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## An Appreciation of Joyce Hill

Roberta Frank

A collection of writings by the humorist S. J. Perelman advertised on its jacket an introduction by Al Hirshfield, followed by an appreciation by George S. Kaufman. Hirshfield contributed a few paragraphs in praise of his friend. Then came the heading: 'An Appreciation of S. J. Perelman by George S. Kaufman'. The page was blank except for one sentence: 'I appreciate S. J. Perelman. Signed, George S. Kaufman'.<sup>1</sup> Would such reticence seem golden in this anthology? John Donne suggests not: that to reach Truth, we her Hill 'about must, and about must go'.<sup>2</sup> So I add here my own pebble to the *lofkøstr* 'praise-pile'<sup>3</sup> towering high in honour of Joyce on her sixtieth birthday.

Joyce's output and activities are paralleled by few, if any, of her contemporaries. In important ways, she resembles one of the Reform figures she writes about, the (hyper)active Archbishop Wulfstan, homilist, statesman, legislator, tract-writer, and practical administrator. Wulfstan was God's servant and the king's too; Joyce has served both the academy and her nation with grace and distinction. If the boundaries between his literary and administrative achievements were porous, it is almost as difficult to separate her scholarly and community service. As I began this piece, I asked a few colleagues to list the adjectives that came first to mind when they thought of Joyce's work. The terms most frequently mentioned were 'incisive', 'authoritative', 'solid', 'formidable', 'sound', 'well-organized', 'thorough', 'reliable', 'useful', 'adroit', 'trustworthy', and 'intelligent'. One respondent supplied 'stalwart', fitting for, like 'trustworthy', the compound derives from an Old English word, *stælwierðe* 'serviceable' (<\**staðolwierðe* 'worthy in its foundation, firm'). Published reviews of Joyce's articles stress again and again their pedagogical usefulness, clarity, accessibility, and profound learning: 'a characteristically readable piece'<sup>4</sup>; 'most

feliculously expressed<sup>5</sup>; she 'clears up something of a mystery'<sup>6</sup>. Andrew Galloway puts it elegantly in his recent *Speculum* review:<sup>7</sup>

Joyce Hill's authoritative opening essay on Ælfric's English *Grammar*, his Latin-English *Glossary*, and his (originally) wholly Latin *Colloquy* uncovers with great finesse Ælfric's pedagogical sequence of texts for teaching Latin in a non-Romance-language world, inspired in part by Carolingian, in part by local models. The essay does not directly engage arguments about medieval literacy, but, as perhaps the most authoritatively learned essay in the collection about its chosen topic, it contributes significantly to our understanding of modes of school-room literacy, English and Latin, about Ælfric's project, and about the social meanings of various kinds of Latin and vernacular adaptations of that project.

Hill's essay moreover allows appreciation of Ælfric's pedagogical works in terms of their genres and those genres' nuances of cultural meaning [...]

'Authoritative' (as adjective and adverb), 'learned', executed 'with great finesse': these are the very qualities Joyce has uncovered in the great figures of the Anglo-Saxon Benedictine Reform, whose impact on tenth-century ecclesiastical and national life has been her concern in recent years.

Different aspects of this subject lie at the heart of the three named distinguished research lectures she has presented in the past decade: the Toller lecture (1996), the Jarrow lecture (1998), and the British Academy Sir Israel Gollancz Memorial lecture (2004).<sup>8</sup> An overriding image emerges of a chain of authority running from the Fathers of the Church to Ælfric, with the latter relying on Carolingian homilies as his immediate, as opposed to ultimate, source. How Bede rose to prominence in this catena was the subject of her plenary address 'An Anglo-Saxon and the Continent: The Elevation of Bede's Authority', presented at the 2005 meeting of the International Society of Anglo-Saxonists, and is examined in her recent article, 'Carolingian Perspectives on the Authority of Bede'.<sup>9</sup> In a recent overview, she summarizes in a single sentence some of her discoveries over the last twenty years. The purpose of Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies*

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was to make accessible to secular clergy and thus to their lay congregations the Biblical and doctrinal teaching that had come into England with the Reform, which was encapsulated in the Carolingian Latin homiliaries that Ælfric must have known at Winchester and that he evidently had available at Cerne: the homiletic anthology of Paul the Deacon, and the homiliaries of Smaragdus and Haymo of Auxerre.<sup>10</sup>

Many of her essays and reviews raise questions about the way modern scholarship identifies and catalogs the 'sources' of Old English prose, and urge readers to repent their ways and to come to terms with the nature of the textual culture that shaped and was shaped by the Reformers. Joyce was a founding member of the *Fontes Anglo-Saxonici* project (a database of all written sources used by authors in Anglo-Saxon England), serving first as General Secretary and now, at time of writing, as Chair of the Management Committee. In a kind of feedback-loop of influence, her interest in the multi-dimensional and complexly intertextual body of source materials available to Ælfric led to her participation in *Fontes*, whose broad vision has inspired some of her subsequent writings.

Joyce has written several studies concerning a central document of the tenth-century Reform, the monastic consuetudinary known as the *Regularis concordia*, especially its adaptation in transmission. Some are on the word choices made by different Old English versions of the rule, including the ways in which one was adapted for women, and assessed the special vocabulary of the reformers.<sup>11</sup> Here, too, a Frankish connection sometimes raises its head. In 'The *Litaniae maiores* and *minores* in Rome, Francia and Anglo-Saxon England: Terminology, Texts and Traditions', *Early Medieval Europe*, 9 (2000), 211-46, for example, she demonstrates that nomenclature that can seem puzzling and inconsistent to scholars in reality follows the precedent of Gallican observance. Joyce is a specialist advisor/reader for the *Dictionary of Old English* in Toronto and a loyal friend of this project, as her recent essay in its honour, 'Dialogues with the Dictionary: Four Case Studies' testifies.<sup>12</sup> I see a link between her cultural and lexicographical studies on the Reform movement – from her *Regularis concordia* articles to those on Ælfric and Wulfstan, only a few of which have been mentioned here – in the ideal of uniformity of observance and expression that she traces in every aspect of the Reformers' thinking, a commitment to authority rather than originality or independence of mind, a conceptual framework radically different from our own.

But Joyce, as Anglo-Saxonists are well aware, is not only a 'prose person'. Her first published articles were on Old English poetry, and include a brave and forward-looking essay on *Widsith* and the tenth century.<sup>13</sup> The same clarity demonstrated in her Ælfrician source criticism is visible in studies such as 'Confronting *Germania Latina*: Changing Responses to Old English Biblical Verse',<sup>14</sup> in which she surveys the history of criticism of the Junius 11 poems in terms of the opposition between Germanic – native, vernacular, pagan, secular – and Latin approaches, the latter focusing on learned Christian backgrounds; she ends by urging a more balanced approach. Her 1983 edition (2nd edn 1994) of *Old English Minor Heroic Poems* is a standard resource in the field, reliable, informative, and glimmering with good sense; the glossary of proper names alone is invaluable, and the commentary – as one would expect – invariably helpful.<sup>15</sup> Leofric of Exeter as book collector and the provenance of the Exeter Book of Old English Poetry are discussed in several more articles.<sup>16</sup> It says something about Joyce's range and reputation that not only was she asked to contribute a survey article on 'The Benedictine Reform and Beyond' to the Blackwells *Companion to Anglo-Saxon Literature* (see n. 9) but also to write the entries on *The Battle of Finnsburh*, *Deor*, Heroic Poetry, *Waldere*, and *Widsith* for *The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Anglo-Saxon England*.<sup>17</sup> And when the editors of *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia* needed articles on *Leiðarvísir* and *Tristrams saga ok Ísoddar*, they, too, turned to Joyce.<sup>18</sup>

For she is also a Nordacist. Her early (1977) translation of the probably fourteenth-century 'Icelandic Saga of Tristan and Isolte' (recently reprinted) is an accurate and lively rendition of a work once dismissed as a 'boorish account of Tristram's noble passion'.<sup>19</sup> Another of her translations (1983) from Old Norse, the itinerary (*leiðarvísir* 'guide') of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land dictated by a certain Abbot Nikulás (probably Nikulás Bergsson), is a precious document describing his journey across Europe and to the Eastern Mediterranean coasts in the period following the capture of Jerusalem in the first crusade and during the establishment of the Crusade states.<sup>20</sup> Joyce's publications over three decades show an interest in travel narratives, from her first pilgrimage piece (1976) through a study of pilgrim routes in medieval Italy (1986, for 1984) and a review of seventeenth-century travels in France and Italy (1988), to an article on pilgrimage in Icelandic sagas (1993).<sup>21</sup> Joyce herself is one of the great travellers of our profession. In recent times, her feet have touched the soil of almost fifty different countries, from the storied shores of the Nile, the Yangtze, and the Don to the mud-flats of Delaware and the flesh-studded sands of Wreck Beach in British Columbia.

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Joyce is – like her admired Ælfric and Wulfstan, Æthelwold and Dunstan – a builder and organizer, a legislator and regulator. At the University of Leeds, she served as Director of the Centre for Medieval Studies, as Head of the School of English and as Pro-Vice-Chancellor. She spent five years as Director of the Higher Education Equality Challenge Unit, based in London. At time of writing, she is chair of the Arts and Humanities Research Council research panel for English, a member of the AHRC's Research Committee and of numerous other local and national advisory groups, and in demand as a consultant from Slovenia to Belgium. She has acted as co-editor of the *Review of English Studies* (1999-2001) and editor of this journal (1988-91). Despite all these responsibilities and leadership posts, she is still younger than I am.

In the opening lines of the Icelandic Tristan saga translated by Joyce, there appears a great English queen of whom the saga-author says, with typical Norse understatement: *hún var vel at sér* 'she was OK' = 'a very distinguished woman'. Were we to follow saga-style, we would say that Joyce, too, is not entirely unappreciated.

NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Anecdote related by Woody Allen, *New York Times Book Review*, 24 October 2004, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Donne, Satire 3 'Kind pity chokes my spleen', line 81, in John Donne, *The Complete English Poems*, ed. by A. J. Smith (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971; repr. 1996), pp. 161-64. Joyce has a demonstrated interest in onomastic play: see her 'Ælfric and the Name of Simon Peter', *Notes and Queries*, n.s. 1 (1988), 4-9, and 'Ælfric's Use of Etymologies', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 17 (1988), 35-44 (repr. in *Old English Prose: Basic Readings*, ed. by Paul E. Szarmach (New York: Garland, 2000), pp. 311-25.)

<sup>3</sup> In the mid-tenth century, Egill Skallagrímsson composed an *óbrotgjarn lofkrøstr* 'not eager-to-be-broken (=long-lasting) praise-pile' for his friend Arinbjörn: see Arinbjarnarkvæði 25, in *Skjaldedigtning: Den norsk-islandske skjaldedigtning*, ed. by Finnur Jónsson (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1912-15; repr. Copenhagen: Rosenkilde og Bagger, 1967-73), BI, 41.

<sup>4</sup> Mark Griffith reviewing 'Ælfric and Wulfstan: Two Views of the Millennium', in *Essays on Anglo-Saxon and Related Themes in Memory of Lynne Grundy*, ed. by Jane Roberts and Janet Nelson (London: King's College London Medieval Studies, 2000), pp. 213-35, in *Notes and Queries*, 49 (2002), 394-95.

<sup>5</sup> Joseph Harris reviewing 'Ælfric, Authorial Identity and the Changing Text', in *The Editing of Old English: Papers from the 1990 Manchester Conference*, ed. by D. G. Scragg and Paul E. Szarmach (Cambridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1994), pp. 177-89, in *Speculum*, 72/4 (1997), 1215.

<sup>6</sup> David W. Porter, reviewing 'The *litaniae maiores* and *minores* in Rome, Francia and Anglo-Saxon England: Terminology, Texts and Traditions', *Early Medieval Europe*, 9 (2000), 211-46, in *Old English Newsletter*, 35/2 (2002), 110.

<sup>7</sup> *Speculum*, 80/2 (2005), 659-61 (p. 660), reviewing 'Learning Latin in Anglo-Saxon England: Traditions, Texts and Techniques', in *Learning and Literacy in Medieval England and Abroad*, ed. by Sarah Rees Jones, Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), pp. 3-29. See also Hill, 'Winchester Pedagogy and the Colloquy of Ælfric', in *Essays in Honour of Peter Meredith, Leeds Studies in English*, 29 (1998), 137-52; 'Ælfric's Colloquy: The Antwerp/London Version', in *Latin Learning and English Lore: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge*, ed. by Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe and Andy Orchard (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), II, 331-48.

<sup>8</sup> See 'Translating the Tradition: Manuscripts, Models and Methodologies in the Composition of Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies*', *The Toller Lecture* (Manchester, 1997). Also published in *The Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 79 (1997), pp. 43-69 (revised text repr. in *Textual and Material Culture in Anglo-Saxon England: Thomas Northcote Toller and the Toller Memorial Lectures*, ed. by Donald Scragg (Cambridge: Brewer, 2003), pp. 241-59).

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*Bede and the Benedictine Reform: The Jarrow Lecture* (Jarrow, 1998); *Authority and Intertextuality in the Works of Ælfric: The Gollancz Memorial Lecture* (2004), to be published in the *Proceedings of the British Academy* and currently available as an audio lecture at <http://www.britac.ac.uk/events/2004/abstracts/2004-hill.htm>.

<sup>9</sup> Joyce Hill, 'Carolingian Perspectives on the Authority of Bede', in *Innovation and Tradition in the Writings of the Venerable Bede*, ed. by Scott DeGregorio (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2006), pp. 227-49.

<sup>10</sup> 'The Benedictine Reform and Beyond', in *A Companion to Anglo-Saxon Literature*, ed. by Phillip Pulsiano and Elaine Treharne (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), pp. 151-69 (p. 158). Hill's articles on this subject include: 'Ælfric and Smaragdus', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 21 (1992), 203-37; 'Ælfric's Sources Reconsidered: Some Case-studies from the *Catholic Homilies*', in *Studies in English Language and Literature: 'Doubt Wisely': Papers in Honour of Eric Stanley*, ed. by M. J. Toswell and E. M. Tyler (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 362-86; 'Ælfric's Homily on the Holy Innocents: The Sources Reviewed', in *Alfred the Wise: Studies in Honour of Janet Bately on the Occasion of her 65<sup>th</sup> Birthday*, ed. by Jane Roberts and Janet L. Nelson with Malcolm Godden (Cambridge: Brewer, 1997), pp. 89-98; 'Ælfric, Gregory and the Carolingians', in *Roma, magistra mundi. Itineraria culturae medievalis: Mélanges offerts au Père L. E. Boyle à l'occasion de son 75e anniversaire*, ed. by Jacqueline Hamesse (Louvain-la-Neuve: Fédération des Instituts d'Études Médiévales, 1998), pp. 409-23; and 'Ælfric's Authorities', in *Early Medieval Texts and Interpretations: Studies Presented to Donald G. Scragg*, ed. by Elaine Treharne and Susan Rosser (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2002), pp. 51-65.

<sup>11</sup> 'The *Regularis Concordia* and its Latin and Old English Reflexes', *Revue Bénédictine*, 101 (1991), 299-315; 'Lexical Choices for Holy Week: Studies in Old English Ecclesiastical Vocabulary', in *Lexis and Texts in Early English: Studies Presented to Jane Roberts*, ed. by Christian J. Kay and Louise M. Sylvester (Amsterdam: Rodolpi, 2001), pp. 117-28; 'Making Women Visible: An Adaptation of the *Regularis Concordia* in CCCC 201', TBP in a collection edited by Catherine Karkov and Nicholas Howe (Tempe: University of Arizona Press); 'Ælfric's "Silent Days"', *Leeds Studies in English*, 16 (1985), 118-31; 'Provost and Prior in the *Regularis Concordia*', *American Notes and Queries*, 15 (2002), 13-17; 'Rending the Garment and Reading by the Rood: *Regularis Concordia* Rituals for Men and Women', in *The Liturgy of the Late Anglo-Saxon Church*, ed. by Helen Gittos and M. Bradford Bedingfield (London: Boydell, for the Henry Bradshaw Society, 2005), pp. 53-64.

<sup>12</sup> Forthcoming in *Making Sense: Constructing Meaning in Early English*, ed. by Antonette di Paolo Healey and Kevin Kiernan, Publications of the Dictionary of Old English series (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies Press).

<sup>13</sup> 'Figures of Evil in Old English Poetry', *Leeds Studies in English*, 8 (1975), 5-19; 'A Sequence of Associations in the Composition of Christ 275-347', *Review of English Studies*, 27



(1976), 96-99; "'Bis Deade Lif': A Note on *The Seafarer*, Lines 64-66', *English Language Notes*, 15 (1977), 95-97; "'The Soldier of Christ" in Old English Poetry and Prose', *Leeds Studies in English*, 12 (1981), 57-80; '*Widsith* and the Tenth Century', *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen*, 85 (1984), 305-15 (repr. in *Old English Shorter Poems: Basic Readings*, ed. by Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe (New York: Garland, 1994), pp. 319-33); "'Pæt wæs Geomuru Ides!" A Female Stereotype Examined', in *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature*, ed. by Helen Damico and Alexandra Hennessey Olsen (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 235-47.

<sup>14</sup> In *Latin Culture and Medieval Germanic Europe*, ed. by Richard North and Tette Hofstra, *Medievalia Groningana* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1992), pp. 71-88.

<sup>15</sup> Durham and St. Andrews Medieval Texts, 4 (Durham: Durham and St. Andrews Medieval Texts, 1983; repr. 1987); 2nd edn, Durham Medieval Texts, 4 (Durham: Durham Medieval Texts, 1994).

<sup>16</sup> 'The Exeter Book and Lambeth Palace Library MS 149: A Reconsideration', *American Notes and Queries*, 24 (1986), 112-16; 'The Exeter Book and Lambeth Palace Library MS 149: The Monasterium of Sancta Maria', *American Notes and Queries*, n.s. 1 (1988), 4-9; 'Leofric of Exeter and the Practical Politics of Book Collecting', in *Imagining the Book*, ed. by Stephen Kelly and John Thompson (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), pp. 77-98.

<sup>17</sup> Gen. ed. Michael Lapidge, assoc. eds John Blair, Simon Keynes, Don Scragg (Oxford, 1998), pp. 56, 139-40, 236-37, 464, 473-74.

<sup>18</sup> Ed. by Phillip Pulsiano and others (New York and London: Garland, 1993), pp. 390-91, 657.

<sup>19</sup> 'The Icelandic Saga of Tristan and Isolt', in *The Tristan Legend: Texts from Northern and Eastern Europe in Modern English Translation*, ed. by Joyce Hill, *Leeds Medieval Studies*, 2 (Leeds: University of Leeds, Graduate Centre for Medieval Studies, 1977), pp. 6-28 (repr. in *Norse Romance: Volume I: The Tristan Legend*, ed. by Marianne Kalinke (Cambridge, Brewer, 1999), pp. 241-92). Dismissal of saga: Henry G. Leach, *Angevin Britain and Scandinavia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921).

<sup>20</sup> 'From Rome to Jerusalem: An Icelandic Itinerary of the Mid-Twelfth Century', *Harvard Theological Review*, 76 (1983), 175-203, and maps (repr. in *Jerusalem Pilgrimage 1099-1185*, ed. by John Wilkinson, with Joyce Hill and W. F. Ryan, *The Hakluyt Society Second Series*, 167 (London: Cambridge University Press for the Hakluyt Society, 1988).

<sup>21</sup> "'Thanne Longen Folk to Goon on Pilgrimages'", *Literature in North Queensland*, 5 (1976), 4-11; 'Pilgrim routes in Medieval Italy', *Bollettino del Centro Interuniversitario di Ricerche sul Viaggio in Italia*, 9 (1986, for 1984), 3-22; review of *Travels through France and Italy 1647-1649*, ed. by Luigi Monga (Geneva: Slatkine, 1987), *Bulletin of the Society for Renaissance Studies*, 6 (1988), 38-40.