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## Like a Duck to Water: Representations of Aquatic Animals in Early Anglo-Saxon Literature and Art

Paul Sorrell

In the second book of his *Life* of Columba abbot Adomnán of Iona relates some details regarding the second and third voyages of the monk Cormac in search of 'a desert place in the ocean'. During the course of his third voyage, Cormac's curach is driven into unexplored northerly latitudes where the fragile skin-covered vessel is assailed by a swarm of small but very aggressive marine animals: 'Quae, ut hi qui inerant ibidem postea narrarunt, prope magnitudine ranarum aculeis permolestae non tamen uolatiles sed natatiles erant' [As those that were present there related afterwards, these creatures were about the size of frogs, very injurious by reason of their stings, but they did not fly, they swam].<sup>1</sup> The *aculei* with which these mysterious creatures are equipped appear to be frontal spines or projections of some sort, and Adomnán's reference to their lack of the power of flight suggests a comparison with the beaks of birds.<sup>2</sup>

Adomnán's English contemporary Aldhelm, in his riddle on the pond-skater or water-strider, 'Tippula' (no. 38), presents a creature that although unable to swim, can cross expanses of water (as well as land) on its four feet:

Pergo super latices plantis suffulta quaternis  
Nec tamen in limphas uereor quod mergar aquosas,  
Sed pariter terras et flumina calco pedestris;  
Nec natura sinit celerem natare per amnem,  
Pontibus aut ratibus fluuios transire feroces;  
Quin potius pedibus gradior super aequora siccis.<sup>3</sup>

[I walk on the waters borne up by my four feet, yet I do not fear  
that I shall drown in the watery main. Rather, I tread on foot  
equally on land and sea. Nature does not allow me to swim in

the fast-moving beck nor to cross turbulent streams by bridge or by boat; instead, I walk with dry feet over still waters.]<sup>4</sup>

Both Adomnán and Aldhelm approach the problem of the identification of their subjects in terms of classificatory features such as physical attributes (beaks, legs); habitat (land, water); and mode of locomotion (walk, fly, swim). Both descriptions exploit the principle of anomaly – in Aldhelm, to illustrate the wonders of creation by means of the riddle device of paradox; and in Adomnán, to assist the reader in the identification of creatures that appear to abrogate clear-cut animal categories.

A creature's activity in a given environment and its ostensible unfitness for such activity is the subject of a number of riddles by Aldhelm and other early Anglo-Latin poets, and some of these are discussed in greater detail below. As in the above example, the literary realisation of the enigma often takes the form of sharp paradox. The principle of taxonomic anomaly that underlies Aldhelm's representation of the pond-skater is characteristically invoked by members of traditional or pre-literate cultures (or, in the case of Edmund Leach's best-known study, contemporary English culture) to describe animals that are perceived as marginal in some way, and is the reason why such creatures are often the subject of a cultural taboo. This at least is the contention of an influential school of structuralist anthropology, pioneered by Mary Douglas and Edmund Leach, that focusses on the anomalous categories of animal that fall in the liminal zone forming the area of overlap between well-defined and conceptually separate categories.<sup>5</sup> Consideration of an animal's ecological habitat and physical attributes is an essential element of this kind of analysis. In her well-known discussion of 'the abominations of Leviticus' Mary Douglas holds that conformity to specific means of locomotion in the appropriate element is the test of ritual uncleanness in animals: 'Leviticus . . . allots to each element its proper kind of animal life. In the firmament two-legged fowls fly with wings. In the water scaly fish swim with fins. On the earth four-legged animals hop, jump or walk. Any class of creatures which is not equipped for the right kind of locomotion in its element is contrary to holiness'.<sup>6</sup>

Margaret Orbell applies the same concepts to an explanation of the reptile taboo in traditional Maori society. Since New Zealand – like Patrick's Ireland or Columba's Iona – has no snakes, the focus of the taboo falls on lizards and, to a lesser extent, the lizard-like tuatara, which 'were thought to have supernatural powers and were regarded with fear and awe. . . . When [in many societies] lizards are feared it is because they are seen as creatures which resemble fish yet have legs

as well, and live on the land rather than in the water. Since they cannot be classified and understood in the normal way they are anomalous, and because of this they are uncanny and dangerous, a threat to ordinary life'.<sup>7</sup> According to a well-known story mentioned by Orbell, lizards and tuatara originally lived in the sea, but then became dissatisfied and moved to their present home. One version of the story includes a debate between the tuatara and the gurnard – to which it bears a remarkable superficial resemblance – over which is the safer environment, the land or the sea; they disagree, and the reptile leaves to take up its present terrestrial habitation. It was this association that led one tribe, Ngaiterangi in the Tauranga district, to declare gurnard as *tapu* and to refrain from eating it.<sup>8</sup>

A number of recent studies have challenged and refined the concept of taxonomic anomaly, pointing out that in many cases perceived anomaly may be the result of an over-rigid ethnographical scheme rather than a true reflection of folk logic; and that in any case the potential number of 'anomalies' far exceeds those recognised as symbolically significant in any given culture.<sup>9</sup> Some cases may be better interpreted as positively 'singular' rather than as negatively anomalous; for Eugene Hunn the proscribed animals of the Levitical code are singular in the sense that they belong to statistical minorities when correlated pairs of characteristics are considered (for example, cud-chewing/cloven-hoofed; or feathered/flying).<sup>10</sup>

The treatment of animals in some of Aldhelm's riddles finds surprisingly close parallels in the zoological taxonomy of contemporary traditional societies. His riddle on the ostrich, for example, presents a creature (not identified as a bird) that although possessed of a large feather-covered body, cannot reach the upper air on its 'meagre wings' (*exiguus . . . pennis*), but is restricted to wandering on foot (*pedibus*) across dusty fields ('Strut<h>io', no. 42). In an explanatory gloss added to the riddle in the early eleventh-century manuscript London, British Library, Royal 12.C.xxiii, the terms of the paradox are made concisely explicit: 'Strutio pennas habet sed non uolat a terra' [the ostrich has wings but cannot fly up from the earth]; and it is unequivocally classified as a bird: 'Strutio auis est magna quae fit in heremo affricae' [the ostrich is a large bird that is found in the African desert].<sup>11</sup> Flightless birds like the ostrich are singled out in many folk taxonomies as animals of special note. The lowland cassowary (*C. unappendiculatus*) of Papua New Guinea has been the subject of a number of anthropological studies and most recently Dan Jorgensen has suggested that among the Telefolmin of the upper Sepik and Elip rivers of Sandaun province, the lowland cassowary, like the echidna, is perceived as an extreme member of the class to which it nevertheless belongs. Just as the echidna

is characterised as *nukok*, 'mother of [the class of] *nuk*', so the lowland cassowary is *uunok*, 'mother of birds'.<sup>12</sup> The ostrich is the only flightless bird known to the Dorzé of Ethiopia, but seems nevertheless to be happily accommodated by their taxonomic system, as it meets their criteria for a bird in being both winged and oviparous. Its flightlessness is regarded as exceptional, in that it violates the empirically valid generalisation that 'birds fly', but not abnormal. Nonetheless, its singularity is no doubt the reason for the use of ostrich eggs and plumes in Dorzé ritual.<sup>13</sup>

It is precisely this potential disparity between the taxonomic definition of an animal kind and the perceived attributes of that kind (what Dan Sperber calls 'encyclopedic' knowledge) that Aldhelm exploits in constructing the paradoxical statements that constitute his riddles.<sup>14</sup> To put it another way, Aldhelm reveals the way in which a particular animal transgresses an 'ideal norm', not the taxonomic definition, but the conjunction of the greatest number of contingent propositions regarding the animal kind in question.<sup>15</sup> Aldhelm is thus concerned with the exceptional species, never an aberrant individual animal, such as a maneless lion or a burrowing cat. In three riddles however he treats fabulous or mythological subjects that are truly anomalous in their violation of taxonomic norms: the Minotaur (no. 28), the Colossus of Rhodes (no. 72) and Scylla (no. 95). The Minotaur, for example, cannot be said to be an abnormal man because he is not a man at all. To use the language of modern scientific taxonomy, Aldhelm is concerned to show how a particular species diverges from traits that can be attributed to its parent genus – hence the direct comparison between the hawk (*accipiter*) and the riddle-subject in line 2 of his 'Struthio' enigma.

Nor is Aldhelm concerned in his riddles with the display of supernatural wonders. Since the subject of each of the one hundred *Enigmata* is identified in the title to each poem, the riddles can be seen not so much as mind-teasing enigmas but rather as expressions of the manifold wonders of the created order. His intention is, as he states in the verse preface to the collection, 'pandere rerum/ Versibus enigmata . . . clandestina' [to reveal . . . the hidden mysteries of things through my verse].<sup>16</sup> The contrast between the natural wonders of Creation and the divinely-assisted miracles that contravene the natural order of things is demonstrated by two passages in Aldhelm's prose treatise on heroic virginity, the *De Virginitate*. When Bishop Narcissus saw that the lamps and torches in his church had run dry of oil at Easter-time, he took water from the fonts, and '*contra rerum naturam* liquentis elementi qualitatem soli Deo mutabilem orationum armatura fretus in aliud genus converteret'

(my emphasis) [relying on the armament of his prayers, contrary to the nature of things he converted the quality of the liquid element – mutable to God alone – into another form].<sup>17</sup> The contrast between natural and supernatural wonders is sharply drawn a little later in the same work where Aldhelm introduces the illustration of the fire-resistant salamander into his account of the trials of the martyrs Cosmos and Damianus, who remained unharmed even in the midst of a blazing furnace: 'ast illos velut salamandras, quas *naturaliter* torrentes prunarum globi assare vel cremare nequeunt, nequaquam flagrantis camini incendia combusserunt' (my emphasis) [but in no way did the conflagration of the raging furnace burn (the twins), who were as salamanders which, by nature, burning lumps of coal are unable to scorch or consume].<sup>18</sup> It comes as no surprise to find the salamander as the subject of one of Aldhelm's *Enigmata* ('Salamandra', no. 15), where the creature's ability to survive its fiery surroundings constitutes the paradox on which the riddle turns.

Many features of the *Enigmata* attest to Aldhelm's formidable Latin learning, a tribute to his intellectual formation in the monastic school of Archbishop Theodore and Abbot Hadrian.<sup>19</sup> Despite his employment of a remarkably esoteric vocabulary; skilful handling of the Latin hexameter (the riddles are ostensibly illustrations to a metrical treatise, itself a section of the compendious *Epistola ad Acircium*); his frequent use of Isidore, Pliny and other literary sources; and his bias towards the etymological exposition of the Latin (and sometimes Greek) names of his riddle-subjects,<sup>20</sup> Aldhelm's description of his riddle-subjects in terms of distinctive attributes and habitats demonstrates his firm affiliation with vernacular culture, as I hope to confirm in detail in the course of this study. Aldhelm's abstruse Latin learning in no way undermined his engagement with indigenous English culture: his activity as a composer and performer of Old English verse is well known from the testimony of William of Malmesbury, and Michael Lapidge has demonstrated the extent to which his Latin prosody was influenced by such essential features of Old English verse as alliteration and the formulaic half-line.<sup>21</sup> In another important study, Lapidge has shown that Aldhelm shared with the *Beowulf*-poet an interest in dragon-fights and that the *Liber Monstrorum*, with its well-known reference to Hýgelac king of the Geats, was compiled by one of Aldhelm's contemporaries in the abbey at Malmesbury.<sup>22</sup> In a recent article, M. L. Cameron has demonstrated the extent to which Aldhelm's riddles are based on close personal observation of the natural world.<sup>23</sup> The close similarities between Aldhelm's treatment of animal kinds and the folk taxonomies characteristic of many contemporary traditional cultures indicate that archaic mentalities and modes of thought are well equipped to survive

the advent of literacy and indeed, to thrive in the work of one whose literate learning is both wide and recondite. This conclusion is by no means surprising, as recent work on orality and literacy has emphasized the extent to which the phenomenon of literacy is assimilated to existing cultural patterns in newly literate societies.<sup>24</sup> The passage from the *Life* of Columba discussed above indicates that the early Celtic culture-province shared the same zoological assumptions as the Germanic world, at least in some important respects, as I demonstrate more fully below.

## I

In the study that follows I draw on a variety of early sources – the writings of Aldhelm and his fellow Anglo-Latin riddlers; early Latin Lives of English saints; and vernacular poetry which, if not always demonstrably early in date, is likely to preserve in its traditional prosody and formulaic diction many features of archaic thought.<sup>25</sup> Some attention is paid to hanging-bowls of mainly Celtic provenance dating from the seventh and eighth centuries, and the early Northumbrian Franks casket is quarried not merely for its runic inscription, but for the revealing rapport between text and artefact. The purpose of the present study is to examine the representation in these various media of fish and other aquatic animals and to demonstrate the extent to which apparently disparate materials exhibit common cultural perceptions of the animal world. The revaluation of artefacts in the light of literary evidence is most vividly illustrated in the case of the Witham bowl, where a new interpretation is proposed of the central element of this remarkable object. The aquatic theme has been chosen partly in order to limit the scope of what otherwise would be a very large and unwieldy enquiry and partly because it facilitates a sharp focus on a major concern of this study, the relationship between an animal and its ecological habitat, and its fitness for that particular environment. The texts and artefacts under consideration reveal a particular interest both in animals confined to a marine or freshwater habitat and also in those that can move freely between aquatic and terrestrial, or even aerial settings.

It is possible to isolate four features that are constitutive of the early Anglo-Saxon conception of the animal world, and reflected in the representations of animals in literature and artworks that survive from the period. Firstly, as we have already seen, an animal is assigned to an ecological habitat or habitats with which it has a peculiar affinity. Secondly, an animal is often seen in terms of its

characteristic means of locomotion. Thirdly, and in association with this, the animal's characteristic *mode* of locomotion, or movement in its habitual setting, is often specified. To put the matter at its most simple: a bird has wings and flies in the air; a fish uses its fins and tail (the caudal fin) – and perhaps its scales – to swim in the water. The Alfredian versifier of the last of *The Metres of Boethius* (probably King Alfred himself) illustrates his contention that the various kinds of animal each have a different 'blioh and fæ'r' [form and mode of locomotion] by explaining how the presence or absence of feet or wings assists the motion of these various kinds in their given habitats:

Creopað and snicað,  
eall lichoma eorðan getenge,  
nabbað hi æt fiðrum fultum, ne magon hi mid fotum gangan,  
eorðan brucan, swa him eaden wæs.  
Sume fotum twam foldan peððað,  
sume fierfete, sume fleogende  
windað under wolcnum. (31:6b-12a)<sup>26</sup>  
[[Some] creep and crawl, their entire body in contact with the  
ground; they have no help from wings, nor can they walk by  
means of feet, make use of the earth – this is their lot. Some  
tread the earth on two feet, some are four-footed, others move  
beneath the clouds by flying.]

The emphasis on the locomotive organs seems to reflect vernacular zoological tradition: the Latin source passage omits the reference to the lack of wings and feet in crawling animals, contains fuller material on the flight of birds and refers not to the numbers of feet possessed by ambulatory creatures, but merely to the imprinting of the ground with their *uestigia*.<sup>27</sup> The Old English version is reminiscent not only of the passage from Douglas's *Purity and Danger* quoted above, but also of a number of passages in Aldhelm's riddles, in particular lines 6-7 of no. 48, 'Vertigo poli', where he asserts that nothing in all of nature can match the movement of the heavenly axis for swiftness, 'Quod pedibus pergat, quod pennis aethera tranet,/ Accola neu ponti uolitans per caerula squamis' [whatever travels on its feet or flies through the air with wings or, as a denizen of the sea, speeds with scales through the blue-green depths (my trans.)]. Here, as in the Levitical account, Aldhelm invokes the concept of the three orders of the animal creation, a system of



classification rooted in indigenous thought as well as in biblical exegesis and with manifestations not only in literature, but also in Germanic and Celtic art.<sup>28</sup> We will meet with it frequently in the course of this study.

The fourth major component of vernacular natural history relates to the various physical attributes of an animal, whether unique to a particular animal kind or shared with others, that are seen as in some way characteristic of it. The organs of locomotion are naturally of great importance in this regard. Features such as a bird's wings or a fish's fins are uniquely associated with a particular animal kind and, in representational terms, can be defined as 'primary diagnostic attributes'. It is of course possible for a writer to refer to a bird or fish without noting these attributes, but a creature that was characterized only as 'the winged one' or 'the finned one', unlinked to an unequivocal signifier (such as *fugel* or *fisc*), could only be intended as a reference to bird or fish respectively. For this reason the reader of *The Battle of Finnsburh* has no difficulty in identifying the animal described only as *græghama* (6), not only because the animal is invoked in the context of the 'beasts of battle' convention, in which the wolf is a traditional participant, but also because the wolf in Old English poetry is conventionally grey-coated.<sup>29</sup> (The wolf's grey coat is incidentally an example of a primary attribute that is unrelated to the locomotive organs.) Some common epithets are shared among two or more animals. A creature characterised as 'the scaly one' might refer to either a fish or a snake or serpentine dragon; Aldhelm for example uses the adjectives *squamiger*, *squamosus* and the ablative nominal form *squamis* to refer to both fish and monstrous serpents.<sup>30</sup> A feature such as 'scaliness' can thus conveniently be labelled a 'secondary diagnostic attribute'. In sum: both primary and secondary attributes are representational conventions, abstract versions of peculiar features of an animal kind's anatomy that are seen to have particular cultural significance.

References to animals in which habitat and movement or locomotion are specified are widely encountered in Old English verse, even in the most generalised contexts. At *Genesis A* 196-205 God gives Adam and Eve control of all the world's resources, including cattle, wild beasts,

and lifigende, ða ðe land tredað,  
feorheaceno cynn, ða ðe flod wecceð  
geond hronrade. (203-05a)

[and the living things which tread the land, [and] the life-endowed kind that stirs the ocean along the whale-road.]

The poet of the Old English *Physiologus* refers to 'fugla ond deora foldhrerendra . . . worna' ['the multitude of land-going birds and beasts', see *The Panther* 4-8a] and the Danish scop who recounts the world's creation in Heorot sings of how the Almighty 'lif eac gesceop/ cynna gehwylcum þara ðe cwice hwyrfaþ' ['created life for every kind of thing that moves about alive', *Beowulf* 97b-98]. A comparable passage in Aldhelm's prose *De Virginitate* on Daniel's exposition of the image of the great tree seen by Nebuchadnezzar in his dream incorporates the features exhibited by the Old English examples, and also includes references to the locomotive organs; under the tree flourished 'pennigeras volucrum turmas praepeti volatu nimborum obstacula penetrantes simulque multimodas ferarum naturas quadripedante cursu per orbem lustrantes . . .' [feathered flocks of birds penetrating the obstacles of the clouds with swift flight, and at the same time the multifarious kinds of beast ranging through the world with four-footed motion . . .].<sup>31</sup> Old English poetic vocabulary abounds with compounds and other periphrastic locutions that express these same notions. In some cases where the first element of a nominal compound designates an ecological habitat that can be considered the normative environment of the animal specified in the second member, the first element may be regarded as semantically redundant, as when birds are referred to as *heofonfugas* (*Genesis* A 201 and 1515; *Daniel* 386; *Azarias* 143; *The Paris Psalter* 103.11) or fish as *sæfiscas* (*Christ III* 986; *The Whale* 56) or *merefixa[s]* (*Beowulf* 549). Such compounds are semantically equivalent to noun phrases such as those found in a passage in *Soul and Body II* (71-81) where most of the major animal kinds are enumerated, including 'fisc on sæ,/ oððe eorþan neat . . .' [a fish in the sea or a beast of the soil, 74b-5]. These various expressions could in turn be considered parallel to such Latin biblical phrases as 'pecora campi . . . volucres caeli, et pisces maris' [beasts of the field . . . birds of the air, and fishes of the sea, *Psalms* viii 8-9; compare *Hosea* iv 3], *aves caeli* (*Ecclesiastes* x 20) and *volatilia caeli* (*Matthew* vi 26). The author of the Lindisfarne *Vita Cuthberti* uses the phrase *aves coeli*;<sup>32</sup> and Aldhelm refers in riddle 29 ('Aqua') to 'uolucres caeli nantesque per aequora pisces' [the birds of the sky and the fish swimming in the sea, line 4].

More properly attributive are the modifiers in compounds such as *sædracan* (*Beowulf* 1426), *eorðdraca* (*Beowulf* 2712 and 2825), *treofugla* (*Guthlac* A 735) or *brimfugas* (*The Wanderer* 47), where the first element assigns the creature to a specific habitat that is not automatically associated with it.<sup>33</sup> In Felix's *Vita Guthlaci* the author refers in one place to Guthlac's control over 'incultae solitudinis volucres et vagabundi coenosae paludis pisces' [the birds of the untamed wilderness and the

wandering fishes of the muddy marshes] and in the following chapter the phrase 'incultae solitudinis volucres' is used again, this time applied to a pair of swallows.<sup>34</sup> The apparently formulaic character of the phrase prompts the speculation that it may reflect an unrecorded vernacular compound such as \**westenfugel*. Of course, such nominal compounds can also embody references to 'diagnostic' attributes (as in *fyrdraca* or *legdraca* in reference to the dragon in *Beowulf*), or simply express the kind of subjective, anthropocentric attitude (as in *niðdraca*, also used of the dragon at 2273) that characterises representations of the natural world in traditional cultures in general and Old English poetry in particular.<sup>35</sup>

Equally commonplace are nominal compounds which denote their referent by joining a noun denoting a particular habitat to an agentive noun that describes a particular kind of action or motion within that environment. Thus the character Saturnus in the second dialogue of Solomon and Saturn attempts to encompass the totality of living creatures in the three periphrases 'grundbuendra,/ lyftfleogendra, laguswemmendra' [of ground-dwellers, air-fliers, water-swimmers, *Solomon and Saturn II* 289b-90]. The apparent tautology presented by this example is matched in the designation of Beowulf's dragon as a *lyftfloga* (2315). Compounds with the second element in *-stapa* are applied to a variety of animal referents and, in the case of *The Wanderer*, to a solitary human exile (*eardstapa*, 6a); and the semi-human Grendel clan, denizens of the moors and borderlands, are *micle mearcstapan* (*Beowulf* 1348a; compare 103a). The raven that tears the corpse of a hanged man in *The Fortunes of Men* 33-42 is a *lapum lyftsceaþan* (39); and when Beowulf's dragon is designated an *uhtsceaða* (2271) and an *uhtflogan* (2760), the temporal dimension expressed by the first member of the compound specifies an 'environmental' affinity just as significant as the dragon's associations with air and land. This class of compound can also be used to express characteristic attributes and attitudes of the creature to which they are applied; examples used of the dragon in *Beowulf* include *attorsceaðan* (2839), *ðeodsceaða* (2278 and 2688) and *guðsceaða* (2318).

The kind of expression that specifies a particular activity that is carried on in a given environment can in theory be applied to more than one referent. Thus the term *lyftsceaþan*, used of a corpse-tearing raven in *The Fortunes of Men*, could equally be applied to Beowulf's dragon, especially in view of the frequency with which the *Beowulf*-poet employs *-sceaþa* compounds in reference to the dragon. The epithet *hæðstapa* is applied in different poems both to the hart (*Beowulf* 1368a) and to the wolf (*The Fortunes of Men* 13a), two animals that seem on a superficial view to have little in common.<sup>36</sup> The identical periphrastic expression can be applied not

only to different animal referents, but to human beings and even to inanimate objects and artefacts. The compound *lyftlacende* refers to birds at *Daniel* 386b-87a (*hefonfugolas, lyftlacende*, an expression paralleled by Aldhelm's 'uolucris penna uolitantis ad aethram' [the feather of a bird flying swiftly in the sky] in riddle 30:4), but is applied to the demons who assail the anchorite Guthlac in *Guthlac A* 146 and is used in a similar context in *Juliana* 281. The fourth reference in the verse is to the drifting of smoke that Judas Cyriacus prevails on God to provide in order to reveal the burial place of the Cross (*Elene* 795). The term *faroðlacende* is used three times in the same poem (*The Whale*) to refer to both fish swimming in the sea (*The Whale* 80b; compare Aldhelm's reference to a fish 'uolitans per caerula' in riddle 48:7) and to sailors, 'those moving about on the stream' (*The Whale* 5a and 20a; compare *Andreas* 507). *The Whale* also characterises its subject as a *wæterþisa* (water-stormer?), a term that recurs in the surviving verse only at *Guthlac B* 1329, where it refers to a ship at sea.<sup>37</sup> The same passage in *Guthlac B* enumerates several kennings for 'ship', including the uniquely-attested *hærnflota* at 1333. Other 'ship' compounds formed on *-flota* are *sæflota* (*Andreas* 381) and *wægflota* (*Andreas* 487 and *Elene* 246). The simplex *flota* is a commonly found in the poetry to denote 'ship' or 'sailor, seaman', but aquatic animals can also be characterized as 'floaters' and the simplex is used both of the whale Fastitocalon in the verse Physiologus, *fyrnstreama geflotan* (*The Whale* 7a) and of the swimming birds which make such poor substitutes for human companions in *The Wanderer* 53-55a (*fleotendra ferð*, 54a).

If the compound *hæðstapa* shows both wolf and hart as occupants of the same habitat, then they must share it with at least one further creature, as it is to the heath that the bear is assigned in *Maxims II* 29b-30a. It is in the gnomic poems, and *Maxims II* in particular, that the notion of a link between a given animal kind and a characteristic ecological habitat finds its clearest and most systematic expression. The affinity between bear and heath is of the same order as that between hand and spear (*Maxims II* 21b-22a) or between heathens and sins (*Maxims I* 131b); *Maxims II* in particular establishes a matrix of ordered relationships that illustrates the extent to which the principle of homology is constitutive of the Anglo-Saxon world-view in the same way that it characterizes the cosmological notions of some contemporary traditional cultures.<sup>38</sup> The two gnomic statements regarding fish in *Maxims II* both assign their subject to an aquatic habitat and describe one aspect of the animals' habitual activity in that medium (27b-28a and 39b-40a). Although in each case the gnomic verb-form *sceal* functions as an auxiliary, it is clear from the structure of the

poem as a whole that the kernel of the gnome resides in the statement of the b-verse, *x sceal on y*, 'fisc sceal on wætere' (27b).<sup>39</sup> Fish goes with water, salmon with pool. In the case of the *leax*, emphasis is given to its characteristic gliding motion (39b-40a).

The intimate relationship between a fish (or any aquatic animal) and its watery element is something that is taken for granted in the poetry. Such a relationship is assumed in the many common kennings for the sea, such as *fisces bæð* (*Andreas* 293, *The Rune Poem* 46), *hwælweg* (*The Seafarer* 63) or *seolhpaðu* (*Andreas* 1714). As we have seen Fastitocalon, the allegorized whale of the Exeter Book Physiologus, is designated as *fyrnstreama geflotan*, 'floating creature of the mountainous oceans' (*The Whale* 7a); he can float placidly on the ocean's surface, or plunge suddenly to its depths (*The Whale* 27-29). The whales invoked in the Song of the Three Children in *Daniel* likewise stir up the ocean currents (386-88a; compare *Azarias* 139-42a). 'Creation', the subject of Exeter Book riddle 40, proclaims itself 'Mara . . . ond strengra þonne se micla hwæl,/ se þe garsegges grund bihealdeð/ sweartan syne' [more massive and mightier than the great whale that occupies the sea-bed, dark in its appearance, riddle 40: 92-94a]. The source passage in Aldhelm's riddle 100 reads more concisely: 'Grandior in glaucis ballena fluctibus atra' [larger than the black whale in the grey waves, line 65]. Two eighth-century Northumbrian hagiographical writers illustrate this kind of ecological relationship in their treatment of a celebrated incident in the life of St Cuthbert. In the version recorded by the anonymous monk of Lindisfarne, the two small sea-animals ('duo pusilla animalia maritima') who come ashore to rub and warm Cuthbert's feet after his night-long vigil in the ocean, are said to return, on completion of their unusual mission, 'ad cognatas undas maris' [to the kindred waters of the sea].<sup>40</sup> In the corresponding passage in Bede's prose *Vita Cuthberti*, the two animals, here identified as otters (*lutraeae*), after ministering to the saint, 'patrias sunt relapsa sub undas' [slipped back into their native waters].<sup>41</sup> While both *cognatas* and *patrias* suggest a close affinity between the animals and their habitat – and suggest that their excursion onto dry land is something of an aberration – the Lindisfarne author's choice of adjective suggests a degree of intimacy that startles the twentieth-century reader.

This intimate relation between an aquatic animal and its sustaining element is widely expressed in the early literature by the metaphor of host and guest. The relationship is analogous to that between soul and body, which is frequently in the poetry expressed by the same metaphor or by related tropes such as master and

servant or house and occupant.<sup>42</sup> The diving whale Fastitocalon is characterized as *garsecgas gæst* (*The Whale* 29), and in Aldhelm's 'Castor' riddle (no. 56) the beaver is a *hospes* living along the steep banks of streams (line 1). The swan of Old English riddle 7 is, in the aerial setting in which it is able to realize its most notable characteristic, a *ferende gæst* (9).<sup>43</sup> Although the term 'guest' is not used in Exeter Book riddle 85 ('Fish and river'), the relationship between the creature and its sustaining environment is that of occupant and house (*sele*). In the Latin analogue, the 'Flumen et piscis' riddle of Symphosius, the *domus* resounds whereas the *hospes* is silent – 'Ambo tamen currunt, hospes simul et domus una' [yet both run on, guest and house together].<sup>44</sup>

Anglo-Saxon thought, as expressed in the vernacular poetry, is much concerned with the defence and violation of boundaries, and with the propriety of things in their settings.<sup>45</sup> The notion expressed in this study of the interaction between an animal (or person, or object) and its habitual setting opens up the possibility that such an entity may transgress the boundaries proper to it, stepping outside its own sphere to invade that proper to another. Thus as Beowulf sinks towards the bottom of Grendel's mere, he is detected by the chief denizen of the place:

Sona þæt onfunde se ðe floda begong  
heorogifre beheold hund missera,  
grim ond grædig, þæt þær gumena sum  
ælwihhta eard ufan cunnode. (*Beowulf* 1497-1500)

[Immediately she who had occupied the flood's expanse for a hundred half-years, ravenous for slaughter, grim and greedy, discovered that a member of the human race was exploring from above the domain of alien beings.]

The sense of the hero's invasion of an alien sphere is underlined by the poet's manipulation of point of view: ostensibly narrated from the monster's perspective, the overarching, anthropocentric viewpoint of the poet-narrator is wrested back in the phrase *ælwihhta eard*, 'the domain of alien beings' (1550a). Considerations of this sort seem to underlie the two opposing senses of Old English *gæst*. Thus a 'guest' may be thoroughly at home in his own environment, whether wholly confined to it (as in the case of Fastitocalon), or introduced into an unfamiliar but compatible setting, one that may in fact replicate the conditions of the guest's

originating environment. Thus Beowulf sleeps peacefully as a *gæst* in Heorot after his defeat of Grendel's mother (1799-1802a) and later the hall is cleared for the returning Geatish warriors, the *feðgestum*, on Hygelac's orders (1975-76). Such terms can be used ironically, as when the hero, locked in combat with Grendel's mother in her submarine cave is described as a *selegyst* (1545); or the Danish Hengest is a *gist* in Finn's hall in Frisia (1138).

These ironic uses of the term mark stages in a progression towards the other major sense of *gæst*, invader or hostile visitor, a 'guest' from an incompatible or hostile environment. Thus the runaway slave who enters the dragon's barrow and steals a cup from the hoard is characterised as a *gyste* (*Beowulf* 2227); and the same term is applied to the dragon himself when, roused from his long guardianship of the barrow by the theft of the cup, he becomes an invader and despoiler of human settlements in the surrounding countryside (2312-15). Likewise Grendel, in his invasion of Heorot, is designated a *gæst* (102 and 2073) and a *wælgæst* (1331 and 1995). In his onslaughts against Beowulf and Wiglaf the dragon is a *gryregieste* (2560), an *atol inwitgæst* (2670) and a *niðgæst* (2699), despite the fact that the fight occurs in the vicinity of the dragon's own cave (see 2538-60). Similarly the demons who assail Guthlac on his hermitage-mound are called *nyðgista* (*Guthlac A* 540), and the hubbub they raise is described in one place as *ceargesta cirm* (393), despite the fact that it is the saint who has himself invaded the territory on which they were previously established (205-14). In both these cases events are seen from the subjective, anthropocentric perspective we have already identified as characteristic of vernacular poet-narrators: dragons and demons, in their dealings with men and their world, can never be anything but hostile guests: 'hyne foldbuend/ swiðe ondrædað' [earth-dwellers fear him greatly, *Beowulf* 2274b-5a].

A significant example of the application of the term 'guest' to an aquatic animal is found in the passage in *Beowulf* where the Danish and Geatish warriors, travelling in pursuit of Grendel's mother after her fatal night-attack on Heorot, come across a body of water inhabited by serpents (*wyrmcynnes fela*, 1425), some swimming, others lying up along the slopes of the shore (1426-29). Angered by the sound of the war-horn, the creatures slither into the mere:

Sumne Geata leod  
of flanbogan feores getwæfde,  
yðgewinnes, þæt him on aldre stod  
herestræl hearda; he on holme wæs

sundes þe sænra, þe hyne swylt fornam.  
Hræpe wearð on yðum mid eoferspreotum  
heorohocyhtum hearde genearwod,  
niða genæged, ond on næs togen,  
wundorlic wægþora; weras sceawedon  
gryrelicne gist. (1432b-41a)

[A man of the Geats deprived one of them of life, of wave-strife, with a bow, so that the hard war-arrow stood in his vitals. He was the weaker at swimming in the lake, when death took him. Quickly he was hard-pressed on the waves with cruelly-barbed boar-spears, violently attacked, and dragged onto the shore, a wonderful wave-piercer; men looked on the terrible stranger.]

Dragged on shore, the water-creature becomes an object of wonder, *wundorlic wægþora*, a designation that succinctly expresses the sense of an active relationship between the animal and the habitat from which it has been so suddenly and violently extracted. Deprived of life and transferred to the land, it is seen by the warriors – themselves visitors in an eerie and forbidding setting – as a 'guest' from an alien and inhospitable environment, a sight to inspire awe, even fear: 'men looked on the terrible stranger'. Here the sense of *gist* is directly antithetical to its usage in *The Whale*, where Fastitocalon is so aptly characterised as *garsecges gæst*, thoroughly at home in his marine environment.

In a few cases in which the term 'guest' is applied to aquatic creatures, the sense in which it is used is uncertain. Thus the reference in Exeter Book riddle 3 to sailors as *brimgiesta* (25) may on the one hand give emphasis to the seafarers' nautical prowess, but may just as well be taken to mean that the men and their vessel are frail and buffeted intruders on the raging ocean currents (see lines 17-35). Aldhelm's *castor* may be a 'guest' on the stream-banks, but there is a suggestion that in its frequent dives '[h]umidus in fundo, tranat qua piscis, aquoso' [down to the watery depths where the wet fish swims, line 5], the beaver is intruding into an element proper to another species. A comparison can be made with that notorious amphibian, Grendel. For Grendel (if not for his mother) the mere seems to be a secondary habitat, a place of retreat, of last resort. Following his encounter with Beowulf, he directs his life-failing footsteps *on nicera mere* (845), that is, into a place whose proper affinities are with another kind of creature altogether.

For those animals that are exclusively aquatic, separation from their sustaining



element is perceived as a traumatic event. The poet of the vernacular 'Fish and river' riddle asserts the divinely-established affinity of the metaphorical *sele* and its occupant and emphasises the fatal consequences of their separation:

Ic him in wunige a þenden ic lifge;  
gif wit unc gedælað, me bið deað witod. (85: 6-7)  
[As long as I remain alive, I always dwell in him; if we two are  
parted, death is appointed for me.]

The same idea is expressed, if more enigmatically, in Bern riddle 30, 'De pisce': 'Vita mihi mors est, mortem pro uita requiro' [life is death to me; I look for death instead of life, line 3].<sup>46</sup>

The death of a water-creature as a result of this removal or separation is often described in terms of the cessation of the animal's characteristic activity in its given habitat. (These are precisely the terms in which the death of the dragon is represented at *Beowulf* 2832-35 and 3043b-46.) Thus the arrow fired by one of Beowulf's men into the water-serpent swimming in the mere separates the creature from – or deprives it of – *yðgewinnes*, 'wave-strife', of life itself, *feores* – the two genitive nouns stand in a relationship of apposition. And the litotes at 1435b-36 underscores the serpent's sudden loss of normal function in its proper environment. Hauled ashore, the *wundorlic wægbora* is a startling anomaly.<sup>47</sup> The same vernacular conception of a fish out of water underlies a passage in a letter from Alcuin to his friend Arn bishop of Salzburg written in 796, where the writer refers punningly to Arn as a keen-sighted eagle diving down from a great height to pluck out 'fluctivagos . . . pisces' [wave-wandering fish] from the sea of this world. Paradoxically however such an operation will result not in the fish's death but in their life ('ad vivificandum non ad mortificandum eruere' [to be hauled out not for death but for life]), and they will be prepared as spiritual food for the banquet of the eternal king.<sup>48</sup>

Essentially the same understanding of an aquatic animal's death is found in the hortatory verse of *Christ III*, where in a passage describing the destruction of the earth by fire on the Day of Judgement, the devastating *deaðleg* (982) is said to sweep across land and sea alike:

Swa ær wæter fleowan,  
flodas afysde, þonne on fyrbaðe

swelað sæfiscas, sundes getwæfde  
wægdeora gehwylc werig swelteð,  
byrneþ wæter swa weax. (984b-88a)

[Even as waters flowed before, the driven floods, then in a bath of fire the sea-fishes shall be burned up. Deprived of its capacity for swimming, each wave-creature shall perish miserably; water will burn like wax.]

Whereas the water-serpent of the *Beowulf* passage is deprived (*getwæfde*) of both life and its conflict with the waters – the one necessarily entailing the other – here the *sæfiscas*, who must exchange their habitual sea-bath for a new and deadly bath of fire, are similarly *sundes getwæfde*, where *sundes* might simply refer to the ocean rather than to the kind of activity appropriate to inhabitants of that environment.<sup>49</sup>

This fatal separation of a marine animal from its native element is again the subject of comment in the runic poem found on the front of the Franks Casket, a decorated whalebone box of Northumbrian workmanship dating from the late seventh- or early eighth-century and now in the British Museum:<sup>50</sup>

Fisc flodu ahof on fergenberig;  
warþ gasric gorn, þær he on greut giswom.  
Hronæs ban.

[The waters raised the fish onto the mountainous shore; the savage creature (?) grew sad, where he swam onto the shingle. Whale's bone.]

The beached whale, unwitting provider of the raw material from which the casket is made is, like the landed water-serpent in *Beowulf*, seen as an anomaly in nature, and therefore worthy of comment. Here again loss of habitat entails loss – termination – of function, but here the poet shapes his material so as to suggest a riddle: the paradox of a sea-creature that 'swims' onto land is combined with an unusual periphrasis (*gasric* is in fact a *hapax legomenon*), with the 'solution' offered at the end of the piece. The designation *hronæs ban* (rather than simply *hron*) draws attention to the material that remains after the whale's demise and points to a significant transformation: bereft of its function in nature, the whale yet provides the raw material for a human artefact, acquiring novel qualities and properties in a wholly new and alien environment. This process suggests a further link with riddle

tradition, specifically the 'transformation' riddles that are commonly encountered in both the vernacular and Anglo-Latin collections. In this kind of riddle the poet describes the change of state in the riddle-subject, which begins as a natural object or substance such as a tree, a feather or ore-bearing earth, often detailing the different functions that are proper to the subject in its successive settings.<sup>51</sup> A close analogue to the Franks Casket inscription, as it relates to its context, is the 'Elephant' riddle of Aldhelm (no. 96) which describes a creature that, although born ugly, nevertheless achieves beauty after death – when, it is implied, its ivory tusks are transformed into exquisitely carved objects.

Separation from ocean, lake or stream does not of course automatically deal out death to all aquatic animals; indigenous natural science distinguished clearly between those animals like the whale that are restricted to water and cannot survive out of it, and those amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals that spend part of their lives in an aquatic setting, but can function just as well in terrestrial or aerial habitats. The treatment of Cuthbert's otters by the Lindisfarne author and Aldhelm's 'Castor' riddle provide clear examples of the way in which some animals were perceived as moving freely between two contrasting habitats, but what is significant is that the phenomenon calls for comment in a way that suggests that such behaviour is incongruous, even paradoxical. The notion of an animal's movement between different habitats is well illustrated by the well-known passage on the hart in *Beowulf* 1368-72: although the *hæðstapa* will, when hard-pressed, make for the woods, she will rather perish on the bank than enter Grendel's mere – implying of course that it is not unusual for deer to take to water *in extremis*. Although, as we have seen, the poet may harbour some doubts regarding Grendel's affinity with water, his mother seems more at home in the water than she does on land. She is introduced to us as a water-dweller (*Beowulf* 1260-61a) and we are later told that she has long presided over the mere as its foremost inhabitant (1497-1500); she is variously described as a *brimwylf* (1506 and 1599) and 'grundwyrgegne,/ merewif mihtig' [outlaw of the depths, mighty mere-woman, 1518b-19a]. In *Beowulf*'s report to Hygelac she is 'ðæs wælmes . . . grundhyrde' [bottom-dwelling guardian of the flood, 2135-36]. The dragon in *Beowulf* likewise moves freely between its earth-cave and the open skies, although this is done in a regular sequence, its air-raids being restricted to the hours of darkness. Unlike the *niceras* or *sellice sædracan* (1426) which inhabit the mere, the 'earth-dragon' cannot function in water. His death, entailing the cessation of his characteristic activity in his normative habitats, is ironically marked by his consignment to a watery grave

(3131b-33).

The sense of incongruity engendered by animals that can perform in multiple habitats underlies a number of animal riddles, in both Latin and Old English. In riddle 7 of the Exeter Book ('Swan') the vernacular poet describes aspects of the bird's activity in relation to the three different habitats with which it is associated, but the particular manifestation of the bird's activity that yields the solution depends on only one of these:

Hrægl min swigað, þonne ic hrusan trede,  
opþe þa wic buge, opþe wado drefe.  
Hwylum mec ahebbað ofer hæleþa byht  
hyrste mine, ond þeos hea lyft,  
ond mec þonne wide wolcna strengu  
ofer folc byreð. Frætwe mine  
swogað hlude ond swinsiað,  
torhte singað, þonne ic getenge ne beom  
flode ond foldan, ferende gæst.

[My clothing is silent when I tread the earth or occupy my lodgings or stir the water. Sometimes my trappings and this lofty air raise me up over the dwellings of men, and then the strength of the clouds bears me wide over the people. My adornments resound loudly and make melody, sing clearly, when I am not in contact with water or land – a travelling guest.]

The swan's 'garment' is silent as long as the animal remains on land (either walking or at the nest) or water, but rustles loudly and melodiously when the bird takes to the air, and the two other possible habitats are explicitly excluded. While the evidence of *The Phoenix* 134-39 corroborates the sense of admiration expressed here for the music of the swan in flight, it is typical of the riddle technique to fix on a characteristic that is both manifested in action and associated (exclusively) with a particular ecological habitat.

The notion of animals active in multiple habitats is invoked in two further vernacular riddles, but in each case the subject described is not a living creature in the usual sense. In riddle 74, convincingly solved by Craig Williamson as 'Ship's figurehead',<sup>52</sup> the subject is said to move not only in the air, but also in the water and on land, and alongside animals proper to two of these habitats:

fleah mid fuglum ond on flode swom,  
deaf under yþe dead mid fiscum,  
ond on foldan stop. (3-5a)

[I flew with the birds and swam in the sea, dived under the wave,  
dead among the fish, and walked on the earth.]

The feather-pen of riddle 51 ('Pen and fingers') is said to be *fuglum framra* [bolder than birds, 4a] on its journey across the writing-surface. Like the figurehead of riddle 74, it too 'fleag on lyfte/ deaf under yþe' [flew in the air, dived under the wave, 4b-5a]. The quill-pen was a popular subject for Aldhelm and his contemporaries and Williamson comments: 'Most of the Latin "pen" riddles are built upon the paradox of the bird-like creature that is caught and forced to travel the flat land. The Old English paradox is that the bird-like creature also dives and travels the land all in the same essential (writing) action'.<sup>53</sup>

The paradox of creatures that are equally at home in seemingly incompatible habitats is exploited too by the Anglo-Latin riddlers, as we saw at the beginning of this study in Aldhelm's treatment of the *tippula* or pond-skater (no. 38). Aldhelm's 'Luligo' riddle (no. 16) recalls the vernacular example on the Ship's figurehead in its evocation of two quite separate habitats shared with their conventional occupants:

Nunc cernenda placent nostrae spectacula uitae:  
Cum grege piscoso scrutor maris aequora squamis,  
Cum uolucrum turba quoque scando per aethera pennis  
Et tamen aethereo non possum uiuere flatu.

[The spectacle offered by my life is a pleasing sight: in company  
with schools of scaly fish I explore the waters of the sea, and  
with flocks of feathery birds I likewise climb through the air;  
nevertheless, I cannot live by breathing air.]

The phenomenon of the squid is, according to the poet, noteworthy in itself (line 1).<sup>54</sup> The creature's apparent violation of environmental norms is reinforced by a second level of paradox introduced into the closing line. Riddle 53 of Eusebius ('De y<ppo>potamo pisce') describes a creature that spends its days in rushing water, but by night grazes the verdant countryside (lines 5-6), a close parallel to the mysterious *eafix* of *The Rune Poem*, an aquatic animal that habitually takes its food on land

(lines 87-89; as I have shown elsewhere, the individual sections of this alphabetic poem are strongly influenced by the riddle-form).<sup>55</sup> In Aldhelm's 'Cancer' riddle (no. 37), the subject is linked with three habitats: the tidal zone (line 2), the ocean proper (line 3) and 'aethereus . . . Olympus' [the ethereal heaven], in the subject's guise as a notable constellation (lines 4-5).

Aldhelm's 'Piscis' riddle (no. 71) likewise exploits the conceit of the constellation that bears the subject's name, and draws the paradoxical contrast with the animal's marine habitat (lines 5-6). Here we also encounter references to the organs of locomotion, or rather the lack of them, as Aldhelm records the absence in the *piscis* of feet, hands and wings as well as the capacity to breathe (lines 1-4). The less polished version of the same subject by Aldhelm's imitator Eusebius (no. 40, 'De pisce') draws on the same elements:

Non uolo penniger aethram, non uago rura pedester;

Sic manibus pedibusque carens me pennula fulcit.

Trano per undisonas ac turgida cerula limphas,

Astriferumque polum et sublime peragro tribunal.<sup>56</sup>

[I do not sail the air with feathers, nor wander the countryside on foot; thus lacking hands and feet a little wing [i.e. 'fin'] supports me. I move through the roaring, swelling waters of the sea, and traverse the starry sky and the lofty court of heaven.]

Here the riddle subject is first defined negatively; lacking the physical attributes that would enable it to function in two specified environments, the fish's possession of a fin (*pennula*) signifies its fitness for its given habitat. It is surely the significance of a fish's fin as a locomotive organ that led the Old English glossator of Aldhelm's riddles in Royal 12.C.xxiii to gloss *squamis* in the 'Luligo' riddle as *finnum*: 'Cum grege piscoso scrutor maris equora squamis' (line 2).<sup>57</sup> I have failed to find any reference to the fins of fish as locomotive organs in Old English verse; Aldhelm, as noted above habitually describes fish in terms of their scales, a secondary diagnostic characteristic in the analytic scheme adopted in this study.<sup>58</sup> The wings of birds are however mentioned frequently in the vernacular poetry, as is the case with Aldhelm in both prose and verse.<sup>59</sup> A man falling from a tall tree is described in riddle-fashion in *The Fortunes of Men* 21-24a as a kind of wingless bird that is nevertheless capable of flight.<sup>60</sup> The converse to this situation is found in Exeter Book riddle 31, where a bagpipe is described in terms of a flightless bird, with

projecting 'feet' (=the two drones?) and 'beak' (=chanter?) hanging down below (lines 6-8).<sup>61</sup> The serpent in *Genesis A* is condemned by God to *faran feðeleas* (908); *feðeleas* here must mean 'lacking visible means of locomotion', since the serpent clearly retains the ability to travel. The only other use of this term in the poetry occurs in riddle 77, where it is applied to the oyster (line 3).

The power of motion on land and its concomitant notion, the possession of feet, is often invoked by the Anglo-Latin riddlers in the equivocal characterisation of their subjects. Thus Tatwine describes an altar – or rather, as in all these examples, it describes itself in the first person – as having the form of a quadruped but lacking the ability to move about of its own accord ('De ara', no. 8); and likewise presents a table whose quadruped form is covered over with beautiful clothes which are rudely pulled away after use to expose the subject's naked limbs ('De mensa', no. 29).<sup>62</sup> The pseudonymous Bern riddler uses a similar conceit for the same subject: 'Quos lactauī, nudam me pede per angula uersant' [those I nourished steer me barefoot into a corner] ('De mensa', no. 5:6). Aldhelm's all-encompassing 'Creatura' has the paradoxical ability to travel on a hundred feet – or none at all (riddle 100:68-9), and his leech, although lacking bones, feet and arms is nevertheless capable of inflicting three-cornered wounds ('Sanguisuga', no. 43). Three of Tatwine's riddles refer to the possession by their respective subjects of only a single foot; thus his paten has 'the likeness of legs' but only one foot ('De patena', no. 12), and his anvil laments the fact that it is 'immobili . . . pede fixus [fixed by an immovable foot] ('De incude', no. 28:3). Tatwine's lectern informs the reader that it is supported by a single foot *sine passu*; and while it appears to be borne up by wings, it lacks the power of flight ('De recitabulo', no. 10).

A number of the vernacular riddles refer, like these Latin examples and the Old English bagpipe riddle discussed above, to the presence or absence of feet in their subject. Thus the ox of riddle 12 is said to travel on his feet ('Fotum ic fere . . .', line 1), and one of the two 'feet' possessed by the subject of riddle 56 ('Web and loom') is said to swing in the air ('leolc on lyfte', line 8a).<sup>63</sup> The mysterious (and much-discussed) *wiht* of riddle 39 '[n]e hafað hio fot ne folme, ne æfre foldan hran' [has neither foot nor hand and never touches the earth, 10], and lacks eyes, mouth and wits into the bargain (11-13a). Yet despite an absence of limbs it remains a living being (27).<sup>64</sup> A number of subjects are distinguished by the possession of a single foot. The inkhorn of riddle 93, formerly part of a stag's headgear, informs the reader that now 'hæbbe anne fot' [I have a single foot, line 27b]; and the rooster of riddle 81 ('Weathercock') is endowed with only a single foot, despite the detailed

enumeration of body-parts, including a *heard nebb*, given in the poem's opening lines (1-5). The creature described in riddle 32 ('Ship') lacks both hands, shoulder and arms (in addition to the power of sight), but moves rapidly 'over the fields' on its one foot. Likewise the one-footed (*anfete*) subject of riddle 58 ('Well-sweep') is very restricted in its power of locomotion: it neither travels far, rides a great deal, nor does it fly and it is not carried on board a ship (1-5a). Finally, the 'feowere fet under wombe' [four feet beneath the belly] that are attributed to the subject of the overly elaborate riddle 36 refer in all likelihood to the oars of a ship (3).<sup>65</sup>

The recognition that the oars supply a ship with its motive force allows them to be seen metaphorically as organs of locomotion. Thus for Aldhelm a ship is propelled over the waves by its oars (*remis, tonsis*; cf. *remige*) in much the same way as a fish moves through the water with its scales (*squamis*) or a bird flies by means of its wings (*pennis*).<sup>66</sup> In his riddle 75 ('Crabro') the hornet is even said to row through the air on its four-fold wings: 'Aera per sudum nunc <bis> binis remigo pennis' [Now I row through the clear air on two pairs of wings, line 1 (my trans.)] When in the vernacular poetry a ship is compared to a bird (*Beowulf* 217-18 and *Andreas* 496b-98a) or to a horse (as in the numerous ship-kennings such as *sæmearh* and *brimhengest*), the analogy is primarily to the rapid and effortless motion characteristic of these animals in their native elements. A more specific parallel between oars and wings is drawn by the sixth-century British monk Gildas, in a passage in the *De Excidio Britonum* (c. 16) which describes an assault on the people of Britain by marauding bands of Picts and Scots: 'alis remorum remigumque brachiis ac velis vento sinuatis vecti . . .' [they came relying on their oars as wings, on the arms of their oarsmen, and on the winds swelling their sails].<sup>67</sup> François Kerlouégan treats Gildas' phrase *alis remorum* as a rather awkward allusion to the Vergilian phrase *remigium alarum* – the inverse of the former, since it implies a comparison between a bird and a ship – a phrase taken up by early grammarians to illustrate the rhetorical figure of *metaphora reciproca*.<sup>68</sup> A rowing-vessel does yet further metaphorical duty in the extended comparison between rowing and swimming that informs the language of the Breca episode in *Beowulf*. Roberta Frank concludes that Unferth in his narrative refers to a *rowing*-contest, but deliberately uses ambiguous language; she points to a conceptual interchange between rowing and swimming exemplified in the passage: 'boats move on limbs and swim; swimmers fling their oars and skim the waves'.<sup>69</sup>



## II

The representations of animals in literary texts, whether vernacular or Latin, are by no means uniformly reflected in the manuscript and plastic arts of the period. In the manuscript tradition of early English and Irish art, the influence of pre-Carolingian continental illumination issued in a purely ornamental use of heavily stylised fish-images, often rendered without regard for anatomical exactitude and certainly devoid of any concern with ecology. There is certainly nothing in the insular tradition to match the concern for naturalism seen in the incised stone monuments of Pictish animal art; in the fish-images surviving from stones of Class I, for example, the body-shape of a salmonoid fish is filled out with tail, fins, midline, operculum (gill cover), eye and mouth all rendered and placed with remarkable anatomical precision, including such refinements as the adipose fin and the pairing of the pectoral and pelvic fins seen in some examples.<sup>70</sup> This last detail points to one feature held in common with the Anglo-Saxon literary tradition: the animal is seen as if in motion. 'There is a confident if rather "frozen" realism: the fish swims; the horse trots; the wolf prowls and slavers'.<sup>71</sup> The fantastic bird-and-fish initials which embellish Merovingian manuscripts such as the Gelasian Sacramentary in the Vatican (Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica, Reg. lat. 316) or the Paris Sacramentary of Gellone (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 12048)<sup>72</sup>, along with the ornamental traditions of early Italian manuscript art, influenced early insular illuminators, particularly those active in the Irish foundation of Bobbio in Lombard Italy.<sup>73</sup> In all these representations of fish, naturalism is subordinated to the requirements of a decorative scheme, involving abstract colour schemes and the selective use of anatomical detail.<sup>74</sup> Whereas in the Merovingian manuscripts the fish and bird images are formed into complete letter-shapes to form large decorative initials,<sup>75</sup> in the Irish tradition represented by the Bobbio manuscripts and the Cathach of St. Columba, and in insular productions such as the Book of Durrow and Durham, Cathedral Library, A.II.10, the curved, spindle-shaped fish images are employed only as accessory elements – to form the cross-stroke of an initial 'F' or the bridge of an 'N', for example.<sup>76</sup>

The initial 'N' on p.2 of Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, S. 45 sup., a Bobbio manuscript, has such a pair of spindle-shaped fish forming the cross-stroke of the two ascenders.<sup>77</sup> The bodies of the fish, which together curve around to form an inverted 'S', are hatched and coloured with red and green inks, the same scheme as the remainder of the initial. Although equipped with mouth, eye and two dorsal fins

apiece, their tails curl away into ornamental spirals, and the fish-images are clearly subordinate to the larger decorative scheme that underlies the composition of the initial as a whole.

Although fish-images of any kind are lacking in the surviving products of the Lindisfarne scriptorium,<sup>78</sup> the striking piscine initials of the mid-eighth-century Stuttgart Psalter (Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, Cod. Bibl. 2°. 12), produced in all likelihood at Willibrord's foundation of Echternach, illustrate the confluence of continental and insular traditions of book decoration.<sup>79</sup> In these initials, both large and small, the heavily stylised fish, notably devoid of fins and (in some cases) tails, are formed into complete initial-shapes and partake of a lively but wholly ornamental colour scheme.

The closest approach to the naturalistic depiction of fish in insular art is found in the Book of Kells, (Dublin, Trinity College Library, A.I.6) which offers a generous store of such images in its decorative scheme. The fish in Kells – always shown in profile, the norm in manuscript art – are uniformly depicted as slim and straight-bodied, with mouth, eye, operculum and a line corresponding to the midline dividing the body into two panels which (in several instances) each contain a row of small circles.<sup>80</sup> The Kells fish are all equipped with a crescent-shaped tail and two series of thorn-like fins, two along the belly and two or three (the frontal pair usually merging to form what is in effect a single organ) placed dorsally. Although still clearly decorative in function, the fish-images in Kells seem remarkably independent, often standing quite detached from the letter-forms with which they are ostensibly associated.<sup>81</sup> The type of fish-image seen in Kells is found again in the Book of Armagh (Dublin, Trinity College Library, MS 52) and in St. Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek 904.<sup>82</sup>

The fish in the Book of Kells form a convenient bridge to the final group of artefacts to be considered here, four seventh- or eighth-century hanging-bowls which all show associations with fish or aquatic animals. The small bronze fish that surmounts the pedestal mounted inside the large bronze hanging-bowl (no. 1) from the royal burial at Sutton Hoo<sup>83</sup> is decorated with two rows of concave depressions (one along the line of the back, the other running along the fish's upper flank) that were probably originally filled with red enamel in imitation of the spotted markings typical of salmonoid fish. The closest analogue to these embellishments in manuscript art – despite a chronological gap of some two hundred years – must be those fish-images in the Book of Kells decorated with similar circle-rows. Like the fish in Kells, the Sutton Hoo fish shows a certain amount of naturalism, displaying

stylised but carefully-modelled features such as mouth, eyes and operculum, a slim salmonoid body (again very reminiscent of the examples in Kells), the remains of a tail, and six fins. Two of these are erected as dorsal fins, while the other four, which must represent the paired pectoral and pelvic fins, are positioned (with little regard for anatomical precision) along the lower flanks. A further curious departure from naturalism is seen in the treatment of the incised scales with which the upper body is covered: these are wrongly aligned, pointing upwards rather than back towards the tail.<sup>84</sup>

The truly significant feature of the Sutton Hoo fish, in terms of the ecological thesis developed in this study, lies in its position and possible function within the bowl. Although the purpose of the hanging-bowls has been the subject of much dispute, recent scholarship has argued convincingly for their use as vessels for containing water, whether for liturgical purposes or (more probably in English contexts) simply as finger-bowls in secular use.<sup>85</sup> The Germanic patches to the bowl, themselves scratched by wear, show the extent to which the vessel was put to use in its East Anglian setting. When the Sutton Hoo bowl was filled with water and the contents stirred with the hand, the fish would move about on its column, its sleek metallic and enamelled body gleaming and shimmering beneath the surface (an effect enhanced by the tinning applied to the upper body). Alternatively, the iron rod whose traces are still detectable in the fish's mouth may have been attached to some device that allowed the model to be revolved from outside the bowl. The naturalistic effect is enhanced by the stylised seal or otter heads – the terminals of the three hook-escutcheons by which the bowl was hung – that face inwards toward the fish from the bowl's rim. The large Sutton Hoo hanging-bowl thus presents a three-dimensional conceit that is the precise analogue, in the medium of metalwork, of the ecological conception of a fish so abundantly exemplified in the surviving literature.

The evidence of three other hanging-bowls strongly suggests that the revolving-fish device on the Sutton Hoo bowl is not an isolated phenomenon. The fragmentary bowl from Lullingstone in Kent, probably dating from the second half of the seventh century and 'a hybrid of Anglo-Saxon and Celtic technique',<sup>86</sup> offers an intriguing parallel to the fish in the Sutton Hoo bowl. Although lacking an internal mount, the bowl was originally decorated with a frieze of animal appliqué in four repeated panels. The single fish image that now survives (alongside birds and deer) is mounted atop an enamelled bronze strip which could be interpreted as a pillar or pedestal and which terminates flush with the bottom of the bowl.<sup>87</sup>

The silver hanging-bowl (no. 8) dating from the seventh or early eighth

century from the St. Ninian's Isle hoard is equipped with three zoomorphic mounts terminating in stylised animal heads that, like those on the Sutton Hoo bowl, seem to peer into the vessel's interior. Although no centre-mounted figure survives from the vessel, a fitting of some kind is missing from the raised circular setting at the centre of a circular gilt mount that is riveted to the omphalos inside the bowl.<sup>88</sup> This arrangement can be compared to the device by which the pedestal is fitted to the basal escutcheon in the large Sutton Hoo bowl.<sup>89</sup>

The St Ninian's Isle bowl is one of only three silver hanging-bowls known to survive; the second was excavated from the royal site of Lejre in Denmark, while the third, now unfortunately lost, was recovered, probably in the nineteenth century, from the River Witham near Lincoln. This richly ornamented piece, whose traces survive now only in the form of a set of coloured drawings and a pair of woodcut blocks now in the possession of the Society of Antiquaries, was described in its first published notice as 'the most remarkable piece of pre-Conquest plate ever found in England'.<sup>90</sup> Kendrick judged the bowl to be 'Mercian or Anglian work of the ninth century', but more recently D.M. Wilson, while accepting the same general provenance, opts for a date in the eighth century.<sup>91</sup> Dunning and Evison suggest affiliations with Northumbrian metalwork and place the bowl in a tradition of English rather than Celtic craftsmanship.<sup>92</sup>

Like the Sutton Hoo and St Ninian's Isle bowls, the Witham bowl is ornamented with (four) hook-escutcheons terminating in animal heads; the four stylised beasts gaze inwards from the vessel's rim not at a fish, but at a naturalistic quadruped of cast silver that stands in the centre of the circular internal mount, its upward-tilted staring head raised just above the level of the rim. In addition, four smaller animal busts, set symmetrically on the internal mount, also appear to gaze up at the central figure. The changes in alignment of this animal detectable in the nineteenth-century illustrations strongly suggest that it was capable of movement, and indeed the small raised circular mount on which it stands in the centre of the basal escutcheon could well have functioned as a revolving base. This animal is described by Bruce-Mitford as a dog, but as he himself admits, such an identification is indeed problematic if, as he thinks, the bowl was intended to be filled with water.<sup>93</sup> Close scrutiny of the illustrations confirms that the Witham beast indeed makes a strange dog, furnished as it is with an elongated neck, short legs and a very long broad, flat tail that curls around its left flank to reach the base of the neck. The conceit of an animal placed in its natural environment demands, here as in the case of the Sutton Hoo bowl, a subject of aquatic habits, and it seems clear

that the Witham specimen is meant to represent an otter, disporting itself in its 'kindred waters' in the company of its congeners.<sup>94</sup>

### III

The evidence of the hanging-bowls combines with that of the literature to witness to a remarkably uniform and consistent perception of the natural world in early Britain and Anglo-Saxon England. Such homogeneity suggests that the representations of aquatic animals in these various media reflect deeply-rooted indigenous cultural forms, rather than more superficial influences imported from the Mediterranean world. Nevertheless, writers such as Aldhelm were undoubtedly subject to such influence, and the extent to which his understanding of the natural world is coloured by the learned traditions of late antiquity is a difficult question to assess. Isidore's treatise on zoology in Book XII of the *Etymologiae* remained the standard authority on the subject throughout the early Middle Ages<sup>95</sup> and was extensively culled by Aldhelm and his fellow Anglo-Latin riddlers.<sup>96</sup>

Isidore's division of the animal kingdom into eight broad divisions is clearly reflected in the work of the Anglo-Latin riddlers and those who studied them; Aldhelm's use of the terms *quadripedans* and *quadrupes* (and Tatwine's metaphorical extension of *quadripes* to refer to both a table and an altar) no doubt owes something to Isidore's discussion of *quadrupedia* at the beginning of Book XII of the *Etymologiae* (XII.i.4).<sup>97</sup> Eusebius begins his riddle 51 ('De scorpione') by noting that his subject has been classified both among the insects (*vermibus*) and the serpents (*serpentibus*) – a clear allusion to the source passage in the *Etymologiae* XII.v.4. Similarly the term *uermis* was used in an early gloss to Aldhelm's 'Tippula' riddle (no. 38) and was eventually incorporated into the title in some manuscripts of the *Enigmata*,<sup>98</sup> the various kinds of *vermes* constitute one of Isidore's major animal categories (*Etymologiae* XII.v). On the other hand, in the vernacular poetic tradition the designation of a dragon as a *lyffflaga* (*Beowulf* 2315) or of the aurochs as a *mære morstapa* (*The Rune Poem* 6) underlines the preeminence of ecology and action as classificatory principles; Isidore, by contrast, assigns these creatures to the categories represented by the headings *De serpentibus* and *De pecoribus et iumentis* respectively (*Etymologiae* XII.iv and i). Again, the poetic designation *hæðstapa* brings together two animals, wolf and hart, that Isidore places in quite separate zoological categories (*Etymologiae* XII.ii.23 and XII.i.18-19

respectively).<sup>99</sup>

In Book XII of the *Etymologiae* Isidore at times makes statements that would have struck a cord with vernacular audiences, such as his observation that whereas fish can move about freely in their environment, other aquatic animals such as oysters, sea-urchins and sponges perforce remain immobile (XII.vi.61); or his definition of amphibians as 'quaedam genera piscium' [certain kinds of fish] that have the faculty of both walking on land and swimming in water (XII.vi.3). His terse reference to the ostrich as an animal that resembles a bird in having feathers but that fails to leave the ground (XII.vii.20), has already been noted;<sup>100</sup> and there would be nothing unfamiliar in his assertion that the motive power of birds is supplied by the wings: 'Volucres enim pinnarum auxilio moventur, quando se aeri mandant' [for when they commit themselves to the air, birds are given motion by the aid of their wings] (XII.vii.7).<sup>101</sup> He again invokes the concept of the locomotive organs in his discussion of snakes in ch. 4: lacking feet, they crawl along by using their ribs and scales for forward propulsion: 'Vestigia serpentium talia sunt ut, cum pedibus carere videantur, costis tamen et squamarum nisibus repant, quas a summo gutture usque ad imam alvum parili modo dispositas habent. Squamis enim quasi unguibus, costis quasi cruribus innituntur' [The movements of serpents are such that, although they clearly lack feet, they crawl by means of their ribs and the downward pressure of their scales, which they have, arranged in a regular manner, from the top of the throat right down to the lower end of the belly. For they are supported on their scales in the manner of hooves and on their ribs as if they were legs] (XII.iv.45; cf. XII.iv.3). Isidore's comment on the bat (*vespertilio*), which he includes among the *aves*, hints at the kind of paradox developed with alacrity by the Anglo-Latin riddlers. Isidore remarks on the bat's resemblance to the mouse and notes the incongruity of a quadruped that has the power of flight: 'specie . . . volatilis simul et quadrupes, quod in aliis avibus reperiri non solet' [in appearance both a flying creature and a quadruped at the same time, something not usually encountered among the other birds] (XII.vii.36).<sup>102</sup>

These passages aside, the idea of an animal's fitness (or unfitness) for activity in a particular ecological setting is presented by Isidore not as an essential idea, still less as the controlling scheme of Book XII of the *Etymologiae*, but only intermittently and on an equal footing with alternative explanations – a seemingly arbitrary mix of factors which include habitat and mode of locomotion, but also such notions as the manner of generation (for example, the spontaneous generation of *vermes* from carrion, wood and so on)<sup>103</sup> and usefulness to mankind. These

explanations in turn all fall subordinate to his pervasive emphasis on lexical etymology as a major hermeneutic principle. In this respect Isidore stands in strong contrast to the vernacular conceptions, expressed in literature and metalwork, the interpretation of which has formed the burden of the present study. Much of the zoological lore preserved in these early texts and artefacts has been lost with the passage of time and cultures, but other insights have proved remarkably durable. Classification according to the organs of locomotion was standard procedure in European science until well into the early modern era and indeed formed the basis of one of the early schemes of classification proposed by Carl Linnaeus, father of modern scientific taxonomy.<sup>104</sup> And his theory of the economy of Nature, expounded in the *Oeconomia Naturae* of 1749, is in some dim sense the remote descendant of the notion of the essential affinity between animal and habitat.<sup>105</sup> Of course, the cultural conditions that gave rise to the representations that survive to us from early northern Europe can never be reduplicated, but an approach to the natural world founded on a deep appreciation of ecological relationships has much to commend it in the closing years of the twentieth century.

NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Adomnán's Life of Columba*, ed. and trans. A. O. Anderson and M. O. Anderson, rev. ed. (Oxford, 1991), pp. 168-9.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Anderson and Anderson, *Adomnán's Life of Columba*, p. 168, n. 191. It seems likely that Cormac encountered a flotilla of the sea jellies known today as By-the-wind sailor or Jack-sail-by-the-wind (*Velella velella*); the animal consists of a horny float made up of an oval raft (measuring up to 2.5" x 1.5") surmounted by an upright triangular 'sail' set diagonally across it. They swarm in huge numbers in tropical waters but are occasionally found off the south and west coasts of Ireland, transported by the Gulf Stream and are no doubt carried even further north by the North Atlantic Current (see A. Hardy, *The Open Sea: its Natural History I: The World of Plankton*, rev. ed. (London, 1958), pp. 13-20, 110-14 and pl. 5.2).

<sup>3</sup> The best edition of Aldhelm's 100 riddles is found in *Aldhelmi Opera*, ed. R. Ehwald, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auct. antiq. 15 (Berlin, 1919), pp. 97-149; Ehwald's text of the riddles is reprinted in F. Glorie (ed.), *Collectiones Aenigmatum Merovingicae Aetatis*, Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina 133-133A (Turnhout, 1968), pp. 371-540. (Glorie's text is cited throughout for convenience.)

<sup>4</sup> M. Lapidge and J. L. Rosier (trans.), *Aldhelm: the Poetic Works* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 77. Unless otherwise indicated, passages of translation from Aldhelm are quoted from this work or from M. Lapidge and M. Herren, *Aldhelm: the Prose Works* (Ipswich and Totowa, NJ, 1979). It is likely that the Old English translator of Aldhelm's 'Creation' riddle (no. 100) used line 6 of the 'Tippula' enigma to augment Aldhelm's terse reference to the *tippula* in line 41 of the former. See *The Riddles of the Exeter Book*, ed. F. Tupper (Boston, Mass., 1910), pp. 168-9; and see K. O'Brien O'Keefe, 'The Text of Aldhelm's *Enigma* no. c in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson C. 697 and Exeter Riddle 40', *ASE* 14 (1985), 61-73, at 68-70.

<sup>5</sup> See M. Douglas, 'Animals in Lele Religious Symbolism', *Africa* 27 (1957), 46-58; E. R. Leach, 'Anthropological Aspects of Language: Animal Categories and Verbal Abuse', in *New Directions in the Study of Language*, ed. E. H. Lenneberg (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), pp. 23-63; M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: an Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London, 1966), esp. pp. 41-57 and 166-72; R. Bulmer, 'Why is the Cassowary not a Bird? A Problem of Zoological Taxonomy among the Karam of the New Guinea Highlands', *Man* n.s. 2 (1967), 5-25; S. J. Tambiah, 'Animals are Good to Think and Good to Prohibit', *Ethnology* 8 (1969), 423-59; R. Willis, *Man and Beast* (London, 1974); Gísli Pálsson, 'The Idea of Fish: Land and Sea in the Icelandic World-View', in *Signifying Animals: Human Meaning in the Natural World*, ed. R. Willis (London, 1990), pp. 119-33.

<sup>6</sup> Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, pp. 55-56.



<sup>7</sup> M. Orbell, *The Natural World of the Maori* (Auckland, 1985), p. 157.

<sup>8</sup> Orbell, *The Natural World*, p. 162.

<sup>9</sup> See R. Ellen, 'Introductory Essay', in *Classifications in their Social Context*, ed. Roy F. Ellen and David Reason (London, 1979), pp. 1-32, at 14-15. Recent responses and modifications to the structuralist theory of anomaly include D. Sperber, 'Pourquoi les animaux parfaits, les hybrides et les monstres sont-ils bons à penser symboliquement?', *L'Homme* 15 (1975), 5-34; M. Douglas, 'The Pangolin Revisited: a New Approach to Animal Symbolism', in *Signifying Animals*, ed. R. Willis, pp. 25-36; and B. Mundkur, *The Cult of the Serpent: an Interdisciplinary Survey of its Manifestations and Origins* (Albany, NY, 1983), esp. pp. 258-62.

<sup>10</sup> E. Hunn, 'The Abominations of Leviticus Revisited: a Commentary on Anomaly in Symbolic Anthropology', in Ellen and Reason (eds), *Classifications in their Social Context*, pp. 103-16, at 108-09 and 113.

<sup>11</sup> Nancy Porter Stork (ed.), *Through a Gloss Darkly: Aldhelm's Riddles in the British Library MS Royal 12.C.xiii* (Toronto, 1990), p. 151. The gloss is loosely based on Isidore, *Etymologiae* XII.vii.20: 'Struthio Graeco nomine dicitur, quod animal in similitudine avis pinnae habere videtur; tamen de terra altius non elevatur. Ova sua fovere neglegit; sed proiecta tantummodo fotu pulveris animantur'. All quotations and citations from Isidore's *Etymologiae* are taken from W. M. Lindsay (ed.), *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri XX* (Oxford, 1911). The ostrich riddle of Eusebius (no. 57) is based closely on this passage (Glorie, *Collectiones Aenigmatum*, p. 268). On the transmission of the Latin glosses to the *Enigmata* (which may derive from the school of Aldhelm himself), see Stork, *Through a Gloss*, pp. 2, 48, 70 and 73-74.

<sup>12</sup> D. Jorgensen, 'Echidna and Kuyaam: Classification and Anomalous Animals in Telefolmin', *Journal of Polynesian Studies* 100 (1991), 365-80, at 372. See also Bulmer, 'Why is the Cassowary not a Bird'; and Don Gardner, 'A Note on the Androgynous Qualities of the Cassowary: or Why the Mianmin Say it is not a Bird', *Oceania* 55 (1984), 137-45.

<sup>13</sup> Sperber, 'Pourquoi les animaux parfaits', pp. 16 and 24.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Sperber, 'Pourquoi les animaux parfaits', esp. pp. 25-32.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Sperber, 'Pourquoi les animaux parfaits', p. 25.

<sup>16</sup> Ehwald (ed.), *Aldhelmi Opera*, p. 97; for further discussion of Aldhelm's aims see Lapidge and Rosier (trans.), *Aldhelm: The Poetic Works*, p. 63.

<sup>17</sup> *De Virginitate* c. XXXII; Ehwald (ed.), *Aldhelmi Opera*, p. 271.

<sup>18</sup> *De Virginitate* c. XXXIV; Ehwald (ed.), *Aldhelmi Opera*, p. 276.

<sup>19</sup> See now M. Lapidge, 'The School of Theodore and Hadrian', *ASE* 15 (1986), 45-72.

<sup>20</sup> On these various aspects of Aldhelm's Latin learning, see M. Winterbottom, 'Aldhelm's Prose Style and its Origins', *ASE* 6 (1977), 39-76; J. Marenbon, 'Les Sources du vocabulaire d'Aldhelm', *Bulletin du Cange* 41 (1979), 75-90; M. Lapidge, 'The Hermeneutic Style in Tenth-

Century Anglo-Latin Literature', *ASE* 4 (1975), 67-111, at 73-5; and N. Howe, 'Aldhelm's *Enigmata* and Isidorian Etymology', *ASE* 14 (1985), 37-59.

<sup>21</sup> See M. Lapidge, 'Aldhelm's Latin Poetry and Old English Verse', *Comparative Literature* 31 (1979), 209-31.

<sup>22</sup> M. Lapidge, "'Beowulf", Aldhelm, the "Liber Monstrorum" and Wessex', *Studi Medievali* 3rd ser. 23 (1982), 151-92.

<sup>23</sup> M. L. Cameron, 'Aldhelm as Naturalist: a Re-examination of Some of his *Enigmata*', *Peritia* 4 (1985), 117-33.

<sup>24</sup> See P. Sorrell, 'Oral Poetry and the World of *Beowulf*', *Oral Tradition* 7 (1992), 28-65, at 28-31, esp. 30, n. 8.

<sup>25</sup> See P. Clemoes, "'Symbolic" Language in Old English Poetry', in *Modes of Interpretation in Old English Literature: Essays in Honour of Stanley B. Greenfield*, ed. Phyllis R. Brown et al. (Toronto, 1986), pp. 3-14; and Sorrell, 'Oral Poetry', esp. pp. 29-31.

<sup>26</sup> For the prose passage on which this *Metre* is based, see W. J. Sedgefield (ed.), *King Alfred's Old English Version of Boethius De Consolatione Philosophiae* (Oxford, 1899), p. 147 (c. XLI.vi). Passages of Old English verse, with the exception of *Beowulf*, are cited and quoted from G. P. Krapp and E. van K. Dobbie (eds), *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records* (New York, 1931-53). References to *Beowulf* are from Fr. Klaeber (ed.), *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg* (3rd ed., Lexington, Mass., 1950).

<sup>27</sup> See Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, ed. H. F. Stewart (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), pp. 396-98.

<sup>28</sup> On the three orders of creation, see Carola Hicks, 'The Pictish Class I Animals', in R. Michael Spearman and John Higgitt (eds), *The Age of Migrating Ideas: Early Medieval Art in Northern Britain and Ireland* (Edinburgh, 1993), pp. 196-202, at 199.

<sup>29</sup> See *The Wanderer* 82b, *The Fortunes of Men* 12b-13a, *The Battle of Brunanburh* 64b-65a and *Maxims I* 146-51. The epithet 'grey' may of course be attributed to other animals, in phrases such as 'se græga mæw' (*Andreas* 371).

<sup>30</sup> See Ehwald (ed.), *Aldhelmi Opera*, pp. 107, 110, 266-67, 308, 376 and 450-51 [serpents]; and pp. 104, 105, 118, 353 and 362 [fish].

<sup>31</sup> Ehwald (ed.), *Aldhelmi Opera*, p. 251.

<sup>32</sup> B. Colgrave (ed.), *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert* (Cambridge, 1940), p. 100.

<sup>33</sup> It is of course possible that in a compound like *heofonfugel* the first element may be restrictive or attributive. In his treatment of OE compounds Charles T. Carr does not discuss *heofonfugel* but lists *heofontungol* as an example of a sub-class of the restrictive type where 'the first part of the compound may indicate the place where the second part is or for which it is intended' (*Nominal Compounds in Germanic*, London, 1939, p. 322). 'Pleonastic' compounds by

contrast are those in which the meaning of the first member is already contained in the second, such as *wæteryð*, *lagustream* or *gielpcwide* (pp. 320-21 and 329-30).

<sup>34</sup> B. Colgrave (ed.), *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac* (Cambridge, 1956), pp. 120 and 122.

<sup>35</sup> See P. Sorrell, 'Oaks, Ships, Riddles and the Old English *Rune Poem*', *ASE* 19 (1990), 103-16, at 112.

<sup>36</sup> For further discussion of *-stapa* compounds see Ann Squires (ed.), *The Old English Physiologus* (Durham, 1988), p. 51.

<sup>37</sup> See the discussion in Jane Roberts (ed.), *The Guthlac Poems of the Exeter Book* (Oxford, 1979), p. 180.

<sup>38</sup> See R. Needham, *Symbolic Classification* (Santa Monica, CA, 1979), p. 66. Needham's discussion of the world-view of the Purum people of the Indo-Burma border includes the observation that in Purum society 'we find a mode of classification by which things, individuals, groups, qualities, values, spatial notions and other ideas of the most disparate kinds are identically ordered within one system of relations' (p. 51; quoted here from R. Needham, *Structure and Sentiment: a Test Case in Social Anthropology* (fourth corrected imprint, Chicago, 1969), p. 95). For further examples of analogical thought (the cognitive basis of homology) in contemporary pre-literate cultures, see Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago, 1966), pp. 56, 60-63 and 97.

<sup>39</sup> See Blanche C. Williams, *Gnomic Poetry in Anglo-Saxon* (New York, 1914), pp. 108-09.

<sup>40</sup> Colgrave, *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert*, p. 80 (Bk. II.3).

<sup>41</sup> Colgrave, *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert*, p. 190 (C. X).

<sup>42</sup> The term *gæst* (*gæst*?) is frequently used in the two *Soul and Body* poems, and the master/servant relationship is the governing trope in the Exeter Book 'Soul and Body' riddle (no. 43): Cynewulf refers to the body as the soul's *gæsthof* in *Christ II* 820, and *Judgement Day I* designates the pair as *gæst ond bansele* (102).

<sup>43</sup> Craig Williamson (ed.), *The Old English Riddles of the Exeter Book* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1977) favours the reading *gæst* ('guest') over *gæst* ('spirit') (p. 153). Some examples interpreted in the present study as (-)*gæst* may in fact be instances of (-)*gæst* ('spirit, demon'). See the discussion of *Guthlac B* 1220 in Roberts, *Guthlac Poems*, p. 175.

<sup>44</sup> Symphosius's riddle is edited in Glorie (ed.), *Collectiones Aenigmatum*, p. 633. The house-and-occupant trope is also found in Bern riddle 30 ('De pisce'), *ibid.* p. 576.

<sup>45</sup> See my paper 'The Approach to the Dragon-fight in *Beowulf*, Aldhelm and the "traditions folkloriques" of Jacques Le Goff', forthcoming in *Parergon* 12 (1994). Sarah Lynn Higley, 'Aldor on Ofre, or the Reluctant Hart: a Study of Liminality in "Beowulf"', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 87 (1986), 342-53 is also useful.

<sup>46</sup> Glorie (ed.), *Collectiones Aenigmatum*, p. 576. On the possible English affiliations of the Bern riddles or *Aenigmata Tullii*, see Lapidge and Rosier, *Aldhelm: the Poetic Works*, p. 68, n. 37;

and Sorrell, 'Oaks, Ships, Riddles', pp. 104 and 113, n. 42.

<sup>47</sup> For a perceptive discussion of this passage, see P. Clemoes, 'Action in *Beowulf* and our Perception of it', in *Old English Poetry: Essays on Style*, ed. D. G. Calder (Berkeley, CA, 1979), pp. 147-68, at 155-56.

<sup>48</sup> See *Alcuini Epistolae*, ed. E. Dümmler, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, *Epistolae* 4 (Berlin, 1895), p. 163 (*Epistola* 113).

<sup>49</sup> See Roberta Frank, 'Did Anglo-Saxon Audiences have a Skaldic Tooth?', *Scandinavian Studies* 59 (1987), 338-55, at 344-45. Frank claims that, with certain exceptions in *Beowulf* and *Solomon and Saturn*, *sund* in OE poetry always signifies 'sea', but in prose stands for the abstract act or power of 'swimming'.

<sup>50</sup> On provenance and date see Leslie Webster, 'Stylistic Aspects of the Franks Casket', in *The Vikings*, ed. R. T. Farrell (London, 1982), pp. 20-31; and Leslie Webster and Janet Backhouse (eds), *The Making of England: Anglo-Saxon Art and Culture AD 600-900* (London, 1991), pp. 101-03 (cat. 70).

<sup>51</sup> See Sorrell, 'Oaks, Ships, Riddles', p. 109; and for examples in the Anglo-Latin collections, see Glorie, *Collectiones Aenigmatum*, pp. 173 ('De penna'), 205 ('De carbone'), 240 ('De atramentorio'), 247 ('De uitulo'), 401 ('Salis'), 459 ('Pugio'), 485 ('Fundibalum'), 493 ('Cupa uinaria'), 497 ('Calix uitreus'), 564 ('De scopa'), 570 ('De membrana') and 573 ('De papiro').

<sup>52</sup> Williamson, *Old English Riddles*, pp. 349-52.

<sup>53</sup> Williamson, *Old English Riddles*, p. 293. For the relevant Latin examples, see Glorie, *Collectiones Aenigmatum*, pp. 173, 245 and 455.

<sup>54</sup> For the solution 'squid', rather than 'flying-fish' as given in Glorie's ed., see the convincing discussion in Cameron, 'Aldhelm as Naturalist', p. 119.

<sup>55</sup> See Sorrell, 'Oaks, Ships, Riddles', esp. p. 111.

<sup>56</sup> Glorie (ed.), *Collectiones Aenigmatum*, p. 250. On the identity of 'Eusebius', an early imitator of Aldhelm, see Lapidge and Rosier, *Aldhelm: the Poetic Works*, p. 66, n. 29.

<sup>57</sup> Stork, *Through a Gloss Darkly*, p. [117]. It is perhaps the feeling that the fins, rather than scales, are the fish's proper locomotive organs that prompted Lapidge and Rosier to translate 'Accola neu ponti uolitans per caerula squamis' in Aldhelm's riddle 48 (line 7) as '... as a denizen of the sea, speeds with fins through the blue-green depths ...' (*Aldhelm: the Poetic Works*, p. 80). It is possible that Aldhelm in fact considered the scales to be the locomotive organs in fish – as Isidore did in relation to snakes (see below, p. 57).

<sup>58</sup> See above, p. 36, n. 30.

<sup>59</sup> See *The Seafarer* 24-25; *The Fortunes of Men* 88; *Andreas* 864; *Elene* 29 and 111; *Judith* 210; *Genesis A* 1984; *Exodus* 163; *The Paris Psalter* 77.27; *The Metres of Boethius* 24.1-2, 9 and 31.8; and *The Phoenix* 86, 100, 123, 145, 163, 266, 316 and 347. See also *Genesis B* 417. For

Aldhelm birds are conventionally 'winged' or 'feathered' in the same way that fish are 'scaly'; see Ehwald, *Aldhelmi Opera*, pp. 104 ('volucrum turma . . . pennis'), 251 ('pennigeras volucrum turmas'), 265 ('penniger praepes'), 386 ('aliger . . . praepes') and 414 ('pinniger . . . praepes'). The phrase 'pennigeros . . . uolucres' is found in Eusebius' riddle 43 (Glorie, *Collectiones Aenigmatum*, p. 253); and the early-ninth-century Northumbrian poet Æthelwulf uses the phrase 'aligeras uolucres' in one place (*De Abbatibus*, ed. A. Campbell, Oxford, 1967, p. 17, line 175).

<sup>60</sup> See Sorrell, 'Oaks, Ships, Riddles', pp. 106-07.

<sup>61</sup> For this interpretation see J. W. Bright's remarks quoted in Williamson, *Old English Riddles*, p. 234.

<sup>62</sup> Tatwine's riddles are printed in Glorie, *Collectiones Aenigmatum*, pp. 165-208.

<sup>63</sup> According to E. von Erhardt-Siebold the 'feet' are the weighted ends of the two rows of warp-threads (see 'The Old English Loom Riddles', in *Philologica: the Malone Anniversary Studies*, ed. Thomas A. Kirby and Henry Bosley Woolf, Baltimore, 1949, pp. 9-17, at 15; cited by Williamson, *Old English Riddles*, pp. 306-07).

<sup>64</sup> Williamson discusses earlier solutions and solves as 'Speech', *Old English Riddles*, pp. 258-65. S. B. Greenfield offers the solution 'Dream' in 'Old English Riddle 39 Clear and Visible', *Anglia* 98 (1980), 95-100; the latest attempt is by John Wilson, 'Old English Riddle no. 39: "Comet"', *Notes and Queries* 236 (1991), 442-43.

<sup>65</sup> See Williamson, *Old English Riddles*, p. 251.

<sup>66</sup> Compare Aldhelm's riddles 16:2-3, 42:3 and 48:6-7 with 92:5-6 and 95:8-10. For the Vergilian echo in the latter example, see Glorie, *Collectiones Aenigmatum*, p. 519.

<sup>67</sup> *Gildas: The Ruin of Britain and Other Works*, ed. and trans. Michael Winterbottom (London and Totowa, NJ, 1978), p. 94.

<sup>68</sup> See François Kerlouégan, 'Un exemple de metaphora reciproca dans le *De Excidio Britanniae*: Gildas et le "Donat chrétien"', in Alfred Bammesberger and Alfred Wollmann (eds), *Britain 400-600: Language and History* (Heidelberg, 1990), pp. 79-83. In the *Vita Guthlaci*, Felix says that the defeated demons bore up the saint 'velut quietissimo alarum remigio', and Colgrave gives *Aeneid* I, 301 as the source of the phrase (Colgrave, *Felix's Life of Saint Guthlac*, p. 108). Isidore, in an example not noted by Kerlouégan, uses the phrase in relation to birds in the *Etymologiae* XII.vii.3.

<sup>69</sup> Frank, 'Did Anglo-Saxon Audiences Have a Skaldic Tooth?', p. 345.

<sup>70</sup> See Charles Thomas, 'The Animal Art of the Scottish Iron Age and its Origins', *Archaeological Journal* 118 (1961), 14-64, at 47-49. See also Isabel Henderson, *The Picts* (London, 1967), pls. 30 and 35. The Pictish fish-images should be compared to the line-drawings of salmon and trout in a modern handbook such as Alwyne Wheeler, *The Fishes of the British Isles and North-west Europe* (London, 1969), pp. 150 and 152. I have not had access to the catalogue of Pictish monuments in Joseph Anderson and J. Romilly Allen, *The Early Christian Monuments of*

Scotland (Edinburgh, 1903).

<sup>71</sup> Thomas, 'The Animal Art', p. 49. For an illuminating general discussion of the Pictish animal figures, see Hicks, 'The Pictish Class I Animals'.

<sup>72</sup> See Francis Klingender, *Animals in Art and Thought to the End of the Middle Ages*, ed. Evelyn Antal and John Harthan (London, 1971), p. 105.

<sup>73</sup> See Françoise Henry, 'Les débuts de la miniature Irlandaise', in Françoise Henry and Geneviève Marsh-Micheli, *Studies in Early Christian and Medieval Irish Art. II: Manuscript Illumination* (London, 1984), pp. 11-40, esp. 24-39 [reprinted from *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 37 (1950), 5-34]. Henry attributes to Ireland a number of manuscripts now regarded as Hiberno-Saxon.

<sup>74</sup> On the non-naturalistic use of colour in manuscript art of the insular period, see J. J. G. Alexander, 'Some Aesthetic Principles in the Use of Colour in Anglo-Saxon Art', *ASE* 4 (1975), 145-54, at 145-48.

<sup>75</sup> For example, the Gelasian Sacramentary, Bib. Apost. Reg. lat. 316, fol. 132r; see Hans Holländer, *Early Medieval Art* (London, 1974), pl. 1. See also Jean Hubert, Jean Porcher and W. F. Volbach, *Europe in the Dark Ages* (London, 1969), pls. 176, 177 and 189.

<sup>76</sup> See Henry, 'Les débuts', p. 35, fig. 20; and A.A. Luce *et al.* (eds), *Evangeliorum Quattuor Codex Durmachensis*, 2 vols. (Olten, Lausanne and Freiburg im Breslau, 1960), II 130-31. See also the discussion in Uta Roth, 'Early Insular Manuscripts: Ornament and Archaeology, with Special Reference to the Dating of the Book of Durrow', in Michael Ryan (ed.), *Ireland and Insular Art, A.D. 500-1200* (Dublin, 1987), pp. 23-29, at 23. I have not seen the compendium of insular ornament in Uta Roth, 'Studien zur Ornamentik frühchristlicher Handschriften des insularen Bereiches. Von den Anfängen bis zum Book of Durrow', *Bericht der Römisch-Germanischen Kommission* 60 (1979), 5-225.

<sup>77</sup> Reproduced in T. D. Kendrick *et al.* (eds), *Evangeliorum Quattuor Codex Lindisfarnensis*, 2 vols. (Olten and Lausanne, 1960), II pl. 20 (e); and Henry, 'Les débuts', fig. 20 (d).

<sup>78</sup> See Luce, *Codex Durmachensis*, II 131.

<sup>79</sup> See Webster and Backhouse, *The Making of England*, pp. 162-66 (cat. 128); and J. J. G. Alexander, *Insular Manuscripts, 6th to the 9th Century* (London, 1978), pp. 54-55 (cat. 28).

<sup>80</sup> For some of the fish in Kells see Françoise Henry (ed.), *The Book of Kells: Reproductions from the Manuscript in Trinity College, Dublin* (London, 1974), pls. 29 (fol. 34r), 56 (fol. 183v), 62 (fol. 188v), 75 (fol. 254r), 86 (fol. 282v), 100 (fol. 311v), 107 (fol. 34r), 116 (fol. 179v), 119 (fol. 243v) and 123 (fol. 250v). The fish decorated with circle-rows can be seen on pls. 56, 62, 116, 119 and 123 (a single row, placed medially). For connections between Pictish art and the Book of Kells, see Isabel Henderson, 'Pictish Art and the Book of Kells', in Dorothy Whitelock, Rosamond McKitterick and David Dumville (eds), *Ireland in Early Mediaeval Europe: Studies in Memory of Kathleen Hughes* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 79-105, esp. 90-94 on animal art.

<sup>81</sup> See Luce, *Codex Durmachensis*, II 130.

<sup>82</sup> See Luce, *Codex Durmachensis*, II 130.

<sup>83</sup> For documentation of the bowl see Rupert Bruce-Mitford, *The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial*, 3 vols. (London, 1975-1983), III 1 206-44, 264-82, 290-98 and 300-07; and Jane Brennan, *Hanging Bowls and their Contexts: An Archaeological Survey of their Socio-economic Significance from the Fifth to Seventh Centuries A.D.* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 266-69 (cat. 54). Bruce-Mitford dates the bowl to 'around 600 or a little later' (III 1 290) and suggests that it was made in one of the royal Celtic workshops active in the north or west of Britain (perhaps Elmet), rather than in Ireland (III 1 293-95). The possibility of an Irish origin is accorded somewhat more weight in *idem*, 'Ireland and the Hanging-bowls – a Review', in Ryan, *Ireland and Insular Art*, pp. 30-39, at 38. Michael Ryan puts a strong case for the bowl's Irish origin in 'The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial and Ireland: Some Celtic Perspectives', in Robert Farrell and Carol Neuman de Vegvar (eds), *Sutton Hoo: Fifty Years After* (Oxford, OH, 1992), pp. 83-116, at 90-95.

<sup>84</sup> For a full discussion of the fish and its setting see Bruce-Mitford, *The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial* III 1 221-29 and 239-44, pl. 7a and figs. 170-75.

<sup>85</sup> See the discussion by D. M. Wilson in Alan Small, Charles Thomas and David M. Wilson, *St. Ninian's Isle and its Treasures*, 2 vols. (London, 1973), I 110; and Bruce-Mitford, 'Ireland and the Hanging-bowls', p. 31. Wilson cites two important earlier studies by G. Haseloff, 'Fragments of a Hanging-bowl from Bekebourne, Kent, and Some Ornament Problems', *Medieval Archaeology* 2 (1958), 72-103; and A. Liestøl, 'The Hanging Bowl, a Liturgical and Domestic Vessel', *Acta Archaeologica* 24 (1953), 163-70. Brennan surveys the literature on the function of the bowls in *Hanging Bowls*, pp. 27-41 and 133-38.

<sup>86</sup> Hicks, 'The Pictish Class I Animals', p. 200.

<sup>87</sup> See Hayo Vierck, 'Cortina Tripodis: Zu Aufhängung und Gebrauch subrömischer Hangelbecken aus Britannien und Irland', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 4 (1970), 8-52, at 43. For studies of the Lullingstone bowl see Bruce-Mitford, *The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial* III 1 202, n. 3; and Brennan, *Hanging Bowls*, p. 245. For illustrations see Bruce-Mitford, *The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial* III 1 268, fig. 207; Françoise Henry, *Irish Art in the Early Christian Period (to 800 A.D.)* (third rev. ed., London, 1965), pls. 26 and 27; and Brennan, *Hanging Bowls*, pl. 40 (a)-(c).

<sup>88</sup> Wilson, *St. Ninian's Isle* I 56. See also II, pl. XXIV and fig. 23 (b). Another (silver) mount was originally mounted outside the bowl, inside the omphalos and attached by the same four rivets that hold the inner mount. For further discussion of bowl no. 8 see I, 55-57, 108-12 and 134-37. The bowl from Manton Common, Humberside may also have a fitting missing; it has what Brennan describes as a "small circular void" at the centre of the internal basal disc (*Hanging Bowls*, p. 248; see also pl. 41 (e)).

<sup>89</sup> See Bruce-Mitford, *The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial* III 1 222-24, esp. 223, fig. 171.

<sup>90</sup> T. D. Kendrick, 'A Late Saxon Hanging-bowl', *The Antiquaries Journal* 21 (1941), 161-62. The drawings are reproduced in pls. XXXIV and XXXV and again in Wilson, *St. Ninian's Isle* II, pl. LI. For the woodblock showing an interior view of the bowl, see G. C. Dunning and Vera I. Evison, 'The Palace of Westminster Sword', *Archaeologia* 98 (1961), 123-58, at 152, fig. 8; it is reproduced again in David M. Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Ornamental Metalwork 700-1100 in the British Museum* (London, 1964), pl. II (c); and in Bruce-Mitford, *The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial* III 1 240, fig. 182. The woodblock showing an exterior view is reproduced in Wilson, *St. Ninian's Isle* II, pl. LII (a).

<sup>91</sup> Wilson, *St. Ninian's Isle* I 111-12. See also Wilson's earlier remarks in *Anglo-Saxon Metalwork*, pp. 18-19. Bruce-Mitford, *The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial* III 1 240, accepts Kendrick's ninth-century dating.

<sup>92</sup> Dunning and Evison, 'The Palace of Westminster Sword', pp. 151-52. Leslie Webster dates the Witham bowl to the first half of the eighth century and, like Dunning and Evison, draws comparisons with the somewhat later Ormside bowl (Webster and Backhouse, *The Making of England*, p. 173).

<sup>93</sup> Bruce-Mitford, *The Sutton Hoo Ship Burial* III 1 240.

<sup>94</sup> For a general description of the Eurasian otter (*Lutra lutra*), see Paul Chanin, *The Natural History of Otters* (London, 1985), pp. 10-22. The Witham bowl otter can be compared with the tiny otter-and-fish image on the great Chi-Rho page of the Book of Kells, fol. 34r (see Henry, *The Book of Kells*, pls. 29 and 107).

<sup>95</sup> See Klingender, *Animals in Art*, pp. 163-4.

<sup>96</sup> See Henry Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England* (third ed., London, 1991), pp. 199-204; and the list of citations in Glorie, *Collectiones Aenigmatum*, pp. 858-60.

<sup>97</sup> See Glorie, *Collectiones Aenigmatum*, pp. 175, 196, 421, 501 and 527.

<sup>98</sup> See Glorie, *Collectiones Aenigmatum*, p. 423 and Stork, *Through a Glass Darkly*, p. 147. On glossed titles in the manuscripts of Aldhelm's riddles, see Stork, *ibid.* pp. 44-45.

<sup>99</sup> See above, pp. 38-39.

<sup>100</sup> See above, p. 31, n. 11.

<sup>101</sup> Compare his etymologising comment at XII.vii.4: 'Vola enim dicitur media pars pedis sive manus; et in avibus vola pars media alarum, quarum motu pinnae agitantur; inde volucres'.

<sup>102</sup> The *vespertilio* is chosen by Symposius as a riddle-subject; see Glorie, *Collectiones Aenigmatum*, p. 649 (no. 28).

<sup>103</sup> Aldhelm alludes to this process in his reference to the *cantarus* (sc. *cantharis*) in riddle 100:38.

<sup>104</sup> See *Dictionary of the History of Science*, ed. W. F. Bynum, E. J. Browne and Roy Porter



(Princeton, NJ, 1981), p. 69.

<sup>105</sup> See Bynum, Browne and Porter, *Dictionary of the History of Science*, p. 110.