenth century or maybe already by the end of the ninth century.

Deciphering *Aðalsteinsdrápa* cannot have been an easy task for an English audience, touching as it does on issues of performance, linguistic comprehension

and the understanding of poetic composition. What is clear, however, is that Scandinavian and English interests in the role of Ælle diverged where political interests were different. And that is even true in post-Conquest England, where Gaimar has his own rendering of the Danish conquest of Northumbria. Here, it is the moral wickedness of the English King Osbriht, who rapes the wife of a nobleman, Buern Bucecarle, that leads to the attack of the Danes, upon whom Buern, anxious to get his revenge on the king, has called for support. Ælle appears here as a knight who assumes the kingship over Northumbria once Osbriht has been driven out by Buern's relatives. When the Danes attack, Osbriht is slain and Ælle, who had resided elsewhere, is killed in the ensuing battle. The story had apparently moved from the time frame of Anglo-Scandinavian contact to the realm of Anglo-Norman politics, where both the Danish and Norman conquests of England are justified through the shortcomings of English moral behaviour. Gaimar's Anglo-Norman history of England thus shows how the figure of Ælle could once again be used as a touchstone for defining the limits of English power.⁹⁶

The thrust of this article has been to show that it is possible to read *Aðalsteinsdrápa* in two very different ways that may, each in their own manner, satisfy both an English and a Scandinavian audience. And this, indeed, reveals this fragmentary poem as an outstanding witness to the intricate ways in which identities were negotiated. The poem can therefore be seen as an important 'border guard',⁹⁷ a poetic statement that served as a demarcation between Scandinavian and English claims to power in England. History, and thus the dealings of King Ælle and the sons of Ragnarr loðbrók, appears as a competitive space in Anglo-Scandinavian England and as the battlefield for any statement of royal authority.

NOTES

¹ The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is the name commonly given to that group of texts containing annals which record the history of Anglo-Saxon England. Individual versions of the *Chronicle* differ to a varying degree. In the present essay reference is made by the letters A–H to the following *Chronicle* manuscripts: Cambridge, MS Corpus Christi College 173 (MS A, also known as the *Parker Chronicle*), London, BL, MS Cotton Tiberius A. vi (MS B), London, BL, MS Cotton Tiberius B. i (MS C), London, BL, MS Cotton Tiberius B. iv (MS D), Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud 636 (MS E, also known as the *Peterborough Chronicle*), London, BL, MS Cotton Domitian A. viii (MS F), London, BL, MS Cotton Tiberius Otho B. xi, 2 (MS G), and London, BL, MS Cotton Domitian A ix, fol. 9 (MS H).

² Martin Irvine, 'Medieval Textuality and the Archaeology of Textual Culture', in *Speaking two Languages. Traditional Disciplines and Contemporary Theory in Medieval Studies*, ed. by Allen J. Frantzen (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), pp. 181–210.

³ Janet Thormann, 'The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* Poems and the Making of the English Nation', in *Anglo-Saxonism and the Construction of Social Identity*, ed. by Allen J. Frantzen and John D. Niles (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997), pp. 60–85.

⁴ The four 'canonical' tenth-century poems of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* are usually referred to as *The Battle of Brunanburh* (937–ABCD), *The Capture of the Five Boroughs* (942–ABCD), *The Coronation of Edgar* (973–ABC) and *The Death of Edgar* (975–ABC[DE]). The letters A–E, quoted behind the annal number, refer to the five main manuscripts of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Since there is a shorter version of *The Death of Edgar* in MSS D and E, references to these two manuscripts have been put in brackets.

⁵ See E. O. G. Turville-Petre, *Scaldic Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. lxx, Alistair Campbell, 'Skaldic Verse and Anglo-Saxon History', *The Dorothea Coke Memorial Lecture in Northern Studies delivered at University College London 17 March 1970* (London: Lewis, 1970) and Russell Poole, 'Skaldic Verse and Anglo-Saxon History: Some Aspects of the Period 1009–1016', *Speculum*, 62 (1987), 265–98. The latter adds that 'on occasion, too, information in the skaldic verses, though not fully confirmed elsewhere, has a general plausibility that encourages acceptance and adds to our awareness of the deficiencies of our main source'. A discussion of the value of the skaldic testimony beyond the question of historical accuracy is, however, not offered by Poole.

⁶ See for example Sarah Foot, 'The Making of *Anglecynn*: English Identity before the Norman Conquest', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6th ser., 6 (1996), 25–49.

⁷ Matthew Townend, 'Ella: An Old English Name in Old Norse Poetry', *Nomina*, 20 (1997), 23–35 (p. 25).

Anglo-Scandinavian History through Scandinavian Eyes

⁸ For an interpretation of this admittedly rather peripheral figure in Gower and Chaucer see John Frankis, 'King Ælle and the conversion of the English: the development of a legend from Bede to Chaucer', in *Literary Appropriations of the Anglo-Saxons from the Thirteenth to the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Donald Scragg and Carole Weinberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 74–92.

⁹ See Saxo Grammaticus, *The History of the Danes. Books I–IX*, ed. and trans. by Hilda Ellis Davidson and Peter Fisher (Cambridge: Brewer, (1979–80) 1998), pp. 291–92. As has been observed previously, the stories of the deaths of Ælle and King Edmund of East Anglia — the later St Edmund — have much in common: see Alfred P. Smyth, *Scandinavian Kings in the British Isles 850–880* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 206, 214 and Alfred P. Smyth, *King Alfred the Great* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 58. Both kings die at the hands of the Danish army under Ívarr. Later English and Scandinavian tradition remembered both kings in connection with the Loðbrók legend and in both cases the arrival of the Danish army is explained as an act of vengeance for the killing of Loðbrók: see Grant Loomis, 'Saint Edmund and the Lodbroc (Lothbroc) legend', *Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature*, 15 (1933), 1–23 and Jan de Vries, 'Die Entwicklung der Sage von den Lodbrokssöhnen in den historischen Quellen', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, 44 (1928), 117–63 (pp. 158–63). The association of Ragnarr's death with Edmund does not, however, occur in literature before the chronicles of Roger of Wendover and Matthew Paris.

¹⁰ Smyth, *Scandinavian Kings*, p. 37. See also Jan de Vries, 'Die Wikingersaga', *Germanisch-Romanische Monatsschrift*, 15 (1927), 81–100 (p. 82).

¹¹ For a discussion and further literature on these subjects see Smyth, *Scandinavian Kings*, pp. 38–53.

¹² This list goes back to Matthew Townend's record of instances of the name *Ella* in skaldic poetry ('*Ella*', pp. 26–28). I have also adopted his chronological sequence which is based on the traditional dating of the poems. Only Egill's poem is of a tenth-century origin, while *Pórsdrápa* is the next in line with an assumed composition around the year 1000. The subsequent poems up to and including *Magnúsflokkr* originated in the eleventh century, while *Krákumál* is the youngest text with a presumed origin of around 1200.

¹³ As to the question how likely it is that the skaldic poems with an English context were performed in England, see Judith Jesch, 'Skaldic Verse in Scandinavian England', in *Vikings and the Danelaw: Select Papers from the Proceedings of the Thirteenth Viking Congress, Nottingham and York, 21–30 August 1997*, ed. by James Graham-Campbell et al. (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2001), pp. 313–25.

¹⁴ Rudolf Simek and Hermann Pálsson, *Lexikon der altnordischen Literatur* (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1987), p. 218a.

¹⁵ *Den norsk-islandske skjaldedigtning*, ed. by Finnur Jónsson, 4 vols, A I–II: *Tekst efter håndskrifterne*, B I–II: *Rettet tekst* (København: Gyldendal, 1912–15), B I 293.

¹⁶ Finnur Jónsson, *Skjaldedigtning*, B I 214.

¹⁷ See Roberta Frank, 'Viking Atrocity and Skaldic Verse: The Rite of the Blood-Eagle', *English Historical Review*, 99 (1984), 332–43 (p. 334).

¹⁸ Finnur Jónsson, *Skjaldedigtning*, B I 232. The stanza occurs in one manuscript of *Ragnars saga loðbrókar* (AM 147 4to) and in *Ragnarssona þátrr* transmitted in *Hauksbók*.

¹⁹ See Smyth, *King Alfred*, p. 58, Smyth, *Scandinavian Kings*, pp. 189–94 and Bjarni Einarsson, 'De Normannorum atrocitate, or on the execution of royalty by the aquiline method', *Saga-Book*, 22 (1986–89), 79–82.

²⁰ Roberta Frank, 'Viking Atrocity', and Roberta Frank, 'The Blood-Eagle again', *Saga-Book*, 22 (1986–89), 287–89.

²¹ Rory McTurk, 'William Morris, Gustav Storm and Alfred, Lord Tennyson', in *Anglo-Scandinavian Cross-Currents*, ed. by Inga-Stina Ewbank, Olav Lausund, and Bjørn Tysdahl (Norwich: Norvik Press, 1999), pp. 114–35. McTurk's interpretation has consequences for our interpretation in that Sighvatr's stanza might simply state that Ívarr 'the one who dwelt at York, had Ella's back cut with a sword' or — as McTurk puts it — had Ella put to flight (p. 130; the same interpretation is advanced earlier in Rory McTurk, 'Blóðörn eða blóðormur?' in *Sagnaþing helgað Jónasi Kristjánssyni sjötugum 10. apríl 1994*, ed. by Gísli Sigurðsson, Guðrún Kvaran, and Sigurgeir Steingrímsson, 2 vols (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag, 1994) II 539–41). However, the interpretation of *Aðalsteinsdrápa* as a poem that could be read as both praising and dismissing King Æthelstan is not changed by Rory McTurk's interesting solution to the 'blood-eagle problem', since Ælle's reputation remains problematic.

²² Finnur Jónsson, *Skjaldedigtning*, B I 232.

²³ Roberta Frank, 'King Cnut in the verse of his skalds', in *The Reign of Cnut: King of England, Denmark and Norway*, ed. by Alexander R. Rumble (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 1999), pp. 106–24 (pp. 110–11).

²⁴ Smyth, *Scandinavian Kings*, p. 193.

²⁵ See Frank, 'Viking Atrocity', p. 338.

²⁶ Townend, 'Ella', p. 33.

²⁷ Finnur Jónsson, *Skjaldedigtning*, B I 333.

²⁸ Townend, 'Ella', p. 32.

²⁹ Manuscripts C and B enter this episode for the year 868.

³⁰ Adam von Bremen states in his eleventh-century *Gesta Hammaburgensis Ecclesiae Pontificum* that Ívarr was Loðbrók's son: see *Quellen des 9. und 11. Jahrhunderts zur Geschichte der hamburgischen Kirche und des Reiches*, ed. and trans. by Werner Trillmich and Rudolf Buchner (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1961), p. 208.

Anglo-Scandinavian History through Scandinavian Eyes

³¹ Gaimar's main witness is the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Indeed, many parts of this Anglo-Norman text have been translated from the English source: see Peter Damian-Grint, *The New Historians of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance: Inventing Vernacular Authority* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1999), p. 51. Gaimar's *L'Estoire des Engleis* presents the ruling king, Osberht, as of evil disposition and Ælle as a knight who takes over government after Osberht has been driven out for his misdeeds: *Lestorie des Engles solum La Translacion Maistre Geffrei Gaimar*, ed. and trans. by Thomas Duffus Hardy and Charles Trice Martin, 2 vols (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1888–89), I 111–17.

³² Most conspicuously, MSS A–E of the *Chronicle* mention Ívarr (Inwær) in their entries for the years 878 (MSS A, D, E) and 879 (MSS B and C) only indirectly by referring to the death of 'Inwæres broþur & Healfdenes' [the brother of Ívarr and Hálfðan] (cited from *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. A Collaborative Edition*, vol. 3: *MS A*, ed. by Janet M. Bately (Cambridge: Brewer, 1986), p. 50). The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is here generally quoted from Bately's edition of MS A. Reference to other manuscript readings is given where it is important for our discussion.

³³ See *The Battle of Brunanburh*, ed. by Alistair Campbell (London: Heinemann, 1938), p. 68 with references to earlier literature.

³⁴ *Egils saga Skalla-Grimssonar*, ed. by Sigurður Nordal, Íslenzk fornrit, 2 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 1933), p. 146.

³⁵ Finnur Jónsson assumed that *harra* is a genitive singular referring to King Ælle (*Skjaldedigtning*, B I 30), while Sigurður Nordal interprets the form as a genitive plural and thus as a reference to 'kings' collectively (*Egils saga*, p. 146). Both interpretations are possible and Nordal's decision might have been influenced by his explicit disbelief in any connection of the lexeme with Ælle. As we will see later, the interpretation of the Old Norse form as a singular also offers the possibility of regarding the term as a reference to God.

³⁶ Nordal, *Egils saga*, p. 147.

³⁷ Judith Jesch, 'Skaldic Verse', pp. 315–17.

³⁸ See *Egil's Saga*, ed. and trans. by Paul Edwards and Hermann Pálsson (London: Penguin, 1976), p. 130 and Nordal, *Egils saga*, p. 146 with reference to Jón Þorkelsson's identical interpretation.

³⁹ See Finnur Jónsson, *Skjaldedigtning*, B I 30.

⁴⁰ Gabrielle M. Spiegel, 'Genealogy: Form and Function in Medieval Historical Narrative', *History and Theory*, 22 (1983), 43–53 (p. 47).

⁴¹ Gabrielle M. Spiegel, *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography*, paperback edition of the 1997 edition (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), p. 106.

⁴² Spiegel, *The Past as Text*, p. 107.

⁴³ Bately, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, p. 47. Also in MSS B, C, D and E (s. a. 867). In MS F, Ælle is only mentioned in the Latin entry.

⁴⁴ Chapter 27, *Asser's Life of King Alfred*, ed. by William Henry Stevenson. With an introductory article by Dorothy Whitelock (Oxford: Clarendon Press, (1959) 1998), p. 22.

⁴⁵ See Michael Wood, 'The Making of King Aethelstan's Empire: an English Charlemagne?', in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society. Studies presented to J. M. Wallace-Hadrill*, ed. by Patrick Wormald, Donald Bullough, and Roger Collins (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), pp. 250–72.

⁴⁶ See C. E. Blunt, 'The coinage of Athelstan, 924–939: A survey', *British Numismatic Journal*, 42 (1974), 35–158 (pp. 47–57). See also Eric John, "'Orbis Britanniae" and the Anglo-Saxon Kings', in his *Orbis Britanniae and Other Studies* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1966), pp. 1–63 (esp. pp. 48–54).

⁴⁷ *The Chronicle of Æthelweard*, ed. by Alistair Campbell (London: Nelson and Sons, 1962), p. 36.

⁴⁸ *Symeonis Monachi opera omnia, Historia regum*, ed. by Thomas Arnold, 2 vols (Wiesbaden: Kraus, (1885) 1965), II 105.

⁴⁹ Arnold, *Symeonis Monachi opera omnia*, II 104.

⁵⁰ 'En konungr sá hét Ella, er þá réð Englandi' [The king was then called Ella, (and) he ruled over England]: *Fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda*, ed. by Guðni Jónsson and Bjarni Vilhjálmsson, vol. 1 (Reykjavík: Bókaútgáfan Forni, 1943), p. 133.

⁵¹ Guðni Jónsson and Bjarni Vilhjálmsson, *Fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda*, p. 157.

⁵² Vries, 'Wikingersaga', pp. 81–83.

⁵³ John Hines, 'Egill's *Hofuðlausn* in time and place', *Saga-Book*, 24 (1995), 83–104 (p. 99).

⁵⁴ As Mark Blackburn, 'Expansion and control: aspects of Anglo-Scandinavian minting south of the Humber', in *Vikings and the Danelaw: Select Papers from the Proceedings of the Thirteenth Viking Congress, Nottingham and York, 21–30 August 1997*, ed. by James Graham-Campbell and others (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2001), pp. 125–42 (p. 136) points out, the inscriptions and motifs on the York coinage of Siefred and Cnut, c. 895–905, were overtly Christian and included, beside the symbol of a cross, liturgical phrases.

⁵⁵ Alfred P. Smyth, *Scandinavian York and Dublin II: The History and Archaeology of Two Related Viking Kingdoms* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1979), p. 96. See also C. E. Blunt, B. H. I. H. Stewart, and C. S. S. Lyon, *Coinage in Tenth-Century England: From Edward the Elder to Edgar's Reform* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 233–34.

⁵⁶ For an interpretation of *Hofuðlausn* as the poem that most prominently marks the climax in Egill's self stylisation as a poet and his artistic independence from royal authorities, see Susanne Kries and Thomas Krömmelbein, "'From the Hull of Laughter": Egill

Anglo-Scandinavian History through Scandinavian Eyes

Skallagrímsson's *Höfuðlausn* and its epodium in context', *Scandinavian Studies*, 74 (2002), 111–36.

⁵⁷ The stanzas of *Arinbjarnarkviða* are cited from Finnur Jónsson's edition of the poem (Finnur Jónsson, *Skjaldedigtning*, B I 38–41).

⁵⁸ Smyth, *Scandinavian Kings*, pp. 78–79.

⁵⁹ Smyth, *Scandinavian Kings*, p. 79.

⁶⁰ Rory McTurk, *Studies in Ragnars saga loðbrókar and its Major Scandinavian Analogues* (Oxford: The Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature, 1991), pp. 214–15.

⁶¹ Vries, 'Entwicklung der Sage', p. 153.

⁶² A similar role is attributed to the Danes in the *Sermo lupi ad anglos*, ed. by Dorothy Whitelock (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1976), ll. 122–32. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle's* well known entry for 793, which tells of the portents of doom alongside the first major looting of a Viking army, has a similar apocalyptic ring.

⁶³ *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto: A History of Saint Cuthbert and a Record of His Patrimony*, ed. by Ted Johnson South (Cambridge: Brewer, 2002), pp. 50–51.

⁶⁴ South, *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, p. 3.

⁶⁵ South, *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, p. 3.

⁶⁶ See South, *Historia de Sancto Cuthberto*, pp. 25–36 for a discussion of previous scholarship and the date of compilation of the *Historia*.

⁶⁷ It has long been thought that the author of the *Annals of St Neots* has drawn on a now lost version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* extending at least to the year 912: see *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. A Collaborative Edition*, vol. 17: *The Annals of St Neots with Vita Prima Sancti Neoti*, ed. by David Dumville and Michael Lapidge (Cambridge: Brewer, 1984), p. xiii. The *Life of Alfred* has also been identified as one of the text's sources.

⁶⁸ Dumville and Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, p. 78. The editors remark that the source for the two sentences that refer to the Loðbrók legend has not yet been identified. The *Annals of St. Neots* are the earliest English source for the name *loðbrók* (McTurk, *Studies in Ragnars saga loðbrókar*, p. 110).

⁶⁹ MS B is quoted after *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. A collaborative edition*, vol. 4: *MS B*, ed. by Simon Taylor (Cambridge: Brewer, 1983), p. 30 and MS D after *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. A Collaborative Edition*, vol. 6: *MS D*, ed. by G. P. Cubbin (Cambridge: Brewer, 1996), p. 20. The spellings in MSS C and E are different again: *bretenanwealda* (MS C; *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. A Collaborative Edition*, vol. 5: *MS C*, ed. by Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe (Cambridge: Brewer, 2001), p. 52) and *Bryten wealda* (MS E; *Two of the Saxon Chronicles parallel with supplementary extracts from the others. On the basis of an edition by John Earle*, ed. by Charles Plummer, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965) I 61).

⁷⁰ Dietrich Hofmann, *Nordisch-Englische Lehnbeziehungen der Wikingerzeit* (Kopenhagen: Munksgaard, 1955), pp. 24–25.

⁷¹ Bately, *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, p. 42.

⁷² As has been pointed out by Simon Keynes, 'Rædwald the Bretwalda', in *Voyage to the Other World: The Legacy of Sutton Hoo*, ed. by Calvin B. Kendall and Peter S. Wells (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), pp. 103–23 (p. 109: 'it is simply impossible to believe, on the evidence available, that these kings [i.e. Bede's seven kings] were like unto each other, or that they exercised similar powers by virtue of holding a particular office'.) He thus concludes that choosing them had nothing to do with an existing office, but with Bede's personal preference.

⁷³ As Ian Walker, *Mercia and the Making of England* (Thrupp: Sutton Publishing, 2000), p. 203, for example, points out, 'the Chronicle singularly fails to highlight the significance of their role [i.e. the Mercians] in a number of crucial events including the Battle of Tettenhall in 910'. The competitive nature of Wessex-Mercian relations does not mean that there was no co-operation between the two kingdoms. As Walker rightly stresses, the threat caused by the Scandinavians clearly fuelled the necessity for co-operation in the face of the political fate of their East Anglian and Northumbrian rivals (*Mercia and the Making of England*, p. 204).

⁷⁴ Keynes, 'Rædwald', p. 113.

⁷⁵ See F.M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 49, who called the inclusion of Egberht in the list of seven a 'mistake of an unintelligent annalist'. Stenton makes the interesting observation that the term *bretwalda* must have been reminiscent of poetic compounds such as *beah-gifa* 'bracelet giver' or *dædfruma*, 'deed doer'. Generally Stenton reads the word as encomiastic in nature (F.M. Stenton, 'The Supremacy of the Mercian Kings', in *Preparatory to Anglo-Saxon England: being the Collected Papers of Frank Merry Stenton*, ed. by Doris Mary Stenton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 34–35).

⁷⁶ Keynes, 'Rædwald', p. 112.

⁷⁷ Campbell, *Chronicle of Æthelweard*, p. 29.

⁷⁸ Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum. The History of the English People*, ed. and trans. by Diana Greenway (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 104–06. Henry added two names in the early twelfth century: Alfred and Edgar.

⁷⁹ However, as Hofmann, *Lehnbeziehungen*, p. 23 points out, the word also refers to secular leaders in Old English literature (cf. *Judith* 56, *Battle of Maldon* 204, *Death of Edward* 32).

⁸⁰ This strong tie between king and God and thus the sacerdotal aspect of Anglo-Saxon kingship is also visible in the Old English laws. See, for example, William A. Chaney, *The Cult of Kingship in Anglo-Saxon England: The Transition from Paganism to Christianity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1970), pp. 174–220 and Mary P. Richards, 'Anglo-

Anglo-Scandinavian History through Scandinavian Eyes

Saxonism in the Old English Laws', in *Anglo-Saxonism and the Construction of Social Identity*, ed. by Allen J. Frantzen and John D. Niles (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1997), pp. 40-59 (p. 70). The royal patronage of the Benedictine community during the tenth-century monastic reform is also important in this context.

⁸¹ Diana Whaley, *The Poetry of Arnórr jarlaskáld: An Edition and Study* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), p. 125.

⁸² Later the word is also used to designate Scandinavian princes.

⁸³ Hofmann, *Lehnbeziehungen*, pp. 23–24. Hofmann names as an exception a *lausavisa* by Hallfróðr vandræðaskáld where *harri* occurs in a Christian context and might thus — according to Hofmann — show the influence of Anglo-Saxon literature (*Lehnbeziehungen*, p. 24).

⁸⁴ Smyth, *King Alfred*, p. 23.

⁸⁵ *King Alfred's Old English Version of Boethius De consolatione philosophiae*, ed. by Walter John Sedgefield. Reprint of the edition Oxford 1899 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968), p. 70.

⁸⁶ The passage reads: 'ge furðon þæt wyrse wæs, we geheordon geo geara on ealdum spellum þæt sum sunu ofsloge his fæder; ic nat humela, buton we witon þæt hit unmennisclic dæd wæs' [and further, that was worse, we also heard in former times in old histories that a certain son slew his father; I do not know how, but we know that it was an inhuman deed] (Sedgefield, *King Alfred's Old English Version*, p. 70).

⁸⁷ Sedgefield, *King Alfred's Old English Version*, p. 91.21.

⁸⁸ Thormann, 'Anglo-Saxon Chronicle Poems', pp. 64–65.

⁸⁹ Bately, *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, p. 70.

⁹⁰ Bately, *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, p. 72.

⁹¹ Bately, *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, p. 39.

⁹² Bately, *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, p. 35.

⁹³ *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. A revised translation*, ed. by Dorothy Whitelock with David C. Douglas, and Susie I. Tucker (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1961), p. 35, n. 4. Whitelock based her interpretation on the fact that the word *Norðmanna* also occurred in the account of the *Annals of St Neots*: see Dumville and Lapidge, *Annals of St Neots*, p. 39.

⁹⁴ Alfred P. Smyth, 'The Emergence of English Identity, 700–1000', in *Medieval Europeans: Studies in Ethnic Identity and National Perspectives in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Alfred P. Smyth (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1998), pp. 24–52 (pp. 34–35).

⁹⁵ The death of the reeve is mentioned in all five main manuscripts of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.

⁹⁶ A further change, as pointed out by McTurk, *Studies in Ragnars saga loðbrókar*, pp. 215–29, had occurred by the early thirteenth century, when Ælle had developed from a minor

Susanne Kries

character to the protagonist in the anonymous *Narratio de Uxore Aernulfi ab Ella Rege Deirorum Violata*. In this story he is a powerful and violent king. An edition of the text is included in *Lestorie des Engles*, Hardy and Martin, pp. 328–38. As to the story's possible influence on Danish and Norwegian legends around Ragnarr loðbrók see McTurk, *Studies in Ragnars saga loðbrókar*, pp. 215–29.

⁹⁷ The term is taken from John A. Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982), p. 6.

Anglo-Saxon History in Medieval Iceland: Actual and Legendary Sources

Magnús Fjalldal

The history of Anglo-Saxon England, as preserved in English sources, is often a tale of frustrating omissions and silences. Where information is lacking in domestic sources, foreign chronicles and histories that document English affairs can seem potentially attractive supplementary materials, albeit problematic ones in view of their questionable reliability. From time to time Icelandic texts — both the family sagas and the thirteenth-century histories of Danish and Norwegian kings — have been examined by English historians who have generally regarded the information that they offer as unreliable.¹ Less sceptical scholars have sought to pose four 'what-if' questions: what if Icelandic saga literature does preserve some first-hand accounts of events that actually took place in Anglo-Saxon England? What if Icelandic historians could be shown to have known English sources such as the works of William of Malmesbury, Roger of Hoveden, Simeon of Durham, Henry of Huntingdon and Florence of Worcester — not to mention the possibility that they might have known such works in a fuller form than we have them today? What if they knew continental works about English history, which were not available to the English themselves or had been lost before English historians could make use of them? And, last but not least, what if they might have had access to English historical documents, which in the course of time were lost, leaving only the faintest traces on medieval English history writing? All these questions have been asked, and it goes without saying that if any of them are answered in the affirmative — which, indeed, they all have been — the credibility of Icelandic medieval historians as a source of information on Anglo-Saxon England would be at least partly salvaged.

In this essay, I shall briefly trace the undisputed sources about England to which Icelandic authors had access, and the various attempts that have been made

over the years to invest these sources with a greater authority than prevailing tradition has recognised. In my discussion, however, 'history' is to be understood in a relatively narrow sense. During the Middle Ages, the interest of Icelandic writers in Anglo-Saxon England was mostly focused on people and events relating to the English monarchy, and my discussion inevitably reflects these priorities. However, this is not to say that saga writers had no interest in other aspects of English society. They did indeed make observations about the geography of England, its wealth and commercial importance, and its language and customs. Such information is, of course, just as historical as any royal event, but its origins can very seldom be traced to any known sources and hence falls outside the scope of this paper. But let us now consider the sources available to Icelandic historians.

Anglo-Saxon royal genealogies

Although their origin and format are unknown, Anglo-Saxon royal genealogies are known to have circulated in Iceland at least as early as the thirteenth century, and thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Icelandic writers were particularly well informed about the affairs of the West Saxon royal house. *Heimskringla* (I, *Hákonar saga góða*, ch. 4),² for instance, mentions the death of King Æthelstan and goes on to add that he ruled for fourteen winters, eight weeks and three days. According to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, Æthelstan ruled for fourteen years and ten weeks, so Snorri Sturluson is only a week and a half off the mark. *Páttir af Ragnars sonum* correctly tells of the torture and death of Edmund, King of East Anglia, at the hands of the Danish Viking raiders Yngvarr and Hústo.³ *Illuga saga Tagldarbana* rightly observes that Æthelred succeeded King Edward, who had been murdered, but is probably less well informed when it proceeds to add that, at this time, England had 'for the most part' adopted Christianity.⁴ However, the sagas are also sometimes wrong about the monarchy of Anglo-Saxon England. In *Ragnars saga loðbrókar ok sona hans*, Ragnarr kills a king named Ella and then proceeds to conquer and rule over all of England.⁵ The saga's tale of Ragnarr's invasion of Northumbria has no historical basis, and the famous story of him dying in the Northumbrian snake-pit is based on the legend of Gunnarr Gjúkason.⁶ The author of *Jatvarðar saga* (ch. 1)⁷ claims that Æthelred (978-1016), correctly identified as the son of Edgar, was the first Anglo-Saxon king to rule over all England. On the other hand, *Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar hin mesta*

makes Æthelred the son of his brother Edward.⁸ In *Dunstanus Saga* (pp. 8-11), the author becomes so confused with the complex genealogy of tenth-century English kings that on one occasion he has a father succeed his son.⁹

Knowledge about individual kings, or about the English monarchy and its habits as a whole, appears to have been relatively limited in medieval Iceland. In *Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar hin mesta* an unsurprisingly unidentified late tenth-century English king by the name of Aðalbrikt successfully fights the Danes and wins back Danish territory in England.¹⁰ In *Jatvarðar saga*, we learn that at the consecration of Harold II as king a crown is held above his head. This is entirely plausible, but when the saga adds that this is a custom peculiar to the English monarchy we may regard this claim as rather doubtful.¹¹ *Dunstanus Saga* places pre-conquest earls [*jarlar*] and post-conquest barons [*baronar*] side by side in its narrative.¹² Even more dubious is the claim made by *Illuga saga Tagldarbana*, that its hero, Illugi, visits King Æthelred at his court in York. Illugi's errand — to ask the king to accept himself and his men as retainers — is commonplace in the Icelandic sagas, but citing York as Æthelred's royal seat is improbable, to say the least.¹³ In *Sigrarðs saga ok Valbrands* we witness the son of an Anglo-Saxon king being given the somewhat improbable name of Sigrarður, and we encounter another English king called Valldimar, who in addition to his Slavic name is said to have many subordinate kings in England.¹⁴

Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Histories of the Kings of Britain*

The first written source that deals at least in part with the history of Anglo-Saxon England and that found its way to Iceland is Geoffrey of Monmouth's pseudo-history of the kings of Britain. Geoffrey died in 1154, and soon afterwards his *Histories of the Kings of Britain* had begun to influence some European writers. In Iceland, his work was translated (by an unknown scholar) very early, perhaps around 1200, as *Breta sögur*. However, that which is customarily referred to as the Icelandic translation of Geoffrey's work should be approached with care, because the Icelandic version is in fact more of an adaptation. The translator shortens and summarises as he goes along, and as he nears the end he appears to become ever more impatient with his task. For instance, in the *Breta sögur* account of the coming of the Saxons — their numerous perfidies, eventual expulsion and return — the emphasis is so much on action, with no concern for questions of motive, that the overall effect is to distort the original. (A modern

critical edition of *Breta sögur* — which we still await — might help to identify more redeeming qualities than the present writer has been able to find.) It is quite clear that to thirteenth-century Icelandic writers this translation was of little use as a source for the history of Anglo-Saxon England. Geoffrey of Monmouth's approach to his subject matter may have influenced the way in which Snorri Sturluson chose to cast his *Heimskringla*, but *Breta sögur* is never mentioned nor quoted by any other medieval writer. That said, the work may obliquely have suggested some ideas that do find expression in the Icelandic literature of the period, as with the notion that a king does not deserve to govern his country, or that God does not wish him to rule there, as with Geoffrey's description of King Thedvallas. In reality, though, the greatest contribution of *Breta sögur* may well have been to acquaint Icelandic writers with the geography of England in a way previously unknown. Geoffrey's history may be unreliable, but there is nothing wrong with his knowledge of English geography.

Saga Ósvalds konúngs hins helga

Another pseudo-history, *Saga Ósvalds konúngs hins helga* — which must be based on a work or works that purported to narrate Anglo-Saxon history — was composed in Iceland. It dates from the fifteenth century and tells of the life of St Oswald, king of Northumbria from 634 to 642.¹⁵ The saga describes his reluctance to accept the crown, and the miracles surrounding his coronation. Similarly, the celibate Oswald receives divine direction to marry the daughter of a cruel Muslim king, Gaudon. The marriage is accomplished by the conversion to Christianity of his bride-to-be, her abduction and successful battles against her father. Gaudon relents eventually and is also converted, along with his subjects, as he is unable to resist King Oswald and his mighty God. Oswald honours his pledge of celibacy even in marriage and rules his kingdom to everyone's satisfaction until his heathen neighbours from the countries of Forheiðe, Brithaniam, and Mercien invade his kingdom. King Oswald is killed in battle but continues to work miracles of all kinds long after his death.

There is little to be said about historical value of *Saga Ósvalds konúngs hins helga*. The author seems totally ignorant of life during the seventh century, as the glass windows of Gaudon's castle and the crusade outfits of King Oswald's men remind us. The same can be said of the saga's description of English history, geography and customs. The closest that the author comes to historical veracity is

to have Oswald killed in a battle against the Mercians, as indeed he was in 642. Various versions of King Oswald's life — both English and continental — exist, but the saga author does not appear to have used any of them. He refers to his sources from time to time in the saga but never identifies them.

Dunstanus saga

During the fourteenth century, interest in another early English saint — Dunstan (ca. 909-88) — inspired the composition of another Icelandic work that concerned itself with Anglo-Saxon England. With *Dunstanus saga* we can identify both the name of the author — Árni Laurentiusson, a monk at the monastery of Þingeyrar — and his main sources, which were Adelard's *Vita Dunstani*, *Passio Sancti Eadwardi*, and some version of Vincent of Beauvais's *Speculum Historiale*. His work shows traces of other sources, mostly Icelandic sagas about religious figures but also Latin saints' lives.¹⁶ Unfortunately for our purposes, Árni seems to have been neither particularly knowledgeable about nor interested in English history of the tenth century, or in Dunstan's career as a statesman. It is the melodramatic material in his sources that always attracts his attention.

Dunstanus saga is mostly a collection of visions and miracles, and hence there is not much historical meat on its narrative bones, despite the author having access to several foreign sources. In what little history there is, however, we find many errors. Though some of these can be blamed on Árni's sources, his own ignorance of tenth-century England, notably royal affairs, does little to lend authority to his saga. Though the main outline of Dunstan's career within the church is correct, little else is. We find only the briefest mention of Dunstan's career as a statesman, and none at all of his fame as a craftsman. Árni's ignorance of tenth-century English royalty leaves him unable to set Dunstan's life into any sort of historical perspective. Thus Æthelstan is succeeded by his father, Edward the Elder, who in Árni's account is credited with the deeds of Edmund, Edgar, and even Edgar's children. There is no reference to Eadred and Eadwig in Árni's book. Half way through his saga (p. 15) Árni does recognise the existence of Edgar as the monarch who appointed Dunstan bishop of Worcester and London, but at this point he is too confused to attempt any historical contextualisation.

As for lesser mistakes we may note that Árni (p. 8) refers to King Æthelstan as an *einuallz konungr*, 'absolute ruler', over all of England. In reality,

Æthelstan ruled over England as far as the Humber and was overlord of the Northumbrians, the Welsh and the Scots. The absolute rule that Árnir has in mind was not achieved until the reign of Edgar (959-75). Of other inaccuracies, Árnir has King Edward murdered by his stepmother (p. 11); in fact it was the queen who in all likelihood plotted his murder, with the actual deed probably carried out by one of her accomplices. Edward is then said to have been buried in a mysterious place called Uisturina, whereas he was in fact buried at Wareham. The long and bitter dispute between Thomas à Becket (murdered in 1170) and King Henry II, which forms one of Árnir's digressions (p. 12), did not specifically involve royal control of ecclesiastical appointments as he insists; it had its origin in the issue of taxation. Moreover, Árnir is completely wrong when he suggests that Thomas wrested the right to make episcopal appointments from the monarchy. The English church never won that right, and episcopal appointments are still a royal prerogative. In describing Dunstan's appointment as a bishop (p. 14), Árnir incorrectly refers to his predecessor, Ælfheah [Elfegus] as an archbishop. In the saga, the proper punishment for coiners of false money becomes an issue as Dunstan grows frustrated over delays in carrying out the assigned sentence. On that occasion, Árnir explains that under English law the customary punishment for counterfeiting money was the loss of both hands and both feet, yet, half a page later, he has the counterfeiters beheaded. In Anglo-Saxon England, however, the normal sentence was loss of the right hand. Here Árnir's account may, however, have been influenced by knowledge of more severe punishments introduced into England during the twelfth-century.¹⁷ In describing Dunstan's exile (p. 20), Árnir has him driven from his bishopric, whereas in fact Dunstan was exiled before his consecration. Lastly, Árnir is quite mistaken in his account of Archbishop Lanfranc (pp. 25-30), as when he seems to assume that the archbishop was Dunstan's immediate successor, whereas no less than eight archbishops served at Canterbury after Dunstan and before Lanfranc's appointment in 1070.

Breta sögur, *Saga Ósvalds konungs hins helga* and *Dunstanus saga*—along with a life of St Edward the Confessor [*Jatvarðar saga*], which I shall discuss later — are the only known Icelandic accounts that both focus on aspects of Anglo-Saxon history, and can be shown to be based on foreign sources, and it seems clear that they contain little information that could have benefited any medieval Icelandic reader with an interest in early English history. This conclusion — which was a product of nineteenth-century scholarship — was not challenged until the 1920s, when it was argued that there were indeed other

Anglo-Saxon History in Medieval Iceland

English sources that had been known and used by Icelandic saga writers. The earliest suggestion to this effect arose from an attempt to make sense of a mysterious place name in *Knyttlinga saga*.¹⁸ On two occasions (chs 18 and 21), the saga refers to an English city called Morstr in such a way as to suggest that the author believed it to be a major settlement. In 1928, Eilert Ekwall proposed that Morstr was a misreading of OE *mynster*, 'a monastery', by a writer who was using an English source for the history of Cnut and his sons. This is indeed a very audacious theory, since it involves linguistic acrobatics of a high order to make Morstr and *mynster* fall into line. Ekwall realised that his suggestion required early Icelandic historians to have had access to and made use of English written sources, a possibility that earlier researchers such as Gustav Storm and Finnur Jónsson had always categorically rejected.¹⁹ Undeterred by these objections, Ekwall then went on to propose the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the works of Henry of Huntingdon, Florence of Worcester and William of Malmesbury as possible sources used by the Icelandic authors of the kings' sagas. Ekwall provides little evidence to support his claim,²⁰ but his ideas seem to have provided inspiration for subsequent hunters of English sources and parallels in both the family sagas and the kings' sagas.

Egils saga Skallagrímssonar

Among the Icelandic family sagas, the most ambitious efforts to postulate English historical sources concern the Vínheiðr episode (the Battle of Brunanburh) of *Egils saga*. I have discussed this episode of the saga (chs 50-55) at some length elsewhere,²¹ but it may be useful briefly to restate the relevant parts of my earlier discussion.

The author of *Egils saga* offers, as an introduction to the great battle, two short chapters (50 and 51) on Anglo-Saxon history from the time of Alfred to the reign of Æthelstan. As Bjarni Einarsson has noted,²² the account of Æthelstan's lineage agrees with the brief genealogy of English kings which serves as an appendix to *Breta sögur*, but it is by no means certain whether the author actually used that work. *Egils saga* also gives accurate information on the respective geographical size of Northumbria, Scotland and England, also drawn from an unidentified source. The rest of the introduction is at variance with historical documents, however, with the exception of the saga's reference to the Scots and the Welsh as being among Æthelstan's enemies. King Alfred is said to have

gained control over England in much the same manner as Haraldr Fair-hair conquered Norway — by stripping local kings of their power, and Æthelstan, who in the saga has just succeeded to the throne, is perceived as a weaker monarch than his ancestors. Consequently, he faces an uprising from the various rulers whom his grandfather had dethroned, and their rebellious alliance is said to include the Irish (not the Norsemen in Ireland). With the exception of one name, Óláfr (the Red), who dies in the battle according to the saga and is wrongly identified as the king of the Scots, nothing in the saga's description of events that lead up to the Battle of Brunanburh can be confirmed by other sources. The same applies to the saga's description of the main battle which, not surprisingly, is won largely through the heroic efforts of the two brothers Egill and Þórólfr.

I find it hard to believe that *Egils saga* relates any genuine historical information concerning the Battle of Brunanburh, including the presence of Egill and Þórólfr in that battle. In the first place, in its description of Egill's exploits in England the saga follows a pattern which occurs in a number of other sagas: the hero arrives in England, is well received by the king, responds to a great task at hand, is handsomely rewarded and asked not to leave. In addition, the *Vínheiðr* episode is particularly characterised by unmistakable literary devices such as neat contrasts, people and events presented in pairs — sometimes with exact symmetry — all of which serve to heighten narrative effects. In short, the saga narrative seems far too smooth and seamless to agree with what little is actually known about the great battle, and the only purpose of the episode seems to be to promote the fame of the two brothers rather than to relate English history.

Others have disagreed. Sigurður Nordal, who published what is still the standard edition of the saga in 1933, maintained that *Egils saga's* account must be seen a mixture of fact and fiction. Discrepancies were to be expected as the narrative was based on information derived not from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* but from oral traditions that went back to Egill and his followers, who had participated in the battle without fully understanding all the events in which they were involved.²³ In other words, there was no reason to doubt that the details of the *Vínheiðr* episode were true, although the historical context into which the saga had put them was garbled. As we shall see, this line of reasoning continues to be popular.

Nordal's theory is not convincing. Even if we accept his initial premise, it seems odd that incidental details should be more likely to survive centuries of oral transmission than the main outline of the story to which they belong. Furthermore, it is unlikely that Egill and his followers would have failed to understand the

nature of the conflict or the parties involved, had they taken part in the battle. Of course the saga writer could be misinformed when he has Egill and Þórólfr devise — or at least participate in formulating — the delaying tactics that allow King Æthelstan to gather more troops, but in his praise poem to the king (stanza 22) Egill is again made to pose as a strategist advising him that now the time is right for an invasion of Scotland.²⁴ Despite these apparent flaws in his argument, Nordal's defence of the historical value of the episode continues to be accepted in Icelandic and non-Icelandic scholarship to date.²⁵ But in recent decades no-one has followed in his footsteps in claiming that the episode is based on first-hand accounts surviving in oral tradition. Critics who believe that the episode contains historical elements now tend to regard their presence in the saga as a reflection of the author's complex and highly selective use of written sources brought to Iceland from England.

Two of Nordal's points of defence, the resemblance between Simeon of Durham's Weondune and Vínheiðr as place names, and the identification of Adam of Bremen's Hringr with the saga's Hringr, have been resurrected by A. L. Binns, but without any new evidence to remove the linguistic and historical obstacles that Alistair Campbell noted decades ago in his edition of *The Battle of Brunanburh*.²⁶ Binns' four stage hypothesis seeks to explain how the saga author might have come by this information:

- (1) Old Norse texts such as *Egils saga* have an historically inaccurate 'top dressing', but 'their central part retains something of the genuine historical tradition of the York kingdom'.²⁷
- (2) It has been suggested that a contemporary chronicle of Viking York was written by Anglo-Saxon chroniclers there and that this document — although there is no direct reference to its existence — was a common source for later monastic writers such as Simeon of Durham, Roger of Hoveden, William of Malmesbury and others.²⁸
- (3) During the early eleventh century Bjarnharðr bókvísi [Beornheard the book-learned] and other English missionaries brought with them to Iceland 'a good library of ecclesiastical historiography including a chronicle of Viking York'.²⁹
- (4) Icelandic thirteenth-century writers had access to these historical materials and used them in their works.³⁰

It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss the evidence on which this hypothetical chronicle of Viking York rests, but it is highly unlikely that if such a document ever existed, it would have reached Iceland at the time and in the way that Binns suggests. The main objection must be that there is no clear reason why

an English missionary should think that a chronicle of Viking York ought to form a part of his luggage to Iceland. No historical contact point, other than the Battle of Brunanburh, has ever been proposed between Iceland and Northumbria or England in the tenth century. Are we then to assume that this hypothetical chronicle celebrated the role of Egill and Þórólfr in the great battle and drew attention to their nationality as Icelanders? The former assumption is dubious, given the evidence of other English sources, and the latter historically impossible. Bjarnharðr's role in Icelandic literature may also have been less striking than Binns would have us think. Foreign missionaries do not appear to have commanded much respect or status in eleventh-century Iceland, and Bjarnharðr's nickname may even be derogatory. Books certainly reached the country through missionary activity, but even if we accept that a chronicle of Viking York might have found its way to Iceland, it seems very strange that it should only leave its mark on a few chapters of one saga.³¹ Still, at least one recent commentator (in search of the battle site) treats Binns' chronicle hypothesis as an established fact, and it is unlikely that he will be the last to do so.³²

Of recent studies, the most extensive discussion of *Egils saga's* use of sources is Bjarni Einarsson's *Litterære forudsætninger for Egils saga* [*The Literary Sources of Egils saga*] and his ideas concerning the author's use of English materials in the *Vínheiðr* episode resemble to some extent those of Binns. Bjarni finds two layers of narrative in the episode and then goes on to argue that certain pieces of information and discrepancies in the saga become easier to understand in the light of English sources that could have been available to the author.³³ The saga writer used some of this historical information directly³⁴ but recast parts of it for his own special purpose³⁵ which was chiefly to produce an entertaining story.³⁶ Specifically, the following points in the *Vínheiðr* episode are supposed to show contact with English sources:

(1) The most reliable English sources explain that Æthelstan fought against troops from Ireland, identified in the *Chronicle* poem as 'Norðmenn'. This would explain why the saga author includes the Irish among Æthelstan's enemies.³⁷

(2) Similarly, the saga's mention of the treacherous Welsh earls (*Bretar*) agrees with Simeon of Durham's statement that the king of the Cumbrians took part in the battle against Æthelstan.³⁸

(3) The author of *Egils saga* would have realised that William of Malmesbury's Anlafus (son of King Sihtricus of Northumbria) had to be descended from Ragnarr loðbrók and hence identified him with the legendary forefathers of Ari inn fróði: Óláfr the White, King of Dublin, and his son Þorsteinn the Red, King of

Scotland. From these elements the author of the saga fashioned Anlafus and Constantinus into a single person, Óláfr the Red, and then proceeded to follow William's account of the invasion into England — that is, the version that has Anlafus invade across the border without the aid of Norse troops.³⁹

4) Bjarni maintains that William's description of the events leading up to the battle has a parallel in the saga:

Et Ethelstano ex consulto cedente, ut gloriosus jam
insultantem vinceret, multum in Angliam processerat juvenis
audacissimus et illicita spirans animo, cui tandem magnis
artibus ducum, magnis viribus militum, apud Brunefeld
occursum.

Bjarni does not translate this quotation, but he refers to it in a way that makes it clear that he interprets the key phrase 'ex consulto cedente' to mean that Æthelstan withdrew (to gather more troops) after a council: 'in order that he might more gloriously defeat the now attacking foe, this most audacious youth, intent on lawless deeds, [who] had proceeded far into England, and was at length opposed at Brunefeld'.⁴⁰ The text in *Egils saga* (ch. 52) that supposedly reflects this information in William's history is as follows:

En er Aðalsteinn spurði þetta allt, þá átti hann stefnu
við höfðingja sína ok ráðamenn, leitaði þá eptir, hvat
tiltøkilegast væri, sagði þá allri alþýðu greiniliga þat, er hann
hafði frétt um athöfn Skotakonungs ok fjölmenni hans...en sú
ráðagørð staðfestisk, at Aðalsteinn konungr skyldi fara aprt
ok fara á sunnanvert England ok hafa þá fyrir sér liðsafnað
norðr eptir landi öllu, því at þeir sá elligar myndi seint
safnask fjölmennit, svá mikit sem þyrfti, ef eigi drægi
konungr sjálf at liðit.

[When Æthelstan heard of all this he held a meeting with his
leaders and statesmen to work out what would be the most
expedient thing to do, explaining clearly to the whole
gathering what he had learned of the activities of the Scottish
king and his great army.... But it was resolved that King
Æthelstan should go back and work through the south of
England, and bring his own army north up the length of the

country. This was because they realised that they would be slow in collecting as many men as they needed if the king himself did not call out the people.]⁴¹

5) The following points in William's account also have their parallels in *Egils saga* according to Bjarni:⁴²

(a) Anlafus' espionage mission mirrors the saga's account of the tents of Æthelstan's troops having been pitched in such a way as to give the enemy an exaggerated impression of the strength of the English forces.

(b) The English troops are said to have pitched their tents and waited for reinforcements both in William's account and in the *Vínheiðr* episode.

(c) Both narratives talk of a night raid by the enemy and a king who is woken up.

(d) In both accounts the enemy is recognised at dawn.

(e) William and the saga author both state that the English did not fear a surprise attack.

In general terms Bjarni's theory creates more problems than it solves. It suggests that the saga author had access to and made some use of a version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the works of Simeon of Durham and William of Malmesbury. Furthermore, it implies that the author made selective use of these works — first one and then another — without any effort to collate different and conflicting information. Regardless of this peculiar mode of working, a good deal of research would have been required. Why should an author whose chief purpose was to entertain his readers have bothered to do it, and why did he not incorporate a good story like William's account of the harpist-spy? It seems extraordinary that the above-mentioned sundry details from William's work were the only ones that the saga author saw fit to use.

As to the specific issues that Bjarni raises, the following objections may be considered:

(1-2) The suggestion that the author's reference to the Irish and the Welsh derived from English sources does not solve the various problems that surface at this point in the text. Chapter 50 relates that King Alfred established himself as an overlord in England. With the succession of his young grandson to the throne, those lords who previously had been forced to surrender their lands rebel against him, and the reader would expect these to be some of his English vassals. Instead, the rebellion comes from places that have not previously been mentioned as parts

of Æthelstan's realm: Wales, Scotland and Ireland. The Irish are never heard of again, and should the reader wonder why Óláfr is a King of Scotland — since we have already been told that all kings of territories conquered in Alfred's day had been demoted to earls (ch. 51) — it is evident from the following chapter that the King of Scotland had indeed never yielded to any English form of overlordship, nor is it ever quite clear why he is invading Æthelstan's kingdom. Similarly, the reader is informed at the beginning of ch. 52 that King Óláfr has conquered all of Northumbria, whereas Egill's stanza (16) refers to Álfgeirr's losing half of it. Æthelstan's dealings with the Scots, the Welsh and Sihtric of Northumbria are duly explained in William's work, and so is the reason why the Scots and the Welsh choose to rebel. Yet, the author of *Egils saga* supposedly decided to ignore that information. As to the presence of the Irish, it seems incredible that an author who had access to the *Chronicle* poem would not have realised that he was dealing with members of a Norse kingdom in Ireland. It seems more likely that the saga's account relates in some way to the state of affairs in the British Isles at the time of its composition in the mid thirteenth century.

(3) The idea of deliberately editing William's text to conflate Constantinus and Anlafus into a single person in order to pay some kind of a tribute to a noble family in Iceland seems far-fetched and hardly sufficient reason to explain such a drastic change in William's account.

(4) The passage quoted from *Egils saga* relates that Æthelstan meets with his leaders, solicits their advice and decides to travel back south to gather more troops. Bjarni's argument for a parallel rests solely on his interpreting the phrase 'ex consulto cedente' to mean that the king withdrew (in order to gather troops) after a council. Dorothy Whitelock translates the same phrase to mean that Æthelstan 'deliberately retired',⁴³ and reads William's panegyric as not only confirming the king's failure to take action, but also apparently rebuking him for this:

For since our king, confident and eager in youth, deeming his service done, had long spent slow leisure hours, they [i.e. the enemy] despoiled everything with continuous ravages.... At length the complaining rumour roused the king, not to let himself thus be branded that his arms gave way before the barbarian axe.⁴⁴

(5) The remaining similarities that Bjarni claims between William's work and *Egils saga* are tangential and in some cases not entirely correct:

(a) Apart from the intrigue involved, I fail to see any parallel between Anlafus' spying in Æthelstan's camp and the saga's story of the cleverly arranged tents.

(b) It is true that the English army waits for reinforcements in both William's account and in the saga, but all other circumstances are different. In William's work the wait provides the framework for Anlafus' spying and his attempt to assassinate Æthelstan; *Egils saga* describes elaborate delay tactics rather than passive waiting.

(c) The raids in the two accounts are entirely different. The saga tells of forces that set off at night and reach their destination at dawn to begin a battle; William describes an attack that takes place at night with the express purpose of murdering the English king. The kings who wake up in the two stories are different kings responding to different circumstances.

(d) It is correct that the coming of daylight is mentioned both in the saga and by William, but in different contexts. The surprise raid led by Hringr and Aðils fails because their troops are spotted at daybreak by the guards in Þórólfr and Egill's camp. William, on the other hand, describes a battle that begins at night and has the English at a disadvantage until dawn, when King Æthelstan successfully fends off the enemy.

(e) That the English are said not to fear a surprise attack in both accounts is also somewhat misleading. In William's story it is King Æthelstan who is caught by surprise, because he does not fear that the enemy would dare to attack him in the night. In *Egils saga* we are told that Aðils thinks that the English will not be prepared to meet an attack, and events prove him wrong.

The kings' sagas: *Knýtlinga saga* and *Heimskringla*

All in all, Bjarni Einarsson's ideas concerning the influence of the English ecclesiastical historians on *Egils saga* are not convincing, and neither are similar claims that have been made in respect to two of the kings' sagas: *Knýtlinga saga* and *Heimskringla*. *Knýtlinga saga* introduces us to Sveinn Fork-beard, already King of Denmark, and keen to add England to his collection. Unfortunately, *Knýtlinga saga* says less about his campaigns in England than one would wish, but the very short account has, as we shall see, some interesting touches. King

Sveinn, we are told, turns his attention to England after campaigns in Saxony and elsewhere. In England he raids extensively and fights many battles against King Æthelred with mixed success. King Sveinn attacks London in 994, presumably with Ólafr Tryggvason, but fails to capture the city. Sveinn made another attempt in 1013, when he besieged London, and again he failed. Yet it seems that at least some Icelandic authors believed that he had been successful in his campaigns against London. The Appendix to *Jómsvíkinga saga* in *Flateyjarbók* (I, ch. 164) has Sveinn establishing an army of élite troops [*Þingamannalið*] and placing it in London. In reality, however, London eluded Sveinn's capture, although he was eventually to conquer the greater part of England. He spent a number of years harrying and burning and became known as *ffándi Engla*, 'the enemy of the English'. At the height of these hostilities, King Æthelred fled the country. King Sveinn died in his sleep one night, according to *Knýtlinga saga*, which adds that the English believed that King Edmund killed him in the same manner that St Mercurius killed Julian the Apostate.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle fully confirms this short description of Sveinn's military exploits in England. According to the *Chronicle*, he raids England on three separate occasions: first by attacking London in 994, then there is a second campaign (1003-1005), and a third in the summer of 1013 when Sveinn did indeed conquer much of England, which resulted in King Æthelred's flight. King Sveinn died of an unknown disease in February 1014.

Sveinn's death, as English people view it (according to *Knýtlinga saga*), is an interesting story in itself. Julian the Apostate was a nephew of Emperor Constantine the Great and was an emperor himself from 361 to 363. He was brought up as a Christian but renounced the faith at an early age. Julian was more interested in Greek religion and philosophy than the Church deemed fit and proper, and that earned him the unflattering title of *apostata*. As an emperor, he tried to resurrect the old Roman faith, while allowing his subjects freedom of religion. He was noted for his many talents and compared to the likes of Marcus Aurelius and Alexander the Great. He was fatally wounded by a spear in a battle against the Persians in Mesopotamia in his thirties. When he died, it was rumoured that the Virgin Mary had sent St Mercurius to kill him. St Mercurius' successor in destroying heathen invaders, Edmund, King of East Anglia, was killed by the Vikings in 870. The story that King Sveinn died at his hands is also told in Hermannus' work *De miraculis sancti Eadmundi*, which relates that Sveinn refused to relieve the heavy burden of taxation from the monastery of Bury St Edmunds, which was Edmund's own monastery.⁴⁵ Whatever the reason, for the

English to recall the story of Julian's death in connection with the death of King Sveinn says a great deal about what the native population must have felt about him and other Viking raiders. Bjarni Guðnason, the editor of *Knýtlinga saga*, believes that the kenning *frándi Engla* and the story of Sveinn's death reflect English views and sympathies. He furthermore argues that it is likely that the ultimate source of *Knýtlinga saga's* account of Sveinn's campaigns in England was an English book,⁴⁶ which is of course not impossible, but difficult to prove from evidence as scanty as this.

Sveinn's son, King Cnut, continued his father's efforts to conquer London. During his siege, the town was — as before — defended by Edmund Ironside and his brothers. Then, *Knýtlinga saga* tells us that messengers went between the two sides, because — as the saga wrongly claims — King Cnut was married to their mother. A deal was eventually struck, and it was agreed that King Cnut and Edmund Ironside should divide the country between them, and, in the event of one of them dying without issue, the other should then rule over all of England.

Bjarni Guðnason firmly believes that in the saga's account of peace being brokered between King Cnut and Edmund Ironside he has found a genuine contact point between English and Icelandic historical works.⁴⁷ His argument is briefly as follows. The *Annals* of Roger of Hoveden include a short work relating the history of England between 975 and 1042 called *Liber de legibus Angliæ*. This text, of unknown authorship, is assumed to date from around 1050. Bjarni argues that the account of how peace is made between King Cnut and Edmund Ironside in *Liber de legibus Angliæ* and in Icelandic texts such as *Olafs saga hins helga* (in *Flateyjarbók*), the Appendix to *Jómsvíkinga saga*, and finally in *Knýtlinga saga* itself, is so similar that accidental likeness can be ruled out, and a genetic relationship can be confidently asserted between the English and Icelandic versions.

Liber de legibus Angliæ and other English sources are agreed that Edmund reigned for nine months and that during this time he fought five battles against King Cnut. Icelandic histories say the same, according to Bjarni. *Liber de legibus Angliæ* and various Icelandic histories describe how peace was made, but only *Knýtlinga saga* and *Olafs saga hins helga* state that important or powerful people — *rikismenn* — acted as go-betweens. *Knýtlinga saga* is the only Icelandic source to mention that as a part of the truce between King Cnut and Edmund Ironside oaths were sworn and hostages exchanged. Bjarni has to admit, however, that *Liber de legibus Angliæ* does not mention anything about this. Yet the oath swearing is found in the *Chronicle* of Florence of Worcester, and the hostage

exchange in *Encomium Emmae*, and both find expression in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. According to Bjarni, we must assume that a now lost *Knúts saga* was the main source for *Knýtlinga saga* (and for the description of these events in *Olafs saga hins helga*), and it is clear, he says, that the author of this *Knúts saga* drew upon English sources.

It has to be said that Bjarni Guðnason provides most of the ammunition against these claims in the course of his own discussion. Concerning the nine month reign of Edmund Ironside and the five battles he fought with King Cnut, it emerges that *Knýtlinga saga* says nothing at all about the length of Edmund's reign and enumerates only four battles; five says Bjarni, if we add the battle over London, but then he has to admit that the saga mentions various other battles that King Cnut also fought in England. The very close agreement that Bjarni sees between *Liber de legibus Angliæ*, *Knýtlinga saga*, *Olafs saga hins helga* and the Appendix to *Jómsvíkinga saga* concerning the details of the peace process is quite simply not there. Neither *Liber de legibus Angliæ* nor *Knýtlinga saga* say anything about important or powerful people acting as intermediaries between the two kings. It is only *Olafs saga hins helga* that mentions such dignitaries. The Appendix to *Jómsvíkinga saga* states that both Danes and Englishmen urged the two kings to make peace. *Knýtlinga saga* only talks about *menn*, 'people', going between them — something that even the most slow-witted Icelandic historian would probably have been able to figure out for himself — and *Liber de legibus Angliæ* makes no mention at all of any go-betweens, and states simply that peace was made. That *Knýtlinga saga* alone of Icelandic sources notes that oaths were made and hostages exchanged proves nothing about this information being derived from English historical sources, even if the *Encomium Emmae* agrees with one point, Florence of Worcester's *Chronicle* with another and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* with both. Under the circumstances surrounding the peace process between King Cnut and Edmund, it would have been naturally assumed that this — or something like it — was the way in which a deal would have been brokered. As for the three English works of history that Bjarni cites to establish the English connection of *Knýtlinga saga* in its description of the peace process, it has never been conclusively demonstrated that any of them was known in Iceland during the Middle Ages.

Edmund Ironside died in 1016, and his death was quite obviously a major turning point in King Cnut's career. Judging from English sources such as the *Encomium Emmae*, Florence of Worcester's *Chronicle* and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, it seems likely that he died of some unspecified disease. Of course,

little imagination is required to see that the agreement between the two kings could have encouraged Cnut to have Edmund murdered, bearing in mind what was at stake. This is precisely what happens in some later sources which blame King Cnut for Edmund's death, beginning with Hermannus' work *De miraculis Sancti Eadmundi*. *Knýtlinga saga* (ch. 16) describes King Edmund's death as follows:

Heiðrekr strjóna hét einn ríkr maðr, er fé tók til þess af Knúti konungi, at hann sviki Játmund konung ok dræpi hann með morðvígi, ok þetta varð hans bani. Heiðrekr var þó fóstri Játmundar konungs, ok trúði hann honum sem sjálfum sér. [There was a powerful man called Eadric streona who was paid by King Cnut to betray King Edmund and to make a murderous attack upon the king, and this was the cause of his death. Yet, Eadric had fostered King Edmund, who trusted him as he would trust himself].⁴⁸

According to English sources, Eadric streona was a notorious deserter and traitor whom King Cnut had had killed in 1017. The *Encomium Emmæ* relates that his execution was carried out by Earl Eiríkr. The great faith that King Edmund had in Eadric streona is also described in the *Encomium Emmæ* which says that Edmund relied heavily on Eadric, who was a wise but wily man. The *Encomium Emmæ* then adds that King Edmund did not think that any matter had been properly deliberated unless Eadric had been there to advise. Bjarni Guðnason wonders if *Knýtlinga saga* might have derived its references to King Edmund's trust in Eadric from the *Encomium Emmæ*. That, however, seems unlikely. If the author of *Knýtlinga saga* had had access to the *Encomium Emmæ*, he would also have known its description of how King Edmund Ironside actually died, and would then surely have realised that the *Encomium Emmæ* was a source much closer to Edmund and the events of his life than Hermannus or the Icelandic kings' sagas. Therefore, it makes no sense to believe that the *Knýtlinga saga* author would have borrowed one relatively unimportant detail of the story from the *Encomium Emmæ* only to leave out an element of real importance — namely, the manner in which King Edmund actually died.

In Snorri's *Heimskringla* two sentences in which he first refers to the long reign of King Cnut's family in Denmark (II, ch. 130) and a further remark, where Snorri explains that he inherited his Danish kingdom but waged a war to possess

England (III, ch. 78), have been singled out by Ove Moberg in an attempt to prove that they originate from a single sentence in William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum*. The first of Snorri's sentences simply reads: 'Þeir langfeðgar hófðu ráðit langa ævi fyrir Danmörku' [[Cnut's] ancestors had reigned over Denmark for as long as they lived]. This, Moberg claims, is comparable with a stitched-together sentence from William's work: 'Danamarchia, quam avito...obtinebat' ['Denmark...which he held by inheritance']. The second sentence reads: 'En gamli Knútr eignaðisk at erfð Danaríki, en með hernaði ok orrostu England' [But old Cnut inherited the kingdom of Denmark but came to possess England through warfare and battle]. Moberg believes that this mirrors a longer version of William's sentence, '[Cnuto] nec contenta Danamarchia quam avito, et Anglia quam bellico jure obtinebat' [[Cnut] not content with Denmark which he held by inheritance and England which was his by right of war].⁴⁹

This argument does not seem to make sense. We are asked to believe that Snorri had access to William's work, and that the best use he could make of it was to take one sentence element and create from it two sentences in his *Heimskringla*. The sentence elements do not even match particularly well, and the information that they contain was common knowledge that Snorri did not need William — or anyone else — to tell him. Elsewhere, Moberg has argued with remarkable confidence that the monastery of Þingeyrar and the bishopric of Hólar both possessed books containing extracts from the works of William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon.⁵⁰ This is wishful thinking, as there is no evidence at all to confirm that these two places owned the above-mentioned works.⁵¹

In *Knýtlinga saga*, the final chapter in King Cnut's life describes his pilgrimage to Rome (ch. 17), which took place in 1027, although the saga — along with other Icelandic sources — assumes that it was made in 1031. We learn of his great generosity to all and sundry during his journey, and a letter which King Cnut sent to his subjects from Rome confirms that he was given a splendid reception there.⁵² On his return to England the saga relates that he was struck down by yellow fever and died in the same year on the 'ides of November', that is on the thirteenth.⁵³ English sources tell a different tale, including the C and D versions of the *Chronicle* as well as Florence of Worcester: they maintain that King Cnut died on 12 November 1035. Despite this difference — presumably arising because both the Icelandic and English sources share the word 'ides' — it has been suggested that, in the absence of any further evidence, an English source, probably Florence of Worcester, was being used.⁵⁴ This claim is all the

more curious, because it implies that the borrower was only interested in lifting one commonplace word from the English text and chose to ignore its information about the exact date and the year of the king's death. King Cnut's cause of death is also unconfirmed by English or any other sources. *Knytlinga saga*, which on the whole is strangely ill-informed about its main hero, states (ch. 18) that King Cnut is buried in the great city of Morstr, and ends with an incorrect statement of the length of his reign over Denmark and England.⁵⁵ King Cnut died in Shaftesbury and was buried in Winchester.

After the death of King Cnut, *Knytlinga saga* relates that his sons Harold and Hardacnut divided the realm in such a way that Harold got England and Hardacnut Denmark. Furthermore, the saga adds that at this point Edward the Confessor returned to England where he was received with great hospitality, as was fitting for such a man. For the most part, this account is stuff and nonsense. In reality, Hardacnut was staying in Denmark when his father died. By virtue of being the son of King Cnut and Emma, he alone was the rightful heir to the English throne. It was probably because he feared that a war with his neighbour King Magnús the Good of Norway was impending that Hardacnut chose to remain in Denmark. Under these circumstances, his half-brother Harold, son of Cnut and Ælfgifu, took the opportunity to secure the English crown for himself. Queen Emma then fled to Flanders. When peace was finally made between Hardacnut and King Magnús, Hardacnut immediately went to Flanders to see his mother and began to plan for an invasion of England so that he could drive Harold out. In 1040, before the invasion had materialised, King Harold died. Edward the Confessor did not return to England until after Harold's death; he would certainly have had good reason to fear for his life had he returned while Harold was still alive. *Knytlinga saga* also claims that King Harold was buried in that mysterious city of Morstr, whereas Snorri (*Heimskringla* III, ch. 17) locates his burial in Winchester. According to the *Chronicle* and other sources, he was actually buried in Westminster.

Ove Moberg claims that Snorri's description of the deaths and successions of the kings of England after the relatively long reign of Cnut reveals such close affinities to the E version of the *Chronicle* that there must be a connection. He maintains that either Snorri was using the *Chronicle* or a work closely related to it as his source.⁵⁶ In presenting Moberg's comparison of the two texts, I have taken the liberty of substituting for his earlier edition of *Heimskringla* the standard one by Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, and in the Icelandic and Old English passages, I have underlined those parts that do not have clear parallels in the other text, and bold-

faced material that does not match at all:

Heimskringla III, ch. 17:

Haraldr Englakonungr andaðisk **fimm vetrum eptir andlát Knúts** ins ríka, fœður síns. Hann var jarðaðr hjá feðr sínum í **Vincestr**. Eptir andlát hans tók konungdóm í Englandi Hǫrða-Knútr, bróðir Haralds, annarr sonr gamla Knúts. Var hann þá konungr bæði yfir Englandi ok Danaveldi. Réð hann því ríki tvá vetr. Hann varð sótt dauðr á Englandi ok er jarðaðr í Vincestr hjá feðr sínum. Eptir andlát hans var til konungs tekinn í Englandi Eatvarðr inn góði, sonr Aðalráðs Englakonungs ok Emmu dróttningar, dóttur Ríkharðar Rúðujarls. Eaðvarðr konungr var bróðir sammœðri Haralds ok Hǫrða-Knúts.

[Harold, king of England died **five years after the death of his father Cnut the Great**. He was buried with his father at **Winchester**. After his death, another of old Cnut's sons, Hardacnut, the brother of Harold, became king of England. With that he ruled both over England and Denmark. He ruled over this kingdom for two years. He died of a disease in England and is buried in Winchester with his father. After his death Edward the Confessor, son

Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, E version:

1039. Her forðferde Harold cyng...
7 he wæs bebyrged æt **West mynstre**.
7 he weolde Engla landes **iiii gear 7 XVI wucan ...7 on þis ilcan gear** com Hardacnut cyng to Sandwic...
7 he wæs sona under fangen ge fram Anglum ge fram Denum... 1041:
7 he wæs cyng ofer eall Engla land twa gear buton X nihtum. 7 he is be byrged on Ealdan mynstre on Win-ceastre mid Cnute cynge his fæder.
7 ear þan þe he bebyrged wære. eall folc ge ceas Eadward to cynge on Lundene. 1040: On þis ilcan gear com Eadward Aepelredes sunu cinges hider to lande of Weallande. se wæs Hardacnutes cinges broþor, hi wæron begen Aelfgiues⁵⁷ suna. seo wæs Ricardes dohtor eorles.

[1039: In this year king Harold passed way...and he was buried at **Westminster**, and he had ruled England for **four years and sixteen weeks**... In this same year came king Harthacnut to Sandwich,... and he was at once received by both English and Danes... 1041: he was king over all England for two years all but ten days. He is buried in the Old Minster in Winchester with king Cnut, his father. Before he was buried, the whole nation chose Edward to be king in London. 1040: In this same year Edward, son of king Æthelred, came

Magnús Fjalldal

of King Æthelred and Queen Emma, the daughter of Duke Richard of Rouen, was made king of England. King Edward was the brother of Harold and Hardacnut, having the same mother.]⁵⁸

hither to this country from France: he was the brother of king Harthacnut, and they were both sons of Ælfgifu, who was the daughter of duke Richard.]

One does not have to inspect these allegedly parallel texts for long to see that there are plenty of differences between them. It is well known that as a historian Snorri always placed his faith in what he perceived to be his oldest sources; hence his great reliance upon the supposedly genuine skaldic verses which he believed had been composed at the same time as the events that they describe. It is therefore hard to imagine that Snorri, using a contemporary English chronicle, would not have believed it to be more accurate than any other source materials. And yet he does not follow the *Chronicle* as regards the length of Harold's reign or his place of burial. The methodology which is used to produce this comparison also leaves something to be desired. The entries for the three years are taken apart and then spliced together in an attempt to match Snorri's text (cf. 1039-1041-1040), and in the case of the entry for 1039, bits of individual sentences are stitched together in order to produce a parallel. With these problems in mind, it is surprising that both Bjarni Guðnason, the editor of *Knýtlinga saga*, and Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, the editor of *Heimskringla*, accept Moberg's findings without any apparent hesitation.⁵⁹ Bjarni Guðnason is so convinced that the kings' sagas make use of English materials that he calls for a full-scale investigation to identify them. That study, however, has yet to be written.

Jatvarðar saga

Although the hunt for English sources which Icelandic medieval historians might have used has not produced any very convincing results, there is at least one work, the Icelandic history of St Edward the Confessor, which perhaps can be said to have made a small contribution to Anglo-Saxon history, in spite of its having been written as a saint's life. The saga, probably a fourteenth-century work, is extant in two versions — as *Saga hins heilaga Játvarðar* in *Flateyjarbók*, and as *Jatvarðar saga* in the Appendix to the first volume of Guðbrandur Vigfússon's *Icelandic Sagas and Other Historical Documents*

*Relating to the Settlements and Descents of the Northmen on the British Isles.*⁶⁰

There is as yet no critical edition of the Icelandic history of St Edward, and the saga was largely ignored until the 1970s, when Christine Fell discussed it at length in three very informative articles.⁶¹ Her work is particularly useful for showing that the Icelandic author used at least three foreign sources: a service book containing the lections for St Edward's day, Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum Historiale*, and the anonymous *Chronicon Laudunensis*. Of particular interest is Fell's conclusion that in some instances the sources which the Icelandic author used appear to have been fuller than the texts in which they survive today.

Fell⁶² argues that most of the material concerning Edward's genealogy comes from the first lection for St Edward's day. *Jatvarðar saga* is, of course, wrong in maintaining that Emma was the sister of Earl Robert, the father of William the Conqueror, but this is an error that it shares with other Icelandic sources. That Robert gave up his dukedom to become a hermit derives from the *Chronicon Laudunensis*, a work believed to have been written by an English monk at Laon, and so does the suggestion that William was wrongly called 'the Bastard' because his ancestors were. That William's mother was a woman named Gunnhildr also comes from this source. It is not clear how this mistake, which would link William to the Danish royal family, came about. King Cnut had a daughter and a niece by the name of Gunnhildr, the daughter eventually marrying Emperor Henry of Germany. William's hereditary claim to the English monarchy was actually quite remote; it was only through Queen Emma, the sister of his grandfather and wife successively to two English kings, Æthelred and Cnut. The story that Matilda first rejected William's proposal of marriage, because she thought he was a bastard son, but later accepted him on account of his violent behaviour towards her, is only found in Norman sources, including the *Chronicon Laudunensis*.

Most of *Jatvarðar saga*'s information about the king comes from hagiographic sources, except for the story about Edward's three wives who retained their virginity with his encouragement — this derives from the *Chronicon Laudunensis*; other chronicles and *Heimskringla* state that King Edward was only married to Godwine's daughter. The story of St John and Edward's gift to the pilgrim of his coronation ring also derives from the *Chronicon*. *Jatvarðar saga*'s account of Edward's vision of the seven sleepers of Ephesus is clearly based on a very similar story told by William of Malmesbury. But, as Christine Fell warns, the author only borrows one very brief story from William, and had he had access to the whole text, he would surely have used

more of it. The author of *Jatvarðar saga* only knew William 'in some exceedingly abbreviated form', most probably through the *Speculum Historiale* by Vincent of Beauvais.⁶³ For other stories about King Edward, a number of other sources are used, but for the story about Earl Godwine denying his responsibility for the death of Edward's younger brother, the saga author returns to the *Chronicon*. The tale itself, which is found in most English and Norman chronicles, is, of course, entirely folkloristic. The short explanatory paragraph in *Jatvarðar saga* that introduces Godwine and his family (at the beginning of ch. 5 in Guðbrandur Vigfússon's edition) is not to be found in the extant copies of the *Chronicon Laudunensis* but may have been there in the text available to the saga author.

In the section of *Jatvarðar saga* that tells of events just before King Edward's death and Harold's succession (ch. 6 in Vigfússon's edition), the author combines material from *Haralds saga Sigurðarsonar* in *Heimskringla* (III) and the *Chronicon Laudunensis*. Understandably, these sources differ on a number of points. One interesting example is Harold's visit to Duke William. In the *Chronicon Laudunensis* Harold promises to hold the kingdom of England for William, but in *Jatvarðar saga* his oath is that he will not oppose William's succession to the English throne upon Edward's death. This change may well have been inspired by the oath as related in *Morkinskinna*,⁶⁴ that Harold would never oppose William. Harold's claim that the dying King Edward bequeathed him the crown is undoubtedly taken from Snorri's account in *Heimskringla*. The story of King Edward's body being moved to a splendid shrine by Thomas à Becket does not derive from any sources on St Edward but is found both in the Latin and Icelandic lives of St Thomas. With events leading up to the Battle of Stamford Bridge (ch. 7 in Guðbrandur Vigfússon's edition), the saga author condenses the description of the Icelandic kings' sagas and acknowledges his debt to them.⁶⁵ However, the saga's reference to English nobles' dislike of serving under foreign rulers is not in the Icelandic histories and may well be derived from the *Chronicon Laudunensis*, as it tells of the nobles' reluctance to take an oath of support for William. *Jatvarðar saga* moves the Battle of Fulford to York and substitutes the name of Earl Waltheof, who flees from the battle in the Icelandic histories, for Gyrth [Gyrðr], assuming, as do other Icelandic sources, that both are the sons of Godwine. The account of the Battle of Stamford Bridge is short and muddled in the *Chronicon Laudunensis*, and the author of *Jatvarðar saga* ignores it and uses Snorri's description instead.

With the Battle of Hastings, *Heimskringla* is also the saga author's main source. However, he does borrow the occasional item from the *Chronicon*

Laudunensis, such as Gyrrh warning Harold not to fight William because of his perjury. The story in *Heimskringla* about Waltheof's burning a hundred of William's men in a wood is reversed in *Jatvarðar saga*, and Fell's suggestion that the mistake is due to the author's faulty memory is entirely plausible.⁶⁶ Chapter 8 of *Jatvarðar saga* also records the story that King Harold did not perish in the Battle of Hastings but was rescued by friends and healed of his wounds in secret. This legend is not uncommon in medieval narratives and chronicles⁶⁷ and occurs in the *Chronicon Laudunensis*. But in introducing the story, the author of *Jatvarðar saga* claims an English source for it ('þat er sǫgn Enskra manna' [as the English relate the story]). This has given rise to speculation that he may have had other materials than just the *Chronicon Laudunensis*, but what these might have been is impossible to determine.

In the story of the Anglo-Saxon emigration to Byzantium Christine Fell notes that 'the author of *JS* [*Jatvarðar saga*] appears either to have had access to a fuller and more coherent text than our present manuscripts of *CL* [*Chronicon Laudunensis*], or himself to have imposed coherence on a confused source'.⁶⁸ Still, it is from the *Chronicon* that the author of *Jatvarðar saga* derives his information on English resistance to William's rule. Many of the English nobles hated it, and their overtures towards King Sveinn of Denmark proved unsuccessful as William bought him off. The saga and the *Chronicon* both specify the ranks of the leaders involved in the decision to emigrate, the number of English nobles, the number of ships, and the stopping places on the way to Byzantium. Both texts also state that after their arrival in Byzantium and their subsequent settlement, the English rejected Greek Orthodoxy in favour of the Latin rites of the Hungarian church. As for the name of the leader of the English expedition, the Icelandic version differs from its source. In the *Chronicon* he is called Stanardus, a name which does not readily translate into the saga's Sigurðr. Professor Fell believes that, in this instance, the author of *Jatvarðar saga* may be closer to the truth, as no one by the name of Stanardus is known to have played a role in English mid-eleventh century politics, whereas more than one Siward [Sigurðr] is known to have opposed William's rule.⁶⁹

In Old Norse studies *Jatvarðar saga's* story of the English emigration to Byzantium was traditionally dismissed as pure fantasy by scholars such as Guðbrandur Vigfússon, Jón Helgason and Sigfús Blöndal.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the story is supported by the Anglo-Norman chronicler Orderic and the hagiographer Goscelin.⁷¹ It is, however, on the evidence of Byzantine sources, Anna Comnena's *Alexiad* and other documentary evidence, that it can be firmly established that

there were large numbers of emigrant Englishmen present in Byzantium at the end of the eleventh century.⁷² Although some of the details of the emigration story, such as the vast number of ships that leave England, are probably an exaggeration, the story as a whole is quite plausible. The motivation of the English nobles to escape from William's rule was real enough. Moreover, if the English joined the Varangian guard but were no longer needed to defend Byzantium itself and the neighbouring regions, it would make perfect sense to give them an outpost like Crimea to hold. As a saint's life, *Jatvarðar saga* may seem an unlikely candidate as a text contributing something to Anglo-Saxon history, but in this instance, it does indeed serve to suggest that emigration may well have occurred in the first years of William's reign, even if English sources are silent about it.

It is commonly agreed that Icelandic students studying in England during the twelfth century would have brought books with them when they returned to Iceland. Two bishops from wealthy and prominent Icelandic families, Páll Jónsson and his uncle Þorlákr Þórhallsson (St Þorlákr), are believed to have studied in Lincoln, and both have been singled out as learned men, particularly interested in history, who would surely have obtained any books available on the history of Anglo-Saxon England, in particular the works of William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon.⁷³ Unfortunately, however, as I have tried to show, these and other English histories — at least in the shape that we now have them — have not left their mark on Icelandic literature. The desire to put them into the hands of Icelandic medieval writers of history is understandable, but it remains unsatisfactory when this can only be achieved by scholars finding a snippet here and there, or by their emending texts in order to accommodate an English source. What has been demonstrated is that a few Icelandic authors had access to Latin anthologies of European or world history — works such as the *Speculum Historiale* — that repeated the occasional story told by English historians. It is clear to anyone familiar with the kings' sagas that the authors are often so ill-acquainted with Anglo-Saxon history that it is simply inconceivable that they had access to texts such as the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* or William's history. This is the larger picture with which those that seek to identify parallels between Icelandic and English histories must contend.

NOTES

¹ See, for example, Frank Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 700, and E. O. G. Turville-Petre, *Scaldic Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. LXX.

² Snorri Sturluson, *Heimskringla*, ed. by Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, 3 vols, Íslenzk fornrit 26-28 (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 1941-1951). All subsequent references to *Heimskringla* are to this edition.

³ *Bátr af Ragnars sonum*, in *Fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda*, ed. by Guðni Jónsson and Bjarni Vilhjálmsson, 3 vols (Reykjavík: Bókaútgáfan Forni, 1943), I 159. English sources vary in the way they confirm that this event took place. In Abbo of Fleury's *Passio sancti Eadmundi*, the Danes are said to be Inguar and Hubba and are not described as brothers. Moreover, it is Yngvarr alone who beheads King Edmund after shooting him with so many arrows that he seemed to bristle like a hedgehog. In Roger of Wendover's account, the sons of Ragnarr are falsely informed that King Edmund had killed their father. They challenge King Edmund to a battle in which the English suffer such heavy losses that the king decides to surrender his own person. He is then tortured and killed in the manner described by Abbo of Fleury. For further discussion, see Rory McTurk, *Studies in Ragnars saga loðbrókar and its Major Scandinavian Analogues* (Oxford: The Society for the Study of Mediæval Languages and Literature, 1991), pp. 229-33.

⁴ *Illuga saga Tagldarbana*, in *Íslendinga sögur*, ed. by Guðni Jónsson, 12 vols (Reykjavík: Íslendingasagnaútgáfan, 1953), III [*Snæfellinga sögur*] 438: 'þá var England at mestu kristnat'.

⁵ *Ragnars saga loðbrókar ok sona hans*, in *Fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda*, ed. by Guðni Jónsson and Bjarni Vilhjálmsson, 3 vols (Reykjavík: Bókaútgáfan Forni, 1943), I 140-43.

⁶ For further discussion, see Alfred P. Smyth, *Scandinavian Kings in the British Isles 850-880* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 50.

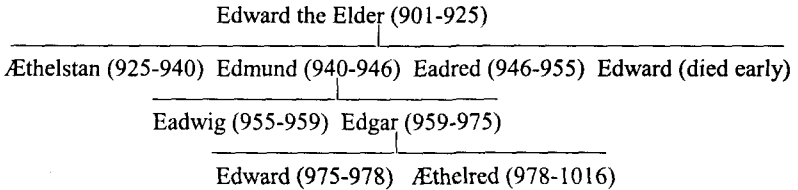
⁷ See *Icelandic Sagas and Other Historical Documents Relating to the Settlements and Descents of the Northmen on the British Isles*, ed. and trans. by Gudbrand Vigfusson [Guðbrandur Vigfússon] and Sir G. W. Dasent, 4 vols (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1887-94), I (*Orkneyinga Saga* and *Magnus Saga* with Appendices).

⁸ *Ólafs saga Tryggvasonar hin mesta*, in *Flateyjarbók*, ed. by Sigurður Nordal, 4 vols (Reykjavík: Flateyjarútgáfan, 1944), I, ch. 397: 'Aðalráðr konungr Játvarðsson hafði ráðit fyrir Englandi þrjú ár ok tuttugu, þá er Ólafr konungr barðist fyrir Svoldr' ['King Æthelræd the son of Edward had governed England for 23 years when King Ólafr fought at Svoldr'].

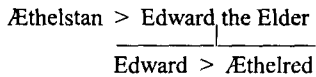
⁹ See *Dunstanus Saga*, ed. by Christine Fell [Editiones Arnarnagænanæ. Series B, vol. 5] (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1963). The following table of the kings of England in the tenth

Magnús Fjalldal

century, adapted from Fell's edition p. XLVII, shows the complexity of succession with which the author of *Dunstanus Saga* had to battle:



In *Dunstanus Saga* the author has reduced this table to:



¹⁰ Sigurður Nordal, *Flateyjarbók*, I, ch. 79: 'Eftir [Aðalmond Játgeirsson] var konungur Aðalbrikt. Hann var góðr konungr ok varð gamall' ['After Æthelmond the son of Edgar] Ethelbriht succeeded to the throne. He was a good king and lived to an old age].

¹¹ Gudbrand Vigfusson and Dasent, I 395-96.

¹² Fell, *Dunstanus Saga*, pp. 16 and 18.

¹³ See Guðni Jónsson, *Illuga saga Tagldarbana*, ch. 7.

¹⁴ See *Late Medieval Icelandic Romances V, Nitida saga, Sigrgarðs saga frækna, Sigrgarðs saga ok Valbrands, Sigurðar saga turnara, Hrings saga ok Tryggva* [Éditiones Arnarnagnænae, Series B, vol. 24], ed. by Agnete Loth (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1965), ch. 1.

¹⁵ The first and only edition of the saga, edited by Jón Sigurðsson, was published in *Annaler for nordisk oldkyndighed og historie* (Copenhagen: Det kongelige nordiske oldskrift selskab, 1854), pp. 3-91.

¹⁶ See Fell, *Dunstanus Saga*, pp. XVI-LIX.

¹⁷ On punishments for coiners of false money decreed by Anglo-Saxon and Norman kings, see Fell, *Dunstanus Saga*, p. 34, 17/29.

¹⁸ In *Danakonunga sögur*, Íslenzk fornrit 35, ed. by Bjarni Guðnason (Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1982).

¹⁹ For further discussion see Ove Moberg, *Olav Haraldsson, Knut den store och Sverige* (Lund: Håkan Ohlssons Boktryckeri, 1941), pp. 216-17.

²⁰ See Eilert Ekwall, 'On Some English Place-Names Found in Scandinavian Sources', in *Festskrift til Finnur Jónsson*, ed. by J. Brøndum-Nielsen et al. (Copenhagen: Levin & Munksgaard, 1928), pp. 219-21.

²¹ Magnús Fjalldal, 'A Farmer in the Court of King Athelstan: Historical and Literary Considerations in the Vínheiðr Episode of *Egils Saga*', *English Studies*, 77 (1996), 15-31.

²² See Bjarni Einarsson, *Litterære forudsætninger for Egils saga* (Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar, 1975), p. 234.

²³ *Egils saga Skallagrímssonar*, Íslenzk fornrit 2, ed. by Sigurður Nordal (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 1933), XLII.

²⁴ Sigurður Nordal, *Egils saga*, p. 147. The two lines quoted in the saga from this supposedly long poem read: 'Nú liggr hæst und hraustum / hreinbraut Aðalsteini' [the highest path of the reindeer (the Scottish Highlands) now lies in the power of the brave Æthelstan].

²⁵ See, for example, Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, *Heimskringla*, I LXXVI; Gwyn Jones, 'Egill Skallagrímsson in England', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 38 (1952), 130-34; A. C. Bouman, *Patterns in Old English and Old Icelandic Literature* (Leyden: Universitaire Pers Leiden, 1962), pp. 22-23; *Íslensk bókmenntasaga*, vol. I, ed. by Vésteinn Ólason et al. (Reykjavík: Mál og menning, 1992), pp. 207, 213; Paul Beekman Taylor, *Sharing Story: Medieval Norse-English Literary Relationships* (New York: AMS Press, 1998), p. 153, and Matthew Townend, 'Pre-Cnut Praise-Poetry in Viking Age England', *Review of English Studies* 51 (2000), 351.

²⁶ See A. L. Binns, 'The York Viking Kingdom; Relations Between Old English and Old Norse Culture', in *The Fourth Viking Congress*, ed. by Alan Small (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1961), pp. 186-87; *The Viking Century in East Yorkshire* [E. Y. Local History Series: No. 15] (York: East Yorkshire Local History Society, 1963), pp. 48-49; and *The Battle of Brunanburh*, ed. by Alistair Campbell (London: Heineman, 1938), pp. 73, esp. n. 2; 62 and 71-72.

²⁷ Binns, *The Viking Century*, p. 5.

²⁸ Binns, *The Viking Century*, pp. 46 and 48.

²⁹ Binns, *The Viking Century*, p. 52.

³⁰ Binns, *The Viking Century*, pp. 48-51.

³¹ On the status of foreign missionaries in Iceland and books that they may have brought with them, see, for example, Jón Jóhannesson, *Íslendingasaga*, vol. I, *Þjóðveldisöld* (Reykjavík: Almenna bókafélagið, 1956), p. 168 and Björn Þorsteinsson, *Íslenska Þjóðveldið* (Reykjavík: Heimskringla, 1953), pp. 192-93.

³² See Michael Wood, 'Brunanburh Revisited', *Saga-Book of the Viking Society*, 20 (1978-81), 216, n. 68. Like Binns the author insists in his note that 'Vínheiðr...could be a literal translation of the Latin Wendun'.

³³ See Bjarni Einarsson, *Litterære forudsætninger for Egils saga*, pp. 238-39.

³⁴ Bjarni Einarsson, pp. 239-40.

³⁵ Bjarni Einarsson, p. 244

³⁶ Bjarni Einarsson, p. 253.

³⁷ Bjarni Einarsson, p. 239.

³⁸ Bjarni Einarsson, p. 240.

³⁹ Bjarni Einarsson, p. 241.

⁴⁰ 'William beretter at Ethelstanus efter rådslagning trak sig tilbage (for at samle flere tropper), og at angriberen imedens fortsatte langt ind i England indtil han blev standset ved Brunefeld...', Bjarni Einarsson, p. 245. [William relates that Æthelstan withdrew (in order to gather more troops), and that in the meantime, the invading army advanced far into England until it was stopped at Brunefeld]. The rest of the translation follows Dorothy Whitelock, *English Historical Documents*, 2nd edition (London: Eyre Methuen, 1979), I 304.

⁴¹ Sigurður Nordal, *Egils saga*, pp. 130-31. The translation is that of Christine Fell, *Egils Saga* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1975), p. 76.

⁴² Bjarni Einarsson, *Litterære forudsætninger for Egils saga*, pp. 246-47.

⁴³ Whitelock, *English Historical Documents*, p. 304.

⁴⁴ Whitelock, p. 309.

⁴⁵ For a more detailed discussion see Bjarni Guðnason, *Knýtlinga saga*, pp. 98-99, n. 2, and Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, *Heimskringla (Ólafs saga helga)*, II 14, n. 1.

⁴⁶ Bjarni Guðnason, *Knýtlinga saga*, Introduction, p. XCIX.

⁴⁷ See Bjarni Guðnason, *Knýtlinga saga*, Introduction, pp. C-CIV; I draw on these pages in my subsequent discussion of Bjarni's analysis. Much of Bjarni's argument concerning the saga's supposed use of English historical sources derives from Svend Ellehøj, *Studier over den ældste norrøne historieskrivning* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1965), pp. 172-74, 281-82.

⁴⁸ Bjarni Guðnason, *Knýtlinga saga*, pp. 119-20; the translation is my own.

⁴⁹ See Moberg, *Olav Haraldsson*, pp. 222-23. The translation of William's text is taken from the edition of R. A. B. Mynors et al., *William of Malmesbury — Gesta Regum Anglorum — The History of English Kings* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 323. 'Avitus' literally means 'relating to a grandfather' or 'ancestral'. The translation of the material from *Heimskringla* is my own.

⁵⁰ See Ove Moberg, 'Snorre Sturlasson, Knut den store och Sverige', *Saga och Sed* (1987), p. 76. See also Jan de Vries, 'Normannisches Lehngut in den isländischen Königssagas', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi*, 47 (1931), 78.

⁵¹ Guðmundur Þorsteinsson wrote the history of the monastery at Þingeyrar and investigated what is known about books that it owned. He finds no evidence of these works (see his 'Drög að sögu Þingeyraklausturs', unpublished dissertation, University of Iceland, 1956, ch. 4, pp. 76-105). In his complete list of books that Icelandic churches, monasteries and the two bishoprics are known to have possessed from the early days of Christianity to 1600, Orri Vésteinsson also finds no evidence of works by these two English church historians. It should be noted, however, that Icelandic medieval inventories of religious establishments are often imprecise. Thus Orri finds an English book of history [*Engelsk historiubók*] in an inventory dating from 1396 for the Bishopric at Hólar, but we have no means of knowing what

Anglo-Saxon History in Medieval Iceland

those histories might have been or who wrote them (see Orri Vésteinsson, 'Bókæign íslenskra kirkna á miðöldum', unpublished M.A dissertation, University of Iceland, 1990, p. 128).

⁵² See Bjarni Guðnason, *Knytinga saga*, p. 122-23, n. 1.

⁵³ Bjarni Guðnason, *Knytinga saga*, p. 124: 'Ídús Nóvembris'. Snorri uses the same phrase in *Heimskringla* (III 11) when he describes King Cnut's death.

⁵⁴ See Ekwall, p. 221 and Moberg, *Olav Haraldsson*, pp. 219-20.

⁵⁵ Bjarni Guðnason, *Knytinga saga*, p. 124, states that King Cnut ruled over Denmark for twenty seven years, over England for twenty four years and over Norway for seven years. *Heimskringla* III (p. 11) gives identical number of years in each instance. In reality King Cnut reigned in Denmark for seventeen years (1018-1035) and in England for nineteen years (1016-1035). In his Introduction to *Knytinga saga* (CVIII), Bjarni Guðnason suggests that as far as the length of King Cnut's reign in Denmark and England is concerned, the Icelandic sources generally make two mistakes, and that if we correct them, their chronology falls into place. The mistakes that Bjarni has in mind are (a) that Icelandic historians seem to believe that Sveinn Fork-beard died in 1008, when in reality he died in 1014, and (b) that they assume that Cnut came to power in Denmark immediately after the death of his father, whereas he only assumed power when his older brother Haraldr died in 1018. This would explain why *Knytinga saga* has Cnut ruling over Denmark for ten years longer than he did. As for the length of his reign in England, he supposedly waited for three years after the death of his father before mounting his invasion and thus would have ruled from 1011 to 1035, according to the chronology of the saga.

⁵⁶ See Moberg, *Olav Haraldsson*, p. 219. In his 1987 article ('Snorre Sturlasson, Knut den store och Sverige', p. 60), Moberg cites the works of Henry of Huntingdon or William of Malmesbury as possible intermediary sources between the *Chronicle* and *Heimskringla*.

⁵⁷ Used as a title of a king's wife, i.e. Queen Emma.

⁵⁸ The translation of the passages from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is from G. N. Garmonsway, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (London: J. M. Dent, 1992), pp. 161-63. The translation of the *Heimskringla* quotation is my own.

⁵⁹ See Bjarni Guðnason, *Knytinga saga*, Introduction, p. CVI, and *Heimskringla*, III 32, n. 1.

⁶⁰ See Gudbrand Vigfusson's edition, pp. 388-400.

⁶¹ See Christine Fell, 'The Icelandic saga of Edward the Confessor: the hagiographic sources', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 1 (1972), 247-58; 'The Icelandic saga of Edward the Confessor: its version of the Anglo-Saxon emigration to Byzantium', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3 (1974), 179-96 and 'English history and Norman legend in the Icelandic saga of Edward the Confessor', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 6 (1977), 223-36.

⁶² Much of the following discussion of *Jatvarðar saga* is based on Fell's articles.

Magnús Fjalldal

⁶³ Fell, 'The Icelandic saga of Edward the Confessor: the hagiographic sources', p. 251. Earlier, Ove Moberg ('Olav Haraldsson', pp. 220-21) had insisted that the borrowing of this passage from William in *Jatvarðar saga* proved that his *Gesta regum Anglorum* had been known in Iceland.

⁶⁴ See *Morkinskinna*, ed. by Finnur Jónsson (Copenhagen: J. Jørgensen, 1932), p. 285.

⁶⁵ See, for example, Gudbrand Vigfusson and Dasent, I 396: 'Sem sagt er í Æfi Noregs konunga' [As it is related in the sagas of the kings of Norway].

⁶⁶ See Fell, 'English History and Norman legend', p. 233.

⁶⁷ It also occurs in *Hemings þáttur* in *Hauksbók*: see the edition by Finnur Jónsson and Eiríkur Jónsson (Copenhagen: Thieles Bogtrykkeri, 1892-1896), pp. 347-49.

⁶⁸ Fell, 'English History and Norman legend', p. 228.

⁶⁹ For further discussion see Fell, 'The Icelandic saga of Edward the Confessor: its version of the Anglo-Saxon emigration to Byzantium', pp. 184-86.

⁷⁰ For specific references see Fell, *ibid.*, pp. 179-80.

⁷¹ See Fell, *ibid.*, pp. 191-92.

⁷² See Fell, *ibid.*, pp. 192-93.

⁷³ For further discussion, see, for example, Bjarni Guðnason, *Knýtlinga saga*, Introduction, p. XVII and Moberg, 'Snorre Sturlasson', p. 76.

Lazamon or the lawman?
A question of names, a poet and an unacknowledged legislator

John Frankis

On the face of it there is no problem: the poet names himself at the beginning of his poem, as was not uncommon, an obvious parallel being in his source-text, Wace's *Roman de Brut*:

An preost wes on leoden, Lazamon wes ihoten;
He wes Leouenaðes sone, liðe him beo Drihten;
He wonede at Ernleze at æðelen are chirechen.¹

It has long been accepted without question that *Lazamon* was the poet's given name, and a personal name of this form is recorded in documents from the eleventh to the early thirteenth century, though it was fairly uncommon; moreover, whether or not it was a relevant factor at the time when the poem was written, it alliterates in the Anglo-Saxon tradition with the father's name.² As a given name *Lazamon* was Scandinavian in origin and is recorded in parts of England and Scotland in which there were Scandinavian settlers. Since Tatlock's discussion of the name it has generally been assumed that the poet, like many people in England from the ninth century onwards, had a given name of Old Norse origin, and there is nothing remarkable in this.³ Rosamund Allen has suggested however that *Lazamon* (literally 'lawman') 'is not in fact a given name but a cognomen', referring to his involvement in some kinds of legal work.⁴

The title 'lawman' was current in the Danelaw before the conquest: D. M. Stenton refers to 'a class of hereditary lawmen' there, but concludes that 'changing times made the office obsolete long before the end of the twelfth century.'⁵ More obviously relevant to the Worcester poet is a class of lawmen established in the late Anglo-Saxon period to mediate in legal disputes between the Welsh and

English (six from each community) in the territory of the *Dunsæte* (between the lower Severn and Gwent, approximately the modern Forest of Dean).⁶ The laws relating to these lawmen are preserved in English in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 383, pp. 93-5 (probably from London, s.xi-xii), including the sentence, *XII lahmen scylon riht tæcean Wealan ond Ænglan: VI Englisce ond VI Wylisce* ('twelve lawmen, six English and six Welsh, shall interpret the law for the Welsh and English'). A Latin version of the same laws, retaining the English word *lahmen*, is preserved in several sources, including London, British Library, MS Royal 11.B.ii (a Worcester manuscript, s.xii-xiii), fol. 160v: '*Duodecim lahmen (id est legis homines) debent rectum discernere Walis et Anglis: sex Walisci et sex Anglici*'.⁷ It is noteworthy that these copies of the laws of the *Dunsæte* survive in post-conquest copies, with the Worcester manuscript showing that knowledge of the lawmen was still current there in the thirteenth century, and the poet's connection with Worcester has frequently been discussed.⁸

The existence of this group of lawmen in the southern Welsh marches adds some weight to Rosamund Allen's suggestion. There seems to be no evidence as to whether these lawmen held a hereditary office like their counterparts in the Danelaw, but by analogy with the latter, and in a society in which sons often tended to follow their fathers' occupation, it is likely that they did, and this might have encouraged the early adoption of the title as a hereditary surname. The transition from personal title to hereditary surname had begun by the thirteenth century in aristocratic circles, and for the holders of an important office what was originally a title acquired something of the quality of a patronymic, eventually becoming a family surname.⁹ It is unlikely that the lawmen of the Welsh marches had this kind of status, and the poet's byname, if that is what it is, is more likely to refer to some kind of actual legal occupation, whether or not inherited as part of a family tradition. The title of lawman evidently continued to be applied as an occupational byname, and subsequently as an inherited surname, long after the decline of the particular circumstances that had given rise to it, as is indicated by the later prevalence of 'Lawman' as a surname.¹⁰ *Laȝamon* is thus an example, rare in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and so perhaps a potential cause of confusion, of a name that could be either a given name or a byname; examples of the name collected by Tatlock show it standing by itself as a given name from 1042 to 1216, and appended as a byname to various given names from 1247 to the end of the thirteenth century, but he does not distinguish between these functions.¹¹

Lazamon or the lawman?

In the Anglo-Saxon period a man (and here we are not concerned with the slightly different problem of women's names) had a single given name chosen from a restricted body of acceptable names, but there were no inherited family-names to assist the process of distinguishing among people with the same given name. During the late Anglo-Saxon period there are occasional examples of bynames added to a given name (like the writer Ælfric Bata and the Canterbury scribe Eadwig Basan),¹² but there was no general movement away from the single-name system. After the conquest there developed the practice of supplementing the given name with some kind of byname, usually of place or occupation, and the use of a patronymic, already common in the Anglo-Saxon period, was also extended, but the given name remained the essential identifying feature and the byname could not be used in isolation: it was indistinctive without the given name that it qualified.¹³ This of course shows the difficulty involved in Allen's suggestion: although occupational bynames, including *Lawman* (in various spellings), had become well established by the late twelfth century, they were only added to a recognised given name and they were not used in isolation (as is proposed for this poem) until much later.¹⁴

The evolution of surnames as an appendage to a given name in the post-conquest period has been the subject of numerous studies, but the further change, the dropping in certain circumstances of the given name and the consequent use of the surname in isolation, seems to have been less well investigated. Stephen Wilson discusses the replacement of the given name by an initial letter in documents, which might be seen as a first step towards dropping the given name, and comments that 'initials designated only the commonest first names like John or William. The move towards recognizing the second name as *the* name was very slight.'¹⁵ The subject deserves further study, but literary usage, as opposed to the kind of documentary evidence on which name-studies are generally based, suggests that this development did not occur in England until after the middle of the fourteenth century, probably about a century or more after *Lazamon's* time.

In the first half of the fourteenth century bynames are still, as they had been for over two hundred years, strictly an attachment to a given name, and may indeed vary between different possibilities in the case of the same person, so that a man may be referred to by his given name followed by any one of several possible bynames, whether an inherited family-name or a patronymic or a place of origin or an occupational name or a nickname.¹⁶ Two literary figures active in the first half of the fourteenth century illustrate aspects of this fluctuating usage.

First, the author of *Handling Sin* names himself as 'Roberd of Brunne', but in his *History of England*, while repeating this locative byname, he also gives his family surname, 'Robert Mannyng'; but the primary name by which he was known was 'Robert', and there is no suggestion that he could ever have been referred to simply as 'Mannyng', which was an optional alternative to other possible bynames.¹⁷ This poet incidentally demonstrates the system in his reference to a famous thirteenth-century churchman:

Y shall 3ow telle, as y haue herd,
Of þe bysshope Seynt Roberd;
Hys toname ys 'Grostest
Of Lynkolne,' so seyþ þe gest.¹⁸

Leaving aside the ascription of sanctity, it is clear that the churchman's essential name was 'Robert', and that this could be supplemented with either a family-name (originally a nickname), 'Grosseteste', or a locative byname, 'of Lincoln', or a title, 'bishop', or all three of these.¹⁹

The second example, Richard Rolle, is less decisive as it is not certain that he names himself in any of his writings, but forms of his name appear in manuscript headings that could be either authorial or scribal additions of varying date; in these he is referred to (in Latin or English, with varying spellings) as 'Richard Hermit' (an occupational byname) or 'Richard Hermit of Hampole' or simply 'Richard Hampole' (a locative byname), and only rarely as 'Richard Rolle' (a family surname); some nineteenth-century writers refer to him as 'Hampole', as if it were a surname, but the custom of referring to him as 'Rolle' became firmly established only in the twentieth century.²⁰

In both these cases the individual concerned had a family-surname that might be appended to his given name, but it did not have the dominant status that surnames later acquired and it was not used in isolation. This is a continuation of the usage established over the preceding two and a half centuries.²¹

At some time after the middle of the fourteenth century, however, it became customary in rather unclear circumstances, and perhaps in a restricted social or professional circle, to drop the given name and use the family surname by itself. One of the earliest examples of this usage is probably also one of the best known, appearing at the end of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*:

O moral Gower, this book I directe

Lazamon or the lawman?

To the, and to the, philosophical Strode (V, 1856-7).

It seems likely that this use of the surname in isolation arose within the lifetime of the persons named here. From about the same date or slightly later Chaucer has a similar use of a surname several times in the text of *Lenvoy de Chaucer a Scogan* (as well as in the title, which may or may not go back to the poet); the same usage appears in the title of *Lenvoy de Chaucer a Bukton*, though the opening phrase 'My maister Bukton' perhaps suggests that the use of the surname by itself may have originated in 'dropping the title' and that the use of the surname alone after a title was a stage in the process of omitting the given name, perhaps beginning among people who held the title (normally conferred by a university) of 'master'.²²

By using surnames in this way Chaucer may conceivably have been following the usage, and perhaps thus asserting his membership, of a restricted social circle: the full social implications of this usage are uncertain, but relative rank and status were apparently involved. In *The House of Fame* the Eagle obviously lays claim to intellectual superiority, but he probably also asserts his social superiority when he addresses the poet condescendingly as 'Geffrey'. A similar usage appears in Gower's *Confessio Amantis* when the poet approaches Venus:

Sche axeth me what is mi name.
'Ma dame,' I seide, 'John Gower.'
'Now John,' quod sche . . . (VIII, 2320-2)

When he takes his leave of the goddess her manner may have become more respectful:

'Lo,' thus sche seide, 'John Gower . . .' (VIII, 2908);

but there is perhaps a suggestion of something closer to social equality in her further remarks:

'And gret wel Chaucer whan ye mete,
As mi disciple and mi poete.' (VIII, 2941-2, first recension)

In the latter lines Venus refers, as it were, to a professional associate, obviously of lower rank than the goddess, but still privileged over Gower by the omission of

the given name. The social background to such usage may also be glanced at in the *Canterbury Tales*, when a fictitious professional figure, the Man of Law, refers to poems by 'Chaucer', perhaps (whether admiringly or condescendingly) implying social equality by his omission of the given name.²³

The restricted social range of this new usage of dropping the given name is suggested both by the naming habits of other characters in *The Canterbury Tales* and by the fact that in documentary sources Chaucer is regularly referred to (in Latin or French and with varying spellings) in the first instance as *Galfridus Chaucer* or *Geffrey Chaucer* and thereafter by such phrases as *eidem Galfrido*, *predicto Galfrido*, *le dit Geffrey* and so on, but he is never named in such documents simply as 'Chaucer'.²⁴

After Chaucer and Gower references by surname alone become common in literature. Thomas Hoccleve, who was employed in the same administrative circles as Chaucer and Gower, demonstrates the new usage in his *Dialogue*:

On knokkid / at my chambre dore sore
And cryde alowde / 'How, Hoccleue, art thou heere?'

Having been admitted, however, the visitor uses what is presumably a more familiar mode of address and calls the poet 'Thomas'.²⁵ In official records the older usage, already noted in fourteenth-century documents referring to Chaucer, continued well into the fifteenth century: the later poet is named in records in the first instance (with varying spellings) as 'Thomas Hoccleve', and thereafter by some such phrase as 'the same Thomas' or 'the said Thomas' (*ipsius Thome*, *eidem Thome*, *prefatum Thomam*, *predicti Thome*), clearly showing that, at least for record-keepers, the decisive name is still the given name, to which the surname is added solely for an opening identification.²⁶

The evidence presented here, which could easily be multiplied from late medieval sources, suggests that literary texts may reflect an aspect of spoken usage that is not clearly represented in the kind of documentary evidence on which name-studies traditionally rely. The whole question of the dropping of the given name is clearly a subject for further investigation by specialists in onomastics, but a tentative conclusion that it is a process that began about the middle of the fourteenth century seems justified, at least as regards England (perhaps a wider parallel system is suggested by the fact that Dante Alighieri is generally referred to in the middle ages, as still today, by his given name, while surnames are normally used for the slightly later writers Francesco Petrarca and

Lazamon or the lawman?

Giovanni Boccaccio). It therefore follows that a byname would not normally have been used without the given name that it supplemented at the time when Lazamon and the scribes of the extant manuscripts of his poem were writing.

If Lazamon is a byname, '(the) lawman', the poet must then have had a given name by which he would normally have been known and officially identified, and he might have been expected to mention this given name in the introductory lines of his poem, as so many poets of that time do. He might however have preferred not to identify himself so specifically, for the ways in which a medieval poet might name himself vary. Most writers were evidently content to remain anonymous, but occasionally, and probably with growing frequency, a poet might give his name in a straightforward and uncomplicated way. The most famous English example from the early Middle English period is of course Orm, who tells us that his poem takes its title from its author's name: *Biss boc iss nemnedd Orrmulum Forrþi þat Orrm itt wrohhte*;²⁷ Orm is incidentally another well attested given name of Old Norse origin that subsequently developed into an inherited surname. Other writers from this period in England who name themselves clearly (usually at the beginning or at the end of their works) include Thomas, the author of *The Romance of Horn*, and several writers of Anglo-Norman saints' lives, including *La Vie Seinte Audree* by Marie and *The Life of St Catherine* by Clemence, a nun of Barking.

On the other hand, a poet might name himself indirectly or in a riddling manner. Various methods of encrypting authorial names are attested back to Anglo-Saxon times, an early example being the eighth-century Anglo-Saxon nun *Hugeburc* (in normalised spelling 'Hygeburg') who wrote a *Vita Willibaldi*.²⁸ The best known example from Old English verse is Cynewulf, who both reveals and conceals his identity by inserting his name in runes at the end of certain poems, so that only readers with special knowledge could understand it. Closer to Lazamon's lifetime, a canon of Hereford who wrote Anglo-Norman verse at the end of the twelfth century gives his name but conceals it in an acrostic placed at the head of a poem, where it appears as *Simund de Freine*.²⁹ Later medieval English poets who used a similar acrostic device include Chaucer's contemporary Thomas Usk, who encrypts a message, including his name, in the initial letter of each chapter of *The Testament of Love*; one notes incidentally that this author, from the same professional milieu as Chaucer and Gower, gives only his surname without his given name.³⁰ Closer in time to Lazamon, a less certain example of encrypting an authorial name may appear in two Anglo-Norman poems preserved (like Lazamon's poem) in London, British Library, MS Cotton Caligula A.ix, *La*

Vie de Seint Josaphaz and *Les Set Dormanz*, in which the poet names himself as *Chardri*. Discussing this poet's identity Brian S. Merrilees repeats a suggestion made privately by Professor E. G. Stanley that 'Chardri, a name not found elsewhere, may be an anagram for Richard'.³¹ The suggestion is appealing because the encrypted name is in fact rather more than an anagram; it is a simple reversal of the two syllables of the presumed name, for which there is a famous model in the *Tristan* romances when the hero disguises his name by calling himself 'Tantris'. In the cases mentioned here the writer names himself only indirectly, giving varying kinds of clues that have to be interpreted in order to solve the puzzle of the writer's identity.

With these examples in mind, we may reconsider precisely how the author of the *Historia Brutonum* (to use the manuscript title and avoid confusion with the numerous other texts called *Brut*) names himself at the beginning of his poem, for there are two possibilities. The first and most obvious is the generally accepted view that La3amon was a given name and that the opening lines of the poem supplement this with information about his occupation (priest), place of residence (Areley) and parentage (Leovnað's son), since this information was commonly used in bynames as a way of clarifying identity. Many will no doubt feel that this remains the most reasonable interpretation. The second possibility, extending Rosamund Allen's suggestion, is that the poet had a given name that he concealed, while giving the information that would normally have been supplied in various possible bynames, so that some readers or hearers, perhaps members of a restricted circle, might be able to identify him. The consequent question would then be whether the opening lines of the poem could be interpreted as omitting the poet's given name and giving his occupational byname as a kind of pseudonym, so that an acceptable translation might be: 'There was a priest among the people, he was called "(the) Lawman", he was Leovnað's son', or, more freely in order to make the point more clearly, 'There was a priest among the people, he was Leovnað's son, known as "(the) Lawman".'

In recent years several scholars have cited a reference showing that in 1268 the rector of Areley was named William,³² and this was taken by Elizabeth Salter as evidence that the poet was dead by that date. Indeed, we would hardly expect him to have been alive in 1268 if we believe that the poem was composed early in the thirteenth century, which still seems to be the most widely accepted view.³³ Long ago, however, E. G. Stanley pointed out that 'the only probable *terminus ad quem* [for the composition of the poem] is the palaeographical dating of the manuscripts',³⁴ and he subsequently argued that the use of deliberately

Lazamon or the lawman?

archaic language in the poem undermined the traditional ascription to the late twelfth century on linguistic grounds, so that the poem could have been written 'perhaps as late as the second third of the thirteenth century'.³⁵ With this in mind one cannot rule out the possibility that the poet was still alive in 1268, though much would depend on whether one thought of the poem as taking shape closer to 1235 than to 1265. One might then consider the possibility that Lazamon was a byname, 'Lawman', and that the poet had the given name William; in that case he would have been known variously (I give modernised spellings for convenience) as 'William Priest', or 'William Areley', or 'William Leovnað's son' (perhaps even, on the evidence of the Otho manuscript, 'William Lucas'), or, if his qualifications or ancestry justified it, as 'William Lawman'. Indeed, if it were ever established with reasonable certainty that William was the poet's given name, speculation would doubtless follow as to whether the closing line of the poem contains an oblique reference to this name: *i-wurðe þet i-wurðe, i-wurðe Godes wille* ('let happen what may, may God's will be done', with the implied secondary sense, 'may Will[iam] be God's').³⁶

In the document relating to 1268 the bishop of Worcester gives his permission for William, rector of Areley, to be absent from his parish while 'undertaking the duties of Master Thomas de Cantelupe, who is going beyond the seas on his business for three years'.³⁷ Dr Cartlidge takes this to imply that the Cantelupe family 'exerted some sort of patronage over the living at Areley Kings',³⁸ which would be plausible if one could be sure that Thomas Cantelupe himself chose the rector of Areley for whatever work was involved and that he had the authority to implement this choice. This however is far from certain in the light of the known facts concerning Thomas Cantelupe.³⁹ In 1268 he was about fifty years of age, a cleric of noble birth apparently destined for high office and already a notable public figure; he was a leading expert in both canon law and civil law and a former chancellor of Oxford university, but after the end of the baronial wars in 1265 he was in a difficult, even dangerous, position.

Like other members of his family Thomas Cantelupe had been a supporter of the baronial faction under Simon de Montfort; he had played a prominent part in presenting the baronial case before the French king at Amiens in 1263 and had been appointed chancellor of England during the period of baronial rule following the capture of the king at the battle of Lewes in 1264.⁴⁰ There is some uncertainty as to whether he still held the chancellorship at the time of the collapse of the baronial cause,⁴¹ but after the defeat of the baronial leaders at Evesham in 1265 and the restoration of the king to power, a new chancellor was

appointed and Thomas Cantelupe's whole future became very doubtful. His journey abroad to resume his earlier academic life has the appearance of a temporary exile: it is possible that 'his return to Paris probably indicates that his position in England was unsafe', or perhaps, more circumspectly, 'a period of residence abroad must have been deemed tactful'.⁴² His uncle, Walter Cantelupe, who in earlier years had assisted his nephew's career in various ways, had been bishop of Worcester, a close friend of Simon de Montfort and a leading supporter of the baronial cause. Under bishop Walter the see of Worcester had become a stronghold of baronial support, but after Walter's death in 1266 the king was understandably anxious to remove baronial sympathisers and to install royalists in positions of influence wherever possible.

To this end Godfrey Giffard, member of a prominent royalist family and the king's own choice as chancellor in 1266, was appointed bishop of Worcester in 1268, and he immediately began strengthening the king's position in his see.⁴³ Among the first entries in his register in fact are dispensations to Thomas Cantelupe and his brother Hugh to go abroad to study, and it was in this connection that the bishop appointed William of Areley as a replacement for Thomas Cantelupe. This of course suggests a rather different interpretation from that proposed by Cartlidge: the bishop of Worcester may have been anxious to remove a powerful political opponent, or, in accordance with the compromises necessary in post-civil-war society, he may have wanted to help a respected colleague to take temporary refuge abroad. Either way, the rector of Areley may have been little more than an instrument in the bishop's political machinations and no connection between Areley and the Cantelupes can safely be inferred from this: the bishop simply needed a suitably qualified cleric from his diocese, or even from his household, to take on whatever work Thomas Cantelupe had been doing there.

It is however quite unclear what part Thomas Cantelupe played in Worcester affairs at this time: his main ecclesiastical living up to that point had been as archdeacon of Stafford and prebend of Lichfield in the diocese of Coventry and Lichfield, an office that he still held after the collapse of the baronial cause, so the bishop of Worcester was not his obvious ecclesiastical superior. Thomas's elder brother, Hugh Cantelupe, was archdeacon of Gloucester in the diocese of Worcester, so bishop Godfrey was clearly entitled to remove him on a temporary assignment to study in Paris, but Thomas was a more complex case.

Lazamon or the lawman?

An indication of Thomas Cantelupe's professional far-sightedness was that early in his career he had acquired a papal dispensation to hold a variety of livings in plurality, and beside his position in Lichfield he held canonries in York and London and livings in widely scattered parts of the country, including two in the diocese of Worcester (one of them at the Cantelupe family-seat at Aston Cantlow), so the bishop of Worcester presumably had some interest as regards Thomas.⁴⁴ It is possible that after the disaster of Evesham in 1265 Thomas took refuge and was given some employment in the household of his uncle, Walter Cantelupe, who was bishop of Worcester until his death in 1266; at any rate, whatever Thomas had been doing in the diocese of Worcester, it was evidently under the authority of the bishop and important enough to require the appointment of a replacement when he left the diocese and went to Paris. The register gives no indication of the duties to be undertaken by this replacement, but since Thomas had achieved national preeminence in law and administration, one might expect him to have been engaged in some administrative and legal duties in the diocese of Worcester, presumably in the bishop's household. In his absence abroad these duties would then have had to be allocated to a cleric who was qualified to undertake them, and it may thus be reasonable to deduce that William of Areley was experienced in some kinds of legal work in 1268, which would strengthen the case for identifying him as the 'lawman' who wrote the poem, though this would imply that the poem was probably written towards the end, rather than at the beginning, of the second third of the thirteenth century. Obviously a certain lapse of time is needed after the completion of the poem to allow for the making of intervening copies before the compilation of the *Caligula* manuscript, for which a commonly accepted date is about 1260-80, but the difficulty is not insuperable.⁴⁵

This might also suggest new possibilities concerning the poet's social role and status: he has generally been seen as a parish priest living in a small rural community that may have included a manorial household, and the implications of this with regard to the poet's expected audience have been explored by Dr Barron, who considers two possible audiences for the poem: one in Worcester (which Barron eventually rejects), 'a huddle of like-minded antiquarians in some corner of the Worcester cloisters', the other in Areley (which Barron cautiously favours, suggesting ways of reconciling the role of parish-priest with duties as chaplain to the lord of the manor) in a manorial household 'mingling minor clerics and local gentry, the semi-educated and illiterates, sharing a common interest in the past of their country but varying in knowledge and intellectual capacity'.⁴⁶ Neither of

these alternatives need be ruled out, but we should also consider a third possibility: the poet may have been less firmly domiciled in his parish than the third line of the poem, *He wonede at Ernleze at æðelen are chirechen* (Caligula), is normally taken to claim. It no doubt implies that Areley was in some sense home for him and that he held the living there, but that might not have precluded his spending a good deal of time elsewhere on tasks allocated by his bishop; indeed, we might infer from the Otho reading, *He wonede at Ernleie wid þan gode cniþte*, that his residence at Areley was little more than a lodging in the household of a friend and benefactor.

It is easy today to think of a parish priest as being a fairly modest figure in the ecclesiastical hierarchy (and it is striking how frequently published accounts of Laʒamon include the word 'humble'), but in the middle ages there were large numbers of clerics in minor orders performing a wide range of tasks and functions, of whom only a small proportion would ever rise so far as to take orders as priests, while to be appointed to a parish living was a highly desirable goal. It was profitable enough for members of the higher ranking clergy (Thomas Cantelupe is a good example) to retain one or more parish livings alongside higher appointments to which they had been preferred. Rather than being a humble parish priest, leading a life like that of Chaucer's idealised 'povre persoun', or acting as chaplain to a manorial household, Laʒamon might have been a cleric engaged in diocesan administration in the bishop's household and being rewarded with the living at Areley Kings (perhaps even employing a vicar to undertake routine pastoral duties on his behalf):⁴⁷ in fact a functionary more like Walter Map, who evidently travelled widely and performed many different roles as he rose through the ecclesiastical hierarchy, but still speaks of his church at Westbury-on-Severn in terms not altogether different from Laʒamon's reference to Areley. The fact that the lord of Martley or the Prior of Newent officially appointed the incumbent to the living at Areley need not rule out this hypothesis: when it came to finding livings for members of his household, the bishop could, and often did, override such obstacles.⁴⁸ This might place a potential readership for the poem among the bishop's *familia*, a more rigorously selected and intellectually accomplished milieu than the manorial household envisaged by Barron, and incidentally an audience who could easily penetrate the pseudonymity (if that is what it is) of 'the lawman'. One objection to this, of course, is that a writer addressing such an audience in the thirteenth century might be expected to use French or Latin rather than English, but Laʒamon's poem is a transformation of a French original and its subject, a celebration of the

Lazamon or the lawman?

English nation as successor to the Arthurian past, would carry its own justification for the use of the English language, particularly in a form that deliberately evoked aspects of the Anglo-Saxon past and reflected some of the preoccupations of Worcester Cathedral priory in the first half of the thirteenth century.

The use of French in England was kept alive throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries by a number of factors, not least by the constant stream of immigrants from the continent whose first language (and, setting aside Latin, presumably only language) was French, primarily men of higher rank brought in to support royal power in church and state, but also their families and attendants. The Cantelupe family is a case in point: William, the first baron, was apparently born in Normandy and brought to England by King John, becoming steward of the royal household.⁴⁹ His grandson, Thomas Cantelupe, was born in England, but as bishop of Hereford (1275-82) he still preferred not to preach in English and he took with him on his travels a Franciscan friar to undertake English preaching for him.⁵⁰ If French was the preferred language of the third generation immigrant Thomas, it is unlikely that his uncle, Walter Cantelupe, who was born before the end of the twelfth century, perhaps before his father migrated to England, and who was bishop of Worcester from 1237 to 1266, was any more at ease with English. So if *Lazamon's* poem, with its reliance on archaic language and poetic conventions, was written in the Worcester diocese during the second third of the thirteenth century, its expected audience can hardly have included the bishop. The thirteenth-century bishops of Worcester were in most cases rather transient figures and none of the more durable ones sounds like a person who was likely to take much interest in, or to have much understanding of, *Lazamon's* poem.⁵¹

A career in clerical administration, however, was not necessarily closely involved with the person of the bishop, and it evidently gave some scope for literary activity, as far as one can judge from the admittedly rather unclear example of Walter Map. A better, if rather earlier, example of a comparable clerical writer is of course Geoffrey of Monmouth, and there would be an obvious appropriateness if *Lazamon* came from the same professional class of secular clerics as Geoffrey and Wace.⁵² In any case, the intended audience of the *Historia Brutonum* is rather elusive: Derek Brewer has pointed out that in *Lazamon's* poem 'the marks of oral delivery...are missing', and that the poet 'appears to envisage a solitary reader', whom he consistently addresses in the second person singular.⁵³ This accords with the fact that although some aspects of

the linguistic archaism of the poem, particularly its vocabulary, would be audible in a public reading, others, especially the archaistic spelling, would appear only to a reader with the text in front of him.⁵⁴ On the other hand, Rosamund Allen, while taking account of the repeated addresses in the second person singular, sees this solitary reader as a fiction devised by the author, and not determining an actual audience.⁵⁵ These are clearly subjects on which one must remain uncertain, and the poet's social milieu remains unclear, but something rather more complex and sophisticated than whatever is likely to have been available in Areley Kings sounds intrinsically plausible.

I have considered elsewhere the literary context of the poem and argued that Lazamon's choice of language and metre suggests that it was written at a time when there was a wider interest in Old English writing, perhaps even some kind of 'Anglo-Saxon revival' movement, and that Worcester in the first half of the thirteenth century provides the required context.⁵⁶ On balance this still seems to me a plausible view, but arguments for a later date of composition should not be ignored, particularly as it can be shown that aspects of Anglo-Saxon England continued to attract some interest throughout much of the thirteenth century. E. G. Stanley compared the language of the poem with that of Henry III's *Proclamation* of 1258, pointing out that both texts deliberately attempt to use archaic forms of language that evoke the Anglo-Saxon past.⁵⁷ In addition to the appeal to the past that appears in the *Proclamation* of 1258 it should be remembered that in 1239 Henry named his first son Edward, making him the first male Plantagenet (and in 1272 the first post-conquest king) to bear a name of English origin, and his second son, Edmund, was also given an English name.

Henry's naming of his sons was primarily, or at least ostensibly, in honour of the cults of two Anglo-Saxon royal saints, St Edward the Confessor and St Edmund the Martyr, but the wider implication that the Plantagenets were the legitimate heirs to the pre-conquest kings of England was obviously an important consideration. Matthew Paris's Anglo-Norman *Life of St Edward the Confessor* was addressed to Queen Eleanor, wife of Henry III, presumably to celebrate the birth and naming of her son Edward in 1239, and probably to explain to a queen from Provence the significance of the name given to her son. In this poem Matthew asserts that the three kings who followed Edward the Confessor (Harold Godwin's son, William the Conqueror and William Rufus) had no right by birth to the English throne, but legitimacy was restored when Henry I married a princess of the Anglo-Saxon royal line.⁵⁸ The Plantagenet claim to be the successors of the Anglo-Saxon royal dynasty was clearly important, and one

Lazamon or the lawman?

could say that an awareness of the Anglo-Saxon past was recurrent throughout the second third of the thirteenth century.

Henry's interest in Anglo-Saxon royal saints, no doubt motivated both by piety and by political considerations, is attested by Matthew Paris, who records in his *Chronica Majora* that on a visit to St Albans in 1257 the king dictated to Matthew a list of their names, *Nominavit insuper omnes Angliæ sanctos reges canonizatos*. The list of eleven alleged royal saints includes the familiar nationally recognised names (Oswald of Northumbria, Edmund of East Anglia, Edward the Martyr and Edward the Confessor), but the other names are less familiar and must be the result of a fairly diligent search for information: the cult of Oswine of Northumbria was mainly restricted to the north of England, but Tynemouth, where his shrine was located, was a cell of St Albans, so his name may conceivably appear as a result of prompting from Matthew Paris; on the other hand, Æthelbert of Hereford, Kenelm and Wistan all point to a West Midland source of information, however one may wish to explain it; while *Fromund* (an error for Fremund) and *Edwulf* (presumably for Eardwulf) were evidently unfamiliar enough for their names to be misrepresented; finally and most surprisingly, *Neithan* (Nectan) was neither royal nor English, being a Welsh hermit whose cult was confined to Devon, and his presence in a list of royal saints may be due to confusion with the Pictish king of the same name praised by Bede for his religious orthodoxy in *Historia Ecclesiastica* V.21.⁵⁹

Clearly importance was attached to some aspects of the Anglo-Saxon past in the mid-thirteenth century, and there could have been a political motive for writing a poem on an Anglo-Saxon theme glorifying the English past; but Lazamon's *Historia Brutonum* does not fit this requirement, for its theme is the glorification of a British national past, in which the English appear as both the supplanters and the inheritors of an earlier British glory. Indeed, in spite of Lazamon's claim to have used Bede as a source, the theme of the poem gives little scope for displaying any knowledge of Anglo-Saxon history: the poet expands Wace's account of St Oswald and introduces mention of St Milburga,⁶⁰ but this hardly suggests a fascination with Anglo-Saxon saints commensurate with that ascribed to Henry III by Matthew Paris. Lazamon's Anglo-Saxon interests are rather in matters of language and poetic technique that are not likely to have had much appeal at the royal court or among the aristocracy and higher clergy who still sought information on England's past through the medium of the French language, whether in Gaimar, Wace and the numerous Anglo-Norman prose chronicles or in Anglo-Norman lives of English saints.⁶¹

The poet's choice of language and metre is influenced by Anglo-Saxon models, and the *Proclamation* of 1258 suggests a nationalistic motive for linguistic archaism, but it is doubtful whether anyone in the mid-thirteenth century seeking a poem on national glory, appealing either to the royal party or to the baronial opposition, would have found *Laȝamon's* poem entirely to his satisfaction. Indeed, while one can readily deduce a general cultural context for the poem, it does not obviously lend itself to any specific political or factional interpretation. Rosamund Allen's comment that the events of the reign of King John (1199-1216) 'provide a political context for *Laȝamon's* verse chronicle' is certainly reasonable,⁶² but it does not preclude the possibility that other periods might provide equally valid contexts: the political unrest in the reign of King John as summarised by Allen has in fact broad similarities to the unrest of the baronial wars in the reign of Henry III. The bleak resignation of the concluding line of the poem could certainly be interpreted as an expression of national apprehension on more than one occasion in John's reign and especially at the time of his death (and subsequent burial in Worcester), but it would be no less appropriate in the years of the baronial wars: it could for example express the apprehension of supporters of Simon de Montfort in the Worcester diocese after the baronial defeat at Evesham in 1265. As an encapsulation of a national mood it would have had a recurrent appropriateness throughout the whole period from 1190 to 1270, which still remains the period during which the poem might have been written; but the poem resists all attempts to relate it to any specific public or political occasion, and its destination is as likely to have been the private reader as the public audience.

Finally, there is an annoying circularity to the double problem of the poet's name and the date of the poem. The references cited by Tatlock, Thureson and Fellows Jensen, and in Reaney (*Dictionary*, p.211), suggest that '*Laȝamon*, *Lawman*' (in various spellings), though never very common, was in use as a given name until the early thirteenth century, but later occurrences show it used only as a byname added to a given name; hence, if the poem was composed in the early thirteenth century, it is possible that the poet should still be included among the few people of that period who had the given name '*Laȝamon*', but conversely, if he was active later in the century the likelihood is that '*Lawman*' was a byname and the poet conceals whatever given name he had. The whole range of possibilities deserves to be kept open for consideration.

Lazamon or the lawman?

NOTES

¹ *Lazamon: Brut*, ed. by G. L. Brook and R. F. Leslie, 2 vols, EETS o.s. 250 and 277 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963 and 1978), lines 1-3; all references are to this edition, but in quotations I insert my own punctuation; all translations are my own. 'There was a priest among the people who was named Lazamon; he was Leovnað's son, may God be gracious to him; he lived at Areley at a noble church.' The poet repeats the name in lines 14, 24 and 29. *Wace's Roman de Brut, a History of the British*, ed. and trans. by Judith Weiss (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1999), lines 7-8, 3823, 1328-83 and 14866. Wace, like Geoffrey of Monmouth (*Historia Regum Britanniae* XI.1), and like other writers mentioned below who name themselves in their writings, refers to himself in the third person: in this respect Lazamon's usage follows convention and to take it as evidence that the prologue is by a different writer shows an unawareness of normal practice: see *Layamon's Brut. A History of the Britons*, translated by Donald G. Bzdyl, (Binghamton, New York: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies LXV, 1989), cited with approval by Kelley Wickham Crowley, *Writing the Future: Lazamon's Prophetic History* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2002), p. 15: I am indebted to Rosamund Allen for this reference.

² J. S. P. Tatlock, *The Legendary History of Britain* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1950), pp. 512-14, discusses the name and cites numerous examples; see further Gillian Fellowes Jensen, *Scandinavian Personal Names in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1968), p. 183.

³ John Frankis, 'Lawman and the Scandinavian connection', *Leeds Studies in English* (2000), 81-113 (pp. 81-82), follows the accepted views of the author's name and the date of the poem: the present article questions these views without necessarily invalidating the arguments of the previous study.

⁴ Rosamund Allen, *Lawman, Brut* (London: Dent, 1992), pp. xxiii-iv; amplified in R. S. Allen, "'Where are you, my brave knights?' Authority and Allegiance in Lazamon's *Brut*", in *Lexis and Texts in Early English. Studies presented to Jane Roberts*, ed. by Christian J. Kay and Louise M. Sylvester (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001), pp. 1-12 (p. 3). Specialists in name-studies tend to prefer the term 'byname' for any name added to supplement the given name; the poet uses (line 6443, concerning Aurelius Ambrosius) the term *to-nome*, translating Wace (6450), *surnuns*.

⁵ Doris Mary Stenton, *English Society in the Early Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1951), p. 172; for recent views on the Danelaw see Katherine Holman, 'Defining the Danelaw', in *Vikings and the Danelaw*, ed. by James Graham-Campbell, Richard Hall, Judith Jesch and David N. Parsons (Oxford: Oxbow, 2001), pp. 1-11, particularly pp. 3-4.

⁶ Doris M. Stenton, *English Justice between the Norman Conquest and the Great Charter 1066-1215* (London: Unwin, 1965), pp. 6-7; on the localisation of the *Dunsæte* see Margaret Gelling, *The West Midlands in the Early Middle Ages* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992), pp. 113-18, which also refers to studies on the whole standing of the document concerned.

⁷ Text quoted from F. Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, 3 vols (Halle: Niemeyer, 1903-16), I 376-77, discussed in III 214-19; the manuscript dates and provenance are from N. R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957), p. 110, and N. R. Ker, *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain* (Second edition, London: Royal Historical Society, 1964), p. 208, respectively. Liebermann, *Gesetze* II 565-6 (*Sachglossar* s.v. Lagamen) cites numerous references both to the term 'lawman' and to the personal name.

⁸ References cited in John Frankis, 'Towards a regional context for Lawman's *Brut*: literary activity in the dioceses of Worcester and Hereford in the twelfth century', in *Lazamon: Contexts, Language, and Interpretation*, ed. by Rosamund Allen, Lucy Perry, and Jane Roberts (London: King's College London, Centre for Late Antique and Medieval Studies, 2002), pp. 53-78 (pp. 53-61).

⁹ David Crouch, *William Marshal: court, career and chivalry in the Angevin Empire, 1147-1219* (London: Longman, 1990), p. 205, illustrates this development with regard to the Marshal and Despenser families. J. C. Holt, *What's in a name? Family nomenclature and the Norman Conquest* (Reading: University of Reading, 1982), shows that the Norman aristocracy had earlier pioneered the development of locative surnames in connection with land-inheritance.

¹⁰ See P. H. Reaney, *The Origin of English Surnames* (London: Routledge, 1967), pp. 159 and 193; *A Dictionary of British Surnames*, Second edition revised by R. M. Wilson (London: Routledge, 1977), p. 211; further examples in Liebermann as cited and *MED* s.v. laue-man; see also Patricia Hanks and Flavia Hodges, *Dictionary of Surnames* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), under 'Lamont'.

¹¹ Christopher Cannon, 'Lazamon and the Laws of Men', *English Literary History*, 67 (2000), 337-63, makes important points about medieval law and legal references in the poem, but he is reluctant to discuss (or even to accept) actual thirteenth-century use of 'Lazamon' as either a given name or a byname, and seems to interpret it as a pseudonym chosen to indicate authorial interests: this may not be unreasonable, but the author's naming usage needs explaining. The use of a pseudonym by a French poet is discussed by D. D. R. Owen, 'Two more romances by Chrétien de Troyes?', *Romania*, 92 (1971), 246-60, who also refers to third-person naming (pp. 250-1).

Lazamon or the lawman?

¹² See references cited in *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. by Michael Lapidge *et al.* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), pp. 7-8, s.v. Ælfric Bata, and Richard W. Pfaff, 'Eadui Basan: Scriptorum Princeps?', in *England in the Eleventh Century. Proceedings of the 1990 Harlaxton Symposium*, ed. by Carola Hicks, Harlaxton Medieval Studies, 2 (Stamford: Watkins, 1992), pp. 219-38; on the whole subject see Gösta Tengvik, *Old English Bynames*, *Nomina Germanica* 4 (Uppsala: Almqvist, 1938).

¹³ See Reaney, *Surnames*, and R. A. McKinley, *A History of British Surnames* (London: Longman, 1990); for further references see Cecily Clark, 'English personal names ca. 650-1300: some prosopographical bearings', *Medieval Prosopography*, 8 (1987), 31-60, and 'Socio-economic status and individual identity: essential factors in the analysis of Middle English personal naming', in *Naming, Society and Regional Identity*, ed. by David Postles (Oxford: Leopard's Head Press, 2002), pp. 99-121. For Anglo-Saxon patronymics see, for example, *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, MS E, s.a. 798, *Alric Heardberhtes sunu*, and MS E, s.a. 1010, *Wulfric Leofwines sunu*, and further examples in Tengvik, *Bynames*. I prefer the term 'given name' to the perhaps more common 'Christian name', but 'forename' and 'baptismal name' are also used by name specialists to refer to the same feature.

¹⁴ For occupational names the classic study is Gustav Fransson, *Middle English Surnames of Occupation, 1100-1350*, *Lund Studies in English* 3 (Lund: Gleerup, 1935); see p. 20; for a survey of later work see Gillian Fellows Jensen, 'On the Study of Middle English Bynames', *Namn och Bygd*, 68 (1980), 102-15. Bertil Thuresson, *Middle English Occupational Terms*, *Lund Studies in English* 19 (Lund: Gleerup, 1950), p. 143, gives examples of *Laweman* as both a given name and a byname but does not explain the distinction between the two functions.

¹⁵ Stephen Wilson, *The Means of Naming: A Social History of Personal Naming in Western Europe* (London: UCL Press, 1998), p. 159; he cites English evidence for the use of initials only from the late thirteenth century, but the practice was already common in twelfth-century England: numerous examples are cited, for example, in Z.N. Brooke and C.N.L. Brooke, 'Hereford Cathedral dignitaries in the twelfth century', *The Cambridge Historical Journal*, 8 (1944), 1-21 (pp. 3-4, 8, 11, 13).

¹⁶ For the use of different bynames for the same individual see Reaney, *Surnames*, pp. 94 and 302-6; and Reaney, *Dictionary*, pp. xii-xiii; Clark, 'Socio-economic status', p. 101, refers to 'some continuing lack of fixity' of bynames in the fourteenth century.

¹⁷ Full references and discussion in Ruth Crosby, 'Robert Mannyng, a new biography', *PMLA*, 57 (1942), 15-28.

¹⁸ *Robert of Brunne's 'Handlyng Synne'*, ed. by Frederick J. Furnivall, EETS o.s. 119 and 123 (reprinted as one volume, Millwood, N.Y.: Kraus Reprint, 1991), p. 158.

¹⁹ The system is sometimes misunderstood: the famous archbishop of that period is sometimes erroneously referred to as 'Edmund Rich', but his father's nickname 'Dives' was never used by any of the children; Edmund was always named as 'of Abingdon' (his birthplace) or 'of Canterbury' (his archbishopric) or, posthumously, 'of Pontigny' (his shrine): see *The Life of St Edmund by Matthew Paris*, translated and edited with a biography by C. H. Lawrence (Oxford: Sutton and St Edmund Hall, 1996), p.1.

²⁰ Examples quoted from Hope Emily Allen, *English Writings of Richard Rolle* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931), pp. 54, 57, 72, 81, 85; many more occur throughout Hope Emily Allen, *Writings ascribed to Richard Rolle* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1927). Richard Morris and Walter W. Skeat, *Specimens of Early English*, Part II, *From Robert of Gloucester to Gower* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1873), p. 107: 'Richard Rolle de Hampole, commonly called Hampole' (cf. p.x, 'Hampole's "Pricke of Conscience"').

²¹ I know of two apparent twelfth-century exceptions to this rule: first, the author of *L'Estoire des Engleis* refers to himself six times as 'Gaimar' and once as 'Geffrai Gaimar': 'Gaimar' looks more like a given name of Continental Germanic origin than a surname, and the double name is puzzling; secondly, though the writer of *De Nugis Curialium* gives his name as 'Gualterus Map', he several times refers to himself simply as 'Map', which may have originated as a nickname: this too is problematic. On Map see references cited in Frankis, 'Regional context', pp. 66-7.

²² References are to *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. by Larry D. Benson (Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 85 and 655-56.

²³ *The Complete Works of John Gower*, ed. by G. C. Macaulay, 4 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1901), III 449, 465-66; *Riverside Chaucer*, pp. 87 and 357.

²⁴ Numerous examples throughout *Chaucer Life-Records*, ed. by Martin M. Crow and Clair C. Olson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), for example, pp. 34-35, 57-59, 259, 265, 271, 415.

²⁵ *Thomas Hoccleve's Complaint and Dialogue*, ed. by J.A. Burrow, EETS o.s. 313 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 33 and 35, lines 2-3 and 25.

²⁶ Relevant documents are printed in *Hoccleve's Works: the Minor Poems*, ed. by Frederick J. Furnivall and I. Gollancz, revised by Jerome Mitchell and A. I. Doyle, EETS e.s. 61 and 73 (reprinted as one volume, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. li-xxx.

²⁷ Quoted from *Early Middle English Verse and Prose*, ed. by J. A. W. Bennett and G. V. Smithers (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 174; for examples of authorial naming from the late Middle Ages see Thorlac Turville-Petre, 'The author of *The Destruction of Troy*', *Medium Ævum*, 57 (1988), 264-69; for the wider implications of authorial naming see Anne Middleton, 'William Langland's "kynde name": authorial signature and social identity in late fourteenth-century England', in *Literary Practice and Social Change in Britain 1380-1530*, ed. by Lee

Patterson (Berkeley: California University Press, 1989), pp. 15-82, reprinted (not quite complete) in *Chaucer to Spenser, a Critical Reader*, ed. by Derek Pearsall (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 206-45.

²⁸ Wilhelm Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), Appendix VIII, 'St Boniface and Cryptography', pp. 290-94 (p. 294), and Pauline Head, 'Who is the Nun from Heidenheim?', *Medium Ævum*, 71 (2002), 29-46.

²⁹ References cited in Frankis, 'Regional context', pp. 63-64.

³⁰ *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. by Walter W. Skeat, Vol. VII, *Chaucerian and Other Pieces* (Oxford University Press, 1897), pp. xix-xx; the full acrostic is 'Margarete of virtw, have merci on thin Vsk'.

³¹ *Le Petit Plet*, ed. by Brian S. Merrilees, Anglo-Norman Text Society 20 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1970), p. xxxi, n. 1.

³² First referred to by Elizabeth Salter, *English and International: Studies in the Literature, Art and Patronage of Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 67 and n. 119; subsequently noted by Neil Cartlidge, 'The composition and social context of Oxford, Jesus College, MS 29 (II) and London, British Library MS Cotton Caligula A.ix', *Medium Ævum*, 66 (1997), 250-69 (p.251); Carole Weinberg, 'Marginal Illustration: a clue to the provenance of the Cotton Caligula manuscript of La3amon's *Brut*?', and W. R. J. Barron, 'The Idiom and the Audience of La3amon's *Brut*', in Allen, *La3amon Contexts*, pp. 39-52 (p. 48) and pp. 157-84 (p. 184) respectively.

³³ For discussion of the dating of the poem see Françoise Le Saux, *La3amon's Brut: the Poem and its Sources* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1989), pp. 2-13, and Allen, *Lawman*, pp. xvi-xviii. Among recent writers, for example, Cannon, 'Laws of men', p. 337, ascribes the poem to 'circa 1200'.

³⁴ E. G. Stanley, 'The date of La3amon's *Brut*', *Notes and Queries*, 213 (1968), 85-88.

³⁵ E. G. Stanley, 'La3amon's antiquarian sentiments', *Medium Ævum*, 38 (1969), 23-37 (p. 34): this hugely influential study is the basis of nearly all subsequent work on this poet and commands obvious respect.

³⁶ Reaney, *Dictionary*, pp. 384-85, cites examples of the abbreviated form 'Will' from the early thirteenth century, and of 'Wilkin' (with a diminutive suffix) from the twelfth century. I am indebted to Rosamund Allen for drawing my attention to the somewhat surprising nature of the closing line of the poem.

³⁷ *Episcopal Registers, Diocese of Worcester. Register of Bishop Godfrey Giffard*, ed. by J. W. Willis Bund, 2 vols (Oxford: Worcestershire Historical Society, 1902), I 3; this is not an edition, or even apparently a translation, but an English summary of the full contents, so details of the exact original wording are not given; the editor does not identify the manuscript or give its present location: see however David M. Smith, *Guide to Bishops' Registers of England and*

Wales, a Survey from the Middle Ages to the Abolition of the Episcopacy in 1646 (London: Royal Historical Society, 1981), pp. 215-16.

³⁸ Cartlidge, 'Composition', p. 251, an interpretation supported by Barron, 'Idiom and Audience', p. 184.

³⁹ For details of Thomas Cantelupe's life see *Dictionary of National Biography* III 900-4; A. B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D.1500*, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957-59), I 347-49; and *St Thomas Cantilupe Bishop of Hereford: Essays in his Honour*, ed. by Meryl Jancey (Hereford: Friends of Hereford Cathedral, 1982). 'Cantelupe' seems to be the usual spelling today, but some writers prefer 'Cantilupe': I use the former except when quoting writers who use the latter. The family took its name from Canteloup in Normandy.

⁴⁰ On the general historical background see Sir Maurice Powicke, *The Thirteenth Century, 1190-1290*, Oxford History of England IV (Oxford: Clarendon Press, second edition, 1962), chapter V, pp. 170-226, and M. T. Clanchy, *England and its Rulers 1066-1272* (second edition, Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), pp. 190-205.

⁴¹ David Carpenter, 'St Thomas Cantilupe: his political career', in Jancey, *Cantilupe*, pp. 57-72 (pp. 69-70).

⁴² The first quotation is from *DNB*, the second from Jeremy Catto, 'The academic career of Thomas Cantilupe', in Jancey, *Cantilupe*, pp. 45-56 (p. 52).

⁴³ The Giffard family were prominent in their support of Henry's reacquisition of power: Thomas Cantilupe was followed as chancellor by Walter Giffard in 1265, and when Walter became Archbishop of York in 1266 he was replaced by his younger brother, Godfrey, who held the office of chancellor from 1267 until he became bishop of Worcester in 1268. The introduction to *The Register of Godfrey Giffard* constructs a detailed narrative of Godfrey's actions to restore royal power in the see of Worcester on the basis of entries in the Register; see further R. H. Hilton, *A Medieval Society: the West Midlands at the End of the Thirteenth Century* (reissue: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 46.

⁴⁴ Jancey, *Cantilupe*, pp. 17 and 62; Emden, *BRUO* I 348, does not list Aston Cantlow among Thomas's livings, but he is named as the rector in a document of 1253: see *English Episcopal Acta 13, Worcester 1218-1268*, ed. by Philippa M. Hoskin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, for the British Academy, 1997), pp.118-19 (no. 150).

⁴⁵ For detailed discussion of the date of the Caligula manuscript, with the possibility of a later *terminus ad quem*, see Jane Roberts, 'A preliminary note on British Library, Cotton MS Caligula A.ix', in *The Text and Tradition of Lazon's Brut*, ed. by Françoise Le Saux (Cambridge: Brewer, 1994), pp.1-14 (pp.6-8), and Elizabeth J. Bryan, *Collaborative Meaning in Medieval Scribal Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), pp.183-7.

⁴⁶ Barron, 'Idiom and Audience', pp. 169-72.

Lazamon or the lawman?

⁴⁷ For an account of the households of thirteenth-century bishops of Worcester see Hoskin, *Acta*, pp.xxxiv-xli; at any one time the bishop's household included a number of clerics, each of whom held a parish-living in the diocese and was skilled in some branch of law. Hoskin's introduction also includes an excellent account (pp.xxvii-xxxiii) of the career of Walter Cantelupe. On rectors, whether resident or non-resident, and the employment of vicars see John R. H. Moorman, *Church Life in England in the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), pp.24-51.

⁴⁸ On Map see Frankis, 'Regional context', pp. 66-8; on the Areley living see Salter, *English and International*, p. 67; Allen, *Lawman*, p. xviii; Carole Weinberg, "'By a noble church on the bank of the Severn": a regional view of Lazamon's *Brut*', *Leeds Studies in English*, New Series, 26 (1995), 49-62 (p. 52); and Barron, 'Idiom and Audience', p. 170. On the bishop's power to overrule the patrons of churches see Philippa Hoskin, 'Diocesan politics in the see of Worcester', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 54 (2003), 422-40.

⁴⁹ Carpenter, in Jancey, *Cantilupe*, p. 57; the early history of the Cantelupe family is somewhat unclear (and is left unexplored in *The Complete Peerage*): the early members of the family named in *DNB* suggest the possibility that King John brought more than one member of the family to England.

⁵⁰ David M. Smith, 'Thomas Cantilupe's Register', in Jancey, *Cantilupe*, pp. 83-101 (p. 90).

⁵¹ Between 1190 and 1268 (the maximum time-span for the composition of Lazamon's poem) there were nine bishops of Worcester (excluding one whose election was rapidly quashed), of whom six occupied the see for two years or less each: the other three were Mauger (1200-12: an immigrant from France), William de Blois (1218-36) and Walter Cantelupe (1237-66): see *Handbook of British Chronology*, ed. by E. B. Fryde (London: Royal Historical Society, third edition, 1986), pp. 278-9.

⁵² See also the comments on clerical writers of history by Monica Otter, *Inventiones. Fiction and Referentiality in Twelfth-Century English Historical Writing* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), p. 125.

⁵³ Derek Brewer, 'The paradox of the archaic and the modern in Lazamon's *Brut*', in *From Anglo-Saxon to Early Middle English*, ed. by Malcolm Godden, Douglas Gray, and Terry Hoad (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 188-205 (pp.199 and 204-5). Brewer refers to the list of features of a text for oral delivery compiled by G. V. Smithers in 'The style of *Hauelok*', *Medium Ævum*, 57 (1988), 190-218: the presence or absence of these features in Lazamon's verse deserves further discussion.

⁵⁴ Distinguishing between authorial and scribal spellings in this text is problematic: see the discussion (with further references) by Richard Dance, 'Interpreting Lazamon: linguistic diversity and some cruces in Cotton Caligula A.ix, with particular regard to Norse-derived words', in *Contexts, Language and Interpretation*, pp. 187-202 (pp. 189-92); it is clear that the

poet intended to use quasi-Old English spellings, but the Caligula scribes may not have reproduced these authorial spellings with complete accuracy or with much understanding of their significance.

⁵⁵ Rosamund Allen, 'The implied audience of *Laȝamon's Brut*', in *The Text and Tradition of Laȝamon's Brut*, ed. by Françoise Le Saux (Cambridge: Brewer, 1994), pp. 121-39.

⁵⁶ Frankis, 'Regional context'.

⁵⁷ Stanley, 'Laȝamon's antiquarian sentiments', p. 27.

⁵⁸ *La Estoire de Seint Aedward le Rei*, ed. by Kathryn Young Wallace, ANTS 41 (London, 1983), lines 3829-41; Wallace dates the work between 1236 and 1245 (p. xxiii) but does not relate it to the birth of Prince Edward.

⁵⁹ *Matthaei Parisiensis Chronica Majora*, ed. by H. R. Luard, 7 vols, RS 57 (London: Longman, 1872-1884), V, 617, where the printed list is 'Albertus, Edwardus martir, Kenelmus, Oswaldus, Oswinus, Neithan, Wistan, Fromund, Edwulf, Edmund, Edward': the implication of the Latinised form of some names but not others is unclear. On *Albertus* (Æthelbert), Edward the Martyr, Kenelm, Wigstan and Eardwulf see D. W. Rollason, 'The cults of murdered royal saints in Anglo-Saxon England', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 11 (1983), 1-22; on all the others see David Hugh Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Second edition, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987); the restricted nature of the cult of Fremund is suggested by the fact that his verse-life in the *South English Legendary* is preserved in one manuscript only: see Manfred Görlach, *The Textual Tradition of the South English Legendary*, Leeds Texts and Monographs, New Series 6 (Leeds: University of Leeds School of English, 1974), p. 167; his shrine was at Dunstable, close to St Albans, so here too the king may have received some help from Matthew Paris.

⁶⁰ Discussed by Le Saux, *Laȝamon's Brut*, pp. 164-70, and Weinberg, 'Regional view', p. 51.

⁶¹ Examples are listed in Ruth J. Deane, *Anglo-Norman Literature, a Guide to Texts and Manuscripts* (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1999), pp. 5-36 (esp. nos. 13, 36, 46) and nos. 519, 520, 522, 523, 566, 580, 581.

⁶² Allen, 'Authority and Allegiance', pp. 2-3.

**'I this book shal make':
Thomas Hoccleve's Self-Publication and Book Production**

David Watt

Thomas Hoccleve made at least five books containing his own poetry in addition to a large *Formulary* that preserves models for Privy Seal documents.¹ He was involved in the production of one manuscript containing a copy of John Gower's *Confessio Amantis* in Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.3.2, where his hand appeared alongside those of a number of other important London scribes.² This involvement connects him with the commercial dissemination of the *Confessio*³ and places him provocatively close to the community of artisans who compiled and produced the Ellesmere and Hengwrt collections of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.⁴ It consolidates the argument that he had an influence on the production of at least two presentation copies of his *Regiment of Princes*: London, British Library MSS Arundel 38 and Harley 4866. Cumulatively, Hoccleve's manuscript legacy shows his profound interest in making his own books and in the methods by which other books were made.⁵ As a writer who compiled manuscripts containing his own poems and a scribe who helped disseminate the work of others, Hoccleve had first-hand awareness of the challenges and opportunities presented by the material book.

In all of his books, only one poem appears twice in Hoccleve's own hand.⁶ In San Marino, Huntington Library, MS HM 744, 'Learn to Die' concludes a compilation of religious poems; in Durham, University Library MS Cosin V.iii.9, the same poem forms part of the *Series*.⁷ Whereas both manuscripts are compilations, MS Cosin V.iii.9 subordinates its collection of linked poems to a framing conversation that describes how a narrator named Thomas Hoccleve selects its items for inclusion. This frame contributes to a sophisticated text that, in John Burrow's words, 'not only describes the making of a book, but also *is* that

book.⁸ The inclusion of 'Learn to Die' in the *Series* cannot be read as a straightforward account of his production of the Huntington holograph since at least part of it had been written before MS HM 744 was complete.⁹ But by demonstrating some of the production methods available to him, Hoccleve's inclusion of 'Learn to Die' in the Huntington manuscript provides a useful context for the way that he later turns the experience of making a book into a framing narrative. The *Series* dramatises its narrator's attempt to overcome the challenges presented by material book production. He employs techniques developed by commercial scribes to deal with a scarcity of resources and limited access to exemplars — solutions that shaped the way books were produced in early-fifteenth-century London. The appearance of 'Learn to Die' in two manuscript contexts shows how the book's material form determines not only what kind of compilation methods can be employed, but also what type of composition can be imagined.

1. 'Learn to Die' and San Marino, Huntington Library MS HM 744

MS HM 744 closes with two quires of 'Learn to Die,' which ends incomplete at line 672.¹⁰ Because of the textual loss, it is impossible to say whether it was originally the last text in the book. It is also uncertain whether it contained all four parts of the treatise or, like the version in the *Series*, broke off after the first.¹¹ What can be discerned is that 'Learn to Die' appears at the beginning of a booklet produced — and perhaps even circulated — independently of the other booklets that make up this composite manuscript.¹² It therefore demonstrates one of the most important techniques that commercial scribes used to counter the constraints imposed by the limited availability of time and exemplars. Booklet production uses the flexibility of the physical book to mitigate the economic risks associated with investing resources in the production of a large manuscript over a long period of time.

In this respect, P. R. Robinson argues that the booklet should be considered alongside quires and *pecia* as a term describing the basic units of manuscript production. Quires are the building blocks of any book. *Pecia* describes a system whereby stationers met the urgent demand for texts at medieval universities by supplying individual quires or *peciae* from larger exemplars for scholars (or scribes employed by them) to copy one at a time.¹³ *Peciae* are portions of larger texts divided arbitrarily by quire division.¹⁴

Booklets, in contrast, come in varying shapes, some consisting of one quire and others of many gatherings.¹⁵ Their distinguishing feature, in Robinson's estimation, is their self-sufficiency.¹⁶ Ralph Hanna modifies this definition by emphasizing the importance of their 'separately conceived production.'¹⁷ In order to use exemplars efficiently, both *pecia* and booklet production take advantage of the fact that any book is comprised of quires or gatherings that can be bound together or circulated separately. However, a booklet's written content is intimately linked with the length of a quire or series of gatherings, allowing it to be used independently or in a variety of manuscript contexts.

In its current state, MS HM 744 reveals that booklets can be distinguished based on two perspectives that Hanna identifies. From the owner's perspective, a booklet is a found object that can be joined with others in a composite manuscript by the purchaser. From the producer's perspective, a booklet is produced as an object in itself, 'and perhaps one intended to be joined with other booklets in the same or similar format.'¹⁸ First, MS HM 744 is comprised of two booklets that reflect the interests of a later owner, probably a member of the Fyler family,¹⁹ who bound two quires of didactic material with six quires of Hoccleve's poems at some time during the fifteenth century.²⁰ Quire 2 ends with its last item incomplete, indicating that the current third quire did not initially follow it. Hoccleve's poems, written in his distinctive secretary hand, commence in Quire 3 and fill the rest of the codex.²¹ Hanna's revision of Robinson allows us to consider these two quires as a booklet. Although it is not evidently self-sufficient due to its textual loss, nevertheless its production was clearly conceived separately from Hoccleve's part of the manuscript. Second, Hoccleve's portion of HM MS 744 (Quires 3-8) shows evidence of having been *produced* as three separate booklets:²²

Booklet I (Quire 3, fols 25^r -32^v):

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. fols 25 ^r -28 ^r | <i>Inuocacio ad patrem</i> |
| 2. fols 28 ^r -30 ^r | <i>Ad filium</i> |
| 3. fols 30 ^r -31 ^v | <i>Ad spiritum sanctum</i> |
| 4. fols 31 ^v -32 ^v | <i>Ad beatam virginem</i> |

Booklet II (Quires 4-6, fols. 33^r-52^v)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 5. fols 33 ^r -36 ^r | <i>Item de beata virgine</i> |
| 6. fols 36 ^r -36 ^v | <i>Item de beata virgine</i> |
| 7. fols 36 ^v -39 ^r | <i>Explicit prologus & incipit fabula</i> |

David Watt

8. fols 39 ^v -50 ^v	<i>Lepistre de Cupide</i>
9. fols 50 ^v -51 ^v	[Balade to King Henry V]
10. fols 51 ^v -52 ^v	[Three Roundels]

Booklet III (Quires 7-8, fols 53^r-68^v)

11. fols 53 ^r -68 ^v	<i>Hic incipit ars vtilissima sciendi mori</i>
---	--

Each item is introduced by a heading; all except 9 and 10 are introduced by a blue capital over red flourishing in ink.

Hoccleve's first booklet is a one-quire unit. All four poems in it are linked thematically as invocations to the Trinity and the Virgin. The parallel construction of the headings makes this connection explicit insofar as the '*Inuocatio*' that opens this quire '*ad patrem*' is distributed among the remaining headings: '*ad filium*,' '*ad spiritum sanctum*,' and '*ad beatam virginem*.' Although it could be a coincidence that the last of these poems ends with the quire, Hoccleve's spacing of the texts in Quire 3 suggests otherwise. He skips a stanza at the bottom of fol. 28^r (between Items 1 and 2) in order to accommodate a new poem to start Quire 4. This ensures that Item 4 ends at the bottom of fol. 32^v, giving the impression that it runs seamlessly into Item 5 across the quire break. Physical variation between the two quires tells against this impression of continuity by indicating that they make use of differing materials and may have been produced at different times. At the fore-edge, the 2-mm size difference between these quires is the most striking in the book. Even when the codex is closed, one can discern the break between these two quires. Self-contained in one quire, the first booklet offers maximum flexibility: it could have been used to open any number of compilation manuscripts or circulated on its own.²³

Whereas its thematic focus and unified presentation characterise the first booklet, the second and third can be discerned through the presence of two poems that disrupt the manuscript's apparent unity in order to fill physical space in the sixth quire. The second booklet is a three-quire collection containing two Marian pieces (Item 6 serves as a prologue to Item 7) followed by Hoccleve's translation of Christine de Pizan's *Letter of Cupid*, which includes much added Marian material.²⁴ Two short pieces, Items 9 and 10, close Quire 6.²⁵ The first of these is a Ballad to King Henry V, made upon his last (or latest) return from France.²⁶ Its seven-line stanzas and tone make it relatively consistent with the other poems in the manuscript, other than in its topicality. The second of these items contains Three Roundels ('*trois chaunceons*') that differ from the remainder of MS HM 744

in tone, form, and *mis-en-page*. These roundels offer a personal side to Hoccleve's writing, more reminiscent of his autobiographical texts than the other poems in this manuscript.²⁷ Both poems have *litterae notabiliores* in the author's own hand instead of the illuminated capitals standard in the rest of the manuscript, and neither spaces nor guide letters for capitals appear. The presence of these two poems at the end of the only four-leaf quire in the manuscript indicates that they were likely included as a way of closing a unit, either a booklet or a codex. In addition to the incongruous material that appears at the end of the shortened sixth quire, a couplet written over an erasure in the manuscript draws attention to the awkward juxtaposition of the three roundels with 'Learn to Die':

After our song / our mirthe & our gladnesse
Heer folwith a lessoun of heuynesse. (MS HM 744, fol. 52^v)

Hoccleve seems uncomfortable about the transition between the second and third booklets, and he attempts to mitigate its inappropriateness. Yet the couplet merely emphasises the fact that 'Learn to Die' would have been more effectively placed immediately following *Lepistre*.

Although the erasure at the end of Quire 6 means that any theory about the inclusion of 'Learn to Die' must remain speculative, I propose two rival hypotheses that take this information into account while pointing to the independent existence of the booklet containing this text.²⁸ The first hypothesis assumes that the writing under the erasure merely represents an earlier, unsuccessful attempt at a transition. Anticipating an ongoing copying project, Hoccleve concludes *Lepistre* at the beginning of an eight-leaf quire. He then decides to incorporate an already-completed booklet containing 'Learn to Die' into this manuscript. Consequently, he needs to fill Quire 6's remaining space in order to accommodate the fact that 'Learn to Die' begins on a new quire. He shortens Quire 6 by removing its inner two bifolia, leaving blank only the two leaves conjugate with the conclusion of *Lepistre*.²⁹ To fill this space, he uses two short poems (Items 9 and 10). Had 'Learn to Die' not existed as a separate booklet, Hoccleve could have copied it directly into the manuscript immediately following *Lepistre*, thereby avoiding the awkward transitional couplet. He would have had no reason to truncate Quire 6 or to find two poems of the right length — but of incongruous thematic content — to fill the space remaining at the end of this quire. The second hypothesis assumes that the writing under the erasure originally concluded a foreshortened version of the manuscript. In this scenario, Hoccleve

completes Quire 6 in the same manner as suggested above, although instead of accommodating another booklet, he merely intends to finish his book. He then has to erase whatever he had written to conclude his collection in order to add the couplet linking 'Learn to Die' to the rest of the manuscript.

Our inability to confirm which hypothesis is more likely shows the advantage of employing booklets. When used effectively, their boundaries can be difficult to discern. They therefore offer compilers the flexibility to delay decisions about including texts until the very last minute. For Hanna, this is their distinguishing feature. It forms the basis of his critique of Robinson's conception of self-sufficiency, which he argues 'tends to overlook that feature which...most basically distinguishes the booklet from other forms of production, the postponement of any overall plan for a finished book, in some cases until after production has ceased.'³⁰ The fundamental importance of the booklet is that it uses the book's physical flexibility to adapt it to changing circumstances, which is precisely how Hoccleve uses the technique in MS HM 744.³¹ Although catchwords in Hoccleve's hand show that he intended these three booklets to be joined together, the book's form suggests that this decision was made at a late stage of production; significant soiling on the outer bifolium of each quire indicates that they were left unbound for some time. Hoccleve's inclusion of 'Learn to Die' in the Huntington manuscript demonstrates his familiarity with the kind of production Hanna describes — a method that employs the physical flexibility of the manuscript to delay indefinitely the plan for a finished book.

2. 'Learn to Die' and the 'Making' of the *Series*

Hoccleve frames his inclusion of 'Learn to Die' in the *Series* as if it relies on booklet production to defer the book's final form for as long as possible.³² In his dramatisation of the compilation process, Hoccleve creates a narrator who needs to overcome limited resources. It takes him time to acquire and copy exemplars. The *Series* defies aesthetic conventions by representing the passing of time not in terms of the reader's experience of the text, but in terms of its production. Its narrator is subject to the same constraints as his counterparts in London's commercial trade, and the framing narrative measures and reveals the time it takes for him to make his book. In a 35-line prologue to the 'Complaint,' the *Series* begins as an apparently conventional dream vision, opening on a night in the 'broune season of Mihelmesse' and implying that the text that follows is written

during the next morning.³³ Ending his prologue, the narrator claims that, 'I brast out / on þe morwe / and þus began' (C 35).³⁴ At this point, the pace of composition ostensibly moves at the same speed as our reading.³⁵ This impression is first troubled near the end of the 'Complaint,' when the narrator recounts how he found consolation in a book in which Reason gives 'wordes of consolacioun' (C 311) to a 'woful man' (C 310). Recognizing a parallel between this man's situation and his own, the narrator uses the book until its lender unexpectedly reclaims it:

Lenger I thoghte / red haue in this book
But so it shoop / þat I ne mighte nagh;
He þat it oghte / ageyn it to him took,
Me of his haast vnwaar. (C 372-375)

Latin glosses accompany the section from lines 310-358, implying that the narrator does not only read this text, but copies from it as well. The glosses are so thorough that A. G. Rigg uses them to identify the book that Hoccleve 'sees' as Isidore of Seville's *Synonyma*.³⁶ John Burrow supplements Rigg's article by pointing out that the source for the *Series* is not the complete *Synonyma*, but rather an epitome like that found in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 110, which supplies all the material included in the 'Complaint.'³⁷ Burrow's careful study concludes that the narrator's loss of exemplar is merely a 'convenient fiction'³⁸ — a reminder that the *Series* does not provide straightforward information about its author's access to texts. This scene does not recount Hoccleve's experience of copying this book, but dramatises the kind of material constraints he might have faced. The lender's haste highlights the relationship between time and access to exemplars: a compiler needs access to his materials for long enough to carry out the mechanical task of copying.

This first temporal rupture might reasonably be read as a recollection of a past event subordinated to the narrative present. By introducing the *Synonyma* with the words, 'This othir day / a lamentacioun / Of a woful man / in a book I sy' (C 309-31), Hoccleve implies that the narrator saw and copied this text earlier, and now transfers it into his 'Complaint.' No other markers indicate the passing of time in the 'Complaint,' which seems to end when a friend arrives at the door and precipitates the 'Dialogue': 'And, endid my compleynte / in this maneere, / Oon knokkid / at my chambre dore sore' (D 1-2). At this point, the time of the reader and the narrator diverge. Hoccleve immediately reads his poem to the friend: 'And

right anon / I redde him my conpleynte' (D 17), condensing into one line the time it has taken for the reader to progress through the text so far. After this, the apparently natural pattern of narrative time resumes, and the 'Dialogue' proceeds by recording the discussion between the two friends for several hundred lines. Then, at lines 659-662, the passing of a 'long tyme' is again compressed into a single line:

He a long tyme in a studie stood,
And aftir þat thus tolde he his entente:
'Thomas, sauf bettre auys, I holde it good,
Syn now the holy seson is of Lente...' (D 659-662)

The 'Complaint' opens in Michaelmas and, in terms of its internal narrative, seems to be completed during a single morning. The arrival of the narrator's friend follows immediately upon this completion. Thus the friend stands in 'studie' for a *long* time. If the season is now Lent, he's been thinking for five months!³⁹

Jacques Le Goff's distinction between Merchant's time and Church's time offers two different ways of reading the shift from Michaelmas to Lent. Le Goff argues that Merchant's time enabled productivity to be measured.⁴⁰ In opposition to Merchant's time, 'the Church sets up its own time, which is supposed to belong to God alone and which cannot be an object of lucre.'⁴¹ Church's time could not be mortgaged or measured: it was experienced in relation to God's eternity.⁴² In terms of Church's time, both Michaelmas and Lent fit with the portion of the poem in which they are used as the setting. Michaelmas establishes the melancholy mood of the 'Complaint'; Lent suits the penitential tone of contrition that follows. The holy seasons can coexist in Church's time because they are always present in relation to eternity. On the other hand, as a scribe, compiler, and author, Hoccleve's narrator functions within the realm of Merchant's time, which can be exchanged for profit. By acknowledging the amount of time it takes to compose, write, and compile a text, the jump from Michaelmas to Lent signifies the lengthy process of 'making'.⁴³

Scribes involved in commercial book production needed to make efficient use of their time in order to survive, let alone profit. They had to develop techniques to produce a variety of texts without the institutional support of a monastic or university community. Theirs was a bespoke trade, where tying up capital in the long-term production of large books could pose a serious economic risk.⁴⁴ The artisans with whom Hoccleve was acquainted developed at least two

ways to reduce the amount of time from commission to the production of text, as well as to reduce the risk associated with producing texts 'on spec.' To meet the demands of producing large manuscripts, such as the *Confessio Amantis*, they distributed exemplars for different parts of a single text to be copied simultaneously by multiple scribes and rejoined as seamlessly as possible.⁴⁵ In contrast, booklet production allowed compilation manuscripts to be produced without such extensive organization. As we have seen in the example of MS HM 744, a stationer could conjoin booklets produced at different times and based on different exemplars in order to draw together a book quickly at the final stage of production. By shifting the seasons at line 662 of the 'Dialogue,' the narrator insists on the time and physical effort it has taken him to produce his book in commercial terms. It simply takes him a long time. He may have begun his 'Complaint' in November, but it is not until April that he can possibly have produced a complete text to read to the friend. While the 'Complaint' may be set in Michaelmas — and may have even been begun on that bleak November morning — Hoccleve dismantles the fiction that his narrator can create a poem in a single day.⁴⁶

In its place, the *Series* offers a narrative where the inclusion of 'Learn to Die' gives the impression that its narrator employs booklet production to defer making decisions about his book's final form in order to make the most of the time available to him. Whereas this poem is an independent booklet joined with other texts at a late stage in the production of MS HM 744, the narrator in the *Series* insists it is the first part of the book to be conceived. When the friend first arrives at the door and hears the newly completed 'Complaint,' he asks whether the narrator intends to produce anything else:

Whan thy conpleynte / was to thende ybrought,
Cam it aght in thy purpos / and thy thought
Aght elles therwith / to han maad than that? (D 200-202)

The narrator responds in the affirmative:

Frende, þat I shal yow telle / as blyue ywis.
In Latyn haue I seen / a smal tretice
Whiche Lerne for to Die / callid is...
And þat haue I / purposid to translate... (D 204-6, 211)

The friend's question is ambiguous, as is the narrator's answer. At first, it is unclear whether the narrator will follow the 'Complaint' by 'making' another text in the same manuscript or another text later in time (but in a different manuscript).⁴⁷

The narrator's motivation for producing 'Learn to Die' is also ambiguous. Initially he claims that he hopes this work will serve partly as a purgation of his 'bodyes gilte / foul and vnclene' (D 215):

To clense it / sumwhat by translacioun
Of it shal be / myn occupacioun. (D 216-17)

In contrast to the idea that time can be measured and exchanged, the narrator's inclusion of 'Learn to Die' serves as a reminder that time must also be used to prepare the soul for salvation. The narrator hopes that his text will cleanse his own sins, but also that others might read it and recognise their need for absolution:

Man may in this tretice / heere aftirward,
If þat him lyke / reden and beholde,
Considerere and see wel / þat it is ful hard
Delaye acountes / til lyf gynne colde.
Short tyme is thanne / of his offenses olde
To make a iust / and treewe rekenynge. (D 225-230)

He notes that he has little life remaining, implying that his translation of this text is an attempt to make the best use of his own limited time on earth.⁴⁸ This motivation highlights the importance of non-commercial time. Ethan Knapp argues that Hoccleve links writing to the process of ageing in the prologue to the *Regiment of Princes*, where the physical demands placed on the scribe eventually lead to mortality.⁴⁹ The *Series*'s narrator likewise expresses his anxiety about the physical demands of writing over time, straining to complete the text before becoming incapacitated through illness, old age, or death; yet the very act of writing threatens to precipitate all three, as both he and his friend recognise.

The narrator then returns to a seemingly commercial or at least pecuniary motivation when he claims to have been moved to translate his text 'at thexcitynge / and monicioun / Of a deuout man' (D 234-235). Whether this devout man signifies a real patron or is merely representative, his presence in the narrative

depicts the importance of such figures in the production and exchange of books.⁵⁰ Where patronage is lacking or uncertain it can be dangerous to invest capital in the material for books and the time it takes to produce them; if no devout man or woman purchases the book or rewards its maker, money could become scarce. As the *Series* progresses and the narrator attempts to produce a text that will both purge his sins and please a patron, he reveals that he already has one in mind. It is this patronage that compels him to make his book. The friend realises that the narrator is keen to publish this book primarily because he owes one to Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester:

And of o thyng / now wel I me remembre,
Why thow purposist in this book trauaille.
I trowe þat in the monthe of Septembre...
Thow seidist / of a book thow were in dette
Vnto my lord / þat now is lieutenant,
My lord of Gloucestre / is it nat so? (*D* 526-29; 532-34)

The narrator replies that this is true, and that Humphrey should have had his book a long time ago, were it not for the narrator's afflicted state:

Yis soothly, freend / and as by couenant
He sholde han had it many a day ago;
But seeknesse and vnlust / and othir mo
Han be the causes of impediment. (*D* 535-538)

By linking the causes of impediment with the production of this book, the narrator shows that the 'Complaint' is an appropriate prologue to 'Learn to Die'; it justifies the narrator's belated completion of this text for Humphrey while introducing the relevant themes of community, mutability, and mortality. It shows the narrator's dedication to the Duke by highlighting his resolution to complete 'Learn to Die' in the face of adversity. Putting the pieces of the puzzle together, the friend asks, 'Thomas / than this book haast thow to him ment?' (*D* 539).⁵¹

The friend's apparent confusion about this book's intended patron is less surprising when we consider that the narrator earlier speaks of a 'devout man' who was the initiator of this project. Did he mean Humphrey? John Thompson thinks not. He argues that this scene exemplifies the demands of completing multiple commissions: in the *Series*, according to Thompson, Hoccleve reveals his anxiety

about completing both this text and MS HM 744.⁵² Although Hoccleve frames 'Learn to Die' differently in these two manuscripts, perhaps even in order to please two patrons, it does not necessarily follow that he would describe this activity in the *Series*. Nor does the *Series* give any reason to doubt that Humphrey is the 'devout man' within the terms of its narrative. The narrator claims that he put everything else aside in order to concentrate on the writing of this text when he heard of Humphrey's recent arrival home from France. He recognises that he cannot write a book in a single morning, so he immediately sets to work on his commission. He claims that we would have preferred to have written something much more cheerful, or 'many a balade' (*D* 551). Based on the evidence provided by San Marino, Huntington Library, MS HM 111 and a missing holograph dedicated to the Duke of York, Hoccleve considered such a collection suitable for important patrons on other occasions. He then contemplates a translation of Vegetius's *De re militari*, but settles on 'Learn to Die,' perhaps because it was a text that Humphrey had requested or would want to be seen to request. His staging of these demands need not rely upon competing commissions. In fact, the lack of an advance commission may account for the manner in which 'Learn to Die' appears in MS HM 744. There, it shows that Hoccleve could tailor the book for a particular reader at the last minute. Its inclusion in the *Series* inverts the manner in which it appears in the Huntington manuscript, and it is the poems around 'Learn to Die' that become part of the book's plan at a late stage. Hoccleve's narrator confirms that this book — the one initially intended to include the 'Complaint' and 'Learn to Die' — is the one that he intends for Humphrey: 'For him it is / þat I this book shal make' (*D* 541). He then uses booklet production to select other texts for inclusion in this manuscript based on the particular circumstances of the commission. And the narrative insists these deliberations continue until the very last stages of this book's production.

The narrator's assertion that he 'this book shal make' yokes the physical and intellectual labour required to produce a book. Like Hoccleve, the narrator becomes a maker in terms of both abstract composition and material production. Recognizing that this process takes time, the friend offers to oversee this book's ongoing production before leaving at the end of the 'Dialogue':

Among, I thynke thee for to visyte
Or þat thy book fully finisshid be,
For looth me were / thow sholdest aght wryte
Wherthurgh / thow mightest gete any maugree,

And for þat cause / I wole it ouersee. (D 792-796)

The friend returns between each section of the *Series* to discuss the next stage of the book. Each of his visits instigates the inclusion of more text, and he emphasises the book's material production by physically supplying the narrator with the moralization to the 'Tale of Jereslaus's Wife,' which appears prior to 'Learn to Die,' and the 'Tale of Jonathas' along with its moralization, which follows it. Ethan Knapp argues that this structuring relationship between the friend and the narrator reveals a 'collaborative labor and textual compilation' that 'is in fact a projection of the labor in the Privy Seal into the world of poetic composition.'⁵³ I agree that Hoccleve's vocation profoundly shaped the *Series*. But underlying this aspect of the collaboration between the narrator and his friend is a profound knowledge of the way that books were being produced in London's commercial trade.

It is in terms of these commercial practices that the *Series* both describes and enacts its own making. Although the narrator initially intends to include 'Learn to Die' following the 'Dialogue,' the friend convinces him to expand the book's scope by including a tale from the *Gesta Romanorum* to appease women. With the friend's departure at the end of the 'Dialogue,' the narrator voices his hope that he will be seen as women's friend through writing (D 810-12). He states that what will follow will be, 'A tale eek / which I in the Romayn Deedis / Now late sy (D 820-21). As with 'Learn to Die,' through which he seeks purification for earthly sins, he hopes to cleanse himself of 'guilt' towards women by including this tale: 'and þat shal purge, I hope, / My gilt / as cleene / as keuerchiefs dooth sope' (D 825-26). He then includes a translation of the tale, closing by noting that the emperor and his wife live in joy and honour until their deaths,

Which þat no wight eschue may, ne flee:
And whan God list, also dye shul we.
(*Fabula...imperatrice Romana* 951-52)⁵⁴

These lines seem particularly appropriate as the reader expects the already belated 'Learn to Die' to follow them. Instead, the friend returns, fulfilling his promise to 'oversee' the book:

My freend, aftir, I trowe, a wike or two
That this tale endid was, hoom to me cam,

David Watt

And seide, 'Thomas, hastow almost do?
To see thy werk, hidir comen Y am.'
(*Fabula...imperatrice Romana* 953-56)

The narrator fetches the tale, and gives it to the friend, who 'it nam / Into his hand and it al ouersy' (957-58). He asks whether the narrator intends to say anything more in the tale, to which the answer is no. The friend claims that there is much missing:

Thomas, heer is a greet substance aweye.
Wher is the moralizynge, Y yow preye,
Bycome heerof? Was ther noon in the book
Out of which þat thow this tale took?
(*Fabula...imperatrice Romana* 963-66).

The narrator tells the friend that there was no moralization in his exemplar, at which the friend expresses his surprise. He then sets off for home to get his own copy:

Hoom wole Y walke and retourne anoon...
And looke in my book. Ther Y shal nat faille
To fynde it. Of þat tale it is parcel,
For Y seen haue it ofte, and knowe it wel.
(*Fabula...imperatrice Romana* 969; 971-73)

His assertion that the moralization is 'parcel' of the Tale reflects the type of compilations that he is used to reading.⁵⁵ His possession of such a compilation indicates that he is someone with access to books and who understands how books are made. When the friend returns with the exemplar, he reads it to the narrator, leaves it with him, and departs. In order to avoid having his copying cut short again, the narrator gets right down to work:

And to this moralyzynge I me spedde,
In prose wrytynge it hoomly and pleyn...
(*Fabula...imperatrice Romana* 976-77)

His urgency recognises the material reality of scarce exemplars, and recalls the moment in the 'Complaint' when the narrator lost his copy of the *Synonyma* because its owner requested it to be returned earlier than expected.

His inclusion of this tale and its moralization relies upon the narrator's use of production techniques apparent in MS HM 744. Hoccleve first points to the use of booklets when his narrator hands a single tale to his friend (*Fabula...imperatrice Romana* 957): it is not yet part of a whole book. Second, upon reading the tale and finding that the moralization is not present in one version of the text, the friend provides another in which it is. The use of different exemplars to complete parts of a single text is, for Hanna, a distinguishing aspect of booklet production.⁵⁶ Most importantly, the narrator's description of a time delay between his completion of 'Jereslaus's Wife' and the inclusion of the moralization reveals that its physical incorporation also relies upon this technique. The friend does not arrive to oversee the book until 'a wike or two' (*Fabula...imperatrice Romana* 953) after the narrator had completed the 'Tale of Jereslaus's Wife,' which immediately precedes 'Learn to Die' in the manuscript. The narrative that describes the production of 'Learn to Die' in the *Series's* frame mirrors the method Hoccleve actually uses in his inclusion of it in MS HM 744. In the time between the completion of 'Jereslaus's Wife' and the arrival of the moralization, the narrator does not copy 'Learn to Die' on leaves conjugate to 'Jereslaus's Wife.' Instead, 'Learn to Die' exists as a separate booklet, which may well have been complete already. The 'wike or two' between the copying of the Tale and its exemplar emphasises the fact that books are made over time, and that scribes developed ways to maximise the use of this time by using the physical flexibility of books to their advantage.

'Learn to Die' finally appears at this point. Given the extent of the narrative devoted to introducing this text, it is something of an anticlimax that the narrator only translates one of the four parts that he outlines, conceding that a complete translation is beyond him:

The othir iii partes which in this book
Of the tretice of deeth expressid be,
Touche Y nat dar. þat labour Y forsook...
(*Ars vtilissima sciendi mori* 918-920)⁵⁷

Perhaps responding to the friend's fear that his illness will recur because of too much mental labour, the narrator gives up the task of translating. In place of the missing three parts, he offers a short prose piece on the 'Joys of Heaven,' the ninth lesson read on 'All halwen day' (*Ars* 926). This appears to be an appropriate ending for the *Series*. In terms of Church's time, the compilation has come full circle, from the opening November morning in Michaelmas, through Lent, to All Saints Day.⁵⁸

Despite the narrator's intentions, the *Series* does not end here. The friend, ignoring his own admonitions that the narrator should limit his exertion, convinces him to 'make' yet another tale:

This book thus to han endid had Y thocht,
But my freend made me change my cast.
Cleene out of þat purpos hath he me broght.
'Thomas,' he seide, 'at Estren þat was last,
I redde a tale, which Y am agast
To preye thee, for the laboures sake
That thow haast had, for to translate and make,
And yit ful fayn wolde Y þat it maad wer...'
(*Fabula ad instanciam amici* 1-8)⁵⁹

The narrator feels obligated to fulfil his friend's request: 'Freend, looth me wer nayseye vnto yow...'
(*Fabula ad instanciam amici* 36). He dutifully agrees to include the text, 'making' it both as its translator and compiler. Hearing the narrator's consent, the friend expresses his satisfaction and supplies yet another exemplar, this time the tale with its moralization implicitly included:

He glad was therwithal, and wel content.
The copie on the morwe sente he me;
And thus Y wroot as yee may heer see.
(*Fabula ad instanciam amici* 82-84)

The inclusion of this final text parallels the second hypothesis that I posited earlier for the presence of 'Learn to Die' in MS HM 744. That is to say, it is added to the end of an ostensibly finished manuscript, drawing attention to the open-ended construction of both the manuscript and the text as a whole.

3. Compilation as Narrative

The realism with which Hoccleve represents his narrator's production of the book often leads readers to assume that he straightforwardly narrates his own activities in producing this particular codex. For example, A. G. Rigg identifies the *Synonyma* as the text read and copied directly by Hoccleve himself. No extant manuscript, including the Durham holograph, supports such an interpretation.⁶⁰ Yet because the author and narrator operate in the same temporal plane, it is difficult to avoid conflating them. By using the pronoun 'I' to describe the making of 'this book,' as in the title of this paper and the passage cited above, the text encourages this conflation: 'And thus Y wroot as yee may heer see' (*Fabula ad instanciam amici* 84). The collapse of distinction between narrator and author becomes especially acute in the case of MS Cosin V.iii.9, where Hoccleve the author literally wrote what we see there. Hoccleve uses this conflation to his advantage. By producing a compilation that has 'Learn to Die' at its heart, both Hoccleve and his narrator seek to use time efficiently. On the one hand, the narrator believes this task will 'clense' (*D* 216) his soul, and Hoccleve might hope it will do the same for him. On the other hand, by producing a suitably devout text for patrons, Hoccleve hopes that the time he has spent making this text will be acknowledged and rewarded. Unlike other dream vision poets, Hoccleve does not use his narrator to efface the time required to make a text, but to emphasise it. By using a narrator who shares his name and writing the text in his own hand, he points up the fact that he is fills all four potential roles in the making of books that St Bonaventure identifies: Hoccleve is the author, commentator, compiler, and scribe.⁶¹ By describing its own production, the *Series* makes a case for its maker's remuneration, and a conflation between scribe and author may prove advantageous.

However, the *Series* does not describe its actual making. Burrow's assertion that an epitome of the *Synonyma* provides the text in the 'Complaint' reveals that the narrator's access to texts does not mirror the author's. Later, the text itself indicates that the frame is a carefully planned fiction. After a lengthy debate about the narrator's ability to make a book and the friend's failure to live up to the ideals of friendship, it appears as though 'Learn to Die' will complete the book. However, the narrator second guesses his plans and turns to the friend for advice about what text he might include that would impress the Duke:

What thyng may I make vnto his plesance?
Withouten your reed / noot I what to seye. (D 618-619)

The friend responds by pontificating on the importance of writing nothing to 'so noble a prince' (D 631) unless 'it be good mateere and vertuous' (D 637). He then advises the narrator to plan what will follow very carefully, as if he were building a house:

Thow woost wel / who shal an hous edifie
Gooth nat therto withoute auisament
If he be wys / for with his mental ye
First is it seen / purposid / cast & ment,
How it shal wroght been / elles al is shent.
Certes / for the deffaute of good forsighte
Mistyden thynges / þat wel tyde mighte. (C 638-644)

A Latin gloss accompanies the text: '¶ Si quis habet fundare domum, non currit ad actum. ¶ Impetuosa manus etc.' (D 638).⁶² The gloss cites lines 43-44 of Geoffrey of Vinsauf's *Poetria Nova*, revealing that the friend draws his metaphor from the very highest authority in matters of composition. The friend continues to follow the *Poetria* in his assertion that the metaphor of house building applies to poetic writing:

This may been vnto thee / in thy makyng
A good mirour / Thow wilt nat haaste, I trowe,
Vnto thy penne / and therwith wirke heedlyng
Or thow auysed be wel / and wel knowe
What thow shalt wryte. (D 645-49)

The friend iterates Geoffrey of Vinsauf's distinction between the stages of mentally imagining a poem in its entirety and physically writing it. One should rush to use one's hand to produce neither buildings nor texts. In both cases, an overall plan should be established before material production begins. Although Geoffrey of Vinsauf has poetic composition in mind, the friend sees a parallel between this and the production of compilation manuscripts. He implies that one

should likewise plan an entire manuscript before performing the physical labour of attaining and copying exemplars. He cautions that only in this way can the narrator assure himself that 'no thyng shal out from him breke / Hastily ne of rakil negligence' (*D* 654-55), perhaps responding to the narrator's initial claim to have 'brast out' (*C* 35). In this concern, too, the friend acknowledges Geoffrey of Vinsauf, who cautions that one inept part can spoil the whole in the same way that little gall makes the honey bitter or a single blemish mars a whole face.

Ironically, the friend offers this advice while attempting to persuade the narrator to change his plans. Once the friend gets his way, the *Series* is not the book that the narrator had initially 'purposid, cast and ment' (*D* 641), which would have been comprised only of the 'Complaint' as a prologue to 'Learn to Die.' Instead, the friend insists on the collection of two tales from the *Gesta Romanorum*. By questioning the overall structure of the *Series* at every point of transition, the friend ensures that its compilation progresses in a manner anathema to Geoffrey of Vinsauf's admonition that one should build a poem as one would build a house. Instead of following a plan for the whole, the narrator defers any decision about the book's final form for as long as possible.

The appearance of the *Poetria Nova* militates against arguments that the narrator's compilation naively reproduces the author's work. It establishes a critical distance between the narrator and the author, suggesting that Hoccleve had planned the entire compilation in his mind's eye before writing it. The framing narration is a reflection on, not a mirror of, Hoccleve's own experience of compiling books. The *Series*'s frame is a fiction, but one rooted firmly in the material conditions of making books in fifteenth-century London. It therefore represents a new kind of text, which emphasises the fact that the vernacular maker does not merely compose texts, but also at times physically compiles units that emulate the book assembled in the mind.⁶³ The scribes with whom Hoccleve interacted produced and disseminated some of the most important contemporary vernacular texts, and their methods led to new ways of imagining how to organise such texts. Gower's *Confessio Amantis* employs the idea of compilation as a structure for his text. Although Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* survives in an indefinitely deferred form, its scribes nevertheless either recognised or imposed a compilation structure upon it, organizing its fragments and booklets into a meaningful whole.⁶⁴

Innovative forms and techniques engender new narrative possibilities. The *Series* demonstrates how the material book conditions how composition can be conceived, providing a new model for self-representation.⁶⁵ Hoccleve

NOTES

I would like to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for a fellowship that allowed me to undertake much of the research for this article. I am also grateful to the Huntington Library, whose provision of an Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fellowship allowed me to have access to the two holograph manuscripts in their possession. This paper was presented in preliminary form at the Leeds International Medieval Congress in July 2002 and revised for presentation at the Medieval Seminar at the University of Oxford in November 2002. Participants at both events offered helpful comments and suggestions.

¹ Three of Hoccleve's books are extant: Durham, University Library MS Cosin V.iii.9 is a copy of the *Series*; San Marino, Huntington Library MSS HM 111 and HM 744 are poetic compilations. Two dedications anthologised in MS HM 111 provide evidence for the two non-extant holographs. The *Formulary* is preserved in London, British Library, MS Additional 24062. H. C. Schulz uses this manuscript to confirm the others as holographs. 'Thomas Hoccleve, Scribe', *Speculum*, 12 (1937), 71-81.

² A. I. Doyle and M. B. Parkes identify Hoccleve as Scribe E in this manuscript in their seminal article, 'The Production of Copies of the *Canterbury Tales* and the *Confessio Amantis* in the Early Fifteenth Century', in *Scribes, Scripts, and Readers* (London: Hambledon Press, 1991), pp. 201-248 (esp. pp. 220-223 and 236-237).

³ Scribe D from Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.3.2 is found in six *Confessio* manuscripts in addition to the Trinity College book. Doyle and Parkes, p. 215.

⁴ Scribe B from Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.3.2 copied both of these manuscripts. See Doyle and Parkes; Paul Christianson, 'A Community of Book Artisans in Chaucer's London', *Viator*, 20 (1989), 207-18; and John Thompson, 'A Poet's Contacts with the Great and the Good: Further Consideration of Thomas Hoccleve's Texts and Manuscripts', in *Prestige, Authority and Power in Late Medieval Manuscripts and Texts*, ed. by Felicity Riddy (Cambridge: Brewer, 2000), pp. 77-101 (p. 95).

⁵ A. S. G. Edwards and Derek Pearsall argue that, 'Thomas Hoccleve also seems to have acted as his own publisher, circulating his own copies of his works and possibly also enlisting his colleagues at the Privy Seal to assist in making copies, just as he helped out with the copying of a Gower manuscript.' 'The Manuscripts of the Major English Poetic Texts', in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain, 1375-1475*, ed. by Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall, Cambridge Studies in Publishing and Printing History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 257-278 (p. 259). They probably base this claim on Furnivall's belief that the three verse manuscripts were the work of Hoccleve's clerk, 'John Welde, or some like man.' F. J. Furnivall, ed., *Hoccleve's Works: The Minor Poems*, EETS, e.s. 61, rev. ed. by J. Mitchell

and A. I. Doyle, bound with EETS, e.s. 73 (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. xlix. The autograph status of these manuscripts eliminates hard evidence for Hoccleve's employment of Privy Seal clerks for copying, although it remains an intriguing possibility.

⁶ The present article does not discuss the textual ramifications of this duplication. For such a study, see John Bowers, 'Hoccleve's Two Copies of 'Lerne to Dye': Implications for Textual Critics', *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 83 (1989), 437-72.

⁷ By using the *Series*, I follow the now accepted title ascribed to these linked poems by E. P. Hammond in *English Verse between Chaucer and Surrey* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1927). The text also appears in the following non-holograph manuscripts: Oxford, Bodleian Library, MSS Selden Supra 53, Bodley 221, and Laud Misc. 735; Coventry, City Record Office, MS Acc. 325/1, and New Haven, Conn., Yale University, Beinecke Library, MS 493. For descriptions, see J. A. Burrow, ed. *Thomas Hoccleve's Complaint and Dialogue*, EETS o.s. 313 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. x-xvii.

⁸ John Burrow, 'Hoccleve's *Series*: Experience and Books', in *Fifteenth-Century Studies: Recent Essays*, ed. by R. F. Yeager (Hamden: Archon Books, 1984), pp. 259-74 (p. 266).

⁹ King Henry V's death on 31 August 1422 provides a *terminus ante quem* for the completion of MS HM 744 since the tag, 'que dieu pardoynt,' accompanies a heading that refers to King Henry V (MS HM 744, fol. 50v). Hoccleve's insertion of a revision in the text of the 'Dialogue' shows that at least part of the *Series* was written prior to 1421:

Whan I this wroot / many men dide amis,
They weyed gold, vnhad auctoritee;
No statut maad was thanne / as now is. (*D* 134-136)

This stanza refers to a statute on counterfeit coins passed by Parliament 2 May, 1421. Using this and other internal evidence, Burrow dates Hoccleve's work on the *Series* to between the end of 1419 and 1421. *Complaint and Dialogue*, pp. lvii-lx. The antecedent to 'this' is unclear in line 134: it could mean the entire *Series*, just the 'Complaint,' or the 'Complaint' and 'Dialogue.' However, at least part of the *Series* was written before Hoccleve completed the Huntington manuscript. For more on the statute see J. A. Burrow, 'Excursus III: Falsing of Coin, *Dialogue* 99-196', in *Complaint and Dialogue*, pp. 120-124. Elsewhere, he reads this an artistic blemish: 'Experience and Books', p. 263. For a discussion of this passage in the context of counterfeiting in Lancastrian England, see Paul Strohm, 'Counterfeiters, Lollards, and Lancastrian Unease', in *England's Empty Throne: Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation 1399-1422* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 141-148.

¹⁰ In 'Hoccleve's Huntington Holographs: The First "Collected Poems" in English', *Fifteenth Century Studies*, 15 (1989), pp. 27-51, John Bowers argues that the loss at the end of MS HM 744 and the beginning of MS HM 111 may indicate that these two manuscripts were initially bound as one 'collected works.' In this he follows the tentative suggestion made by

Thomas Hoccleve's Self-Publication and Book Production

Doyle and Parkes, p. 182 n. 38. J. A. Burrow and A. I. Doyle articulate their scepticism about the unification of these manuscripts in their introduction to *Thomas Hoccleve: A Facsimile of the Autograph Verse Manuscripts*, EETS s.s. 19 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. xxvii. Although other evidence makes this claim unlikely, the flexibility of booklet production means that it cannot be ruled out. In this case, 'Learn to Die' would not be the last poem in the manuscript, but would nevertheless still need to be regarded as a separate booklet among others.

¹¹ This cannot be assumed since the truncation of this text plays a part in characterization in the *Series*. See my discussion below.

¹² It is important to distinguish between the type of production that copies multiple 'booklets' or bundles of quires simultaneously with a specific plan for a codex in mind and the type of booklet production that is apparent in MS HM 744 where the plan for the manuscript is open ended and can be modified. See Ralph Hanna III, 'Booklets in Medieval Manuscripts: Further Considerations', *Studies in Bibliography*, 39 (1986), 100-111 (pp. 106-107 n. 14).

¹³ Graham Pollard, 'The *pecia* system in the medieval universities', in *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts, and Libraries: essays presented to N. R. Ker*, ed. by M. B. Parkes, and Andrew G. Watson (London: Scolar Press, 1978) pp. 145-161 (pp. 145 and 152).

¹⁴ The division is arbitrary, but very carefully annotated in order to ensure the continuity of the texts. One of the essential features of *pecia* copies and the *pecia* exemplars is the numbering system in place to coordinate the transcription. See Pollard, '*Pecia* system', pp. 152, 153.

¹⁵ P.R. Robinson claims that they 'originated as a small but structurally independent production containing a single work or a number of short works': "'The Booklet," a self-contained unit in composite manuscripts', *Codicologica*, 3 (1980), 46-69 (p. 46).

¹⁶ Robinson, p. 47.

¹⁷ Hanna, p. 107.

¹⁸ Hanna, p. 101.

¹⁹ Thomas Fyler had been an apprentice of William Estfeld; he was on the livery from 1439-40; in 1475 he was a mercer worth £10 p.a. 'Mercers' Company Biographical Index Cards; Laetitia Lyell and Frank D. Watney, *Acts of Court of the Mercers' Company: 1453-1527* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936), p. 78. See Anne Sutton, 'Alice Claver, Silkwoman (d. 1489)', in *London Medieval Widows 1300-1500*, ed. by C. M. Barron and A. F. Sutton (London: Hambledon Press, 1994), pp. 129-142 (p. 135 n. 18). Considering the devotional and didactic nature of both sections of MS HM 744, this manuscript may witness as much to the Fyler family's interests as it does to Hoccleve's poetry: the merchant class piety displayed by others connected to this family resonates with the didactic and religious texts in the whole book.

²⁰ Although the table for establishing the date of Easter has a rubric indicating it was written in 1386, it is a later copy. The death of Henry V in 1422 provides a *terminus post quem* for the binding together of this manuscript in its present form. The date 1444, written as part of a household inventory in the flyleaves at the end of the book, provides a *terminus ante quem*, given that it is in the same hand and refers to the Fyler family, whose deaths are recorded in the *computus* that opens the volume. The first recorded date in the *computus* is for Thomas Fyler in 1424 (fol. 1^v), but this does not provide any precise information for dating the assembly of the manuscript for two reasons: first, as the first two quires had an existence independent of the latter six, the date may have been written in 1424 but before the manuscripts were one; second, it could have been written well after the fact. This information does suggest that the two parts of MS HM 744 were bound together while in the hands of the Fyler family. Although it does not affect my argument, J. A. Burrow and A. I. Doyle place this dating marginally later, to the third quarter of the fifteenth century, given that the memoranda of the Fyler family covers the years 1424-73. *Autograph Verse Manuscripts*, p. xxiii.

²¹ In addition to the scribal change, where Hoccleve begins writing his own text, other markers indicate that this is a separate booklet: ink ruling gives way to brown plummet and the page layout changes to accommodate poetry. The large opening capital (22 mm) and subject matter of the first poem suggest that this item was intended to open a text (the remaining capitals in the quire are 13mm, 11 mm, and 12 mm respectively).

²² For the clarity of this argument, I number the booklets in the Hoccleve section of HM 744 from I-III and the items in his hand from 1-11, replacing the catalogue numbers. However, I retain the Quire numbers from the beginning of the manuscript in its present form. For a full description of this manuscript, see C. W. Dutschke, *Guide to Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Huntington Library*, 2 vols (San Marino: Huntington Library and Art Gallery, 1989), I, 247-251. A more detailed description appears in Burrow and Doyle, *Autograph Verse Manuscripts*, pp. xv-xvii.

²³ Booklets in one quire like this one may be even more common than we know. The physical aspects of one-quire booklets offer maximum flexibility to book producers: 'the producer of a codex, in a single-quire booklet, possesses a bibliographical unit which can potentially be fitted into nearly any context.' Hanna, p. 105.

²⁴ See Furnivall, *Hoccleve's Works*, pp. 243-253.

²⁵ The one remaining problem with this quire is that it is ruled in dry point whereas the other quires in Hoccleve's section of the manuscript are ruled in brown plummet. This evidence does not confirm or refute booklet production: it could indicate that he used an old quire or changed his practice within this one quire.

²⁶ Probably referring to Henry V's return in February 1421.

Thomas Hoccleve's Self-Publication and Book Production

²⁷ In the first of the roundels, Hoccleve appeals to lady money for help. In the second, she responds by telling him that he did not handle his money well and therefore deserves no more. The third closes with a conceit praising lady money's virtues.

²⁸ Burrow and Doyle note that, 'the smaller fourth gathering suggests that it was at first planned to finish on fol. 52v, but that he subsequently decided to continue copying on further quires.' They also note the erasure under the second line, which 'may reflect either a change of mind about the sequel or merely a modification of wording.' *Autograph Verse Manuscripts*, p. xxiv.

²⁹ Because Hoccleve wrote 3 stanzas per page throughout all of his poetry, if he had wanted to complete his text at the *Epistre* he could have used a 10 leaf quire as Quire 6. If he had, he would have had only space for one stanza at the bottom of the last verso leaf of this quire. The fact that he had begun another quire and had to shorten it indicates that he had expected the project to be ongoing.

³⁰ Hanna, p. 107.

³¹ Booklets are an efficient way of producing relatively lengthy books in an uncertain market by providing medieval booksellers, 'who typically produced works to order in what is considered a 'bespoke trade,' a way to have some ready stock, especially of popular texts, without the major investment inherent in producing a full codex 'on spec'.... The booklet occurs with such frequency because of its cheapness and its flexibility: this unit involves a rather minimal commitment of resources while still allowing ongoing book-production.' Hanna, pp. 101-02.

³² The *Series* is arranged as follows in Durham, University Library, MS Cosin V.iii.9:

1. fol. 3^r Prologue to the 'Complaint'
2. fols 3^v-8^v 'Complaint'
3. fols 9^r-26^v 'Dialogue'
4. fols 26^v-49^r 'Tale of Jereslaus's Wife' (Ellis: *Fabula de quadam imperatrice Romana*)
5. fols 49^r-49^v Prologue to Moralization to the 'Tale of Jereslaus's Wife'
6. fols 50^r-52^v Moralization to the 'Tale of Jereslaus's Wife'
7. fols 52^v-74^r 'Learn to Die' (Ellis: *et incipit ars vtilissima sciendi mori*)
8. fol. 74^v Prologue to a Lesson on all Saints' Day
9. fols 75^r-77^r A Lesson on All Saints' Day
10. fols 77^r-79^r Prologue to the 'Tale of Jonathas'
11. fols 79^v-93^r 'Tale of Jonathas' (Ellis: *Hic additur alia fabula ad instanciam amici mei*)
12. fols 93^v-95^r Moralization to the 'Tale of Jonathas'
13. fol. 95^r Envoy to the Countess of Westmorland

³³ Although he uses some of the conventions of a dream vision in the framing of this text, Hoccleve emphasises his lack of sleep. See Christina Von Nolcken, "O, why ne had y lerned for to die?": *Lerne for to Dye* and the Author's Death in Thomas Hoccleve's *Series*', *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 10 (1993), 27-51 (pp. 30-31).

³⁴ All citations from the 'Complaint' and 'Dialogue' are noted *C* and *D* followed by line numbers; they are taken from *Thomas Hoccleve's Complaint and Dialogue*, ed. by J. A. Burrow, EETS o.s. 313 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). All citations from the remaining texts of the *Series* are taken from *'My Compleinte' and Other Poems*, ed. by Roger Ellis, (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2001). In my citations I follow Ellis for the titles of these texts; however, in the text I use the more conventional titles based on F. J. Furnivall's edition.

³⁵ See James Simpson, 'Madness and Texts: Hoccleve's *Series*', in *Chaucer and Fifteenth-Century Poetry*, ed. by Julia Boffey and Janet Cowan, King's College London Medieval Studies, V (Exeter: Short Run Press, 1991), pp. 15-29 (p. 16).

³⁶ A. G. Rigg, 'Hoccleve's *Complaint* and Isidore of Seville', *Speculum*, 45 (1970), 564-74.

³⁷ John Burrow, 'Hoccleve's *Complaint* and Isidore of Seville Again', *Speculum*, 73 (1998), 424-428 (p. 428).

³⁸ Burrow, 'Hoccleve and Isidore Again', p. 428.

³⁹ See Burrow, *Complaint and Dialogue*, p. 105, n. D662.

⁴⁰ Jacques Le Goff, 'Merchant's Time and Church's Time in the Middle Ages,' in *Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 29-42 (p. 35).

⁴¹ Le Goff, p. 30.

⁴² Le Goff, p. 31.

⁴³ In his dating of the *Series*, Burrow implicitly uses Hoccleve's depiction of Michaelmas and Lent.

⁴⁴ Graham Pollard, 'The Company of Stationers Before 1557', *The Library*, 4th Series, 18 (1937), pp. 1-38 (p. 15).

⁴⁵ Doyle and Parkes.

⁴⁶ See Von Nolcken, pp. 38-43 for a different reading of the use of Michaelmas and Lent.

⁴⁷ Wherever he plans to use it, he claims that he will no longer occupy himself by writing in English once it is finished (*D* 239-40).

⁴⁸ See Burrow, 'Experience and Books', p. 264 and Von Nolcken.

⁴⁹ Ethan Knapp, *The Bureaucratic Muse: Thomas Hoccleve and the Literature of Late Medieval England* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), pp. 85-93 (esp.

p. 85): 'This association between writing and mortality lurks near the surface of any bureaucratic apparatus.'

⁵⁰ He invites comparison with the Old Man in the *Regiment of Princes*, especially for readers of manuscripts in which it appeared with the *Series*.

⁵¹ Considering the unflattering representation of regency that appears in the 'Tale of Jereslaus's Wife,' it is surprising that Hoccleve dedicates this text to Humphrey in the hope of remuneration. Cf. Lee Patterson, 'What is Me?', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 23 (2001), 437-70 (p. 448).

⁵² See Thompson, pp. 81-3 and Bowers, 'Two Copies of "Lerne to Dye"', pp. 437-72.

⁵³ Knapp, p. 181.

⁵⁴ I refer to the title in Ellis VII.3: *Fabula de quadam imperatrice Romana*.

⁵⁵ Most *Gesta Romanorum* texts included moralization as part of their apparatus. For a discussion of these texts as story-collections, see Helen Cooper, *The Structure of the Canterbury Tales* (London: Duckworth, 1983), esp. Chapter 1.

⁵⁶ Hanna, p. 108.

⁵⁷ I refer to the title in Ellis VII.4: *et incipit ars vtilissima sciendi mori. Cum omnes homines naturaliter scire desiderant etc.*

⁵⁸ See Von Nolcken, p. 41.

⁵⁹ I refer to the title in Ellis VII.5: *Hic additur alia fabula ad instanciam amici mei predilecti assiduam.*

⁶⁰ It would be surprising if it did reflect these aspects of material production, given that Burrow has clearly shown that it was not a fair-copy, but descended from a previous text, which he terms the Variant Original (VO) and Ellis describes as *H. See Burrow, *Complaint and Dialogue*, pp. xviii-xxii.

⁶¹ See Bonaventure's commentary on Peter Lombard's *Libri sententiarum*; for an English translation of this part of the text, see A. J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic literary attitudes in the later Middle Ages* (London: Scholar Press, 1984), p. 94.

⁶² Geoffrey of Vinsauf, *Documentum de Arte Versificandi*, II.2.1, *Les Arts Poétiques du XIIe et du XIIIe Siècle*, ed. by Edmond Faral (Paris: É. Champion, 1924), ll. 43-44. The gloss appears in Oxford, Bodleian Library MSS Selden Supra 53, Laud misc. 735, Bodley 221; and Durham, University Library, MS Cosin V.iii.9. John Burrow identifies its source. *Complaint and Dialogue*, p. 104 nD638-9. The passage is cited in *Troilus and Criseyde* I.1065-71, but Jerome Mitchell shows that Hoccleve was not dependent on Chaucer. *Thomas Hoccleve: A Study in Early Fifteenth-Century English Poetic* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1968), p. 120.

⁶³ By invoking both aspects of 'making,' Hoccleve may have followed the French poet Guillaume de Machaut, whom Sylvia Huot asserts was one of the earliest writers to realise that

the vernacular poet could also represent himself as a producer of books. Sylvia Huot, *From Song to Book: the Poetics of Writing in Old French Lyric and Lyrical Narrative Poetry* (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), p. 235. On the influence of the French Poets on Hoccleve, see J. A. Burrow, 'Hoccleve and the Middle French Poets', in *The Long Fifteenth Century: Essays for Douglas Gray*, ed. by Helen Cooper and Sally Mapstone (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 35-49.

⁶⁴ Derek Pearsall argues that, 'what Chaucer left behind him when he died was a mass of papers, in which the tales he had written formed a series of fragments, some consisting of one tale only, with prologue and possibly also ending material, and others consisting of anything from two to six tales, fully integrated internally with dramatic links.' *The Life of Geoffrey Chaucer: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p. 233. For further discussion of the form of the *Tales* in relation to the Trinity Gower scribes, see Doyle and Parkes, pp. 223-232.

⁶⁵ I am not denying the possibility for autobiographical information in this text: I merely want to stress the assertion that the *Series's* frame, at least in terms of book production, is fictional.

⁶⁶ *Caxton's Book of Curtesye*, ed. by Frederick J. Furnivall, EETS e.s. 3 (London: Trübner and Co., 1868) ll. 351-56; 362-64 (I have cited the transcription taken from Oxford, Oriel College MS 79).

⁶⁷ Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 178-84. She writes that, 'character indeed results from one's experience, but that includes the experiences of others, often epitomised in ethical commonplaces, and made one's own by constant recollection,' p. 179.

Reviews

The Siege of Jerusalem, edited by Ralph Hanna and David Lawton. Early English Text Society o.s. 320. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. xcix + 224 pp. ISBN 0-19-722323-0. Price: £50.00.

The Siege of Jerusalem, a northern alliterative poem of the fourteenth century, has long been the object of a certain critical dismay. Despite the poem's lush ornamental flourishes and sumptuous descriptions of late medieval warfare, critics have seemed for the most part unable to divert their gaze from its extremely violent narrative foreground, and with good reason: the terrible events of the last century demonstrated with tragic force the need for vigilance against the rhetorics of anti-Semitism. Upon first reading this work, one is indeed struck not only by the sheer frequency with which Jewish bodies are torn, pierced, beaten, and dismembered by the avenging Romans, but also by the lengths to which the poet has gone to describe such violent exertions in their every gory detail. It is for this reason that several critics, from Derek Pearsall to Ralph Hanna, co-editor of this new edition, have condemned what appears to be the anonymous poet's sadistic preoccupation with violence against Jews. Yet a new generation of scholars, most notably Elisa Narin Van Court and Bonnie Millar, have questioned the assumption of anti-Semitism that has marginalised the poem as an object of study. Given this renewal of interest in the *The Siege of Jerusalem*, Hanna and Lawton's long-awaited edition for the Early English Text Society could not have come at a better time.

The introduction begins with a description of the contents of the nine surviving manuscripts, which together demonstrate the variety of ways in which *The Siege of Jerusalem* may have been received in its time: as romance, biblical narrative, crusading poetry, even classical history. Hanna's characteristic attention to the polyvocal status of Middle English texts illustrates the extent to which our comparatively monolithic reading practices often cause us to ignore the much wider horizon of meaning that attended most medieval poetry. After establishing the dialect as likely that of Barnoldswick, West Yorkshire, in the late fourteenth century, the authors turn their attention to the poem's sources. Most of these texts, including the *Vindicta Salvatoris*, Ranulphus Higden's *Polychronicon*, and Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea*, have long been established as sources for the poem. Hanna and Lawton, however, suggest the addition to this list of

Josephus's *De bello Iudaico*, a text previously thought to have influenced *The Siege of Jerusalem* only through the liberal fourth-century translation often attributed to Ambrose. By arguing instead for the literal translation by Rufinus Aquileia, the editors close a significant gap between *The Siege of Jerusalem* and the learned classical history of Josephus, our most reliable source for the events the poem describes. The editors repeat Hanna's earlier, widely-accepted assertion that the author composed the poem at Bolton Abbey, probably for the house's secular patrons. The editors' thorough discussion of the poet's elaborate style and versatile techniques of translation goes a long way towards establishing *The Siege of Jerusalem* as a work of great artistic merit, and not merely an example of a particularly virulent English anti-Semitism.

With such an impressive scholarly apparatus in place, the poem itself seems almost beside the point. Hanna and Lawton, in their expansive textual notes, cite a wide range of variations among the nine witnesses, providing where possible historical explanations for differences in scribal behaviour. Scholars of the poem will find the appendices especially useful: these contain both the *Vindicta Salvatoris* and relevant sections of Higden's *Polychronicon*. Hanna and Lawton have done a wonderful job with this edition, which should find a wide audience among scholars of Middle English poetry and manuscript culture, proving, yet again, that the best things are indeed worth waiting for.

JEREMY CITROME

OKANAGAN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Bard of Iceland: Jónas Hallgrímsson, Poet and Scientist. Edited and Translated by Dick Ringler. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002. xiv + 474 pp. ISBN 0-299-17720-3. Price: £37.95.

Jónas Hallgrímsson (1807-45) is modern Iceland's best-loved and most-admired poet — 'the darling of the nation...the dearest friend of the nation's heart', as the Nobel Prize winning novelist Halldór Laxness called him. His works, like those of Shakespeare, are 'full of quotations' which most decently educated Icelanders can be trusted to recognise. Two examples make the point. Firstly, lamenting the fall of Margaret Thatcher in 1991, one of her (few) Icelandic academic admirers ended an interview on Icelandic television with a sad shake of the head and the

words 'Nú er hún Snorrabúð stekkur' (in Ringler's new translation, 'Snorri's old shed is a sheep pen'). This tribute is unlikely to have reached the ears or moistened the eyes of the Smith Square faithful, but many Icelanders would have understood its resonance. At school they would have learnt by heart passages from Jónas Hallgrímsson's 1835 poem 'Ísland' [Iceland], and absorbed its haunting yet challenging message: Iceland was once beautiful; freedom-loving noblemen from Viking-Age Norway settled it; Iceland is still beautiful; but its modern inhabitants have squandered their proud medieval inheritance. The derelict 'Snorrabúð' refers to the stone and birch structure in which Snorri Þorgrímsson, the late tenth-century law-speaker, lived while resident at Þingvellir, the ancient parliament site, during the summer meetings of the Althing. For Jónas, Þingvellir, once the proud and busy site of fellowship and national law-making, had become a sad, silent, and symbolic relic. So it is that the 'Nú er hún Snorrabúð stekkur' line, as quoted about Margaret Thatcher in 1991, signals a sense of elegy, indignation, and national loss.

The second Jónas 'quotation' also has a political dimension, involving the present (at the time of writing) Icelandic Minister of Agriculture, recently identified in an opinion poll as the country's most popular politician. Interviewed for a newspaper in his new home in a small country town an hour's drive away from the bustle of Reykjavík, the famously folksy minister drew the reporter's attention to a celebrated mountain visible from his sitting-room window. Apparently without the aid of a spin doctor, he quoted a line from another of Jónas's famous poems, 'Gunnarshólmi' [Gunnar's Holm] (1838): 'við austur gnæfir sú hin mikla mynd' (Ringler: '...Eyjarfjalla Glacier, standing / huge in the east beneath its icy crest'). Enough readers of the interview — and perhaps enough potential voters — would have recognised the line and picked up the cultural signals. The poem celebrates the once richly grassed plain, with its great glacial backdrop, across which, according to *Njáls saga*, the hero Gunnarr, sentenced to exile, set off to join his waiting ship. Unseated by his stumbling horse, Gunnarr found himself gazing back up the slope to his home at Hlíðarendi. Overcome with an irresistible sense of love for hearth and home, Gunnarr abandons his plan to seek safety abroad, and returns to face certain death at the hands of his enemies. By Jónas's day time and tide had deposited sand and gravel over the plain, save for the spot where Gunnarr, according to tradition, made his fateful decision. That location had been mysteriously untouched by the age-old processes of fluvial erosion, as if preserved by some emanation of the spirit of medieval Iceland. In

quoting the line, a contemporary politician seeks to wrap himself if not in the national flag then at least in the pages of the nation's best-known poet.

As modern Iceland becomes ever more culturally 'cool' in the English-speaking world it seems high time for enthusiasts to be offered the opportunity to explore one key area in the under-charted literary-cultural terrain between *Barðar saga* and Björk. Dick Ringler's translations of and commentaries on selected poetry and prose of Jónas Hallgrímsson provide much-needed illumination and guidance and as such can be warmly welcomed.

From the well-informed introductory survey of the life and times of Jónas, an intriguingly unglamorous figure emerges: a stocky country boy, no stranger to personal tragedy (aged eight he saw his father and brothers drown while fishing in a local lake — he later translated into Icelandic a Danish pamphlet on learning to swim), afraid of the dark (like Grettir Ásmundarson, the mighty saga hero with whose spirit he identified), a gifted but lazy student, a loner whose inner self was well protected by irony, a broodingly insecure Christian, a poet whose (now) best-known writings were coolly received back in Iceland, and a visionary Enlightenment scientist whose research projects were doomed to incompleteness. The word on the Copenhagen street was that Jónas, rather like Lord Byron, was 'mad, bad and dangerous to know' — a godless, dissolute, syphilitic spendthrift.

Leafing through the texts translated by Ringler it is possible to sense the creative edge that many of these tics, traits and tragedies lend to Jónas's verse. Essentially a miniaturist, his best pieces invariably represent a fusion of a natural scientist's unblinking eye, a theologian's probing spirit, an historian's sense of perspective, a native's awareness of local tradition, and an internationalist's sense of European literary fashion. Amidst the high seriousness, wry humour can suddenly emerge, as in this unsentimental weather song of a harassed farmer:

Goddess of drizzle,
Driving your big
Cartloads of mist
Across my fields!
Send me some sun
And I'll sacrifice
My cow — my wife —
My Christianity.

Jónas the poet constantly tests generic limits: panegyric can dissolve into pastoral elegy and re-crystallise as political propaganda; topographic description can be shot through with Christian awe or folkloric irony. The poet's prose is no less sophisticated, as in his fascinatingly re-voiced versions of Hans Christian Andersen tales, or in *Grasaferð* (Ringler's 'Gathering Highland Moss'), an elusive rite of passage narrative which incorporates Jónas's translations of poems by Schiller and Adam Oehlenschläger. And with Jónas's fame in Iceland based primarily on his nature poetry, what diversity of vision and mood emerges as he surveys his native land of ice and fire: nature as the world of elves and trolls, the book of God's creation, the home of country folk wrestling with the seasons, the benevolent provider, and, not least, the bleak space in which 'the devouring element' of the universe emerges without warning or pity. All these elements find particularly memorable expression in the dozen densely allusive poems which make up the splendid 'Á sjó og landi' sequence.

Not everyone will warm to all aspects of Ringler's translations of these and other pieces. There is much elaboration and paraphrase; at times he tends to hum the tunes rather than sing the words. However, critical high horses ought to be kept on a tight rein. Firstly, the well-stocked commentaries freely acknowledge the problem and provide literal versions of a number of key passages. Secondly, in translating Jónas, authenticity of matter can only be achieved at the expense of authenticity of manner. Ringler's knowledge of and respect for ancient and modern Icelandic tradition is signalled by his decision to prioritise the prosodic exuberance and alliterative virtuosity of the originals, qualities which would be particularly apparent in oral performance. After all, many of Jónas's poems first entered the public domain as recitations at meetings. It was appropriate that the translator's own recitation of his version of Jónas's 'Dalavísa' at the University of Iceland in the Autumn of 2002 won from the locals — and the present writer — applause well beyond the requirements of politeness. We might note in this context that modern Icelandic winter festivities include at least one major and widely reported public gathering at which several of the country's best known versifiers (including prominent politicians) compose and recite satirical verses about current affairs and personalities to an audience of several hundred enthusiasts, who come to enjoy the topical jokes, and delight at the deftness with which the complex rules of age-old verse forms are adhered to and exploited. Literal prose translations of Jónas Hallgrímsson would certainly not do justice to the priorities of that demanding group of listeners

Reviews

Bard of Iceland represents a pioneering and admirable foundation on which a diversified tradition of translating Jónas Hallgrímsson (and other medievalist nineteenth-century Icelandic poets, come to that) can develop. There is certainly room for fastidious prose realisations of Jónas's work now that Ringler's fleet-footed and imaginative verse has marked out the ground. We might say, in pianistic terms, that in Dick Ringler Jónas has been lucky enough to have found his Horowitz, but may now be in need of his Brendel.

ANDREW WAWN

UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Also published by *Leeds Studies in English* are the occasional series:

LEEDS TEXTS AND MONOGRAPHS

(ISSN 0075-8574)

and

LTM Medieval Drama Facsimiles

(ISSN 0143-0335)

Recent volumes in the LTM series include:

The Gawain Country: Essays on the Topography of

Middle English Poetry by R.W.V. Elliot (1984) 165pp.

Staging the Chester Cycle, Lectures given on the Occasion of the

Production of the Cycle at Leeds in 1983, edited by David Mills

(1985) vii + 123pp.

Thomas Campion: De Puluerea Coniuratione (On the Gunpowder Plot),

edited by David Lindley with translation and additional notes by Robin Sowerby

(1987) v + 123pp.

Úr Döllum til Dala: Gudbrandur Vigfússon Centenary Essays,

edited by Rory McTurk and Andrew Wawn (1989) x + 327pp.

P. J. Cosijn: Notes on 'Beowulf', introduced, translated and annotated by

Rolf H. Bremmer Jr, Jan van den Berg and David F. Johnson

(1991) xxxvi + 120pp.

A Study and Edition of Selected Middle English Sermons

by V. M. O'Mara (1994) xi + 245pp.

Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages, edited by Simon Forde,

Lesley Johnson and Alan V. Murray (1995) viii + 213pp.

The Old English Life of St Nicholas with the Old English Life of St Giles

by E. M. Trehearne (1997) viii + 218pp.

The Heege Manuscript: a facsimile of National Library of Scotland MS Advocates

19.3.1, introduced by Phillipa Hardman (2000), 60 + 432pp.

And in the **Medieval Drama Facsimile** series:

The York Play, a facsimile of BL Additional MS 35290, edited by

Richard Beadle and Peter Meredith (1983) lxi + 551pp., 5 colour plates.

The Chester Mystery Cycle, a facsimile of BL Harley MS 2124, edited by

David Mills (1984) xxii + 288pp.

Full details of these series and of past numbers of *Leeds Studies in English*, including prices and availability, can be obtained from:

The Secretary,
Leeds Studies in English,
School of English,
University of Leeds,
Leeds LS2 9JT, U.K.

All orders should be placed with the Secretary at the above address.

Those with standing orders for any series (*Leeds Studies in English*, *LTM* or the Drama Facsimiles) are entitled to a 25% discount on all publications.

Also published by *Leeds Studies in English* are the occasional series:

LEEDS TEXTS AND MONOGRAPHS

(ISSN 0075-8574)

and

LTM Medieval Drama Facsimiles

(ISSN 0143-0335)

Recent volumes in the **LTM** series include:

The Gawain Country: Essays on the Topography of Middle English Poetry by R.W.V. Elliot (1984) 165pp.

Staging the Chester Cycle, Lectures given on the Occasion of the Production of the Cycle at Leeds in 1983, edited by David Mills (1985) vii + 123pp.

Thomas Campion: De Puluerea Coniuratione (On the Gunpowder Plot), edited by David Lindley with translation and additional notes by Robin Sowerby (1987) v + 123pp.

Úr Döllum til Dala: Gudbrandur Vigfússon Centenary Essays, edited by Rory McTurk and Andrew Wawn (1989) x + 327pp.

P. J. Cosijn: Notes on 'Beowulf', introduced, translated and annotated by Rolf H. Bremmer Jr, Jan van den Berg and David F. Johnson (1991) xxxvi + 120pp.

A Study and Edition of Selected Middle English Sermons by V. M. O'Mara (1994) xi + 245pp.

Concepts of National Identity in the Middle Ages, edited by Simon Forde, Lesley Johnson and Alan V. Murray (1995) viii + 213pp.

The Old English Life of St Nicholas with the Old English Life of St Giles by E. M. Treharne (1997) viii + 218pp.

The Heege Manuscript: a facsimile of National Library of Scotland MS Advocates 19.3.1, introduced by Phillipa Hardman (2000), 60 + 432pp.

And in the **Medieval Drama Facsimile** series:

The York Play, a facsimile of BL Additional MS 35290, edited by Richard Beadle and Peter Meredith (1983) lxi + 551pp., 5 colour plates.

The Chester Mystery Cycle, a facsimile of BL Harley MS 2124, edited by David Mills (1984) xxii + 288pp.

Full details of these series and of past numbers of *Leeds Studies in English*, including prices and availability, can be obtained from:

The Secretary,
Leeds Studies in English,
School of English,
University of Leeds,
Leeds LS2 9JT, U.K.

All orders should be placed with the Secretary at the above address. Those with standing orders for any series (*Leeds Studies in English*, *LTM* or the Drama Facsimiles) are entitled to a 25% discount on all publications.