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## *Eorodcistum in The Battle of Brunanburh*

Paul Cavill

There are four occurrences of the word *eorodcistum* in Old English, all in verse (for the spelling variants and examples, see the discussion below).<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this article is to reach some conclusions as to what the compound means, and to discuss the implications of this for the interpretation of the passage in *The Battle of Brunanburh*. I propose briefly to consider the etymology of the elements in the compound, then the examples in verse, and then translations of the compound and inferences drawn from them by various interpreters.

### *Elements of the Compound*

#### *Eored, eored-*

There is no doubt that the first part of the compound was originally a compound itself: *eorod* is made up of *eoh* 'horse' + *rad* 'riding, an expedition, a road', and that it most likely referred originally to a group of horsemen. The (now) simplex *eorod*, *eored* seems to mean 'horsemen' in verse, as in, for example, *Exodus* where Pharaoh's army, repeatedly described as including horses and chariots in the biblical source, is said to shine (*eored lixan*; l. 157b), and it clearly refers to horsemen in the *Maxims*:

Eorl sceal on eos boge, eorod sceal getrume ridan,  
fæste feþa stondan.

[The nobleman goes on horseback, the horsemen ride in a band, the foot-soldiers stand firm.]<sup>2</sup> (*Maxims 1* ll. 62–3a)

But in prose, it is more often a Roman legion or a band of men: Ælfric uses it

frequently to translate Latin *legio*, as in: 'An eorod is ge-cweden on ðam ealdan getele | six þusend manna . and six hund. and six and syxtig' [One legion is said in the old reckoning to be six thousand six hundred and sixty-six men].<sup>3</sup> A rapid review of the compounds with *eorod-* as first element shows that only in one, *eoredmann*, does the word refer unequivocally to a rider or horseman.<sup>4</sup> A phrase in *The Letter of Alexander to Aristotle* makes these distinctions clear: 'ic þe write be þære unarimedlican mengeo his weoredes, þæs wæs buton unarimedlican feþum, sixtene þusend monna & eahta hund eoredmanna' [I will write to you about the countless multitude of his troop, which comprised (not counting an innumerable number of foot-soldiers), sixteen thousand men and eight hundred cavalry].<sup>5</sup>

### *Cist, -cist*

There is some doubt as to the etymology of the second element of *eorodcistum*. It might be *cyst* 'choice; excellent, precious; the best', from *ceosan*, as the *Dictionary of Old English* suggests (under *cyst* 1, 2, 2a).<sup>6</sup> But it might be *ci(e)st* 'a company', following Bosworth-Toller, who do not supply an etymology.<sup>7</sup> John C. Pope suggests the word is 'unrelated to **ceosan** and should be normalized as **ciest**, an i-stem from \*CÆSTI-, meaning simply *band, troop, crowd*. Cf. Old Norse KOSTR, *pile, heap*.<sup>8</sup> Bernard Muir gives CHEST as the OED headword under which the element falls, but without specifying which of the OED senses might be appropriate.<sup>9</sup> The Old English *Exodus* is the only poem in which the simplex is used, and the only verse source which has the element in compounds other than *eorodcistum* where the meaning is concerned with a gathering. In the *Exodus* poem, the Israelite soldiers muster to fight the Egyptians in tribal detachments:

Wæs on anra gehwam æðelan cynnes  
alesen under lindum leoda duguðe  
on folcgetæl fiftig cista;  
hæfde cista gehwilc cuðes werodes  
garberendra, guðfremmendra,  
X hund geteled, tireadigra.

[In each [detachment] of the noble race, tried warriors of the people chosen [to fight] under shields, there were fifty companies; each of the companies of the famous host numbered one thousand glorious spear-carrying warriors.] (*Exodus* ll. 227–32)

While the context makes it clear that these men were selected, as they did not include the young or old (ll. 233b–46), it seems to me that the number and tribal configuration of the detachments is what is important in the word *cist*, rather than the fact that they were composed of chosen men. This is perhaps borne out by the use of *cist* in this poem as second element in the compounds *gudcyst* (l. 343) and *herecist* (ll. 177, 257 and 301), where the Egyptian army (l. 177), the Israelite army (ll. 257, 301), and the Simeonite detachment (l. 343) are referred to in a general sense. Thus while it is possible that the *Dictionary of Old English* definition (s.v. *cyst* 4), 'band of chosen men; picked host, troop (perh. a parallel formation to Lat. *legio* <*legere*)', accurately indicates the etymology and formation of the element *cist* (from *ceosan*, and calqued on Latin *legio*), it does not necessarily give appropriate prominence to the idiomatic sense of the word or element which, like *legio*, might well have rapidly lost any sense of the company having been 'picked' or 'chosen'. The idiomatic sense seems to be 'troop, detachment'.

\**Eored-cist*

Bosworth-Toller, under *eóred-cist*, glosses the word with 'A company, troop', and adds '[*eóred a band, troop; cist a company*]: this represents the most general sense of the two elements put together. The *Dictionary of Old English* glosses 'troop, band; perhaps "band of chosen men"; only in dative plural: in bands': this represents the general sense of the elements, but holds out the possibility that the second element is *cyst* from *ceosan* and might carry the lexical freight of that etymological source. The *Thesaurus of Old English* includes this term with others such as *here* and *þreat* in the category 'An armed force/band',<sup>10</sup> which emphasises the supposed military connotations of the compound more than Bosworth-Toller's gloss does.

There is some unclarity about the etymology of the second element of the compound and it may not be possible to resolve that; however, the idiomatic use of the term seems fairly clear, and I turn now to the examples in Old English verse. Since discerning the particular sense of *eorodcistum* in the *Battle of Brunanburh* is my aim in this article, I will leave that aside for the moment and examine the other instances first.

*Use of the compound in Old English verse*

In *The Phoenix*, the reborn bird is described in lines that loosely follow the source, Lactantius's Latin *Carmen de ave phoenice*; the bird reveals itself to the world before flying off to its own realm:

þonne he gewiteð wongas secan,  
his ealdne eard of þisse eþeltyrf.  
Swa se fugel fleogeð, folcum oðeaweð,  
mongum monna geond middangeard,  
þonne somniað suþan ond norþan,  
eastan ond westan, eoredciestum,  
farað feorran ond nean folca þrypum  
þær hi sceawiþ scyppendes giefe  
fægre on þam fugle, swa him æt fruman sette  
sigora soðcýning sellicran gecýnd,  
frætwe fægerran ofer fugla cyn.

[When he departs to seek the plains of his ancient home from this land, and as the bird flies and reveals itself to nations, to many people throughout the world — then from south and north, from east and west in bands (*eoredciestum*) they gather, they travel from far and near in hosts of nations where they see the Creator's beautiful gift in the bird, as the true King of glory ordained for it in the beginning a more wonderful nature and more beautiful decoration than the race of birds.] (*The Phoenix* ll. 320–30)

This is an expansion of Lactantius's lines:

Huc venit Aegyptus tanti ad miracula visus  
Et raram volucrem turba salutat ovans. [...]   
Alituum stipata choro volat illa per altum  
Turbaque prosequitur munere laeta pio.

[(All) Egypt comes here for the wonders of this sight and an exultant crowd greets the rare bird. [...] The phoenix flies through the air accompanied by the choir of birds, and the crowd follows, rejoicing in its pious office.] (*Carmen de ave phoenice* ll. 151–52, 157–58)<sup>11</sup>

Here *eoredciestum* is one of the words which expands *turba* 'crowd' in the Latin. The context makes it clear that the crowd is a miscellaneous group, and that the people are neither mounted on horses nor a 'chosen band'. There are no specific military connotations at all. Here the word is best reflected by the term '*en masse*'.

In *The Panther* a rather similar scenario is envisaged. The Panther emits a pleasant smell which draws the attention of people and makes them follow it:

Þonne of ceastrum ond cynestolum  
ond of burgsalum beornþreat monig  
farað foldwegum folca þryþum,  
eoredcystum, ofestum gefysde,  
dareðlacende; deor efne swa some  
æfter þære stefne on þone stenc farað.

[Then from cities and royal palaces and from town houses many a troop of warriors travel on the roads in hosts of nations, in bands (*eoredcystum*) impelled hastily on; the animals likewise travel after the voice in the scent.] (*The Panther* ll. 49–54)

Once again, the context shows that the people are miscellaneous drawn from various places to follow the scent of the panther, and that they are not necessarily mounted on horses nor are they a select band. The militarised vocabulary does not disguise the fact that the followers of the panther are people and animals of all kinds. This is reinforced by the meaning attributed to the word 'panther' and the possibility that in the source(s) of the allegory, the animals and people represent the Jews and the Gentiles in their responses to Christ:

Sic et dominus noster Iesus Christus, uerus panther, omne humanus genus [...] per incarnatione ad se trahens: Captiuam duxit captiuitem [...] Panthera enim omnia capiens interpretatur. [...] Et sicut de ore pantherae odor suauitatis egreditur, et omnes qui prope sunt et qui longe (id est Iudaei, qui aliquando sensum bestiarum habebant, qui prope erant per legem; et gentes, qui longe erant sine lege), audientes uocem eius, repleti et recreati suauissimo odore mandatorum eius, sequuntur eum.[...]

[So also our Lord Jesus Christ, the true panther, drawing to him by his incarnation the whole human race [...] led captivity captive. For "panther" is to be interpreted as "all-capturing". [...] And just as from the panther's mouth a smell of sweetness comes out and all who are near or

far (that is the Jews who once had the instinct of animals, who were near through the law, and the Gentiles who were far off without the law), hearing his voice, filled and restored by the most sweet smell of his commandments, follow him [...] (*Physiologus: Panthera*)<sup>12</sup>

The passage from *Elene* refers to an army about to cross the Danube to attack Rome:

For fyrda mæst. Feðan trymedon  
eoredcestum, þæt on ælfylce  
deareðlacende on Danubie,  
stærceðfyrhðe, stæðe wicedon  
ymb þæs wæteres wylm.

[The greatest of armies advanced. The foot-soldiers fell into formation, into troops (*eoredcestum*), so that in a foreign nation on the shore of the Daunbe the resolute spear-warriors camped beside the surge of the water.] (*Elene*, ll. 35–39a)

The troops here are foot-soldiers, the primary meaning of *feða*, as may be seen from the *Maxims* lines and *Letter of Alexander* quoted above. P. O. E. Gradon notes the glosses *getrym(m)ed feþa* for *cuneus* 'wedge, phalanx', which reinforces the point that these are not mounted men.<sup>13</sup> And once more it is to be noted that they are not 'picked men' in any specific sense, but the ordinary foot-soldiers of a great army.

The passage from *The Battle of Brunanburh* refers to the routing of the Scots and Norse forces in 937:

Wesseaxe forð  
ondlongne dæg eorodcistum  
on last legdun laþum þeodum,  
heowan herefleman hindan þearle  
mecum mylenscearpan.

[The West Saxons in troops (*eorodcistum*) for the duration of the day onwards pursued the hateful people, savagely hacked those fleeing the battle from behind with milled-sharp swords.] (*The Battle of Brunanburh* ll. 20b–24a)

The thrust of this passage is to contrast the generality of the West Saxons with the generality of the *Sceotta leode* [people of the Scots, l. 11] and *mænig* [...] *guma norþerna* [many a northern warrior, ll. 17–18]; and to make a parallel between the West Saxons and the Mercians (*Myrce* l. 24). There is no mention of horses and no sense that these are specifically 'picked men'. It is in fact one of the main points of the poem that the West Saxons (and Mercians) *en masse* defeated the coalition forces and left their corpses for the beasts of battle to enjoy. The highly bombastic Latin poem quoted by William of Malmesbury mentions that the raiding forces used horses in ravaging the local country:

Marcuerant totis uiridantia gramna campis,  
egra seges uotum deriserat agricolarum;  
tanta fuit peditum, tam barbara uis equitantum,  
innumerabilium concursus quadrupedantum.

[In every meadow the green grass had withered, and the sickly grain had mocked the prayers of the husbandman; so great and so barbarous was the great mass of men both foot and horse, the concourse of innumerable steeds.] (*Gesta Regum Anglorum* II.135)<sup>14</sup>

But in the entire range of early material about *Brunanburh*, there is no reference to the use of horses in the actual battle.

The translation of the Old English poem into Latin by Henry of Huntingdon<sup>15</sup> might be thought to lend some credence to the notion that *eorodcistum* was construed in the early post-Conquest period as having some connotation of 'picked men', as Henry apparently translates the word into Latin as *prius electi*. The first version of Henry's *Historia Anglorum* was complete and in manuscript by 1131.<sup>16</sup> Henry makes a serious attempt to render the Old English closely, as he claims:

De cuius prelii magnitudine Anglici scriptores quasi carminis modo proloquentes, et extraneis tam uerbis quam figuris usi translatione fida donandi sunt. Vt pene de uerbo in uerbum eorum interpretantes eloquium ex grauitate uerborum grauitatem actuum et animorum gentis illius condiscamus.



[The English writers describe the magnitude of this battle in a kind of song, using strange words and figures of speech, which must be given a faithful translation, rendering their eloquence almost word for word, so that from the solemnity of the words we may learn of the solemnity of the deeds and thoughts of that people.] (*Historia Anglorum* V.18)

But it is clear that Henry did not understand the Old English completely.<sup>17</sup> His rendition can be set out thus to show the relation of the Latin to the original:

Wesseaxe forð  
*Gens uero Westsexe*  
ondlongne dæg eorodcistum  
*tota simul die, prius electi,*  
on last legdun lapum þeodum  
*post indefessi, inuise gentis*  
heowan herefleman  
*globos strauerunt*

[Latin: All that day the people of Wessex, first chosen, then unwearied, laid low the masses of the enemy race.] (*Historia Anglorum* V.19)

Henry generally gets the gist of the Old English, though there are parts that defeat him altogether. He has the habit of rendering words or parts of words that he recognises, whether they are accurate or not, thus showing that he is linguistically aware but not always well-informed. The obvious examples of this are his translation of Old English *froda* and *guðe* as personal names, as noted by Diana Greenway.<sup>18</sup>

But more entertaining are his translation of *afaran Eadweardes* (l. 7) 'sons of Edward' as *defuncti Edwardi* 'of the departed Edward' (where Henry recognises ME *afaren* 'to depart'); *glad* (l. 15)<sup>19</sup> 'glided' as *hilariter* 'gladly'; of *hæleþa nanum* (l. 25) 'to none of the warriors' as *Sanitas [...] nulla* 'there was no safety'; *blandenfeax* (l. 45) 'grey-haired' as *verbis blandus* 'smooth in words'; and *hasewanpadan* (l. 62) 'grey-coated' as *buffo liuens* 'the livid toad' (where Henry recognises ME *padde* 'a toad'). These examples show Henry's habit of making some sort of sense of the words from what he knows. Interestingly, in not a few of these types of error he is followed by much later translators: James Ingram coins personal names such as Hildrinc ('The hoary Hildrinc/ cared not to boast [...]') and Inwood ('Nor old Inwood/ and

Anlaf the more/ [...] could laugh [...]') and also has 'glad' for the past tense singular of OE *glidan*;<sup>20</sup> the early nineteenth-century Icelandic translation of the Old English poem by Jón Espólin also has 'leifdu val gulum / póddum' [they left the slain to the yellow frogs (ll. 97–98)], for *hasewanpadan*, as noted by Andrew Wawn.<sup>21</sup>

In the present case, if we are to attempt some sort of reconstruction of Henry's procedure, it seems possible that he interprets *on last* as meaning 'behind, afterwards' in a temporal sense, hence *post*, as this partly motivates *prius* 'first' which is necessary to make sense of *on last – post*; and he possibly also reads *eored-* as some form of *erst* 'first'. The part of *eorodcistum* he clearly recognises is the *-cistum*, which he translates as *electi* 'chosen'. If the term were a simplex this might be correct, but in this case it must be regarded as an expedient. Henry has particular difficulty with poetic compounds as has already been demonstrated, and *eorodcistum* is a further example. The point here is that Henry's translation constitutes an unreliable guide to the actual meaning of the Old English; he has no sense of this compound as an independent semantic entity, but is giving his best attempt at a piecemeal literal translation of the surrounding words and the elements, *de uerbo in uerbum*.

### *The sense of eorodcistum*

From the evidence of the four occurrences in Old English poetry it is possible to reach two clear conclusions about *eorodcistum*. Firstly, it has nothing inevitably to do with horses; secondly, it does not refer to 'chosen bands'. In the two properly military contexts, *Elene* and *Brunanburh*, it may (and probably does) refer to gatherings of men in particular formations, though even here it still refers to the entire mass of men on foot; but in the other two contexts it seems to mean assemblages of people, or everyone (and even animals) *en masse*. In the light of the evidence above that in two out of four of the occurrences the word refers to people or animals in general, not even the *Thesaurus of Old English* categorisation, 'An armed force/band', which correctly removes any reference to horses or chosen men, can be thought accurate.

In all contexts, the word is adverbial in function, referring to the manner in which people gathered, journeyed, were organised or pursued their enemies. This raises the question whether it is appropriate to gloss it as if it were a noun with a dative plural inflection. Certainly, it is that natural tendency to deduce a noun that

has led to the mistaken glosses that have been discussed here. The roughly parallel word *floc(c)mælum* 'in groups' is given as an adverb in the *Dictionary of Old English*. Though the verb of motion is not as consistent as it is with *feran/faran flo(c)mælum*, there is nevertheless a verb of motion present in each case with *eorodcistum*. Given the lack of evidence for a nominal form, it seems to me that at the very least there should be an asterisk to indicate a hypothetical form for \**eored-cist*, and that (whatever the etymology) a more accurate analysis and gloss for *eorodcistum* and variants would be 'adverb; *en masse*, in bands'.

### *Translations and interpretations*

The pull of etymology and tradition is strongly in evidence in modern glosses and translations of *The Battle of Brunanburh*. Pope, in his *Seven Old English Poems*, glosses *eorod-cyst* 'picked company' and [*eorod*]-*ciest* 'band of horsemen', thus giving the two erroneous translations as alternatives.<sup>22</sup> Similar is Michael Swanton: '*eorodcistum* [...] (*eored* "mounted troop", from *eoh* "war-horse"); but perhaps here, less specifically, it means "elite troops".<sup>23</sup> Early in the nineteenth century Ingram translated the compound 'with chosen troops', and this remains in the *Dictionary of Old English*, as has been seen.

Other scholars perpetuate the more specific, horse-related mistranslation. Dorothy Whitelock's influential version has: 'The whole day long the West Saxons with mounted companies kept in pursuit of the hostile peoples [...].<sup>24</sup> And Swanton's translation runs:

All day long  
the West Saxons with elite cavalry  
pressed in the tracks of the hateful nation [...] (p. 108)

Burton Raffel's translation gives us:

All the battle  
Became the Wessex cavalry endlessly  
Hunting a broken enemy [...]<sup>25</sup>

This is interesting in itself, but in relation to *The Battle of Brunanburh* it is important to the question of the location of the battle. There is a strong tradition in

which *eorodcistum* has been translated as having to do particularly with horsemen and cavalry and this has been used by historians to draw entirely erroneous conclusions about the location of the battle. It is intriguing to see how these apparently innocuous translations are used. Alfred P. Smyth wishes to argue for a site for the battle somewhere in the area of Bedfordshire, in the area called *Bruneswald*, so he notes, '[...] the West-Saxon pursuit (on horseback) lasted "the whole day long"'.<sup>26</sup> He goes on, 'The Anglo-Saxon poem in stressing the day-long pursuit of the fugitives from *Brunanburh* which was cut short by nightfall, implies that the battle was fought far from the Scottish and Strathclyde borders and far away from the coast [...] The Anglo-Saxon poem clearly rules out a coastal location [...]' (pp. 45–46). Cyril Hart prefers to locate the battle at Bourne in Lincolnshire and objects to Smyth's idea on the grounds that fenlands are inhospitable to horses: 'Smyth's location for the battle is weakened still further by the statement in the OE poem that the West Saxons pursued Olaf on horseback to his ship, which is said later in the poem to have been moored on *Dingesmere*. [...] Even if a [...] large mere had been located there [on the River Welland], it is unlikely that it could have been reached on horseback.'<sup>27</sup>

Michael Wood summarises the information available about the battle, before going on to address the question 'Where then did the battle take place?', in this fashion:

As in many famous battles of the period the final advance was made at dawn, and in a huge and savage struggle the English won a complete victory. The earliest sources describe a regular pitched battle between dense infantry lines, not a rout. Bands of West-Saxon troops who were probably mounted (*eorodciste*) then harried the defeated invaders in a sustained pursuit which lasted *ondlongne dæg*, 'all through the day', a phrase which perhaps indicates that the battlefield was at least the best part of a day's ride from the ships. This account leaves an obvious implication: that after Athelstan had made his Mercian rendezvous and launched his rapid attack on the invaders, the battle took place in the region between the hostile peoples, and the lost *burh* therefore lay in the border zone between the Northumbrians and the southern English.<sup>28</sup>

Paul Hill rules out Bromborough on the Wirral as the site of the battle:

It has been argued [by Hill himself] that Bromborough, despite the strength of the etymological argument, is an unlikely place for the battle of Brunanburh since the site is walkable from the shore. This would make a mockery of the Brunanburh poem which states that all night long (sic), mounted companies chased the Vikings until they reached their ships.<sup>29</sup>

And much more reasonably, Higham also invokes the cavalry translation in his discussion of the battle-site: 'Defeated there [on the Mersey], the fugitives perhaps made for Meols, the only beach-head site in the vicinity likely to have offered even a small number of vessels by which to effect an escape from the mounted English soldiers still harrying them.'<sup>30</sup>

The point here is not to deny that either side in the battle had horses: such a suggestion would be close to absurd. But C. Warren Hollister's discussion rightly draws attention to 'the absence of any positive reference in Old English sources to the participation of Anglo-Saxon cavalry in battles'.<sup>31</sup> The evidence above does not support the notion that the Old English poem gives warrant for a pursuit of the defeated troops by 'elite cavalry' or 'mounted companies', with the implication that the West Saxons had specialised mounted forces. Nor can this single word, *eorodcistum*, have implications for the geography and location of the battle-site such as those that have been mentioned above: the battle and escape might have, and probably did, spread over a relatively small area. The arguments I have mentioned are not only semantically flawed in that *eorodcistum* does not refer to West-Saxon 'elite cavalry', they also make assumptions about the battle that might be thought implausible: that the Viking forces also had cavalry, for example, in order to escape the pursuit, or that the flight was an orderly affair in a single direction. What the poem actually says is that the West-Saxons *en masse* harried the fleeing troops from behind for the whole day. This seems to be something much more like a process of 'mopping up' after the first onset and breaking of the ranks than the headlong chase over substantial distances deduced by some writers.

NOTES

<sup>1</sup> All poetic texts are quoted from *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records: A Collective Edition*, ed. by George Philip Krapp and Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie, 6 vols (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931–42). Translations are my own except where otherwise attributed.

<sup>2</sup> See Paul Cavill, *Maxims in Old English Poetry* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1999), pp. 45–50, for a consideration of the verb *sceal* and its meaning in this context.

<sup>3</sup> *Ælfric's Lives of Saints: Being a Set of Sermons on Saints' Days Formerly Observed by the English Church*, ed. by Walter W. Skeat, 2 vols, EETS o.s. 76, 82, 94 and 114 (London: Oxford University Press, 1881–1900; rpt 1966 in 2 vols), II, 158 (St. Maurice and his Companions), ll. 12–13.

<sup>4</sup> Using the online Old English corpus, *The Dictionary of Old English Corpus in Electronic Form*, ed. by Angus Cameron, Ashley Crandell Amos, Sharon Butler, Antonette diPaolo Healey (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English, 1981).

<sup>5</sup> *The Letter of Alexander to Aristotle*, ed. by Andy Orchard, in his *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the 'Beowulf'-Manuscript* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1995), pp. 228–29, Orchard's translation. The Latin has *exercitus* for *weored*, *pedes* for *feþa* and *eques* for *eoredmann*.

<sup>6</sup> *Dictionary of Old English in Electronic Form, A–F*, ed. by Angus Cameron, Ashley Crandell Amos, Antonette diPaolo Healey (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English, 2003).

<sup>7</sup> *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, ed. by Joseph Bosworth and T. Northcote Toller (London: Oxford University Press, 1898; repr. 1973), *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary: Supplement*, ed. by T. Northcote Toller, with revised and enlarged addenda by Alistair Campbell [1972] (London: Oxford University Press, 1921; repr. 1980).

<sup>8</sup> *Seven Old English Poems*, ed. by John C. Pope (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merill, 1966), p. 138. Cleasby-Vigfusson (*An Icelandic-English Dictionary*, ed. by Richard Cleasby and Gudbrand Vigfusson, 2nd ed. with a supplement by Sir William Craigie (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957)) does not clearly list this 'pile, heap' sense for *kostr*, prefacing the entry with 'a choice, the fundamental notion being *trial*'.

<sup>9</sup> *Leoð. Six Old English Poems: A Handbook*, ed. by Bernard James Muir (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1989), p. 121.

<sup>10</sup> *A Thesaurus of Old English*, ed. by Jane Roberts, Christian Kay with Lynne Grundy, 2 vols, King's College London Medieval Studies, 9 (London: King's College London Centre for Late Antique and Medieval Studies, 1995), under item 13.02.10.01.02.01.

<sup>11</sup> Text from *The Phoenix*, rev. ed. by N. F. Blake (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1990), p. 95. Translation from *Sources and Analogues of Old English Poetry: The Major Latin Texts in*

*Translation*, trans. by Michael J. B. Allen and Daniel G. Calder (Cambridge: Brewer, 1976), p. 117.

<sup>12</sup> Text and translation from *The Old English Physiologus*, ed. by Ann Squires (Durham: Durham Medieval Texts, 1988), pp. 105–8.

<sup>13</sup> *Cynewulf's Elene*, rev. ed. by P. O. E. Gradon (Exeter: University of Exeter, 1977), p. 27.

<sup>14</sup> Text and translation from William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum, The History of the English Kings*, ed. and trans. by R. A. B. Mynors, R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), I, pp. 220–21.

<sup>15</sup> Henry, Archdeacon of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum, The History of the English People*, ed. and trans. by Diana Greenway (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 310–15.

<sup>16</sup> Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, ed. by Greenway, p. lxxvii.

<sup>17</sup> In a brief examination of Henry's translation, Edith Rickert, 'The Old English Offa Saga, I', *Modern Philology* 2 (1904), 29–76, points to three features, '(1) various blunders, often absurd, due to a misunderstanding of the words; (2) a successful removal of much distinctively Old English coloring; (3) the retention of a few phrases unmistakably Old English in idiom' (pp. 37–8). She lists several examples in the first few lines of the text.

<sup>18</sup> Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, ed. by Greenway, pp. 312–13.

<sup>19</sup> Line numbers refer to the Old English poem; the Latin translations are those of Greenway.

<sup>20</sup> *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, trans. Rev. James Ingram (London: Dent, n.d. [original 1823]), pp. 84–87.

<sup>21</sup> Andrew Wawn, 'Anglo-Saxon Poetry in Iceland: The Case of *Brúnaborgar Bardaga Quida*', *LSE n.s.* 37 (2006), 473–90. Wawn suggests that Jón's mistranslation here may have been spontaneously generated from the Old English (p. 483) of Langebek's edition, which reads 'thane hasean padan' (p. 482). I am grateful to Robert Bjork for the reference, and to Professor Wawn for a copy of the article.

<sup>22</sup> *Seven Old English Poems*, ed. by Pope, p. 162, s.v. *eorod*.

<sup>23</sup> *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, trans. and ed. by M. J. Swanton (London: Dent, 1996), p. 108.

<sup>24</sup> *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Translation*, ed. and trans. by Dorothy Whitelock, with David C. Douglas and Susie I. Tucker (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1961), p. 69.

<sup>25</sup> Burton Raffel, *Poems and Prose from the Old English*, ed. by Alexandra H. Olsen and Burton Raffel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998): *The Battle of Brunanburh*, ll. 20–22.

<sup>26</sup> Alfred P. Smyth, *Scandinavian York and Dublin: The History and Archaeology of Two Related Viking Kingdoms*, 2 vols (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1987), II, 37.

<sup>27</sup> Cyril Hart, *The Danelaw* (London: Hambledon Press, 1992), p. 519 fn. 17.

<sup>28</sup> Michael Wood, 'Brunanburh Revisited', *Saga-Book of the Viking Society* 20 (1980),

*Eorodcistum in The Battle of Brunanburh*

200–17, at pp. 205–06. I am grateful to Michael Wood for stimulating *viva voce* discussion of the site of the battle.

<sup>29</sup> Paul Hill, *The Age of Athelstan: Britain's Forgotten History* (Stroud: Tempus, 2004), p. 144. Hill echoes John Henry Cockburn, *The Battle of Brunanburh and its Period Elucidated by Place-Names* (London: Leng, 1931), when the latter writes (p. 45, Cockburn's bold font), 'Bromborough is only 10 minutes' **walk** to the Mersey. That is not a "long pursuit."

<sup>30</sup> N. J. Higham, 'The Context of *Brunanburh*' in *Names, Places and People: An Onomastic Miscellany for John McNeal Dodgson*, ed. by Alexander R. Rumble and A. D. Mills (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1997), pp. 144–56 (p. 155).

<sup>31</sup> C. Warren Hollister, *Anglo-Saxon Military Institutions on the Eve of the Norman Conquest* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), pp. 134–40, quotation from p. 135.