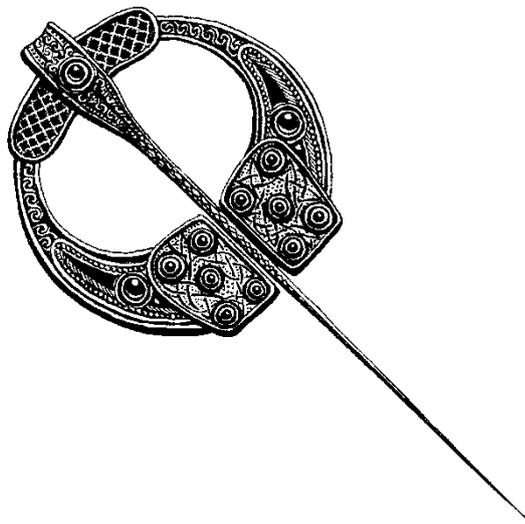


The Cambridge Colloquium in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic is a yearly spring conference organized by postgraduate students of the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic at the University of Cambridge.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- Abing* S. E. Kelly, ed., *Charters of Abingdon Abbey Parts 1 and 2*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 7–8 (Oxford, 2000–1)
- al-Bakrī E. Vidal Beltran, transl., *Abū ‘Ubayd ‘Abd Allāh al-Bakrī*, Geografía de España (Zaragoza, 1982)
- al-Ṭurtūshī T. Kowalski, ed., *Relatio Ibrāhīm ibn Ja’kub de itinere Slavico*, MPH, 2nd ser., 1 (Krakow, 1946)
- ASE* *Anglo-Saxon England*
- Bath* S. E. Kelly, ed., *Charters of Bath and Wells*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 13 (Oxford, 2007)
- BLch* *Bald’s Leechbook*, ed. and transl. T. O. Cockayne, *Leechdoms, Wortcunning and Starcraft of Early England. Being a Collection of Documents, for the Most Part Never Before Printed, Illustrating the History of Science in This Country Before the Norman Conquest*, Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland During the Middle Ages 35, 3 vols. (London, 1864)
- CantCC* N. P. Brooks, and S. E. Kelly, ed., *Charters of Christ Church Canterbury Parts 1 and 2*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 17–18 (Oxford, 2013)
- DOE *The Dictionary of Old English. A–G Online*, ed. A. Cameron, A. C. Amos, A. D. Healey, et. al
<doe.utoronto.ca/st/index.html>
- DS *Diplomatarium Suecana: Svenskt diplomatarium*, Stockholm: Vitterhets historie och antikvitetsakademien/Riksarkivet 1829.
- EHR* *English Historical Review*
- Flat* *Flateyjarbók*, 4 vols., ed. Sigurður Nordal, Vilhjálmur Bjarnar and Finnbogi Guðmundsson (Reykjavík, 1944–5)
- Gísl* *Gísla saga*, in *Vestfirðinga sögur: Gísla saga Súrssonar*;

- Fóstbræðra saga; Þáttur Þormóðar; Hávarðar saga Ísfirðings; Auðunar þáttur vestfirzka; Þorvarðar þáttur krákunefs,* Íslenzk fornrit 6, ed. Guðni Jónsson (Reykjavík, 1943)
- Gret* *Grettis saga,* in *Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar; Bandamanna saga; Odds þáttur Ófeigssonar,* Íslenzk fornrit 7, ed. Guðni Jónsson (Reykjavík, 1936)
- Harð* *Harðar saga,* in *Harðar saga; Bárðar saga; Þorskfirðinga saga; Flóamanna saga; Þóraríns þáttur Nefjólfssonar; Þorsteins þáttur uxafóts; Egils þáttur Síðu-Hallssonar; Orms þáttur Stórolfssonar; Þorsteins þáttur tjaldstæðings; Þorsteins þáttur forvitna; Bergbuá þáttur; Kumlbúa þáttur; Stjörnu-Odda draumr,* Íslenzk fornrit 13, ed. Þórhallur Vilmundarson and Bjarni Vilhjálmsson (Reykjavík, 1991)
- Lacn.* *Lacnunga,* ed. E. Pettit, *Anglo-Saxon Remedies, Charms, and Prayers from British Library Ms Harley 585. the Lacnunga,* 2 vols. (Lewiston, 2001)
- Lchbk III* *Leechbook III,* ed. and transl. T. O. Cockayne, *Leechdoms, Wortcunning and Starcraft of Early England. Being a Collection of Documents, for the Most Part Never Before Printed, Illustrating the History of Science in This Country Before the Norman Conquest,* Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland During the Middle Ages 35, 3 vols. (London, 1864)
- MGH SS rer. *Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores rerum*
Germ *Germanicarum*
- MPH *Monumenta Poloniae Historica*
- OEH *Old English Herbarium Complex,* ed. H. I. de Vriend, *The Old English Herbarium and Medicina de Quadrupedibus* (Oxford, 1984)
- S P. H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters: an Annotated List and Bibliography,* Royal Historical Society Guides and

Handbooks 8 (London, 1968)

- SBVS* *Saga-Book of the Viking Society for Northern Research*
- Sherb* M. A. O'Donovan, ed., *The Charters of Sherborne Abbey*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 3 (Oxford, 1988)
- SS* *Scandinavian Studies*
- Strl* *Sturlunga saga*, 2 vols., ed. Jón Jóhannesson, Magnús Finnbogason and Kristján Eldjárn (Reykjavík, 1946)
- Wells* S. E. Kelly, ed., *Charters of Bath and Wells*, Anglo-Saxon Charters 13 (Oxford, 2007)
- Svrs* *Sverris saga*, Íslenzk fornrit 30, ed. Þorleifur Hauksson (Reykjavík, 2007)
- Writs* F. E. Harmer, *Anglo-Saxon Writs*, 2nd ed. (Stamford, 1989)

PREFACE

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the sixteenth number of *Quaestio Insularis*, the journal of the annual Cambridge Colloquium in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic (CCASNC). Both the journal and the Colloquium, established in 1999 on the initiative of the postgraduate community of the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, have maintained an impressively high standard, driven by the enthusiasm and commitment of successive cohorts of students. The 2015 conference was one of the best-attended to date and focused on the theme of Communication and Control, which was tackled by the speakers from a variety of stimulating angles. The Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic is delighted to continue its association with CCASNC and its published proceedings. *Quaestio Insularis* 16 and all back numbers of the journal can be ordered directly from the Department's website (www.asnc.cam.ac.uk).

Dr Rosalind Love

Head of the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic
University of Cambridge

COLLOQUIUM REPORT

The 2015 Colloquium in Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic took place in Room GR 06/07 of the Faculty of English on Saturday 7 February. It was the largest, best-attended Colloquium and dinner to date, and our attentive audience ensured that discussion never ebbed. The theme of the Colloquium was ‘Communication and Control’. We welcomed our keynote speaker Professor Stefan Brink and ten postgraduate speakers from several countries. Despite the breadth of subject matter, common themes emerged from the thought-provoking papers: modes of contact between societies; the diffusion of cultural concepts; the intentions of authors, compilers and scribes. At the close of the day, heartfelt thanks were offered to our speakers, the organising committee and, in particular, to our wonderful team of undergraduate helpers—Iona Casley, Lee Colwill, Amy Dolben, Angharad Gilbey, Emilia Henderson, Maura McKeon, Liam Waters and Charlie White—for their time and enthusiasm in ensuring an efficient and pleasant event.

Session I (*Chairs: Nicholas Hoffman and David Callander*)

Julia Bolotina, ‘The *Lacnunga*: Controlled Communication or Physician’s Notebook?’

Ryder Patzuk-Russell, ‘Control of the Word: Ideologies and Rhetoric of Language in the Icelandic Grammatical Treatises’

Session II (*Chair: Rebecca Shercliff*)

Exequiel Monge-Allen, ‘Becoming Sons of Life: the spiritual direction of the *Céli Dé*’

Stephenie McGucken, ‘“Remove You from the Burning Desire of Lust”: St Æthelthryth as Virgin, Mother, and Queen’

Plenary Speaker (*Chair: Caitlin Ellis*)

Professor Stefan Brink, ‘Medieval Laws: the most important written

sources for understanding Scandinavian society’

Session III (*Chairs: Ben Guy and David Callander*)

Samuel Ottewill-Soulsby, ‘Al-Bakrī and the Bretons’

William Norman, ‘Language as a factor in Norse-Celtic power dynamics’

Alexandra Reider, ‘The Structure of a Life: Lists in *The Fortunes of Men* and *Rígsþula*’

Session IV (*Chairs: Katherine Olley and Nicholas Hoffman*)

Albert Fenton, ‘Discourses of Control: Anglo-Saxon Writs as Legal Instruments’

Jacob Hobson, ‘Political Theology in the Charters of Æthelstan A’

Alexander Wilson, “‘Ef eigi kæmi troll milli húss ok heima”’: Monstrousness and the Communication of Power in *Sverris saga*’

The members of the colloquium committee for 2014–15 were:

Caitlin Ellis, David Callander, Ben Guy, Nicholas Hoffman, Katherine Olley and Rebecca Shercliff.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Quaestio Insularis 16 was edited by Caitlin Ellis, David Callander, Ben Guy, Nicholas Hoffman, Katherine Olley and Rebecca Shercliff. The editors wish to acknowledge the assistance of Dr Elizabeth Ashman Rowe, Jo Shortt Butler, Professor Paul Russell, Dr Rosalind Love and our anonymous peer reviewers. Editorial design is by Alistair Vining and the *Quaestio Insularis* logo was drawn by Katharine Scarfe Beckett. The production of this volume and the successful running of the conference have been made possible through the generosity of the Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic and the support of the Faculty of English.

Early Law in the North

Professor Stefan Brink
University of Aberdeen

RECONSTRUCTION OF VIKING AND EARLY MEDIEVAL SCANDINAVIAN SOCIETY (C. 700–1400)

Most scholars working on early Scandinavia are fascinated by Icelandic literature and devote their research to these interesting sources, whether the precious manuscripts, the masterly composed narratives, the complexities of the poems, the impact from European Latin literature, and so on, building up a complex and mesmerizing ‘Saga World’, as presented to us by the authors of the poems and sagas.

Fewer scholars delve into the actual medieval (in the European sense) Scandinavian society, with an aim to understand and to reconstruct it: not then a fictitious world, but a (or many) real world(s). Here the written sources are considerably fewer and (admittedly) not so spellbinding. Many of these are also biased in a way that makes it difficult to tease out reliable information from them. Of course Icelandic literature can be used in this endeavour, as well, but here we have many pitfalls and the perception of the usefulness of this literature as a reliable source for early Scandinavian society has oscillated over the decades, as is well known.¹

¹ H. O’Donoghue, *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature: A Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 36–47; M. Clunies Ross, *The Cambridge Introduction to the Old Norse-Icelandic Saga* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 38–43; K. Liestøl, transl. A. G. Jayne, *The Origin of the Icelandic Family Sagas* (Oslo, 1930); A. Heusler, ‘Die Anfänge der isländischen Saga’, in *Kleine Schriften*, 2 vols., vol. II, ed. S. Sonderegger (Berlin, 1969), pp. 388–459; Einar Ólafur Sveinsson, transl. G. Turville-Petre, *Dating the*

It is a time-consuming and complicated task to tease out ‘reliable’ information for this reconstruction from sources such as—for Iceland—*Íslendingabók*, *Landnámabók*, annals, chronicles, sagas and archaeology, and—for Scandinavia proper—*Vita Anskarii*, Adam of Bremen’s *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, Saxo’s *Gesta Danorum*, documents, annals, medieval chronicles and legends, translations of continental romances, runic inscriptions, medieval laws and, of course, archaeology, a source which always has to be interpreted to be able to be used in societal reconstructions.

In this paper I will concentrate on the most important sources for this reconstruction of early medieval Scandinavian society (c. 1000–1300), namely the earliest laws, often called the provincial laws. As with all written—well, of course, all—sources, there are source critical problems we have to deal with, but taking these into account, these sources are no doubt the most important ones in the reconstruction of our early society.

The questions we are able to—and, as regards to the source-critical problems, have to—ask these laws are:

- What is the societal background of these laws?
- How were these laws ‘made’?
- Were they ‘newly’ made, hence created, during the time they were written down? Or are there traces of older law or legal customs incorporated in the laws?
- To what extent were they influenced by continental jurisprudence, by Roman and Canon Laws? If heavily influenced, are they to be considered as ‘imports’, mirroring to a greater extent a Continental-European societal situation, than a Nordic one?

Icelandic Sagas. An Essay in Method (London, 1958); Gísli Sigurðsson, transl. N. Jones, *The Medieval Icelandic Saga and Oral Tradition. A Discourse on Method* (London, 2004).

- Why were they written in the vernacular (where in principle all other Barbarian laws were written in Latin—except for the Irish laws and the Anglo-Saxon royal law codes)?
- Who wrote the earliest laws – who actually wrote them down; who oversaw the project; who decided what was to be included in the laws; who commissioned them?
- Were the earliest laws just normative and proscriptive, or did the law-rules actually function in society, hence did the provinces actually follow the law rules?
- Relating to what was asked above, do the laws have anything to say regarding earlier periods, thus periods prior to the time when the laws were written down?
- Hence, is it possible to trace law and legal customs in the Scandinavian society, prior to the time of writing the laws down?
- This leads to the question: We know that society in the Viking Age was some kind of ‘legal society’; is it possible for us to reconstruct this in any way?
- If so, how could that ‘legal society’ be described?

Of course, there are many more possible questions to be addressed to the earliest medieval laws in Scandinavia, but these above are the ones I have personally been struggling with during the last couple of decades. I will below give some hints and arguments, trying to answer or at least qualify (some of) these questions.

THE BARBARIAN LAW CODES AND EARLY RESEARCH

The Scandinavian provincial laws can be seen as the youngest of the so-called Barbarian Law Codes (*Leges Barbarorum*), which are laws, written in Latin, and used by Germanic-speaking people on the Continent from the fifth to the ninth centuries. We know of laws for the Visigoths in Spain (*Codex Euricianus* [the Code of Euric], c. 480 and *Lex Visigothorum*, 654), the Burgundians (*Lex Burgundionum*, c. 500), the Salian Franks (*Pactus* and *Lex Salica*, c. 500), the Alamanni

(*Pactus Alamannorum*, c. 620 and *Lex Alamannorum*, 730), the Ripuarian Franks (*Lex Ripuaria*, c. 630), the Lombards (*Edictum Rothari*, 643), the Bavarians (*Lex Baiuvariorum*, c. 745), the Frisians (*Lex Frisionum*, c. 785) and the Saxons (*Lex Saxonum* 803).

The laws of the Anglo-Saxon kings—the earliest from Kent and Wessex—are an exception as they, like their Scandinavian counterparts, are written in the vernacular. The earliest of all these Anglo-Saxon law codes is the Law of King Æthelberht of Kent, from c. 600.

The nineteenth century saw an increasing interest in the laws of the Germanic-speaking people, with prominent scholars such as Konrad (von) Maurer and Karl von Amira working very often on Scandinavian legal history. Their theoretical foundation, that it was possible to trace all these laws for Germanic people/tribes (*Germanische Stammesrechte*) to a common *Urrecht*, a common ‘well’ for all these laws, is today a most contested idea to say the least.² Instead modern research stresses the influence from Continental jurisprudence, Roman law and especially Canon Law. The discourse during the last couple of decades has been finding more and more traces of Canon Law in the medieval Scandinavian laws. One extreme position has been taken by the Swedish historian Elsa Sjöholm,³ whose idea can be summarised as: ‘Everything we find in the Scandinavian Laws is a result of reception of Continental and Biblical Law’. Recent discussion concerning the medieval Scandinavian laws has been somewhat more mediating and open to seeing chronological layers in the laws and regional.⁴

² J. A. Brundage, *The Medieval Origins of the Legal Profession. Canonists, Civilians, and Courts* (Chicago, 2008), p. 60.

³ E. Sjöholm, *Sveriges medeltidslagar. Europeisk rättstradition i politisk omvandling*, Rättshistoriskt bibliotek 41 (Stockholm, 1988).

⁴ See for example S. Brink and L. Collinson, ed., *New Approaches to Early Law in Scandinavia*, Acta Scandinavica 3 (Turnhout, 2004).

THE SCANDINAVIAN PROVINCIAL LAWS

The earliest laws in Scandinavia date from the twelfth century and onwards, hence they are considerably younger than their continental relatives. Although written down hundreds of years later, it is notable that what is dealt with in the laws is very similar, albeit with some differences obviously due to adaptations to regional conditions. What we find are rules about theft and killings, how to compensate for injuries, sometimes down to each limb of the body, how to organise settlement and agrarian life, how to behave in the local community, regulations between the people and the king and aristocracy, and in most laws how to deal with slaves and also their manumission, a theme which has very much more extensive coverage in the continental and Anglo-Saxon laws.

A significant question is of course how we can describe the early laws, if building on early custom or newly composed law, if they are to be understood as proscriptive, what the law-giver wanted and anticipated with the law, or if they had a real function in society. There is hence a socio-judicial and also a political aspect here to be answered.

We find early medieval laws covering the whole of Scandinavia. In Iceland the oldest one was *Grágás* (the ‘Grey Goose’, named so for an unknown reason), which was replaced by *Jónsbóke*, after the Norwegian take-over, in its turn replaced by *Járnsiða*.⁵ In Norway the Gulathing Law was effective in western Norway, the Frostathing Law

⁵ There is a tradition of an even older law, the so-called Ulfjóts Law, of which we have some fragmentary evidence in, for example, *Landnámabók*. Some scholars believe this law is a later counterfeit (for instance O. Olsen, *Hørg, hov og kirke: historiske og arkeologiske vikingetidsstudier* (Copenhagen, 1996)), where others, like me, believe in its authenticity (S. Brink, ‘Forsaringen – Nordens äldsta lagabud’, in *Femtende tværfaglige Vikingsymposium. Aarhus Universitet 1996*, ed. E. Roesdahl and P. Meulengracht Sørensen (Aarhus, 1996), pp. 27–55).

in Trøndelag. For eastern Norway we only have the Christian laws from two legal districts, the Eidsivating and the Borgarthing. In Sweden most of the old provinces (OSw *land*, Sw *landskap*) seem to have had their provincial law: the Hälsinge Law (for northern Sweden), the Uppland law, the Dala Law, the Västmanna Law, the Södermanna Law, the Östgöta Law, the Västgöta Laws, the Guta Law (for Gotland), and the Småland Law (for Tiohärad, Värends lagsaga, only the Church Law exists). Some provincial laws have been lost: some are mentioned in medieval documents, and some are not documented but hinted at, such as a Värmland Law, a Närke Law, an Ångermanna Law and a Jamta Law for the province of Jämtland.

In medieval Denmark the situation is similar with the Skåne Law, a couple of kings' laws for Sjælland, and the Jyske Law (for Jutland).

The oldest and perhaps most archaic law of the Scandinavian provincial laws is the Gulathing Law from western Norway, with some fragments from the twelfth century and a single complete manuscript, *Codex Ranzovianus*, from the 1220s; among the Swedish laws the Older Västgöta Law is considered to have been written c. 1220, with the oldest surviving manuscript, from the 1280s.

A huge and complicated question is thus who wrote these laws, and for what purpose were they written? Who commissioned them and who physically wrote them down? The last question can be answered, probably as expected, with: the Church, in the form of monasteries, scribes at Cathedrals and other ecclesiastical centres. It is more difficult to answer the former question. As mentioned above one (perhaps extreme) position was the proposal from Elsa Sjöholm, that the laws were a result of a power struggle in early medieval Scandinavian society, between kings and aristocracy. As I have discussed elsewhere, this cannot be the whole truth.⁶ In addition,

⁶ S. Brink, 'The creation of a Scandinavian provincial law: How was it done?', *Historical Research* 86:233 (2013), 432–42.

there must be regional differences regarding the background of the laws.

Fortunately, we have a couple of contemporary documents, which tell us of the background of the creation of two of the early laws, the Icelandic *Grágás* and the Uppland Law for central Sweden.

In *Íslendingabók*, written by Ari fróði in the beginning of the twelfth century and surviving in two manuscripts from the seventeenth century, we can read:

The first summer that Bergþórr spoke the law [which was 1117], a new pronouncement was made that our laws should be written down in a book at the home of Hafliði Másson the following winter, at the dictation and with the guidance of Hafliði and Bergþórr, as well as of other wise men appointed for this task. They were to make new provisions in the law in all cases where these seemed to them better than the old laws. These were to be proclaimed the next summer in the Law Council, and all those were to be kept which a majority of people did not oppose.⁷

When this writing down of laws took place in Iceland, there must therefore have been an extensive body of laws readily available to the men entrusted with the task of writing a law book,⁸ some, according to Peter Foote, from well before the advent of Christianity.⁹ These

⁷ *Íslendingabók*, ch. 10 (ed. and transl. S. Grønlie, *Íslendingabók, Kristni saga: The Book of the Icelanders, The story of the conversion*, Viking Society for Northern Research Text Series 18 (London, 2006), p. 12).

⁸ P. Foote, 'Oral and literary tradition in early Scandinavia: Aspects of a problem', in *Oral Tradition Literary Tradition. A Symposium*, ed. H. Bekker-Nielsen, P. Foote, A. Haarder and H. F. Nielsen (Odense, 1977), pp. 47–55, at pp. 52–5.

⁹ P. Foote, 'Reflections on *Landabrigðisþátr* and *Rekapátr* in *Grágás*', in *Tradition og historieskrivning. Kilderne til Nordens ældste historie*, ed. K. Hastrup and P.

must have been orally transmitted laws, legal customs and ‘sayings’, treasured and transferred by wise men knowledgeable in legal matters. The efforts of Hafliði and others did not result in one sanctioned book, but obviously in many books or manuscripts.¹⁰

This operation of the editors could, of course, lead to disputes and problems of interpretation and precedence, so it was therefore stated in the *Grágás* (*Konungsbók* §117):

if books differ, then what is found in the books which the bishops own is to be accepted. If their books also differ, then that one is to prevail which says it at greater length in words that affect the case at issue. But if they say it at the same length but each in its own version, then the one which is in *Skálabolt* is to prevail.¹¹

From this it is obvious that in early Iceland there existed no single well-defined and sanctioned law book, from which identical copies were made and used throughout the country. Instead, there were successively several law books, and probably other legal documents, used in the judicial process. Although Hafliði was tasked in 1117 with trying to collect scattered laws into a book, this was clearly not ratified as *the* law book for Iceland, but was rather an attempt to collect and write down oral law.

The next indication of the creation of a provincial law is from Uppland and the Uppland Law, which was effective in the province of Uppland in central Sweden. This province was (obviously since

Meulengracht Sørensen, *Acta Jutlandica* 63:2 (Aarhus, 1987), pp. 53–64, at p. 63.

¹⁰ Foote, ‘Oral and literary tradition’, pp. 53–4.

¹¹ *Grágás* (ed. A. Dennis, P. Foote, and R. Perkins, *Laws of Early Iceland: Grágás, the Codex Regius of Grágás with Material from other Manuscripts*, 2 vols. (Winnipeg, 1980–2000), I, at pp. 190–1).

ancient times) divided into three sub-districts: Tiundaland, Attundaland and Fjädrundaland, which all seem to have had their own local laws. For some reason it was decided that a new law was to be made for the whole of the province, and the instigator seems to have been the Swedish King Birger in the 1290s. The law was collected and written in the late thirteenth century and ratified in 1296 by King Birger.

It is declared in the *Praefatio* to the Uppland Law (*Upplandslagen*):

Thus gives the sovereign King of the Svear and Götar, Birgir, son of king Magnus, to all of them, who live between the sea and Sagå river and Ödmorden, this book, which contains Vigher's *flockar* and Upplandic law ... Law-maker was Vigher the wise, pagan in pagan time [*Lagha yrkeir var vighær spa. hæpin i hæpnum timæ*]. What we find in his law, which are for the benefit for all, we include in this book; that which is useless we will exclude. And everything which the pagan has not included, hence the Christian law and the Church law [*cristnu ret oc kirkio laghom*], we shall add to the beginning of this book.¹²

This is to be supplemented with King Birger's Ratification letter (DS 1154) for the new law:

Now our faithful servant Sir Birger, Lawman of Tiundaland, has credibly declared to us on behalf of all of them, who settle and live in the three folklands of Uppland, that in their law, who were scattered in several communities, there were some things not quite fair, some things obscurely stated and some things very difficult to comply with ... we invited Sir Birger Lawman ... that he together with the most knowledgeable men from each of the folklands should

¹² My translation.

establish both what old law there has been and then what ought to be stated and compiled in new law. He fulfilled our assignment with utmost promptness and assigned to his help a commission of twelve men, who are here named: from Tiundaland *Mæstar* Andreas dean in Uppsala, our knights Sir Rødh Kældorson and Sir Benedict Boson, Ulf Laghmanzson, Hagbardh from Söderby, Andræs from Forkarby and Thorstæn from Sandbro; from Attundaland our knight Sir Filip the Red from Runby, Hakon Lawman, Æskil the cross-eyed, Sigurdh judge and Jon goose-shoulder; from Fjädrundaland Ulf from Önsta, Gøtrik and Ulvhedhin judge ... After that all these men had carefully considered and examined old law, and formulated, compiled and supervised new law, they declared it at the thing assembly, with those listening, who were concerned. Thereafter, when the thing assembly in full agreement and without any contradictions had accepted the law, they came back to us ...¹³

In the ratification letter and in the preamble it is thus stated that the three folklands had their own—older—laws, and that King Birgir invited the lawman of the largest folkland, Tiundaland, ‘together with the most knowledgeable men from each of the folklands [to] establish ... what old law has been’ and to elucidate what aspects of the old laws ought to be included in the new law, as well as naming the men who should form the committee. The committee comprised twelve nominated delegates from the folklands: six from Tiundaland, four from Attundaland and two from Fjädrundaland. It is likely that the Church’s representative, Andreas And, and the three lawmen from

¹³ My translation.

each folkland were considered obvious members of the committee.¹⁴ Andreas And, the dean at Uppsala Cathedral, probably functioned as its secretary. He was the cousin of the lawman Birger Persson, had been educated in Paris, and was thereby probably knowledgeable in Canon law. In the 'Praefatio' these older laws are called Vigher's *flockar*, thus 'chapters' or perhaps, in this case, 'collections'. And here it is also stated that 'What we find in his law', if it was useful, was to be included in the new law book. Vigher's *flockar* is hence an epithet used for the older laws, which were used and incorporated in the new Uppland law book, while the 'Upplandic law', which is opposed to Vigher's *flockar*, must be understood as that part of the law which was newly made.

Furthermore, it is notable that when the task was complete, the committee had to go back to the assembly to have the new law accepted: 'they declared it at the thing assembly, with those listening, who were concerned', and this assembly must consequently be that of the whole province of Uppland. Thus, if we are to believe these two records (as I do, having seen no evidence that they are fraudulent), they contain ample evidence that there must have been older laws, which were used when making the Uppland Law. It is not explicitly stated if these earlier laws were written down or not. However, the translators of and commentators on the law, Elias Wessén and Åke Holmbäck, note, with regard to the mention of laws of the three folklands, that in the Latin version of the king's ratification letter it says *per plura volumina*, which they believe may suggest that these laws actually were written down.¹⁵

Holmbäck and Wessén point out another interesting circumstance of relevance to this question. In his chronicle of Sweden from the early sixteenth century Olaus Petri writes, in relation to a

¹⁴ Å. Holmbäck and E. Wessén, ed., *Östgötalagen och Upplandslagen*, Svenska landskapslagar 1 (Lund, 1933), pp. 9–10, n. 11.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 9, n. 8.

visit to Sweden in 1248 by the papal emissary William of Sabina, about a Swedish law book which at this time was used in Uppland (*the Sveriges lagbocck som thå brukades i Vpland*), and he cites from it.¹⁶ This leads them to believe that the citation must emanate from a law for the Uppland folklands (or one of them) which is lost and otherwise unknown, if this mention of a law book in 1248 is not what is alluded to in the ratification letter and the 'Praefatio', namely the so-called Vigher's *flockar*.

Elias Wessén has speculated about Vigher's *flockar*.¹⁷ The latter word, ON *flokker*, is, at least in Old Norse poetry, used for a collection of stanzas in a rather free order, in contrast to a *drápa*, which was a poem with a more rigid structure. He believes that the above mentioned *per plura volumina* is to be understood as referring to the fact that the older laws were found in disordered collections, whereas the new law book was well structured in *balkar* ('baulks'), that is, 'books' or 'chapters'. I believe this speculation to be well founded. Wessén is also of the opinion that Vigher's *flockar* is used as a generic term for all the older law collections, which were, probably with conscious exaggeration, attributed to one man only, Vigher, who was probably a well-known lawman of the past.

There are thus indications and hints in the earliest law manuscripts and other documents from the thirteenth century that the laws, which by then had started to be written down for the different provinces, included older laws which were either oral laws or found in documents. This is, in my opinion, an important observation when we are discussing the earliest Scandinavian laws.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹⁷ E. Wessén, *Svenske medeltid. En samling uppsatser om svenska medeltidshandskrifter och texter, 1: Landskapslagar*, Kungl. Vitterhets-, historie- och antikvitetsakademiens handlingar. Filologisk-filosiska serien 9 (Stockholm, 1968), p. 20.

Someone was thus given the order or mandate to write down a law, where newly composed law was sometimes obviously intermixed with earlier law.

So what do the laws deal with?

In principle all the Scandinavian provincial laws are composed in a similar way, some with headings to every Book (*Balkar*), some with just paragraph numbers. Normally they start with a Book concerning ecclesiastical matters (for example, *Kirkeiu balkar* or *Kristinrétter*), where we find rules on how to build a church, how a priest shall be chosen and ordained to the church, how the vicarage shall be created and the tithe be paid. Then in the Swedish laws, normally a Book stipulating what the King can expect from the province; what the king's taxes and fines are and for what crimes, how the *leding* (the naval military organisation) should be organised and manned and so on. Then follows Books concerning how to deal with and prosecute arson, killings, mutilations, robbery and other crimes affecting persons or society. There are Books for trading, inheritance, the usage of mills, and for how to function in the hamlet, how to organise agrarian life and to be a good neighbour.

As is expected in a medieval law the punishment for even minor offences was harsh. So, for example, theft under the Guta law often resulted in the death penalty:

<38> *Concerning the law of theft*

And concerning the law of theft the legislation is this: whoever steals two öre or less than two öre, is to pay a six-öre fine for petty larceny. If he steals between two öre and a mark of silver, he will be taken before the assembly and marked and be committed to pay wergild (i.e. that of the victim). If he steals again after he has been marked, even if it

be less, then he shall be hanged. If he steals as much as a mark of silver or more, then he shall also hang.¹⁸

Very often a severe punishment was outlawry, in essence excommunication from society, forever or for a defined period. To understand the severity of such a penalty one has to understand that an outlaw had no rights; he could be killed at random. This can be described as a ‘social death’, in principle on par with hanging, decapitation or some other legal putting to death.

Many laws have elaborate rules concerning slaves and slavery, however not as elaborate and extensive as we find in many of the continental Barbarian laws. And in the Scandinavian provincial laws a vital element regulating slaves is their manumission, with sometimes a rather odd and prolonged process before becoming free (*frjáls*), with one or several intermediary stages which must be passed through.¹⁹

CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, early Scandinavian laws are evidently heterogeneous. It is possible to detect chronological layers in many of these laws; new legal material and innovations were mixed with what seems to be old local or regional customary law. It is furthermore obvious that the provincial laws have been adapted to their respective physical environments and regional conditions, which means that there cannot

¹⁸ *Guta Lag* 38 (ed. and transl. C. Peel, *Guta Lag. The Law of the Gotlanders*, Viking Society for Northern Research Text Series 19 (London, 2009), p. 48).

¹⁹ Regarding slavery and how it is dealt with in the medieval laws, see C. Neveaus, *Trälarna i länslagslagarna: Danmark och Sverige* (Uppsala, 1974); T. Iversen, *Trelldomen: norsk slaveri i mellomalderen*, Skrifter fra Historisk Institutt, Universitetet i Bergen 1 (Bergen, 1997); S. Brink, *Vikingarnas slavar. Den nordiska trälldomen under yngre järnålder och äldsta medeltid* (Stockholm, 2012).

have been some ‘mechanical’ transfer of laws from one region to another. From the analyses of the northernmost law in Sweden, we can see that it has several layers—which also must have chronological implications—and that the law was created in such a way that it was acceptable to those people living in the north. King Birger’s ratification letter for the Uppland law states that once the law had been written, it was only ratified ‘with those listening, who were concerned ... when the thing assembly in full agreement and without any contradictions had accepted the law’. This reference demonstrates that the people at some public assembly had to accept a new law.

Another interesting question we are still wrestling with is why the Scandinavians wrote their laws in the vernacular, rather than in Latin, which was the language used for the majority of the Barbarian Law Codes.

Although there is still work to be done, the salient point is that these laws are our most important sources for attempting to reconstruct the early medieval society in Scandinavia.

The *Lacnunga*: Controlled Communication, or Physician's Notebook?

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Bald's Leechbook (London, British Library, Royal 12. D. xvii, s. x med.) and the *Lacnunga* (London, British Library, Harley 585, ff. 130r-193r, s. x/xi) are the two earliest vernacular medical compilations of the middle ages, and the most famous and most studied Anglo-Saxon medical texts. The *Lacnunga* itself has, over the past century and a half, captivated the imaginations of critics with its huge amount of seemingly superstitious and folkloric content that takes its place alongside herbal remedies.¹

¹ For example the so-called 'Nine Herbs' charm, *Lacn.* LXXVI (ed. E. Pettit, *Anglo-Saxon Remedies, Charms, and Prayers from British Library Ms Harley 585. the Lacnunga*, 2 vols. (Lewiston, 2001), I, pp. 60–8), or 'Wið Færstice', *Lacn.* CXXVII a and b (ed. Pettit, *Lacnunga* I, pp. 90–5). The stress on the unusual and irrational began with the text's first editor, Thomas Oswald Cockayne, whose 1863 edition printed the text in a font which emulated manuscript lettering, and used deliberately archaic terms in his translation. For example, he translates *beafod wræce*, simple head ache, as 'head wark' (ed. and transl. T. O. Cockayne, *Leechdoms, Wortcunning and Starcraft of Early England. Being a Collection of Documents, for the Most Part Never Before Printed, Illustrating the History of Science in This Country Before the Norman Conquest, Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland During the Middle Ages* 35, 3 vols. (London, 1864), III, at pp. 1–2). Twentieth-century critics then stressed the *Lacnunga*'s supernatural and magical elements over its herbal remedies. Grattan and Singer produced an edition of the text, but disparaged it in the introduction as being 'on as low a cultural level as any in the A.S. language' (J. H. G. Grattan and C. Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine. Illustrated Specially From The Semi-Pagan Text "Lacnunga"*, Publications of the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum, New Series 3 (London, 1952), p. 7), and characterised Anglo-Saxon medicine as follows: 'barbarian man ... reaches no rational concept of the working of the body, and

The only extant copy of the *Lacnunga* is in London, British Library, Harley 585. It is a small manuscript, only 19.2 x 11.5 centimetres. It is largely undecorated, although it does have line decorated initials and some drawings of snakes. In the manuscript the *Lacnunga* follows one of the Old English translations of the *Herbarium of Apuleius Complex*, a collection of late antique medical texts which circulated widely throughout Europe in the middle ages, and was both copied and translated in England.² The *Lacnunga* itself has no

his medicine, at its best, is narrowly empiric and, at worst, remains mere magic' (Grattan and Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine*, p. 7). Gotfried Storms (*Anglo-Saxon Magic* (Gravenhage, 1948)) perhaps did the most damage by publishing all of what he saw as superstitious or magical material from the *Lacnunga* as well as *Bald's Leechbook* and other texts in one volume, extracted from their manuscript and textual contexts; his edition created the illusion that all Anglo-Saxon magic contained magical or superstitious elements. Over the past forty years scholars have begun to acknowledge that the superstitious content of Anglo-Saxon medicine was not as prominent as these editions made it seem. However, the *Lacnunga* still tends to be categorised among the fantastical. Thus, in her quantitative analysis of 'extra-medical' elements in Anglo-Saxon texts Meaney demonstrates that the *Lacnunga* had more such components than the other extant texts, but that the absolute number of remedies with such elements was still small, with only 26.89% of *Lacnunga* remedies containing 'extra-medical' elements (L. Meaney, 'Extra-Medical Elements in Anglo-Saxon Medicine', *Social History of Medicine* 24 (2011), 41–56, at p. 54). While her comments on the *Lacnunga* are far more nuanced than those of early editors, she nonetheless stresses its 'extra-medical' nature and inherent difference from the other extant texts: 'Lac [*Lacnunga*] is the most different, not only in being the most superstitious but also the most Christianised ... Perhaps the similarities between the AC [*Apuleius Complex*] and *Bald's Leechbook* are due to their reliance on Latin texts, whereas L3 [*Leechbook III*] and the *Lacnunga* are more dependent upon native folklore' ('Extra-Medical Elements', p. 55).

² The standard edition of the Old English version is H. I. De Vriend, *The Old English Herbarium and Medicina de Quadrupedibus* (Oxford, 1984). See also A. Van Arsdall, *Medieval Herbal Remedies: The Old English Herbarium and Anglo-Saxon Medicine* (New York, 2002) and M. A. D'Aronco and M. L. Cameron, ed., *The*

table of contents, and no discernible order to the remedies, where most other medieval medical texts are ordered either head-to-toe, or alphabetically by the name of the plant.³

This combination of supposed superstitious content, the simple manuscript, and disordered text has led critics to see the *Lacnunga* as a simplistic hodgepodge of popular charms, and as a world away from the kind of formal and learned medical writing evidenced in *Bald's Leechbook*, let alone classical texts. These views hold even in the writing of Karen Jolly and M. L. Cameron, two of the prime movers of the recent rehabilitation of Anglo-Saxon medicine as a whole.⁴ Thus, Jolly states:

the *Leechbook* is a more highly organised and elaborate text and has more classical and continental-Christian elements than the *Lacnunga*. However, the comparatively unscholarly nature of the *Lacnunga* should not lead us to disparage it as a source for understanding Anglo-Saxon medicine. The *Lacnunga*, in all its perceived barbarousness, reflects more of actual practice *because* of its diverse mixture and simple approach to medicine. It is much more representative of

Old English Illustrated Pharmacopoeia: British Library Cotton Vitellius C. III (Copenhagen, 1998).

³ *Bald's Leechbook* is organised in head-to-toe order (cf. Cockayne II). The *Herbarium*, on the other hand, is alphabetical by plant (cf. de Vriend, *Herbarium*).

⁴ Especially through the following publications: M. L. Cameron, 'The Sources of Medical Knowledge in Anglo-Saxon England', *ASE* 11 (1982), 135–55; M. L. Cameron, 'Bald's *Leechbook*. Its Sources and Their Uses in Its Compilation', *ASE* 12 (1983), 153–82; M. L. Cameron, 'Anglo-Saxon Medicine and Magic', *ASE* 17 (1988), 191–215; M. L. Cameron, 'Bald's *Leechbook* and Cultural Interactions in Anglo-Saxon England', *ASE* 19 (1990), 5–12; M. L. Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine* (Cambridge, 1993); K. L. Jolly, 'Anglo-Saxon Charms in the Context of a Christian World View', *Journal of Medieval History* 11.4 (1985), 279–93; K. L. Jolly, *Popular Religion in Late Saxon England. Elf Charms in Context* (Chapel Hill, 1996).

Anglo-Saxon medicine, if what you want is the whole society and not just the narrow tradition of copied texts.⁵

Cameron saw it in largely the same terms. Discussing its process of composition, he also calls it ‘thoroughly unscholarly’ and states:

It appears to be a commonplace book ... the *Lacnunga* shows none of the organization or medical relevance of the *Leechbooks* ... There is, indeed, no good reason to suppose that it ever was a planned work but that ... things were entered higgledy-piggledy.⁶

The text’s most recent and best editor, Edward Pettit, presents a similar opinion, saying that it ‘looks rather like the Anglo-Saxon equivalent of a modern day notebook’.⁷

In this paper, I would like to consider an alternative model for its compilation: what I will call an ‘archival’ principal, like that suggested by Jolly and Keefer for other disordered texts, such as the additions to the Durham Ritual (Durham, Cathedral Library MS A. IV. 19, s. ix/x or x in., additions s. x² (c. 970)), or the marginalia in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41 (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41 s. xi (additions s.xi¹-xi med.)).⁸

It is incredibly important to note at this point that when I argue that the *Lacnunga* may have been ‘archival’, I am not suggesting that it was not meant to be used in medical practice, or that it was not used

⁵ Jolly, *Popular Religion*, p. 107.

⁶ Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, p. 31.

⁷ Pettit, *Lacnunga* I, p. xlvi.

⁸ K. L. Jolly, *The Community of St Cuthbert in the Late Tenth Century: The Chester-le-Street Additions to Durham Cathedral Library A.IV.19* (Columbus, 2012); K. L. Jolly, ‘Prayers from the Field: Practical Protection and Demonic Defense in Anglo-Saxon England’, *Traditio* 61 (2006), 95–147; S. L. Keefer, ‘The Margin as Archive: The Liturgical Marginalia of a Manuscript of the Old English Bede’, *Traditio* 51 (1996), 147–77.

by a physician.⁹ Rather, the term refers to a conscious process of gathering information from a wide variety of sources in order to record practices for the future, and not just sterilely preserve the past. After all, as will be discussed below, some of the prayers in the Durham Ritual seem to have likewise been meant to be used in a practical, pastoral context.

Both of these collections, the Durham Ritual and CCCC 41, seem to be an odd jumble of material from a variety of sources. The Durham additions were made to an early tenth-century collectar of southern origin, sometime after 970 when it was brought to Chester-le-Street by Aldred, a monk more famous as the glossator of the Lindisfarne Gospels. These additions were made on the empty sheets of the last quire of the southern text and on three added quires; they show how diverse such material could be. They include, among other things, texts for the daily office, as well as agricultural blessings and generic prayers, a blessing over salt and water for demonic possession, house blessings—which Jolly identifies as ‘including a prayer repeated from the earlier section, possibly in this context for a residence outside the religious community’¹⁰—the St John the Baptist prayer against poison, benedictions, blessing for new bread, a blessing for a well, alphabetical legal abbreviations, lists of ancient titles and offices and ecclesiastical grades, and names of the apostles’ burial places.¹¹ Jolly notes that these additions include both older, local

⁹ For more on the users of Anglo-Saxon medical texts, see my PhD dissertation (University of Cambridge, forthcoming).

¹⁰ Jolly, *Community*, pp. 144–5.

¹¹ Examples of each: Daily Office fol. 68[72]r17–28 (ed. Jolly, *Community*, p. 257; all pp. in this note refer to this edition); agricultural blessings ff. 66[70]r1–67[71]v5, (pp. 246–52); generic prayers ff. 64r9–17 (pp. 238–9); blessing for demonic possession fol. 67[71]v6–22 (pp. 282–3); house blessings ff. 67[71]v23–68[72]r16 (pp. 254–5) – 67v24–68r1 is repeated from the original collectar, cf. Jolly, p. 254 n. 28; prayer against poison ff. 61r11–22 (pp. 230–1); benedictions ff. 61v1–62v18 (pp. 231–4); blessing for new bread ff. 63v12–19 (p. 237); blessing for a well ff. 63v23–64r8 (p. 238); legal abbreviations ff.

material and new liturgical developments on the continent and in England.¹² She suggests, ‘it would seem that in smaller or more isolated rural communities, clergy collected every scrap of new prayer that came their way, along with older practices and forms they treasured’.¹³ This certainly sounds a lot like the supposed disordered miscellany of the *Lacnunga*.

The Durham Ritual is useful because it is possible to know far more about its compilation than that of the *Lacnunga*, mainly thanks to Jolly’s excellent and thorough analysis in *The Community of St Cuthbert in the Late Tenth Century*. Jolly suggests that each quire was written by a different monk, perhaps simultaneously, and that each conformed to each individual monk’s interests and requirements.¹⁴ However, she also shows that the additions were made under Aldred’s general oversight—oversight that is apparent not only in the colophon which states that he brought the manuscript to Chester-le-Street in the first place, but also in the corrections and gloss he added in his own hand to other scribes’ work.¹⁵ Likewise, Jolly has shown that the Chester-le-Street additions, particularly records of more recent prayers, brought an out-of-date southern collectar in line with post-Benedictine reform liturgical needs.¹⁶ This was a collection that brought together a vast amount of material, from a large number of sources, which was collected and copied through the combined efforts of a scriptorium and under the oversight of an experienced scribe, and which served a distinct purpose within the community.

85ra1–86rb9 (pp. 329–38); ancient titles and offices ff. 86va16–87ra10 (pp. 342–5); ecclesiastical grades ff. 87ra11–87va15 (pp. 346–9); apostles’ burial places ff. 88ra1–b24 (pp. 352–5). This is not an exhaustive list, and the citations are individual examples only: see Jolly, *Community*, for a full edition of the collector additions.

¹² Jolly, *Community*, p. 118.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 111 and 118.

Nonetheless, the final form is not unlike what Cameron calls the ‘higgledy-piggledy’ hodgepodge of the *Lacnunga*.

Significantly, it has also been proposed that *Bald’s Leechbook* was collected in a similar way. Meaney has done the most work on this. In her brilliant article ‘Variant Versions of Old English Medical Remedies and the Compilation of Bald’s Leechbook’, she compared remedy variants in an attempt to uncover the *Bald’s Leechbook* compilation process. She noticed that variants of *Bald’s Leechbook* remedies appear in groups or blocks in other manuscripts, and that some transcription errors or variations can be explained if we assume that the scribe was copying from such a block. She concludes, ‘even before King Alfred’s time, a large number of medical remedies in Old English must have been circulating more or less independently ... Gradually little groups must have started to adhere together, some perhaps haphazardly ... Elsewhere there was a tendency to group a number of remedies for the same or related diseases’, and that these groups were collected, rearranged and copied to form *Bald’s Leechbook*.¹⁷ If this is true of *Bald’s Leechbook*, why not the *Lacnunga*, as well?

These are therefore two very different models for looking at the *Lacnunga’s* compilation. What is in question is not so much whether the compiler or compilers had in mind some formal definition of ‘notebook’ or ‘archive’, but rather the opposition of two models for understanding the way the text was put together: on the one hand as an organic development and accident of circumstance; and on the other as a collection which, though disordered, was the product of concerted editorial effort to gather remedies from a wide variety of sources.

¹⁷ A. L. Meaney, ‘Variant Versions of Old English Medical Remedies and the Compilation of Bald’s Leechbook’, *ASE* 13 (1984), 235–68, at p. 250. For a more nuanced view on how such remedies may have been selected, see the forthcoming doctoral thesis by Emily Kesling (University of Oxford).

So which theory stands up to the evidence of the text and manuscript? First of all, one thing is clear: however the *Lacnunga* was collected, Harley 585 itself cannot have been an organically-developed notebook. The manuscript was written by a number of scribes in a series of long stints. Just how many scribes were involved and how many stints each scribe completed is up for debate. The theories are as follows:

British Library:¹⁸

- Hand A: ff. 1r–114v (*Herbarium Complex*), 130r–179r (beginning of *Lacnunga* – *Lacn.* CXLIII)
 - o Except ff. 131r–132v (*Lacn.* VII – *Lacn.* XIII), 151r–v (*Lacn.* LXIV)
- Hand B: ff. 115r–129v (*Herbarium Complex*)
- Hand C: ff. 179r–190v (*Lacn.* CXLIV–CLXXXII)

Pettit:¹⁹

- Hand i: ff. 1–114v (*Herbarium Complex*), 130–179r, l. 10 (beginning of *Lacnunga* – *Lacn.* CXLIII)
 - o Except ff. 131r l. 5–(?)132v l. 1 (*Lacn.* VII – *Lacn.* XIII; = hand iii), 151r–v (not l. 15; *Lacn.* LXIV; = hand iv)
- Hand ii: ff. 115–129 (*Herbarium Complex*)
- Hand v: ff. 179r l. 11–190v (CXLIV–CLXXXII)
- Hand vi: ff. 191r–v (CLXXXIII)
- Hand vii: ff. 192r–193r (CLXXXIV–CLXXXVIII)
- Hand viii: f. 193r ll. 3–7 (CLXXXIX–CXC, later hand – Ker s. xii)
- Hand ix: f. 193 r ll. 8–11 (CXCI, later hand – Ker s. xii/xiii)

¹⁸ British Library Catalogue, ‘Harley 585’. (British Library, ‘Harley MS 585’ http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley_MS_585 [accessed September–November 2014])

¹⁹ Pettit, *Lacnunga* I, pp. 138–41.

Wright and Flowers²⁰

- Hand A: ff. 1–115 (*Herbarium Complex*)
- Hand B: ff. 115–129 (*Herbarium Complex*)
- Hand C: ff. 130–190v (*Lacnunga*)

The differences of interpretation hinge on a few cruxes, but as is evident above, in every case critics agree that the bulk of Harley 585 was written by three scribes writing in long stints of as many as one hundred and fourteen folios at a time, and the most recent critics agree that one of these scribes copied parts of both the *Herbarium* and the *Lacnunga*.

This does not sound like an organically developing scrapbook. If it were, one would expect a number of interchanging hands, and perhaps a variety of inks. This seems to indicate a more concerted programme of copying. Moreover, that the *Lacnunga* was copied as part of the same stints as the *Herbarium Complex* suggests that this was not a notebook written in spare sheets at the end of a copied text, but that both texts were purposely planned to be included in the same manuscript.

Of course this does not prove that the *Lacnunga* itself is not a notebook. Harley 585 could easily be a later copy that obscures the process of compilation of the original. To address this, it is necessary to look at the text.

Perhaps the most telling piece of evidence is that the same ‘blocks’ of remedies are evident here as in *Bald’s Leechbook* (see Appendix 1). For one thing, as Meaney has noted, remedies that are shared between the *Lacnunga* and *Bald’s Leechbook* are included in the *Lacnunga* in blocks, corresponding to *Bald’s Leechbook* chapters or parts of chapters.²¹ As is clear in Appendix 1, only in one case is a *Bald’s*

²⁰ Op. cit. Grattan and Singer, *Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine*, p. 308.

²¹ Meaney, ‘Variant’, p. 255.

Leechbook set interrupted by an unrelated remedy. This holds true likewise for remedies from other sources; *Leechbook* III remedies are also left in sequence, for example. This is not to suggest that these were necessarily direct copies of the manuscripts in question – both may have been copied from independently circulating blocks of remedies.²² Likewise, there are a number of ‘blocks’ of remedies which have no identified parallels, but seem to be grouped together according to disease,²³ suggesting that they may have been adapted from similar circulating groups of remedies.

While it is possible that this could be attributed to a physician culling remedies on particular topics from particular sources one at a time, it does not seem reasonable to attribute the same evidence, the inclusion of blocks of remedies, to two different causes. It is more likely that this is part of the process of collecting pamphlets or scraps of remedies in groups, which were then re-recorded in Harley 585.

Moreover, textual evidence seems to support this as well. Like *Bald’s Leechbook* and the archival texts I have already mentioned, the *Lacnunga* also draws on a huge variety of material, from a wide variety of sources and forms of transmission, and representing three centuries of medicine.

In his edition, Pettit listed all of the parallels and variants he could find for every *Lacnunga* remedy.²⁴ Manuscripts which contain such variants or parallels of *Lacnunga* remedies span from the eighth to the eleventh centuries. Likewise, the *Lacnunga* preserves a body of older and perhaps even outdated material. As Meaney points out, the remedies which are variants of those in *Bald’s Leechbook* also seem to have been copied from an earlier version than the one in Royal 12 D

²² Indeed this is what Meaney argues, cf. ‘Variant Versions’, p. 258.

²³ Meaney also notes blocks of remedies with or without ‘extra-medical’ elements, suggesting that the inclusion of extra-medical elements may have depended on the copied source texts (Meaney, ‘Extra-Medical Elements’, p. 54).

²⁴ See Pettit, *Lacnunga* II, *passim.*, and Pettit, *Lacnunga* I, pp. 151–66.

xvii, perhaps from a late ninth-century Alfredian ‘fair copy’.²⁵ We see this interest in the preservation of older material also in the gloss of a single charm: the so-called *Lorica of Laidcenn*. This charm exists in multiple manuscript versions, but what is interesting is that only two contain an Old English gloss: this one, in the *Lacnunga*, and a version in the Book of Cerne (Cambridge, University Library, Ll.I.10, c. 820 x 840). In his incredibly detailed study, Herren has shown that despite being later, the Harley gloss actually incorporates a much older layer of vocabulary than the version in the Book of Cerne, which updates the language of the gloss.²⁶ Each piece of evidence can be explained away—perhaps the Alfredian fair copy was the only one available to the compiler and perhaps the compiler mindlessly copied an older *Lorica* gloss that is no longer extant. However, as a whole the evidence points to the deliberate or at least indiscriminate inclusion of older—and in the case of the *Lorica* gloss, outdated—material in the text.

So the *Lacnunga* seems to copy pamphlets of related remedies, and preserve older material. Likewise, like the other ‘archival’ texts—and indeed like *Bald’s Leechbook*—the *Lacnunga* combines a variety of remedies from a wide body of sources. Alongside remedies circulating in England, it includes remedies or elements of remedies which have continental parallels. The most striking is a recipe for *oleo roseo* which has a variant version in the so-called *St Gall Antidotary*, associated with the monastery of Sankt Gallen in Switzerland (Sankt Gallen, Stiftsbibliothek 44).²⁷ Likewise, a blessing on the dedication of a church which is recorded in *Lacnunga* CLI²⁸ is attested in continental manuscripts originating as far apart as Spain, Northern Italy,

²⁵ Meaney, ‘Variant Versions’, p. 258.

²⁶ M. Herren, *The Hisperica Famina II: Related Poems*, Studies and Texts 85 (Toronto, 1987), p. 8.

²⁷ Pettit, *Lacnunga* I, p. 12; II, p. 17.

²⁸ Pettit, *Lacnunga* I, p. 104.

Northern France, and Germany.²⁹ As well, *Lacnunga* LXXXI a and b borrow the names of saints Macutus and Victorius, which circulated on the continent.³⁰ Victorius is especially telling here, as he is originally a French saint, indicating that he must have been included in the charm through borrowing from the continent.³¹ It seems therefore that like the Durham Ritual, the *Lacnunga* preserves both English and continental practices.

It also includes remedies which otherwise circulated in a variety of intellectual contexts. Besides being a continental text, the *oleo roseo* recipe is an example of a remedy which circulated in antidotaries—that is specialised, medical texts. And it is only one among many such remedies in the *Lacnunga*. One of these is *Lacnunga* XXX,³² a wensalve, which encodes such tacit information into every version. In addition to the *Lacnunga*, the remedy appears in London, British Library, Cotton Domitian I, and London, Wellcome Historical Medical Library, 46. Internal evidence suggests the remedy was aimed at an audience with medical expertise. The Wellcome version asks for ‘Clear honey, such as one puts in a ‘black *brin*’.³³ This instruction relies on the user’s knowing what a black *brin* is, and how to make it, and therefore on his or her possessing medically-specific knowledge. The Harley version omits this line, but asks instead for *gemered*, or purified honey, assuming that the user not only knows what ‘purified’

²⁹ Cf. O. Heiming, *Liber Sacramentorum Augustoduniensis*, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 159b (Turnhout, 1984), p. 169, no. 1461.

³⁰ Pettit, *Lacnunga* I, p. 70.

³¹ Perhaps by Grimbald, one of the foreign scholars recruited by Alfred. Cf. M. Lapidge, *Anglo-Saxon Litanies of the Saints* (Woodbridge, 1991), p. 64; as noted in Pettit, *Lacnunga* II, pp. 168–9.

³² Pettit *Lacnunga* I, p. 18.

³³ As quoted in Pettit, *Lacnunga* II, p. 43: ‘clear honey, such as one puts in a “black *brin*”’ (my translation). The DOE translates ‘brin’ as ‘1. a paste or pottage made mainly with grain, meal, etc. and used in medical recipes for various ailments (either to be eaten or to be applied as a poultice)’. For more, see D. Banham, *Food and Drink in Anglo-Saxon England* (Stroud, 2004), p. 24.

means in this context, but also how to purify honey and how pure it must be for a remedy such as this.³⁴

As Fig. 2 demonstrates, the three versions also disagree on the order in which ingredients are to be added and the number of times or degree to which the mixture is to be boiled. All three versions require the herbs to be pounded together, then wrung through a cloth and boiled in the honey. However, these steps are introduced in a different order: while the Lacnunga and Domitian versions list the herb steps first, the Wellcome remedy addresses the honey first, and then describes the steps for compounding the herbs. As well, while the Domitian remedy says simply: *wylle þone on þam hunige*,³⁵ the other two come with indications for how long to boil it: Wellcome states: *willan hit neah brives þicnesse*,³⁶ while the Lacnunga is even more precise, instructing the practitioner: *þonne seoð ðu hit twa swa swiðe swa hit ær was*.³⁷ A more crucial difference, in terms of the compounding process, is in the way in which the garlic and pepper are added. The Domitian version calls for them to be pounded with the other herbs. The Lacnunga calls for the herbs to be pounded, then the garlic to be pounded last into the mixture as a whole, while the pepper is to be added along with the other ‘exotic’ ingredients to borrow Pettit’s phrase, only after the honey and herb mixture *swiðe gesoden sy*.³⁸ Then, the Lacnunga version calls for the new mixture to be boiled again. The Wellcome version is different still: it calls for the honey to be boiled

³⁴ For more on tacit knowledge in Anglo-Saxon medical texts, see A. Van Arsdall, ‘Medical Training in Anglo-Saxon England: An Evaluation of the Evidence’, in P. Lendinara, L. Lazzari and M. A. D’Aronco, ed., *Form and Content of Instruction in Anglo-Saxon England in Light of Contemporary Manuscript Evidence: Papers presented at the International Conference, Udine, 6–8 April 2006* (Turnhout, 2007), pp. 415–34.

³⁵ As quoted in Pettit, *Lacnunga* II, p. 42: ‘boil this in the honey’.

³⁶ As quoted in Pettit, *Lacnunga* II, p. 43: ‘boil it to almost a *brin*’s thickness’.

³⁷ Pettit, *Lacnunga* I, p. 18: ‘then boil it twice as strongly as before’.

³⁸ Pettit, *Lacnunga* I, p. 18: ‘has thoroughly boiled’.

before any herbs are added, then the basic set are added and boiled, and the garlic and pepper are subsequently added at the same time, when the honey and herb mixture *þonne hit beo forneah genyllled*.³⁹

Fig. 2 A Step-by-Step Layout of Lacnunga XXX Variants⁴⁰

[variations *in boiling italicised*, in honey underlined, **in garlic and pepper bold**.]

<i>Lacnunga XXX</i>	Cotton Domitian	Wellcome
To wensalfe [For a wen-salve]	Þas wyrta sceolon to wensealfe [these herbs are appropriate for a wen-salve]	Hat wyrcean þe sylf wennsealfe [work a hot wen-salve]
Nim elenan 7 rædic 7 cyrfillan 7 hræmnes fot, Ængliscne næp 7 finul 7 saluian 7 supernewuda [take elecampane and chervil and hramnes fot, English næp and fennel and sage and southernwood,]	Elene ceruille, rædic, næp, hremnes fot, pipur ; [Elecampane, garlic , chervil, radish, næp, hremnes fot, and pepper]	Man sceal niman <u>clæne hunig</u> , swylc <u>man to blacan briwe deþ</u> [one shall take <u>clear honey</u> , such as one puts in a 'black <i>brin</i> ']
7 cnuca tosomne	Cnucige ealla wyrta	ða 7 wyllan hit neah brines þicnesse

³⁹ Pettit, *Lacnunga* II, p. 43: 'and when it is almost boiled'.

⁴⁰ Text and translation *Lacnunga* version Pettit, *Lacnunga* I, pp. 18–19; Text Cotton Domitian, Wellcome Pettit, *Lacnunga* II, pp. 42–3, translations my own, with plant names taken from Pettit.

[and pound together,]	[pound all of the herbs]	[and boil it to nearly a brin's thickness]
7 nim garleaces 7 wringe þurh clað godne dæl	7 wringe þurh clað	7 niman rædic 7 elenan fillan 7 hrefnes
[and take a good deal of garlic ;	[and wring through a cloth]	[and take radish and elecampane, chervil and raven's foot]
Cnuca	7 wylle þonne on þam hunige	Cnocian, swa man betst mæge
[pound]	[and boil this in the honey]	[pound it as much as possible]
7 wring þruh clað on <u>gemered hunig</u>		7 wringan þonne þa wyrta 7 geotan þæt wos þarto
[and strain through a cloth into <u>purified honey</u>]		[and then strain the herbs and pour the juice out into it (i.e. the boiled honey)]
<i>Donne hit swiðe gesoden sy, þonne do ðu pipor 7 sideware, gallengar 7 gingifre 7 rinde 7 lawerbergean 7 pyretran, godne dæl ælces be ðære mæðe</i>		<i>7, þonne hit beo forneah genwylled, cnucian godne dæl garleaces 7 don þarto 7 piperian, swaswa þe þince.</i>
<i>[when it has thoroughly boiled then add pepper</i>		<i>[and when it is almost boiled, boil a good deal of garlic and also put pepper in it, as much</i>

*and zedoary, galingale
and ginger and cinnamon
bark and laurel-berries
and feverfew, a good deal
of each according to
strength,*

as you think (necessary)].

7 syððan hit swa
gemænged þara wyrta
wos 7 þæt hunig,

[and after the juice of
the plants and the
honey has been mixed
thus,]

*Ðonne seoð ðu hit twa
swa swiðe swa hit ær was*

*[then seethe it twice as
strongly as before]*

Ðonne hæfs þu gode
sealfe wið wennas 7
wið nyrwet

[then you will have a
good salve for wens
and for shortness of
breath].

In ‘Variant Versions’ Meaney discussed a remedy which had similar kinds of variations in procedure. This is a remedy which is duplicated between the Omont Fragment (remedy viii), and *Bald’s Leechbook*.⁴¹ Meaney notes that while they share most of the same ingredients,

⁴¹ *BLch* I.xxiii, p. 66.

Omont recommends that they be made into a bath, while *Bald's Leechbook* recommends that they be made into a drink.⁴² Meaney does not make much of this, and addresses it mostly as a symptom of scribal processes. While scribal error must indubitably have introduced many changes to remedies over time, the changes here significantly alter the format and administration of the remedy. If this was meant as a practical text, it is unlikely that such a fundamental detail as whether a compound is meant to be bathed in or drunk would be changed so carelessly. The changes in *Lacnunga* XXX, likewise, are not simply textual variants, but affect the way in which the remedy was put together, and the kind of mixture it would yield, and would affect such easily observable qualities as colour, texture, and viscosity. These are the kinds of variants one would expect to occur through experimentation, like slight variations on a particular recipe in modern cooking. It seems that this remedy may have circulated in a context where it was being used and altered by practitioners.

Yet alongside these specialist remedies the *Lacnunga* also contains blessings and prayers such as the *Lorica of Laidcenn*,⁴³ or the prayer of St John the Evangelist,⁴⁴ whose variants occur mainly in liturgical and devotional contexts, in some of the most famous liturgical manuscripts of the period. Variant versions of the *Lorica* occur in Köln, Dombibliothek, 106 (s. ix); London, British Library, Harley 2965 ('The Book of Nunnaminster' s. viii/ix or ix^{1/4}); the 'Book of Cerne'; Verona, Biblioteca Capitolare di Verona LXVII (s. x); Dublin, Royal Irish Academy 23 ('Leabhar Breac'; s. xiv); Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Cod. Theol. 809 (s. xvi). Variants of the St John the Evangelist prayer are found in the 'Book of Nunnaminster'; the 'Book of Cerne'; the Durham Ritual; the Irish

⁴² Meaney, 'Variant Versions', p. 244.

⁴³ *Lacn.* LXV, pp. 40–56.

⁴⁴ *Lacn.* LXIV, pp. 46–8.

Liber Hymnorum; *Bald's Leechbook*; and Vatican, Regina Christina 852 (s. x).⁴⁵ Likewise, we must not forget the large amount of charms and other material which have no antecedents and have been seen as popular remedies. It seems that not only did the compilers collect small groupings of remedies, and include older as well as continental material, but they also culled these not only from medical contexts, but from a wide variety of textual genres.

They also collected texts which circulated in a huge variety of ways. Some do indeed seem to have circulated orally. One example of this is the *tigað* or *acre* gibberish charm. As Pettit notes, Anglo-Saxon versions of this charm appear in the *Lacnunga* (XXV, LXIII, LXXXIII),⁴⁶ *Bald's Leechbook* (I.xlv, part of the 'holy salve' and immediately following the prayer of St John the Evangelist),⁴⁷ Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 163, and Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College 379/599.⁴⁸ A version of part of the charm appears likewise on the rings from Bramham Moor, Yorkshire, and Greymoor Hill, Carlisle as well as an Anglo-Saxon agate ring of unknown provenance, and a late twelfth-century rune stick from South Søstergården, Bergen, Norway.⁴⁹ The rings have been dated as pre-tenth-century based on the type of silver sulphide niello used.⁵⁰ These

⁴⁵ *BLch* I.xlv.4, p. 112.

⁴⁶ *Lacn.*, pp. 32, 14 and 70.

⁴⁷ *BLch*, p. 112.

⁴⁸ For a parallel comparison of all of the versions, see Pettit, *Lacnunga* II, pp. 24–6.

⁴⁹ Pettit, *Lacnunga* II, p. 27. For more on the rings, see R. I. Page, 'Two Runic Notes', *ASE* 27 (1988), 289–94, at pp. 291–2; E. Okasha, 'Anglo-Saxon Inscribed Rings', *Leeds Studies in English*, NS 35 (2003), 29–45, at p. 31; A. L. Meaney, *Anglo-Saxon Amulets and Curing Stones*, B.A.R., British Series 96 (Oxford, 1981), pp. 23–4.

⁵⁰ Meaney, *Amulets*, p. 23.

rings are made of electrum, gold, and agate, with silver sulphide niello setting off the runes.⁵¹

The Bramham Moor ring contains a runic inscription which reads *ærkriufll | kriuripon | glæstæpontol*.⁵² The Greymoor Hill ring has, as Page notes, an ‘almost identical inscription’,⁵³ reading *+ærkriufllkriuriponglæstæpon | tol*,⁵⁴ ‘with the last three runes set within the hoop’.⁵⁵ The third, agate ring reads ‘· e r y · r i · u f · d o l · y r i · u r i · þ o l · * l e s · t e · p o t e · n o l’.⁵⁶ While Meaney does believe that these rings are connected to one another, she does not believe that they are connected to the charms in the medical texts, stating ‘the Bald’s leechbook formula contains the word *ærcrio*, which is presumably the same as the *ærkriu* of the Greymoor and Bramham Moor rings, and perhaps what underlines the beginning of the agate ring inscription, but there are no other really convincing similarities. A general likeness extends to other formulae in Bald’s Leechbook (I.xlv) and the Lacnunga (XXV, LXIII), all of which appear to be distorted Irish, and which share certain words’.⁵⁷ Meaney is certainly correct in noting that any parallels between the full set of texts occur only on the level of individual words. However, it is clear that the inscriptions and the manuscript versions are playing with the same sounds, and the litany of repetitions of forms of *acre*, and the overall structure of the charm in the manuscript and material versions seem to be similar. For example, line 1 of the *BL* version reads *Acre. ærcree. ær nem. nadre. ærcuna hel. ær nem. ni þærn. ær*. The line consists in part of modified versions of repetitions of words, which bring out one or another elements: *ærcree* draws attention to the ‘cr’ sound in the first

⁵¹ *Ibid.*; Page, ‘Two Runic Notes’, p. 291.

⁵² Page, ‘Two Runic Notes’, p. 291.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 292.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 291.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 292.

⁵⁷ Meaney, *Amulets*, p. 24.

word, while *ærnem* picks up on the ‘æ’ sound at the beginning of the second word, while at the same time emphasising the ‘e’ ending of both. *ærcuna* picks up on the ‘ærc’ sound of the second word and the ‘n’ of *nem* and *andre*. *Ærnem* is repeated twice, while *nipærn* partially reverses the word. None of these repetitions work perfectly, but they do create a kind of interlace of sound in the line that is aurally clear. The same is true of the ring inscriptions. It starts with *ærkriu*, which may be a case and orthographic variant of *ærcre*, and therefore seems to point to the same inscription. The *ærkriu/kriuþon/stæpon* progression creates the same audible interlace as in the manuscript charm. The rest of the material is more difficult to fit in, but it is worth noting that the other textual variant versions of this charm do at times have vast differences in individual lines despite being on the whole clear textual variants.⁵⁸ For example, the *BL* text contains a line which reads *asan. bui þine. adcrice. ær nem. meodre. ær nem. æþern. ær nem. allii*.⁵⁹ Like the text on the rings, this introduces entirely unrelated words, like *meodre*, while maintaining the basic repetition of ‘a’, ‘ær’, ‘cr’ – the same which is maintained on the rings. Therefore it seems that the ring inscriptions are versions of the same charm.

This charm’s appearance on material objects also suggests that it was popular in the period and used amuletically, as well as spoken as part of verbal healing. There is evidence that this prayer circulated orally. First of all, the *Lacnunga* records two versions of the charm, in chapters LXIII and XXV (a third chapter, LXXXIII, alludes to the charm with a first-word cue). Chapter LXIII records only a single line, equivalent to the second line of the charm in XXV, but even the one line contains a number of variants which cannot have been mere scribal error: where LXIII has *nona ærnem beoðor*, for example, XXV has *nonabiud ær*. This variation cannot have been introduced through scribal variation: the *nem* has disappeared entirely, and *beoðor* looks

⁵⁸ For a side-by-side comparison of the variants, cf. Pettit, *Lacnunga* II, pp. 22–6.

⁵⁹ Pettit, *Lacnunga* II, p. 24.

nothing like *biuð ær* when written. The two do, however, sound very similar. Perhaps *beoðor* is a different orthographic interpretation of the sounds *biuð ær*—which would point to the charm’s being recorded from an oral exemplar. Bodley 163 contains yet a third version of that line, *arcre. enxrcce erernem nonabaioth arcum cunat*; again the changes at the beginning of the line suggest that the scribe is working from an altogether different exemplar. The *BL* example contains *nadre ærcuna hel* in the place of the *nona ærnem beoðor crux*, suggesting that it was not the exemplar for any of these variations, nor could any of the rings have been, as previously discussed. All of this points to the oral circulation of the remedy, and it is unlikely that these versions simply draw on two separate textual traditions. Moreover, the sheer number of extant variants suggests oral circulation, as written circulation tends to be more conservative of the text. Finally, that three variant versions exist from the eleventh century alone points to its continued circulation at the time at which the *Lacnunga* was compiled.

Alongside this, we have a number of remedies which clearly circulated in written form. The best example is a prayer which has already been mentioned: the prayer of St John the Evangelist. Among the seven manuscript witnesses for this prayer (Book of Nunnaminster, Book of Cerne, Durham Ritual, Vatican, Regina Christina 852, Irish *Liber Hymnorum*, *Bald’s Leechbook*, and *Lacnunga*), all of the variants are orthographical, with the exception of one line which is included in the *Lacnunga* but omitted in the others.⁶⁰ This close copying indicates that the remedy cannot but have circulated in written form.

Therefore what we have in the *Lacnunga* is a text which draws on both oral and written remedies; on texts which Anglo-Saxons

⁶⁰ *Lacnunga* (ed. Pettit, *Lacnunga* II, 78–9; my transl.): *cum nos te ad auxilium inuocamus; cuius auditu nomine serpens conquiescit* (‘when we call you to help us; hearing whose name, the serpent rests’). Cf. Pettit, *Lacnunga* II, pp. 78–9 for all variants between manuscript versions.

identified with formal medical writing and expertise, and on those, like the *Lorica*, which come from a devotional context, as well as those like the *acre* charm which were used amuletically, perhaps in popular healing. Likewise, the *Lacnunga* represents medicine which circulated on the continent as well as in England; and it preserves or re-records older remedies. Finally and perhaps most importantly, there is evidence that these remedies may have been gathered in pamphlet form.

However the *Lacnunga*'s compiler or compilers labelled their finished product, it is clear that a huge amount of effort must have gone in to gathering this collection. The miscellany of included material sounds a lot like the Durham Ritual or Corpus Bede, while the underlying block structure of material parallels that of *Bald's Leechbook*. Though it is possible to suggest that a physician found and copied blocks of remedies every time a patient came to see him, or had an exceptionally good memory or large library at his disposal, it does not seem reasonable to interpret this same evidence differently in the case of the *Lacnunga* than in the case of other, similar texts.

And this is really the take-home message here: the evidence which has been presented here points to a collection which does not seem to have been valued any differently, or any less, than any other Anglo-Saxon medical text. The manuscript context becomes important here again. The fact that Harley 585 was pre-planned to include both the *Lacnunga* and the *Apuleius Complex* suggests that the two texts were seen, at least by those who commissioned and wrote the present manuscript, as being on the same footing. It may include a different sort of material from the classical text, but it seems that both the *Lacnunga* compilers and the Harley scribes saw it as complementary, and not opposing, to the broader tradition of medicine in Anglo-Saxon England.

APPENDIX⁶¹

Colour blocks represent groups of remedies by use.

Remedy Number (pp. in <i>Lacn.</i>)	Use	Translation	Variant Versions in <i>Bald's Leechbook</i> , <i>Leechbook III</i> , <i>OE Herbarium</i>
I (4–5)	with heafodwræce	for headache	<i>BLch</i> I.i, p. 18
II (4–5)	wið heafodwræce	for headache	<i>BLch</i> I.i, p. 18
III (4–5)	wið heafodwærce	for headache	<i>BLch</i> I.i, p. 18
IV (4–5)	to heafodsealfe 7 to ehsealfe	For a head-salve and for an eye-salve	
V (4–5)	eahsealf	eye-salve	
VI (4–5)	eahsealf	eye-salve	<i>BLch</i> I.ii, p. 34
VII (6–7)	gif eagan forsetene beoð	if the eyes are stopped up	
VIII (6–7)	eahsealf	eye-salve	
IX (6–7)	gif poc sy on eagan	if there is a sty in an eye	
X (6–7)	eahsealf wið eahwyrce, 7 wið miste, 7 wið wænne, 7 wið weormum, 7 wið gicðan, 7 wið	eye-salve for eye-pain, and for dimness (of vision), and for a sty, and for 'worms', and for	

⁶¹ Ed. and transl. Pettit, *Lacnunga* I, with some modifications to the translations. Variant versions from Pettit, *Lacnunga* II, pp. 163–5; cf. for additional parallels.

	tyrendum eagan, 7 wið ælcum uncuðum geswelle ... on swa hwylcum lime swa hit on bið.	itch, and for watering eyes, and for any strange swelling ... whichever limb it is on	
XI (8–9)	wið hwoſtan	for cough	
XII (8–9)	wið eagen dymnesse	for dimness of the eyes	
XIII (8–9)	gif eagan tyran	if the eyes water	
XIV (8–9)	se man se ðe biþ on healsoman	the person who has erysipelas of the neck	
XV (10–11)	seo grene ſealf	the green salve	
XVI (10–11)	wið adle	for (?)-disease	
XVII (10– 11)	wið heafodece	for headache	
XVIII (10– 11)	wið fleogendum atſre 7 færſpryngum	for flying venom and sudden eruptions	
XIX (12–13)	wið ðone bledende fic	for bleeding haemorrhoid	
XX (12–13)	oleo roſeo ... facis eum ad plurimus paſſiones, maxime ad dolorem capitis quod Grecae æncauſius uocant, hoc eſt emigraneum capitis	rose oil ... use it for moſt afflictions, eſpecially for the headache which the Greeks call <i>enkaufios</i> , that is pain on one ſide of the head.	
XXI (12–13)	cardiacus	<i>cardiacus</i> [i.e. heart-attack]	

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XXII (12–13)	wið toðece	for toothache	
XXIII (14–15)	wið ðone dropan	for the <i>dropa</i> [(?) gout]	
XXIV (14–15)	wið geswel	for a swelling	
XXV (14–15)	... on ða blacan blegene	on the black blains	
XXVI (14–15)	wið ðon þe mon oððe nyten wurm gedrince	in the event that man or beast drinks an insect	
XXVII (16–17)	þis ylce galdor mæg mon singan wið smeogan wyrme	this same incantation can be sung for penetrating worm	
XXVIII (16–17)	wið ðon ðe mon attor gedrince	in the event that a person drinks poison	
XXIX (16–17)	halga drænc wið ælfsidene 7 wið eallum feondes costungum	holy drink for (?)elfish magic and for all temptations of the devil	
XXX (18–19)	wið wennas 7 wið nyrwet	for wens and for shortness of breath	
XXXI (18–21)	to godre bansealfe þe mæg wið heafodece 7 wið ealra lyma tyddernysse sceal	for a good bone salve which is good for headache and for infirmity of all the limbs (the	

		following) shall serve	
XXXII (20–1)	gif poc sy on eagan	if there is a stye in an eye [or eyes]	
XXXIII (20–1)	þonne ðu geseo þæt hy ut slean	when you see that they are breaking out [styes?]	
XXXIV (20–1)	to lungensealfe	for a lung-salve	
XXXV (20–1)	wið heafodece	for headache	
XXXVI (20–1)	wið hreofum lice	for scabby body	<i>BLcb</i> I.xxxii, p. 78
XXXVII (22–3)	wið cneowærce	for knee pain	<i>BLcb</i> I.xxiii, p. 66
XXXVIII (22–3)	to eahsealfe	for an eye-salve	
XXXIX (22–3)	wið utsihte	for diarrhoea	
XL (22–3)	eft wið þon	again for that	
XLI (24–5)	wyll wið ðon	boil for that	
XLII (24–5)	[no description of use]	diarrhoea?	
XLIII (24–5)	wyrc utyrnendne drænc	make a purgative drink	
XLIV (24–5)	oper utyrnynde drænc	a second purgative drink	
XLV (26–7)	þridde utyrnende drænc	a third purgative drink	
XLVI (26–7)	spiwdrænc	a drink to induce vomiting	

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XLVII (26–7)	wyrc oðerne	make a second	
XLVIII (26–7)	spiwdrænc	a drink to induce vomiting	
XLIX (26–7)	wið heafodwærce, 7 wið liðwyrce, 7 wið eahwyrce, 7 wið wenne, 7 wið ðeore	for headache, and for joint-pain, and for eye-pain, and for wen, and for <i>ðeor</i> .	
L (26–7)	wið sidwærce	side pain	
LI (26–7)	briw wið lungenadle	<i>briw</i> for lung-disease	
LII (26–7)	wyrc oðerne	make a second	
LIII (28–9)	wyrc þridan briw	make a third <i>briw</i>	
LIV (28–9)	feorða briw	fourth <i>briw</i>	
LV (28–9)	drænc wið lungenadle	drink for lung-disease	<i>Lchbk III</i> , pp. 316–18
LVI (28–9)	[no description of use]	???	
LVII (28–9)	eft drænc	again a drink	
LVIII (28–9)	[no description of use]	???	
LIX (28–9)	eft wið þon	again for that	
LX (30–1)	wyrc briw	make a <i>briw</i>	
LXI (30–1)	briw	<i>briw</i>	
LXII (30–1)	slæpdrænc	a drink to induce sleep	
LXIII (30–7)	to haligre sealfe	for a holy salve	<i>BLch I</i> . xlv, p. 112
LXIV (36–9)	This is the ‘Prayer of St John the Evangelist’. The <i>Lacnunga</i> provides no explanation of its use, but the <i>Book of Nunnaminster</i> labels it as <i>contra uenenum</i>		<i>BLch I</i> . xlv, p. 112

	<p>(‘against poison’), while <i>BLch</i> includes it in a remedy for snakebite, within a larger section against poison.⁶² Textual clues within the remedy itself also point to this use. The remedy states that the prayer was first spoken by John over those who were poisoned: <i>tunc beatus Iohannes, iacentibus mortuis his qui uenenum biberunt, intrepidus et constans accipiens calicem et signaculum crucis faciens in eo dixit ...</i> (‘then the blessed John, with those who had drunk poison lying dead, undaunted and steadfast, taking the cup and making the sign of the Cross said unto it ...’). The prayer also invokes poison and poisonous creatures multiple times, and concludes with <i>Domine, extingue hoc uenenatum uirus</i> (‘Lord, destroy this venomous poison’). The instructions also provide for <i>gif se mon sy innan forswollen þæt he ne mæge þone wætan þicgean</i> (‘if the person is badly swollen from within’).</p>	
<p>LXV (40–57)</p>	<p>This is the <i>Lorica of Laidcenn</i>. Although the speaker does at one point ask for deliverance <i>ut non tetri demones in latera mea liberantur, ut solent, iacula</i> (‘So that the foul demons cannot into my sides/hurl shafts, as they are accustomed’; ll. 31–2, ed. and transl. Pettit, pp. 44–7)—possibly referring to</p>	

⁶² Cf. Pettit, *Lacnunga* II, p. 77.

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	<p>‘elfshot’—the prayer is a more general invocation of the power of the Trinity against all harm that may come to the body parts listed therein: the prayer concludes with:</p> <p><i>tege totum me ... ut a plantis usque ad uerticem nullo membro meo foris intus egrotem, ne de meo posit uitam trudere pestis, languor, dolor corpore</i></p> <p>(‘Protect all of me ... So that from my soles to the top of my head In no member of mine, outside or inside, I may be sick, So that pestilence, weakness, or pain Cannot thrust the life from my body’) ll. 81-6 (ed. Pettit, pp. 54–5)</p>		
LXVI (56–7)	wið færlicre adle	for sudden sickness	
LXVII (56–7)	wið lændenwyrce	for loin-pain	
LXVIII (56–7)	wið þeore	for <i>þeor</i>	
LXIX (56–7)	gif ðeor sy in men	if <i>ðeor</i> is in a person	<i>Lchbk III</i> lxvi, p. 354
LXX (58–9)	wið ðeore	for <i>ðeor</i>	
LXXI (58–9)	ðeordrænc	drink for <i>ðeor</i>	<i>Lchbk III</i> xxx, p. 324
LXXII (58–9)	wið þeore 7 wið sceotendum wenne	for <i>þeor</i> and for pain-causing wen	<i>Lchbk III</i> xxx, pp. 324–6

LXXIII (58–9)	gif ðeor sy gewunad in anre stowwe	if <i>ðeor</i> is established in one place	<i>Lchbk III xxx,</i> p. 326
LXXIV (58–9)	wið ðeore	for <i>ðeor</i>	
LXXV (58–9)	gif se uic weorðe on mannes setle geseten	if haemorrhoid is situated on a person’s rump	
LXXVI (60–9)	<p>This is the ‘Nine Herbs Charm’. The charm invokes the power of herbs against (variant spellings not listed, cf. Pettit edition):</p> <p>wið III 7 wið XXX (‘against the three and against the thirty’, ll. 4, 42) attre (‘poison’ ll. 5, 12, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21?, 22?⁶³ 29, 30, 41, 46-51, 55-7, 63) onflyge (‘flying disease’ ll. 5, 12, 19, 25 (here, ‘for gefloge’)) ‘þam laþan ðe goend lond færð’ (‘the loathsome one that travels throughout the land’ ll. 6, 13, 20) wærce (‘pain’, ll. 15, 41) wraðan (‘the fierce one’, l. 17) wyrm (‘the snake’, ll. 18, 31-5,) feondes hond (‘the hand of the enemy’ l. 43) freabregde (‘severe seizure’, l. 43) malscrunge minra wihta (‘bewitchment of evil creatures’, l. 44) nygon wuldorgeflogenum (‘nine</p>		

⁶³ In ll. 21 and 22, poison is not named directly, but is assumed by Pettit.

	<p>(?)fugitives from glory’, l. 45) geblæd (‘blister’, ll. 52-4) alde (‘disease’ or ‘ancient ones’, l. 58)</p> <p>l. 63, the last of the poem, reads <i>ðonne ic þis attor of ðe geblawe</i> (‘when I blow this poison from you’), which might be taken to suggest that the charm was intended to be a treatment for poison specifically, with the other listed uses simply as an explanation of the plants’ more general powers. However, <i>attor</i> was also a general term for both poison and other kinds of harmful substances, and I think that this is the more likely object of the charm.⁶⁴ The instructions following the charm call for it to be sung <i>in þone muð 7 in þa earan buta 7 on ða wunde þæt ilce gealdor ær he þa sealfe on de</i> (‘into the person’s mouth and into both the ears and on the wounds before he applies the salve’). (ed. Pettit, pp. 68–9)</p> <p>Scholars do not agree on what the primary aim of the charm may have been. For example, Banham sees the instructions as indicating that the resulting remedy was intended to be a</p>	
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⁶⁴ Cf. ‘attor, ator’, in DOE [accessed July 2015], meanings 3–5b.

	<p>wound salve,⁶⁵ while Chardonnens gives more weight to the invocation, seeing it as effective against ‘anything from airborne infection to poisoning from snake bite’.⁶⁶</p> <p>The mention of <i>wyrm</i> may link it with the following two remedies. Cameron took the fact that it was surrounded by hemorrhoid remedies, added to the medical properties of the named plants, as suggesting that it too was meant to treat hemorrhoids.⁶⁷ If this is accepted, then it links the groups preceding and following it.</p>	
LXXVII (68–9)	gif se wyrm sy nyþergewend oððe se bledenda fic	if the ‘worm’ [<i>i.e.</i> anal fistula] is turned downwards or the bleeding haemorrhoid
LXXVIII (68–9)	eft wið þon ylcan	again for the same
LXXIX (68– 9)	gif fot oððe cneow oððe scancan swellan	if foot or knee or shins swell
LXXX (70–	wið micclum lice 7	for swollen body

⁶⁵ D. Banham, ‘The Old English Nine Herbs Charm’, in *Medieval Christianity in Practice*, ed. M. Rubin (Princeton, 2009), pp. 189–93, at p. 192.

⁶⁶ L. S. Chardonnens, ‘An Arithmetical Crux in the Woden Passage in the Old English Nine Herbs Charm’, *Neophilologus* 93:4 (2009), 691–702, at p. 693.

⁶⁷ Cameron, *Anglo-Saxon Medicine*, pp. 144 and 147.

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1)	bringcadle	and (?)chest disease	
LXXXIa (70–1)	wiþ dweorh	<i>dweorh</i>	
LXXXIb (70–1)	wið dweorh	<i>dweorh</i>	
LXXXII (70–1)	wið wennas æt mannes heortan	for ‘wens’ at a person's heart	
LXXXIII (70–1)	þis gebed man sceal singan on ða blacan blegene	this prayer must be sung on the black boils	
LXXXIV (72–3)	Seo blace blegen	black boil	
LXXXV (72–3)	gif þin heorte ace	if your heart hurts	
LXXXVI (72–5)	wið dweorh	<i>dweorh</i>	
LXXXVII (74–5)	Her syndon læcedomas wið ælces cynnes omum 7 onfeallum 7 bancopum eahta 7 twentige	here are twenty-eight remedies for every kind of erysipelas and attacks of disease and (?) severe illnesses [this introduces the entire following set, as well as this particular remedy]	<i>BLcb</i> I.xxxviii, p. 98
LXXXVIII (76–7)	wið omum 7 blegnum	for erysipelas and boils	
LXXXIX (76–7)	wið omum 7 ablegnedum	erysipelas and (?) ulcerated	<i>BLcb</i> I.xxxviii, p.

		(erysipelas)	98
XC (76–7)	eft ... wið omena geswelle	again ... for erysipelalous swelling	<i>BLcb</i> I.xxxviii, pp. 98–100
XCI (76–7)	eft wið omena geberste	again for erysipelalous swelling	<i>BLcb</i> I.xxxviii, p. 100
XCII (76–7)	eft	again	<i>BLcb</i> I.xxxviii, p. 100
XCIII (76– 7)	eft	again	<i>BLcb</i> I.xxxviii, p. 100; <i>OEH</i> lxxxvii.3, p. 126
XCIV (76– 7)	eft wið þon ylcan	again for the same	<i>BLcb</i> I.xxxviii, p. 100
XCV (76–7)	eft	again	<i>BLcb</i> I.xxxviii, p. 100
XCVI (78– 9)	eft	again	<i>BLcb</i> I.xxxviii, p. 100
XCVII (78– 9)	eft	again	<i>BLcb</i> I.xxxviii, p. 100
XCVIII (78–9)	wið þon ylcan	for the same	<i>BLcb</i> I.xxxviii, p. 100
XCIX (78– 9)	eft	again	<i>BLcb</i> I.xxxviii, p. 100

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C (78–9)	wið hwoſtan 7 neorunyse	for cough and constriction	<i>OEH</i> cxxvi.1, p. 164
CI (78–9)	wið morgenwlætunga	for morning- nausea	
CII (78–9)	wið þon þe mon blode wealle þurh his muð	in the event of blood welling through a person's mouth	<i>BLch</i> I.vii, p. 52; <i>OEH</i> i.13, p. 32
CIII (78–9)	wið ælces monnes tydernesſe innewearde	for every person's internal infirmity	<i>OEH</i> ii.22, p. 42
CIV (80–1)	gif man ſceorpe on þone innað	if a person scratches at his belly	
CV (80–1)	wið eagenas teara	for tearfulness of the eyes	<i>BLch</i> I.ii, p. 34
CVI (80–1)	wið earon	for the ears	
CVII (80–1)	wið lungenadle 7 breoſtwræce	for lung-disease and chest-pain	
CVIII (80– 1)	wið healsomena	for erysipelas of the neck	<i>BLch</i> I.iiii, p. 44
CIX (80–1)	wið lændenece	for loin-pain	<i>BLch</i> I. xxii, p. 64; <i>OEH</i> i.10, p. 32
CX (82–3)	wið utſihte	for diarrhoea	
CXI (82–3)	gif hors geſcoten ſy, oððe oþer neat	if a horse or another ſuch animal ... is 'shot'	<i>BLch</i> I.lxxxviii, p. 156
CXII (82–3)	gif men ſynd wænnas gewunod on þæt heafod foran oððe on ða	if wens are eſtabliſhed on a perſon's forehead or on	

	eagan	the eyes	
CXIII (82–3)	to monnes stæmne	for a person's voice	<i>BLcb</i> I.xxxiii, p. 152
CXIV (82–3)	wið angcbreoste	for tightness of the chest	
CXV (84–5)	wið ðone swiman	for dizziness	
CXVI (84–5)	wið sidece	for side-pain	<i>BLcb</i> I.xxi, p. 64; <i>OEH</i> i.9, p. 32
CXVII (84–5)	wið ðon ylcan	for the same	
CXVIII (84–5)	eft wið sidece	again for side-pain	
CXIX (84–5)	wið fotadle	for foot disease	<i>OEH</i> i.29, p. 36
CXX (86–7)	wið ðære miclan siendan fotadle, þære ðe læceas hatað podagre	for the great oozing foot disease, which doctors call <i>podagra</i>	
CXXI (86–7)	wiþ þon ylcan ... wið endwerce 7 wið þeorwerce 7 wið fotswilum	for the same ... for pain in the bottom and for the pain of <i>þeor</i> and for swellings of the foot	
CXXII (86–7)	wið giccendre wombe	for itching belly	<i>BLcb</i> II.xxxiiii, p. 240; <i>OEH</i> xciv.3, p. 138
CXXIII (86–7)	wið lusum	for lice	
CXXIV	wið lusum	for lice	

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(88–9)			
CXXV (88–9)	wið innoðes hefignese	heaviness of the inwards	
CXXVI (88–9)	wið fleogendan attre	for flying poison	
CXXVIIa (90–1)	wið færstice	for a sudden stitch	
CXXVIIb (90–5)	wið færstice(?)/gescot (various kinds)	for a sudden stitch (?)/shot	
CXXVIII (94–5)	wið lusan	for lice	
CXXIX (94–5)	sona ða lys 7 oðre lytle wyrmas swyltað	Soon the lice and other little creatures will die	
CXXX (96–7)	þonne swylteð ða lys 7 oðre lytle wyrmas	then the lice and other little creatures will die	<i>OEH</i> xlvi.3, cii.2, pp. 92 and 148
CXXXI (96–7)	eac ... wið ðon	also for that	
CXXXII (96–7)	gif hryðera steorfan	if cattle are dying	
CXXXIII (96–7)	lungenadle hriðerum	lung-disease in cattle	
CXXXIV (96–7)	gif sceap sy abrocen 7 wið færsteorfan	if a sheep is incapacitated and for sudden death	
CXXXV (98–9)	wið poccum 7 sceapa hreoflan	for pustules and scabbiness of sheep	
CXXXVI (98–9)	wið swina færsteorfan	for sudden death of pigs	
CXXXVII	wið þeofentum	for thefts	

(98–9)			
CXXXVIII (98–9)	wið hondwyrmmum	for scabies itch mites	<i>BLcb</i> I.1, p. 124
CXXXIX (98–9)	eft	again	<i>BLcb</i> I.1, p. 124
CXL (98–9)	gif nægl of honda weorðe	if a nail has come off a hand	<i>BLcb</i> I.xxxiiii, p. 80
CXLI (100– 1)	wið hwoſtan	for cough	
CXLII (100–1)	wið magan wyrce 7 gif he bið toblawen se innoð	for pain of the stomach and if his belly is distended	<i>OEH</i> xciv.2, 11, pp. 138 and 140)
CXLIII (100–1)	wið ðon ðe wif færunga adumbige	in the event a woman suddenly goes dumb	
CXLIV (100–1)	wið þeor	for <i>þeor</i>	
CXLV (100– 1)	eft oþer	again another	
CXLVI (100–1)	wið ælc inyfel	for every internal affliction	
CXLVII (102–3)	wið metecweorran	indigestion	
CXLVIII (102–3)	wið þæt man ne mage ſlapan	in the event that a person cannot sleep	
CXLIX (102–3)	þonne þe mon æreſt ſecge þæt þin ceap ſy loſod	as soon as someone tells you that your cattle are lost	
CL (104–5)	contra oculorum dolorum	for pain of the eyes	

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CLI (104–5)	[blessing for the consecration of a church]		
CLII (104–5)	gif hors bið gewræht	if a horse is sprained [<i>or</i> tormented]	
CLIII (106–7)	wið cyrnel ... þis þe libbe ... scrofelles 7 weormes 7 æghwylces yfeles;	for glandular swelling ... may this be your remedy for ... scrofula and ‘worm’ and for every evil.	
CLIV (106–7)	þis mæg horse wið þon þe him bið corn on þa fet	this is good for a horse in the event that there is a corn on its feet.	
CLV (106–7)	gif hors bið gesceoten	if a horse is ‘shot’	
CLVI (106–7)	gif wif ne mæge bearn beran	if a woman cannot bear a child	
CLVII (108–9)	ab articulorum dolorum constantium malignantium	for the constant, wicked pain of the joints	<i>Lchbk III</i> xxiiii, p. 322
CLVIII (108–9)	contra dolorum dentium	for pain of the teeth	
CLIX (110–11)	[blessing]		
CLX (110–11)	wið utsihte	for diarrhoea	

CLXI (112–13)	se wifman se hire cild afedan ne mæg	the woman who cannot rear her child	
CLXII (112–13)	se wifmon se hyre bearn afedan ne mæge	the woman who cannot rear her child	
CLXIII (114–15)	se man se ne mæge bearn afedan	the woman who cannot rear her child	
CLXIV (114–15)	wið cyrnla	for glandular swellings	
CLXV (114–15)	[charm for a horse] ⁶⁸		
CLXVI (116–17)	lungensealfe	lung-salve	
CLXVII (116–17)	wið gedrif	for fever	
CLXVIII (116–17)	wið horsoman 7 mannes	erysipeals of a horse and man	
CLXIX (116–17)	wið oman	for erysipelas	
CLXX (116–119)	morgendrænc wið eallum untrunnessum þe mannes lichoman iondstyriað innan oððe utan. se drænc is god wið heafodecce, 7 wið brægenes	morning drink for all infirmities that agitate a person’s body from within or without. The drink is good for headache, and for dizziness of	<i>Lchbke III</i> xii, pp. 314–16

⁶⁸ Olsan argues convincingly that it is for the delivery of a foal, cf. L. Olsan, ‘The *Arcus* Charms and Christian Magic’, *Neophilologus* 73:3 (1989), 438–47.

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	<p>hwyrfnesse 7 weallunge, wið seondre exe, wið lungenadle 7 liferwerce, wið seondum geallan 7 þære geolwan adle, wið eagenadimnessa, 7 wið earena swinsunge 7 ungehyrnesse, 7 wið breosta hefignesse 7 hrifes aþundenesse, wið miltan wærce 7 smælþearma, 7 wið ornum utgange, 7 wið þon þe mon gemigan ne mæge, wið þeorece 7 sina getoge, wið cneowwærce 7 fotgeswelle, wið ðam micclan lice 7 wið oþrum giccendum blece 7 þeorgeride 7 æghwylcum attre, wið ælcres untrumnesse 7 ælcres feondes costunge.</p>	<p>the brain and inflammation, for a discharging brain, for lung-disease and liver-pain, for flowing gall and the yellow sickness [i.e. jaundice], for impairment of vision [lit. dimness of the eyes], and for singing in the ears [i.e. tinnitus] and deafness, and for affliction of the chest and swelling of the belly, for pain of the spleen and of the small intestines, and for excessive excretion, and in case a person cannot urinate, for (?)pain of <i>þeor</i> and contraction of the sinews, for knee-pain and swelling of the foot, for swollen</p>	
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		body and for another itching skin disease and <i>þeorgerid</i> and every poison, for each infirmity and each temptation of the devil.	
CLXXI (120–1)	[general explanation of the use of mugwort]		
CLXXII (120–1)	wið fotece	for foot-pain	
CLXXIII (120–1)	wið hwestan	for cough	<i>BLch</i> I.xv, p. 56
CLXXIV (120–1)	wið hwestan eft	again for cough	<i>BLch</i> I.xv, pp. 56–8; <i>Lchbk</i> III viiii, p. 312; <i>OEH</i> xlvi.1, p. 90
CLXXV (120–1)	eft	again	<i>BLch</i> I.xv, p. 58
CLXXVI (120–1)	gif wænnas eglan mæn æt þære heortan	if ‘wens afflict a person at the heart’	
CLXXVII (122–3)	wið heortwærce	for heart-pain	<i>BLch</i> I.xvii, p. 60
CLXXVIII (122–3)	wið heortece	for heart-pain	<i>BLch</i> I.xvii, p. 60
CLXXIX (122–3)	wið heortece eft	for heart-pain again	<i>BLch</i> I.xvii, p. 60
CLXXX (122–3)	eft	again	<i>BLch</i> I.xvii, p. 60

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CLXXXI (122–3)	wið breostnyrwette	for tightness of chest	
CLXXXII (122–5)	['Egyptian Days' (bloodletting prognostic)]		
CLXXXIII (124–7)	lues isti huius pestis ... doloris igniculo 7 potestate uariolae ... mortis a periculo ... de languoribus pessimis & de periculis huius anni ... wið ða lapan poccas 7 wið ealle yfelu	the plague of this pestilence ... against the spark of pain and the power of variola ... from the danger of death ... from the worst illnesses and from the dangers of this year ... against the loathsome pocs and against all evils	
CLXXXIV (128–9)	benedictio herbarum	blessing of plants	
CLXXXV (128–9)	alia	another	
CLXXXVI (128–9)	benedictio unguentum	blessing of ointments	
CLXXXVII (130–1)	alia	another	
CLXXXVIII (130–1)		[fragmentary]	
CLXXXIX (130–1)		[fragmentary]	
CXC (130–	medicina ad	cancer	

1)	canrum	[fragmentary]	
CXCI (130– 1)	a os freint en teste	for a broken bone in the head	

Ideologies and Rhetoric of Language in the Icelandic Grammatical Treatises

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The discipline of *grammatica* in medieval Iceland is both problematic to study and distinctive in a European context. *Grammatica* was the core discipline of medieval schools, encompassing at its most basic level the Latin language, but also poetics, exegesis, and philosophies about the nature of language.¹ Yet in Iceland, almost all the surviving textual corpus is in Old Norse, and the vernacular appears to have been more widely used as a textual language from an earlier date than in the rest of Europe, though the relationship between Latin and the vernacular in Iceland has not been thoroughly studied.²

¹ The discipline of *grammatica* is often summarized according to the two parts which the Roman rhetorician Quintilian assigned to it in the first century AD: knowledge of how to speak correctly (*recte loquendi scientia*) and interpretation of the poets (*poetarum enarratio*). This definition was highly influential in definitions of the discipline in the Middle Ages (V. Law, *The History of Linguistics in Europe: From Plato to 1600* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 61–2). Martin Irvine notes that ‘*grammatica* was foundational, a social practice that provided the exclusive access to literacy, the understanding of Scripture, the knowledge of a literary canon, and membership in an international Latin textual community’ (M. Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture: ‘Grammatica’ and Literary Theory, 350–1100* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 1). For the later Middle Ages and speculative grammar, see R. Copeland and I. Sluiter, ed., *Medieval Grammar and Rhetoric: Language Arts and Literary Theory AD 300–1475* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 368–75 and 684–98, and references therein.

² Some have been rather dismissive of the role of Latin in Iceland: ‘Latin passed, it would seem, like a meteor across the Icelandic sky; it was never an end in itself but a mere vehicle for acquiring new knowledge and achieving the written mastery of the local language’ (P. Scardigli and F. D. Raschellà, ‘A Latin-

The extant grammatical treatises, like most of the literary corpus, are entirely in the vernacular, and rather than being vernacular tools for learning Latin, they are focused on the Old Norse language and Old Norse poetics.³ They are named for their order in the fourteenth

Icelandic Glossary and Some Remarks on Latin in Medieval Scandinavia’, in *Idee – Gestalt – Geschichte: Festschrift Klaus von See. Studien zur europäischen Kulturtradition*, ed. G. W. Weber (Odense, 1988), pp. 299–315, at p. 301); ‘We know Icelanders wrote some history and hagiography in Latin but they must have found they had little use for it ... the learned literature was the work of men who obviously read Latin but thought and wrote in Icelandic’ (P. Foote, ‘Latin Rhetoric and Icelandic Poetry: Some Contacts’, in *Aurvandilstá: Norse Studies* (Odense, 1984), pp. 249–70, at p. 251). Some recent scholars have put more emphasis on the important role of Latin literature in Iceland, notably Gottskálf Jenson (Gottskálf Jenson, ‘The Lost Latin Literature of Medieval Iceland: The Fragments of the *Vita Sancti Thorlaci* and Other Evidence’, *Symbolae Osloenses: Norwegian Journal of Greek and Latin Studies* 79 (2004), 150–70, at pp. 150–5; Gottskálf Jenson, ‘Were the Earliest *Fornaldarsögur* Written in Latin?’, in *Fornaldarsagaerne: Myter og virkelighed*, Studier i de oldislandske fornaldarsögur Norðurlanda, ed. A. Ney, Ármann Jakobsson and A. Lassen (Copenhagen, 2009), pp. 79–91, at pp. 79–80). See also the more general studies of language in Iceland and Scandinavia in A. Nedkvitne, *The Social Consequences of Literacy in Medieval Scandinavia* (Turnhout, 2004) and I. McDougall, ‘Foreigners and Foreign Languages in Medieval Iceland’, *SBVS* 22 (1986–9), 180–233.

³ In addition to the full extant treatises, there are fragments of bilingual and Latin texts which offer small, precious views into the core of Latin *grammatica* in Iceland. Probably the most prominent examples are the fifteen-century fragment AM 921 III 4to, which contains a Latin verbal paradigm with an Old Norse translation, and the Latin-Old Norse word list in the late twelfth-century manuscript GKS 1812 4to. The treatise *Snorra Edda* can also be thought of as a grammatical text, in a somewhat broader sense, and further investigation into the translated texts and learned miscellanies in the Old Norse corpus will no doubt reveal more examples. Finally, it is worth noting that a very small number of fourteenth-, fifteenth-, and sixteenth-century book lists contains references to grammatical texts in Icelandic monasteries and churches (Sverrir Tómasson, *Formálar Íslenskra Sagnaritara á Miðöldum* (Reykjavík, 1988), pp. 29–33, see n. 106 and references there).

century manuscript, AM 242 fol. or the *Codex Wormianus*, the only place where all four of them appear together among the extant manuscripts. The *First Grammatical Treatise* deals prescriptively with orthography, while the *Second Grammatical Treatise* also seems to be orthographic, but more descriptive and oblique in its purpose. The *Third Grammatical Treatise* is in two parts, the first dealing with sound and the parts of speech, and the second with poetics translated from Donatus and Priscian. The *Fourth Grammatical Treatise* continues the poetic portion of the *Third Grammatical Treatise*, using translations from Ebarhard of Béthune's *Graecismus* and Alexander of Villeideu's *Doctrinale*. Though these vernacular treatises were composed over a long period of time, they are transmitted in fourteenth century manuscripts alongside the most well known and influential Icelandic treatise on poetics, the *Snorra Edda*, as well as some skaldic verse.⁴ Together, they represent a distinctly Icelandic analysis of language and poetics, a vernacular *grammatica* which, through the change of language, inherently shifted its function and role.

The functions and ideological perspectives of these texts, the divergent disciplines they represent, and the nature of their relationship to the core Latin grammatical tradition remains only loosely understood. Some scholars have interpreted the *First* and *Third Grammatical Treatises* as failed attempts to normalize or pragmatically deal with issues of Old Norse language and literature.⁵

⁴ Guðrun Nordal has summarized and offered interpretations for the six manuscripts of the *Snorra Edda*, four of which contain one or more of the other grammatical treatises, and all of which contain some additional poetry (G. Nordal, *Tools of Literacy: the Role of Skaldic Verse in Icelandic Textual Culture of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Toronto, 2001), pp. 41–72).

⁵ Ólsen and Finnur Jónsson were both quite dismissive of perceived errors in the *Third Grammatical Treatise* and set a precedent for anachronistically interpreting the text according to modern scholarly and linguistic standards (B. M. Ólsen, ed., *Den Tredje og Fjerde Grammatisk-Afhandling* (Copenhagen, 1884), at pp. xl–xlii; Finnur Jónsson, ed., *Óláfr Þórðarson Málhljóða- og Málskrúðsrit: Grammatisk-Retorisk Afhandling*, Det kgl. danske videnskabernes selskab,

Yet as in the core Latin grammatical tradition, these texts show that Old Norse *grammatica* went beyond the practicalities of clear communication, and into the philosophical understanding of the nature of language, composition, and exegesis. It is in this less pragmatic side of *grammatica*, the rhetorical presentation of ideology and intellectual values, that we can better understand the potential successes of these Icelandic treatises, and the full complexity of their position in Icelandic intellectual culture.

This paper will examine two of these Old Norse grammatical treatises—the *First Grammatical Treatise* and the *Málskerúðfræði*, the second half of the *Third Grammatical Treatise*—in light of their relationship to the Latin tradition and the ideologies they bring into vernacular discourse. Among the most basic, essential ideologies of *grammatica* is an idealization of normalized language beyond that which is purely practical. The motivation for this was a medieval drive to understand the characteristics of language as non-arbitrary, fundamental, and part of the relationship between language and truth.

Historisk-filologiske meddelelser, XIII:2. (Copenhagen, 1927), p.14). Clunies Ross likewise characterizes the second part of the *Third Grammatical Treatise* as an ‘attempt to demonstrate the similarities and differences between Norse and Latin poetics’, concluding that though the author attempts to draw parallels, the differences dominate (M. Clunies Ross, *A History of Old Norse Poetry and Poetics* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 188–93). In reconstructing an orthography based on the prescriptions of the *First Grammatical Treatise*, Odd Einar Haugen has noted how different it is from the extent twelfth-century Icelandic orthographies, and has expressed confusion that the treatise would propose such a ‘deviant orthography’ (O. E. Haugen, “‘So that the writing may be less and quicker, and the parchment last longer’: The Orthographic Reform of the Old Icelandic *First Grammatical Treatise*”, E. C. Quiggin Memorial Lectures 14 (Cambridge, 2012), p. 22). On uncertainty about the success of the *First Grammatical Treatise*, see also Clunies Ross, *Old Norse Poetry*, p. 155; A. Holtsmark, ‘Grammatisk Litteratur: G. L. om modersmålet’, in *Kulturbistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder fra vikingetid til reformationstid*, vol. XV, ed. G. Roma and A. Karker (Copenhagen, 1970), pp. 412–9, at p. 416.

In the Icelandic treatises, this can be seen on multiple levels, in different treatises and contexts.

The vernacularisation of these essential grammatical ideologies shows an important and unexamined way in which medieval Icelanders used Latin learning to interpret their own language and literature. Old Norse vernacular *grammatica* does not simply show a transmission of foreign ideas to an audience wishing or needing to read them in the vernacular, but reinterprets the ideas themselves, and presents a new understanding of the Old Norse language and literature through the use of foreign hermeneutics. One cannot fully understand Old Norse textual culture, and attitudes towards language among educated Icelanders of the Middle Ages, without understanding the many interacting ideologies within these grammatical treatises.

LATIN ORTHOGRAPHIC TREATISES AND *THE FIRST GRAMMATICAL TREATISE*

The Icelandic grammatical text known as the *First Grammatical Treatise* was written sometime in the middle of the twelfth century in the vernacular. It presents itself as an orthographic work, intended to adapt the Latin alphabet to fit the needs of Old Norse, ostensibly modeled on the example of English adaptations of the Latin alphabet to suit their own vernacular. Primarily, it proposes a large number of new vowel symbols to precisely denote length, nasalization, and different types of umlaut for each vowel. In its own words, it states:

Nv eptir þeira dæmvm ... til þess at hægra verði at rita ok lefa sem nv tíðiz ok a þessv landi beði lög ok ááttvísi ęða þyðingar helgar ęða sva þav hín spaklegv fræði er ari þorgillf son hefir a bokr sett af sett af skynfamlegv viti þa hefir ek ok ritað off iflendingvm staf rof beði latinv stofvm qlvm þeim

er mer þóttí gegna til vaarf maalf vel fva at rett ræðir mættí verða ok þeim oðrvm er mer þóttí i þvrfu at vera en or varv teknir þeir er æigi gegna atkvæðvm váárrar tvngv.

Now following their example ... in order that it may become easier to write and read, as is now customary in this country as well, both the laws and genealogies, or interpretations of sacred writings, or also that sagacious [historical] lore that Ári Þorgilsson has recorded in books with such reasonable understanding—I have composed an alphabet for us Icelanders as well, both of all those Latin letters that seemed to me to fit our language well—in such a way that they could retain their proper pronunciation—and of those others that seemed to me to be needed in [the alphabet], but those were left out that do not suit the sounds of our language.⁶

The inherent pragmatism of this function of orthographic reform has been almost universally accepted by scholars, often with a remarkable lack of critical reading.⁷ While there is no doubt an aspect

⁶ *First Grammatical Treatise* (ed. and transl. Hreinn Benediktsson, *The First Grammatical Treatise* (Reykjavik, 1972), pp. 244–5). In this article I have used both Hreinn's original text and his translation; for other texts I have used my own translation. I have also attempted where possible to keep the characters used in his transcription, however in some instances—the double-a ligature, for example—for lack of a readily available equivalent I have slightly altered his orthography.

⁷ Early scholars in particular also tended to take a rather uncritical view on the widespread impact and importance of the *First Grammatical Treatise*. Ólsen saw a conflict between the inadequacies of both the Latin and runic alphabets, and the treatise as responding to the need for a more perfect alphabet within a growing vernacular literary movement (Ólsen, ed., *Den Tredje og Fjerde Grammatisk Afhandling*, pp. xxi–xxii). Finnur Jónsson saw the treatise as resulting directly from difficulties arising from the writing of the Icelandic laws

of pragmatism behind the treatise, linked to the conditions of a newly developed written vernacular, passages like the one above are rhetorically charged and the treatise clearly has rhetorical and ideological purposes as well. Since the treatise survives only in a fourteenth century manuscript, long past the time when its reforms would have been new and relevant, its ideological and intellectual functions must be taken into account when considering its continued use. Considering the novelty of Old Norse textual culture in the mid-twelfth century, such functions must be sought through comparison with the Latin orthographic tradition, a relationship that has been neglected in Old Norse scholarship.⁸

in 1117–18, and an almost popular desire to improve the written vernacular (Finnur Jónsson, *Den Oldnorske og Oldislandske Litteraturs Historie*, vol. I–III (Copenhagen, 1920–4), p. 913); Hreinn Benediktsson left the function of the text as an open question, but all the options he considered, from among speculation in the 1930s by Halldór Hermannsson and Magnus Olsen, concerned very practical purposes, again largely in response to the writing of laws (Hreinn Benediktsson, ed., *First Grammatical Treatise*, p. 179). More recently, in the context of the study of skaldic poetics, Guðrun Nordal has speculated that the treatise was responding to ‘a need for exact rules of orthography and phonology to secure a faithful presentation of the verse in the Latin alphabet’ (Nordal, *Tools of Literacy*, p. 26). See also Holtsmark, ‘Grammatisk Litteratur’, p. 415; Clunies Ross, *Old Norse Poetry*, p. 153.

⁸ Guðrun Nordal argues: ‘The author’s approach to orthographic analysis distinguishes him from other contemporary writers in this field’ (Nordal, *Tools of Literacy*, p. 25). Hreinn Benediktsson acknowledged an etymology of *titulus* links the treatise directly to Remigius’ commentary on Donatus’ *ars minor*, and discussed other more general ways in which the treatise shows a basic learning in *grammatica*, focusing, however, on ideas about vowel length and distinction therein. Despite the fact that this is among the most thorough discussions of Latin sources in the *First Grammatical Treatise*, he completely ignored the tradition of orthographic treatises (Hreinn Benediktsson, ed., *First Grammatical Treatise*, pp. 73–81 and 190–3). Anne Holtsmark speculated more deeply about sources, particularly about connection to the schools of Paris which Hreinn largely discounted, but still failed to address the orthographic treatises

Late antique and medieval writing on orthography was based on the broad ideal of *latinitas*, ‘latinity’, or correct usage according to established authority, and was closely connected to ideas inherited from the Stoics about etymology and faults of style. *Orthographia* and *emendatio*, often used synonymously, referred to the correction of error, but in a very broad literary and linguistic sense, encompassing not only orthography itself but also stylistics and grammar.⁹

The textual expression of these ideas could vary; in some sense, all prescriptive grammatical treatises involved a certain amount of *emendatio*. Treatises on orthography itself often took the form of long word-lists, alphabetically arranged, where aspects or errors of each individual word are dealt with. In addition, some discussions of letters and syllables could be included. They were, in some sense, spelling books. As little scholarly work has been done on the cohesive tradition of orthographic treatises, it is worth noting some of the major texts to show some of the consistencies of form and methodology that link the tradition to the *First Grammatical Treatise*.

The sixth century rhetorician Cassiodorus wrote a *De orthographia* near the end of his life as an elementary treatise, ostensibly at the request of his fellow monks for something more practical for everyday scribal work than his previous writings, though he had already made comments on *orthographia* in his *Institutiones*.¹⁰ It is a compilation of previous authors, and includes significantly more commentary compared to some later texts. There are several different methodologies and pedagogical tools within the treatise, but among them are simple instructions for spelling: noting where errors tend to

(Holtsmark, ‘Grammatisk litteratur’, p. 416; A. Holtsmark, ed., *En Islandsk Scholasticus fra det 12. Århundre* (Oslo, 1936), pp. 75–99).

⁹ Irvine, *Making of Textual Culture*, pp. 75–7.

¹⁰ Copeland and Sluiter, ed., *Medieval Grammar and Rhetoric*, p. 210; J. J. O’Donnell, *Cassiodorus* (Berkeley, 1979), pp. 229–37.

taking place in certain words, such as when *aggero* is written with a *d* and a *g*, not a geminate *g*.¹¹

Around the end of the seventh and the beginning of the eighth century, Bede wrote a *De orthographia*, using several earlier orthographic treatises reorganized into alphabetical order.¹² His text was thus a Latin lexicon with each word commented upon through a series of *differentiae*. These *differentiae*, ‘differentiations’ or ‘distinctions’, are the key methodological element linking this tradition to the *First Grammatical Treatise*. This basic methodological idea could be applied on many levels throughout the grammatical tradition, but generally it tended to refer to distinctions or differentiations between individual words of similar form or meaning.¹³ The types of *differentiae* in Bede’s treatise vary significantly, and some are selected here which bear particular resemblance to the *First Grammatical Treatise*.

Crassari corporis est et saginae, grassari animi et crudelitatis.
Dilibuit unguento, non delibuit. Disertus orator est, desertus derelictus. Delator qui defert ad accusandum, dilator qui differt ad proferendum. Deluit purgat, diluit temperat.¹⁴

‘To be thickened’ (*crassari*) concerns the body and gorging, ‘to prowl’ (*grassari*) concern the mind and barbarity. One anoints (*dilibuit*), one does not *delibuit*,¹⁵ with oil. An orator is eloquent (*disertus*), a desert (*desertus*) forsaken. An accuser

¹¹ Cassidorus, *De orthographia* (ed. H. Keil, *Grammatici Latini*, vol. VII (Leipzig, 1880), pp. 143–216).

¹² Irvine, *Making of Textual Culture*, p. 288.

¹³ Isidore of Seville’s *Differentiae* established *differentia*, *etymologia*, and *glossa* as the essential methods of explanation in *grammatica*, with the *differentia* used to distinguished things that could be confused through meaning—as between a king and a tyrant—or through form, as *animus* and *anima* (Irvine, *Making of Textual Culture*, pp. 210 and 221).

¹⁴ Bede, *De orthographia* (ed. Keil, *Grammatici Latini*, VII, p. 269).

¹⁵ An orthographic variation of *dilibuit*.

(*delator*) is one who accuses (*defert*) for accusing, a procrastinator (*dilator*) one who postpones (*differt*) for postponing. He [who] washes (*deluit*), cleanses; he [who] dilutes (*diluit*) [wine with water] controls himself.

Here the instructions in orthography and morphology seen in Cassiodorus' *De Orthographia* are reformatted into more exemplary dichotomies, *differentiae* similar to modern minimal pairs, but still essentially concerned with pointing out spelling errors to be avoided. As will be shown, this format of an exemplary dichotomy is borrowed directly into the *First Grammatical Treatise*.

Alcuin wrote his *De Orthographia* around the end of the eighth century. His emphasis on *orthographia* and scribal arts relates him to both Cassiodorus and Bede, although his reforms of *grammatica* in Charlemagne's court had a much more widespread influence. Bede was certainly one of Alcuin's sources, alongside Cassiodorus, Priscian, and Isidore.¹⁶ While exemplary *differentiae* do not appear in Alcuin's text to the same extent as Bede, it is worth showing a sample to see both the similarities and variances in the structure of early medieval orthographic treatises:

Aeternus, aetas, aevum per duo u, aequitas, aequus id est iustus, haec omnia per ae diphthongon scribenda sunt; equus, si animal significat, per simplicem e. Accusso per duo c et per duo s scribi debet, accedo per duo c. Sæpe ad euphoniae causa in sequentem mutabitur consonantem, ut afficio affluo allido ammoneo annuo appono arripio assumo.¹⁷

¹⁶ Irvine, *Making of Textual Culture*, pp. 327–8. Irvine further notes that many of the surviving manuscripts of Alcuin's orthographic work also contain Bede's, in addition to other authors within the same tradition (see also A. Marsili, ed., *Alcuinus: De orthographia* (Pisa, 1952)).

¹⁷ Bede, *De orthographia* (ed. Keil, *Grammatici Latini*, VII, p. 295).

Aeternus (eternity), *aetas* (age), *aevum* (time) with two *u*'s, *aequitas* (fairness), *aequus* (fair), that is *iustus* (just), these all must be written with the diphthong *ae*; *equus* (horse), if one indicates an animal, through a simple *e*. *Accusso* (I accuse) ought to be written with two *c*'s and two *s*'s, *accedo* (I agree) with two *c*'s. Often for the sake of euphony *ad* is changed into the following consonant, as *afficio* (I affect) *affluo* (I flow to) *allido* (I damage) *ammoneo* (I admonish) *annuo* (I agree to) *appono* (I appoint) *arripio* (I seize) *assumo* (i.e. *adsumo* 'I take up').

A more distinct genre of *differentiae* continued to develop in the twelfth century, and in the *Versus de differentiis* of Serlo of Wilton a series of verses present pairs of homonyms.¹⁸ Here these are essentially homonyms, though in classical pronunciation there is variation in vowel-length. Thus there are no attempts to show distinction through orthography, but rather the *differentiae* themselves seem to be a sort of mnemonic tool for distinguishing homonyms.

Unam semper amo, cuius non solvor ab hamo.
Dicitur arbor acer, vir fortis et improbus acer.
Forma senilis anus, pars quedam corporis anus.
Porcum nutrit ara, gentilis eum necat ara.
Terram nullus aret, in qua spes seminis aret.
Ad quid pignus alis, o Dedale, quod caret alis?

¹⁸ Serlo, born in Wilton in 1105, was educated in Paris and lectured and wrote there until 1136, and it has been speculated that his grammatical poems belong to this earlier part of his career, but he later also taught in England before becoming a Cluniac monk at Charité-sur-Loire and a Cistercian at L'Aumône (A. G. Rigg, 'Serlo of Wilton: Biographical Notes', *Medium Aevum* 65 (1996), 96–101, at pp. 98–9).

‘Nutrio’ curtat alo, producit ‘spiritus’ alo.¹⁹

I always love one woman, from the hook of whom I am not freed.

A tree is called a maple, a strong and wicked man (is called) severe.

The form of old age (is) an old woman, a certain part of the body (is) the anus.

A shelter rears a pig, an arum lily kills a gentile.

Let no one plow earth, in which the prospect of a seed is withered.

What relict do you cherish, O Daedalus, that is without wings?

‘I feed’ diminishes I nourish, ‘breath’ brings forth garlic.

In light of this methodological tradition within the orthographic treatises, a better understanding of the context and significance of the Icelandic *First Grammatical Treatise* can be obtained. To explain the need for its very precise orthography, it presents several sections of what are essentially minimal pairs, what it calls *greinar* or ‘distinctions’. This is unmistakably the same method of discussing orthography as the *differentiae* in Bede and Serlo, and though concern for length and nasality of vowels in the *greinar* make them more precise, it does not suggest an entirely distinct methodology or motivation.²⁰ As in the

¹⁹ Serlo, *Versus de differentiis* (ed. J. Öberg, *Serlon de Wilton: Poèmes Latins*, Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis Studia Latina Stockhomiensia XIV (Stockholm, 1965), p. 80).

²⁰ It has been emphasized that the author of the *First Grammatical Treatise* has a particular concern, and a skilled ear, for the phonetics of his own language, uniquely inspired by the tradition of skaldic poetry (Clunies Ross, *Old Norse Poetry*, p. 153; Nordal, *Tools of Literacy*, pp. 25–6). While this is likely true to some extent, concern for phonetics is not unprecedented in the orthographic tradition. As a part of his grammatical reforms, of which *De orthographia* is a key text, Alcuin may have intended to correct Latin pronunciation to a more

Latin texts, the roles of the words in fully constructed sentences allow their meaning to be apparent from context, and the importance of distinctions between individual letters, and particularly vowels, can be understood.

Sar veittí maðr mer æitt fōr morg veitta ek honum ... Sor goðinn fōr ein fōren. Sur erv avgv fyr flik duga betr en fpryngí yr ... Har vex a kvíkendvm enn hār er fīlkr.

A man inflicted one wound (*sar*) on me; I inflicted many wounds (*sōr*) on him ... The priest swore (*sor*) the fair (*sōr*) oaths only. Sour (*sur*) are the sow's (*sy*) eyes [but even] such are better than if they popped out ... Hair (*har*) grows on living creatures, but the shark (*hār*) is a fish.²¹

fēcr er flogar maðr. enn fēkr er í lāt ... Betra er hverívm fyr þagat enn annarr hafí þagat.

Roman style, by tying a strict phonic reading to each character, removing dialectic variation (Irvine, *Making of Textual Culture*, pp. 328–9). Notker, likewise, who devised an orthographic system for Old High German as a teacher at St. Gall in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, had available to him a manuscript of grammatical texts including both Bede's and Alcuin's *De Orthographia*, and it has been argued that from these texts and the evidence of his teaching and linguistic experience he probably would have taught his students to read Latin phonetically (A. A. Grotans, *Reading in Medieval St. Gall* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 300). A precedent and analogy thus exists for the author of the *First Grammatical Treatise* to have benefitted from and used the Latin orthographic tradition in interpreting his own language in terms of phonetics as well as orthography.

²¹ *First Grammatical Treatise* (ed. and transl. Hrein Benediktsson, pp. 216–17).

An outlaw is a convict (*sekr*), but a sack (*sekr*) is a bag ... It is better for everyone to have become silent (*þagal*) before someone else should have silenced (*þaGal*) [him].²²

Comparing these passages to those Latin passages quoted above, particularly Bede's, there is no doubt that the author of the *First Grammatical Treatise* was familiar with such orthographic texts, and deliberately used their methodology.²³ Yet the historical context is distinct: while Latin grammarians were dealing with maintaining orthographic normativity in a language with a long written tradition, with the established sense of *latinitas* that linked truth, authority, and normalization, Old Norse was a newly written language. The *First Grammatical Treatise*, in presenting these passages of *greinar*, uses a methodology which implicitly creates a vernacularity in parallel to *latinitas*, and in the view of anyone among its audience familiar with the Latin grammatical tradition, links it to orthographic treatises and the tradition of *differentiae*.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 244–5.

²³ Vivian Law argued that among the closest parallels to the passages of *greinar* in the *First Grammatical Treatise* is Serlo of Wilton's *differentiae*, but both the verse format of Serlo's text, and the fact that his *differentiae* are presented as homonyms, though in classical pronunciation the vowel length would often be distinct, separates it somewhat. Serlo is dealing with distinctions of words with the same orthography, while the other orthographic treatises and the *First Grammatical Treatise* are pointing to semantic distinctions between words with different spelling. On an implicit level, however, Serlo and the *First Grammatical Treatise* relate more closely because the *First Grammatical Treatise's* orthographic rules were not adopted into Icelandic writing, and as such many of the distinctions it shows would sometimes, in practice, have been written as homonyms.

FUNCTION AND PHILOSOPHY OF NORMALIZED LANGUAGE IN THE
FIRST GRAMMATICAL TREATISE

The potential pragmatic functions of the *First Grammatical Treatise* have received a significant amount of attention, with little indication of a consensus, other than it must originally have had something to do with the newly written vernacular.²⁴ However, if its purpose is seen on a more theoretical and rhetorical level, in light of the tradition of *orthographia* of which it clearly is a part, a broader understanding of the mentality behind it, and the ideologies it adapted into the vernacular, can be gained.

Irvine describes the general function of both Bede and Alcuin's *de Orthographia* as to provide 'a compendium of examples to follow that define normative spelling rules, *latinitas*, and semantic distinctions'.²⁵ On a broader level, he notes, for Alcuin and many other authors, that the highest use of *orthographia* was correcting the texts of the Scriptures, applying 'the principles of consistent latinity and orthography'.²⁶ These types of functions are clear in the *First Grammatical Treatise* and its vernacular take on *orthographia*.

Yet on a more philosophical level *grammatica* inherited from its Stoic roots, and developed through its use in theological interpretation, a concern for absolute truth and language's relationship to truth. This functioned on two basic levels: on one level, logic and rational discourse required an absolutely controlled language in order to be assured of the validity of their conclusions; on another, language itself could only be justifiably studied for its own sake, from both a philosophical and theological perspective, if it

²⁴ See above p. 64, n. 7.

²⁵ Irvine, *Making of Textual Culture*, p. 328.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 331.

could be shown to be rational, non-arbitrary, and connected to the world outside language.²⁷

Within the tradition of *orthographia* itself, Bede, among other early medieval authors, was concerned with using orthography and other aspects of *grammatica* to preserve the authenticity and normative authority of Christian Latin texts. Several authors, like Alcuin and Boniface, even saw heresy itself as deriving from textual defects and error, and the context of Alcuin's *de orthographia* and other writings within Charlemagne's education reforms offer excellent examples for seeing the functions of a highly learned grammarian's ideological interests within developing pedagogical systems.²⁸

The rhetorical posturing of the *First Grammatical Treatise* can be seen in light of these ideologies. The treatise defends the superlative precision of its orthographic system with a rhetorical passage which is revealing. This is preceded by a passage where a rhetorical opponent argues that they could read perfectly well without all the extra letters the treatise proposes. But, the author argues:

Eigi er þat rvnanna koftr þo at þv leser vel eða raðir vel að likindvm þar sem rvnar vífa o fkyrt. helldr er það þinn koftr enda er þa æigi qrvænt at þæygi lefa ek vel eða mín makí ef fa finnz eða rãða ek vel at likíndvm til hverf enf retta færa fkal ef flere vega ma færa til rettz enn æinn veg þat sem a æinn veg er þo ritað ok æigi fkyrt a kveðit. ok fkal geta til sem þu letz þat vel kvnna. Enn þo að aller mætte nakkvað

²⁷ Law makes the latter point, that the study of language required language to be characterized as non-arbitrary, in specific reference to philosophical values in Varro and Plato, but also argues that this idea is was prevalent through the Middle Ages because of an analogous Christian value of the spiritual over the bodily, deriving to a great extent from Augustine's work on language and theology (Law, *Linguistics in Europe*, pp. 44 and 107–9).

²⁸ Irvine, *Making of Textual Culture*, pp. 289, 303 and 307.

rett or giora þa er þo víf von at þæygi vilí aller til æinf færa ef malí skiptir allra helldz i logvm

It is not the virtue of the letter if you can read well or make a good guess [in cases] where the letters are unclear, but rather it is your virtue; and it is then indeed not beyond expectation that I, or my equal, if such there be, shall not be able to read well or make a good guess about which of the correct [interpretations]—if a correct [interpretation] is possible in more than one way—is to be given to what after all is written in one way only, and not unambiguously, and one then has to guess, as you claimed you can do so well. But even though everyone could put some correct [interpretation] on [it], it is very much to be expected that not all will be willing to put on the same [interpretation], if this changes the discourse, particularly in the laws.²⁹

In essence the treatise is stating that even though an accomplished reader might be able to read through the orthographic ambiguities, it cannot be assumed that all readers would be able to do so. By allowing any ambiguities of orthography, ambiguities of meaning could arise, which could allow for multiple interpretations of a text, and thus manipulations of that text. Thus, in the same way as Latin grammarians argued that their discipline warded off theological error at the same time as textual corruption, in this vernacular discourse the discipline of orthographic precision wards off misinterpretation, abuse of the text, and conflict between readings.

The focus on law codes in this passage also indicates an adaptation of traditional ideas. While Bede and Alcuin were concerned in the context of Latin *grammatica* and *latinitas* with maintaining the Scriptures and other theological texts without corruption, vernacular interests seem to be broader. While the

²⁹ *First Grammatical Treatise* (ed. and transl. Hrein Benediktsson, pp. 214–15).

passage quoted in the first section shows that the *First Grammatical Treatise* intended its vernacular *orthographia* to be applied to many types of texts—religious, genealogical, historical, legal—this passage prioritizes the legal texts. While many Latin authors, Alcuin most famously with his “what has Ingeld to do with Christ?” quote, disparaged many aspects of vernacular culture, seeing it as largely insignificant in their understanding of worthwhile knowledge and textual authority,³⁰ the situation was different in Iceland. The importance of vernacular laws, compared to other types of texts, may have been a large part of what provided an environment for the development of a vernacular *orthographia*, and vernacular ideas partly analogous to *latinitas*. But rather than a purely pragmatic interest in writing laws with perfect orthography, the treatise produced a hermeneutic for the texts of laws to have authority within the intellectual context of *grammatica*, the most basic intellectual context of medieval culture.

While there is a practical side to this passage, when seen in light of the Latin orthographic tradition the ideology behind its rhetoric is more apparent. The distinctions recommended by the *First Grammatical Treatise* were not carried out in the orthography of medieval Icelandic manuscripts, and one should not be so quick to believe the rhetoric about the issues of ambiguous language in the treatise to be more authentic or more critical than that presented by earlier Latin grammarians. In both languages, there were real issues in maintaining uncorrupted texts, but grammarians were also working within a philosophical and theological ideal of correct, normalized language.

³⁰ Irvine, *Making of Textual Culture*, pp. 331–2.

NON-ARBITRARY LANGUAGE IN THE *FIRST GRAMMATICAL
TREATISE*

This ideological background can be better understood by exploring not only the ideals of normative language within the *First Grammatical Treatise*, but also those of non-arbitrary language, as the two ideas are closely connected in the intellectual context of *grammatica*. By non-arbitrary, it is meant that features of language—graphic, phonetic, morphological, etc.—are understood and often rhetorically presented not as ‘accidents’. Rather, they are seen as interconnected and representative of deeper significance, or related to more concrete ideas external to the language. Perhaps the best known expression of this treatment of language is the medieval etymology. The *First Grammatical Treatise* contains one such example, *titulus*, the ‘tittle’, a particular type of abbreviation mark. After explaining the various ways the tittle can be used, the treatise states:

Titvll hefir þo nokkvra iarteín til nafns þess er hann áá þo at hann megi æigi sva merkia af nafni sem aðra stafí. Titan heitir sol en þaðan af er minkat þat nafn er titvlvs er a latinu. titvll kveðvm ver þat er sem litil sol se þviat sva sem sol lysir þarf aðr var myrkt þa lysir sva titvll bok ef fyri er ritinn eða orð ef yfir er settr.

The tittle, however, has some significance in the name that it has, even though one cannot determine it, as [one can] other letters, from its name. Titan is a name for the sun, and from this the name is diminished that is *titulus* in Latin, [or] tittle, [as] we say, that is like a little sun, for just as the sun illuminates that which was dark before, so the tittle illuminates a book, if [it] is written at the beginning, or a word, if [it] is placed above.³¹

³¹ *First Grammatical Treatise* (ed. and transl. Hrein Benediktsson, pp. 240–3).

Here, the etymology shows that the meaning of the word is not independent from its historical development; rather, form and meaning have a connection that involves an interpretation, often metaphorical. As Irvine has noted when discussing the importance and ideology of Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*, 'for Isidore, differentiae and analogies are based on external linguistic features, but etymology penetrates to the inner nature of words, recovering sources and origins obscured through the diversity of externals', and that essential, original nature of the word provides a starting point for all knowledge.³² Both form and meaning are thus shown to be non-arbitrary, interconnected and referencing the deeper essential truth of language, through etymology.

A related type of thinking occurs, moreover, in relation to the form and sound of individual letters. At one point the *First Grammatical Treatise* argues that, as Odd Einar Haugen has described, '[t]he letters of the language should be designed so that their shape reflects their sound'.³³ The passages in question suggest that the shape of the new letters the treatise is proposing reflect how they were created, in addition to how they sound: the ϑ is a blending of the sounds of o and a , so it has the circle from the former and the loop from the latter; the ϱ likewise has shape of e and the loop of a ; the \emptyset has the circle of o and the crossbar of e ; the y uses the sounds of i and u and thus has the shape of J and V .³⁴

³² Irvine, *Making of Textual Culture*, p. 222.

³³ Haugen, 'Orthographic Reform', p. 13.

³⁴ *First Grammatical Treatise* (ed. Hreinn Benediktsson, pp. 211–13). The last sentence, concerning the formation of y , is corrupt and my interpretation is based on Hreinn Benediktsson's emendation. Hreinn's commentary goes on to debate arguments by Einar Haugen and Anne Holtsmark about how corrupt this passage may in fact be, based on the actual shape of the y used in Icelandic medieval paleography. It is important to note, however, that the mechanical details of such a rhetorically-charged passage as this should not be taken at face value; the point is to show that the phonetic relationship between $y/u/i$ is

This is comparable to the logic of non-arbitrary language used in many Latin grammatical treatises, wherein more fundamental truths are sought in the study of the *littera*, 'letter'. Two treatises cited by Vivian Law in this vein of grammatical thought show the depth of interpretation that could go into a medieval grammarian's discussion of a single letter: a seventh or eighth century work describes the three strokes used to write the letter *A* as signifying the trinity, and its first position in the alphabet being related to the name of Adam, the first man, starting with *A*; another eighth- or ninth-century work compares the five vowels to the five senses of the body, and correlates their order in the alphabet to the position in the mouth and throat from which they resonate.³⁵

The grammatical treatise of pseudo-Grosseteste, from the Oxford school of grammarians of the early thirteenth century, shows a later, related form of thinking in its treatment of phonetics with influence from Aristotelian ideas. Robert Grosseteste's treatise *De generatione sonorum* argues that the shape of letters must logically represent the way they sound, and pseudo-Grosseteste's treatise goes a great deal into this line of thinking, describing how the shape of the letters mimic the shape the mouth takes when forming their sound.³⁶ Here, the non-arbitrary nature of the characteristics and accidents of language is understood in very mechanical, physical, but no less philosophical or ideological terms.

The passage of the *First Grammatical Treatise* is not allegorical or theological as in the early medieval examples, nor is it as deeply physical or Aristotelian as Pseudo-Grosseteste, but it reflects the same basic ideologies. There is no pragmatic reason for positing a

reflected in their shape and construction, and exactly as in a medieval etymology, observable facts could be ignored to make that point.

³⁵ Law, *Linguistics in Europe*, pp. 117–19.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 168–71. For the text of pseudo-Grosseteste, see K. Reichl, *Tractatus de grammatica: eine fälschlich Robert Grosseteste zugeschriebene spekulative Grammatik* (Munich, 1976).

relationship between the shape and sound of the letters if the treatise were only a sort of spelling book, or an alphabetical guide. The treatise is addressing an essential ‘why’ question, and justifying itself in a way that would be significant to an audience familiar with understanding letters in terms of their relationship to the essential truth of language. Positioned as it is in the twelfth century, the *First Grammatical Treatise* might represent a vernacular interpretation of a line of thinking somewhere between these early and late medieval models.

THE *MÁLKRÚÐSFRÆÐI* AND STYLISTIC NORMATIVITY

Within the *First Grammatical Treatise* alone there are multiple ideologies of Latin *grammatica* being brought into vernacular discourse. Its rhetoric of normalization, using methodologies adapted from the tradition of Latin orthographic treatises, combined with its stance that the features of language reflect essential realities, reveals that its author understood medieval discourses about the relationship between language and truth. These concerns also points to the ideological links between the *First Grammatical Treatise* and the later translated grammatical treatises, which are otherwise very different. Such links show the intellectual and pedagogical practices that brought together a manuscript like the *Codex Wormianus*, AM 242 fol., containing all four treatises. While the *First Grammatical Treatise* shows an interest in normalizing the Old Norse language on the graphic level, other texts apply Latin stylistic ideology to normalizing and interpreting vernacular literature.

The *Málkrúðsfræði*, the second half of the *Third Grammatical Treatise*, from the mid-thirteenth century, concerns itself with such stylistics. It primarily consists of translations from a standard Latin grammatical textbook, book three of Donatus’ *Ars maior*, generally

referred to as *Barbarismus* after its first section.³⁷ The text lists and explains what are variably referred to as the vices and virtues, or faults and figures of speech, the so-called barbarisms, solecisms, metaplasms, *schemata*, and tropes, and in the *Málskerúðsfræði* these faults and figures are exemplified through verses of skaldic poetry, instead of the classical or Christian quotations used in related Latin texts. While on one level many of these faults and figures developed as exegetical and compositional tools, on another they were used to maintain normativity and express an ideology of perfected style and semantics.

Understanding the intellectual background and development of these faults and figures requires understanding their origin: they first appear in Stoic dialectic, in the context of philosophical inquiry, through the Stoic interest in language as it could be used to both express and distinguish truth and falsehood.³⁸ The mixture of Stoic and Aristotelian dialectic with poetics, brought into the Middle Ages by Donatus and other late antique grammarians and rhetoricians, created an essential break and conflict within these figures: while, in dialectic, language had to be normative to correctly express truth and philosophical ideas, poetics could use tropes and metaphor and other deviations of form and meaning.³⁹

In the *Ars maior*, Donatus' main purpose for these faults and figures was teach students to avoid mistakes, but also to show that in addition to faults, there were also figures which could be acceptable for masters, but not for students. In this latter sense, Donatus differed from the early philosophers, in allowing language to go

³⁷ Clunies Ross and Wellendorf have recently argued effectively that the *Málskerúðsfræði* also drew on the *Doctrinale* of Alexander de Villa-Dei, written around 1200 and one of the most popular grammatical treatise of the later Middle Ages, which was also the source of the fourteenth century Icelandic *Fourth Grammatical Treatise* (M. Clunies Ross and J. Wellendorf, ed., *The Fourth Grammatical Treatise*, (London, 2014), pp. xli–xliv).

³⁸ Law, *Linguistics in Europe*, p. 41.

³⁹ Irvine, *Making of Textual Culture*, pp. 104–5.

beyond the normative in certain contexts, and his writing reflected how the study of language changed in the context of Roman rhetoric.⁴⁰ Cassiodorus took this a step further, revealing the inherent conflicts in the discipline, as he claimed that even those figures which Donatus claimed as faults were not in fact, because they were used in the Scriptures and by authoritative authors.⁴¹

In the early Middle Ages, the faults and figures continued to be an essential exegetical tool; Bede is perhaps the most famous example of a long process of Christianizing Donatus, replacing his verse examples from Virgil with quotes from the Bible and Christian texts. Christianizing these exegetical tools was part of the cultural adaptation of the commentary tradition itself, and for Bede in particular, the claiming of stylistics and linguistic ornamentation as an originally scriptural art.⁴²

Throughout these changes, the close relationship between grammar and logic remained, and was emphasized by the late medieval rediscovery of Aristotle and the rise of speculative or theoretical grammar. The continuing imperative to understand the nature of *grammatica* itself, as the most basic of educational disciplines, maintained the ontological concerns inherited from the discipline's philosophical origins, and was added to by the Christianization of the discipline. As Sluiter and Copeland have noted: 'Grammatical theory, even when applied to literary criticism, was everywhere permeated with the most fundamental logical questions of substance and accident, matter and form, what can be expressed and what is meant, signification and reference, ambiguity and equivocation'.⁴³

⁴⁰ Sluiter and Copeland, ed., *Medieval Grammar and Rhetoric*, p. 84, n. 11; for a full discussion of the development of grammatical ideology in this respect see M. Baratin and F. Desbordes, 'La "Troisième Partie" De L'Ars Grammatica', in *The History of Linguistics in the Classical Period*, ed. D. J. Taylor (Amsterdam, 1987), pp. 41–65.

⁴¹ Irvine, *Making of Textual Culture*, p. 208.

⁴² Sluiter and Copeland, ed., *Medieval Grammar and Rhetoric*, pp. 257–8.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

As a mid-thirteenth century text, the *Third Grammatical Treatise* can be seen in the context both of the long tradition of the figures and tropes in *grammatica*, as well as the rise of interest in Aristotle and speculative grammar in the later Middle Ages. Many of the things which scholars have described about the difficulty in interpreting the text are in fact issues inherent to the study of figures and tropes within *grammatica*, above all the apparent contradiction between normative standards which contradict the extant poetic corpus.⁴⁴ While there are unavoidable issues with Latin poetics being applied to vernacular verse, the concern of *grammatica* for normalized language beyond the merely pragmatic, related to its concern for viewing language as non-arbitrary, can explain much of why this treatise is in fact applying grammatical ideas to vernacular language and poetics.

First of all, the barbarisms themselves are faults that take place within individual words. In the first example below a long vowel is made short for the sake of metre, and in the second an aspiration is added to the beginning of the word to maintain alliteration in the verse-form:

Vm stvndar afdrátt verðr barbarismvs ... her er vindara roðri sett fyrir vindára roðri; þat er flvgr. Þessi samstafa er skom ger fyrir fegrðar sakir þviat þa lioðar betr.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Clunies Ross, *Old Norse Poetry*, pp. 194–5. The characterization of *grammatica* here is somewhat deceptive. Clunies-Ross ignores the dynamic between poetic and dialectic standards of language, the history of grammarians like Cassiodorus actually disagreeing with Donatus' characterization of faults of speech, and mistakenly presents grammatical ideology as unproblematically 'negative and restrictive' in contrast to a rather romanticized view of a native Icelandic poetic ideology that viewed poetic language as 'something worthy of study because it used language with skill and imagination'. See also S. Tranter, 'Medieval Icelandic *artes poetica*', in *Old Icelandic Literature and Society*, ed. M. Clunies Ross (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 140–60, at pp. 144–7.

⁴⁵ *Third Grammatical Treatise* (ed. Ólsen, *Den Tredje og Fjærde Grammatiske Afhandling*, p. 66).

Concerning the deduction of time barbarism occurs ... Here *vindara roðri* is used for *vindára roðri*; that is ‘flight’. This syllable is made short for the sake of beauty, so that the verse is thus made better.

Vm viðr lagning ablasningar verðr barbarismvs ... her er hrammaztan sætt fyrir rammaztan, at qveðandi halldiz i balkar lagi.⁴⁶

Concerning addition of aspiration barbarism occurs ... Here *hrammaztan* is used for *rammaztan*, so that the rhythm of the verse is kept in *bálkarlag*

Unlike the *First Grammatical Treatise*, we are dealing here with normalization of actual pronunciation, not simply with orthography. But this reflects a different angle on the same ideal of correct language, a normative correctness that goes beyond what would be practical in poetic composition. From the perspective of poetic composition, these faults can potentially be reasonable adjustments to make: they are in many cases similar to or the same as the figures or virtues of speech,⁴⁷ and this would be true in both Latin and vernacular poetics. From the perspective of the more conservative, dialectic-influenced side of *grammatica*, they are flaws in the normalized coherency of the language, in its ability to effectively communicate truth and the essence of its own nature. Though the treatise is primarily concerned with poetics, in the idea of barbarism and faults of language, that dialectic-influenced aspect is also being

⁴⁶ *Third Grammatical Treatise* (ed. Ólsen, pp. 67–8).

⁴⁷ Though there are some parallels with other faults, the most obvious examples of this is the fact that barbarisms are the faults equivalent to the figures of metaplasm, and many of the metaplasm have exact equivalents among the types of barbarism.

applied to vernacular discourse, essentially by arguing that there is a perfect, ideal, true version of Old Norse.

With the tropes, the last section of the *Málskrúðsfræði*, the treatise presents the idea that all figurative language is in itself *óeiginligr* ‘improper’, even while in several places in the text it is clear that such language is absolutely necessary and constantly used in Old Norse poetry. Here on a much more theoretical level the ideal of normative language is shown, and emphasized by the fact that for every single trope the *Málskrúðsfræði* points out what is improper or *óeiginligr* about the verse used as an example. In the explanation of the verse quoted for *metaphora*:

Metaphora ær frammfæring orða eða hlvtar i aðra merking.
Hon verðr a .iiij. leiðir: Af andligvm hlvt til andligs hlvtar,
sem her ... her ær dyr kollvt konan. Ær þar frammfæring
eiginligs hlvtar, konvnnar, i annarlíga merking, sem dyrit er.
Veiginlig líking ær þat millvm dyrs ok konv, þviat dyrit ær
skynlavst kvikendi enn maðrinn skynsamligt.⁴⁸

Metaphor is the translation of words or things into another signification. It occurs in four ways: from a living to a living thing, as here ... Here the woman is called an animal. There is translation of a proper thing, the woman, into another signification, which is the animal. There is improper form between animal and woman, because the animal is a senseless beast but the person is rational.

This emphasis on *eiginligr* versus *óeiginligr*, ‘proper’ vs. ‘improper’, form is an expansion of a single line in the introduction to the section on tropes in Donatus.⁴⁹ The idea of applying this line of Donatus to

⁴⁸ *Third Grammatical Treatise* (ed. Ólsen, pp. 102–3).

⁴⁹ Donatus, *Ars maior* (ed. H. Keil, *Grammatici Latini*, vol. IV (Leipzig, 1864), p. 399).

individual examples appears in other grammatical treatises, and is not limited to the thirteenth century revival of Aristotelian logic.⁵⁰ It is, however, a part of the longer tradition of the relationship between dialectic and *grammatica*.⁵¹ Several scholars have suggested such influence on the first half of the *Third Grammatical Treatise*, in its discussion of sound and letters.⁵² Whatever the sources, the importance here is that ‘improper’ language is not incorrect language—the tropes are among the virtues, not the vices, of speech—but merely deviant, and representative of the philosophically-orientated standards of normativity which the treatise brought to vernacular poetic discourse.

While the *First Grammatical Treatise* and the Latin tradition of orthographic treatises cautions that poor orthography can obscure or change meaning, and barbarism similarly points out alterations in individual words as flaws, with this idea of ‘improper’ form in tropes the linguistic ideology of correct speech is seen from a much more semantic angle. Correct language signifies what it purports to signify, and even if this ideal never actually existed in practice, either in Latin or in Old Norse, its existence as an ideology within *grammatica* shaped medieval understanding of language and composition. However, rather than these traditions of normalization constraining or

⁵⁰ Clunies Ross, following unpublished work by Micillo, has also suggested that the application of ‘proper’ and ‘improper’ to individual poetic examples, in the instance of at least one trope, is derived from the ninth-century Irish scholar Murethach (Clunies Ross, *Old Norse Poetry*, p. 188, n. 3). Speculating such a specific source is not particularly tenable, considering the age of the ‘proper/improper’ distinction and the wealth of unedited and unpublished medieval grammatical texts, nor does it take away from the ideological or rhetorical significance of the application of such ideas to Old Norse poetry.

⁵¹ Clunies Ross has explored the possible significance of this ‘improper/proper’ distinction in Old Norse texts and poetics (M. Clunies Ross, *Skáldskaparmál: Snorri Sturluson’s ars poetica and Medieval Theories of Language* (Odense, 1987), pp. 29–38).

⁵² Clunies Ross, *Old Norse Poetry*, p. 189.

diminishing Old Norse poetics by the comparison to Latin, the *Málskrúðsfræði* represents a sweeping authorization of the vernacular. Some early medieval grammarians considered any deviations from Latin grammatical rules in written vernacular to be barbarisms and soloecisms,⁵³ and by saying that such faults could exist within Old Norse—that the language and its literature could be normalized—the *Málskrúðsfræði* silences any possibility of such criticism.

Multiple types of normativity—orthographic, semantic, etc.—suggest that a fundamentally grammatical, prescriptive understanding of language developed for Old Norse over the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. A vernacular idea related to and derived from *latinitas* provided the intellectual link between these grammatical ideologies. These ideas are the method by which the grammatical treatises evidence attempts to authorize or justify the vernacular in Iceland. They are not a mere *translatio studii*, a metaphorical myth of knowledge moving to the North, though that is certainly a component of vernacular *grammatica*.⁵⁴ Rather, these treatises indicate that at least some educated Icelanders viewed their own language in philosophical, ideological terms, and with further research a better understanding could be obtained of how these ideologies developed over the Middle Ages and are reflected in the other treatises.

⁵³ Notably Otrifrid von Weissenbug (Grotans, *Medieval St. Gall*, pp. 45–6).

⁵⁴ For the authorization of the vernacular, see Tranter, ‘Medieval Icelandic *artes poeticae*’, pp. 155–6; Nordal, *Tools of Literacy*, pp. 22–4. Both the *Snorra Edda* and the *Third Grammatical Treatise* contain an etiological introduction, involving the euhemerized Norse gods. In the *Third Grammatical Treatise*, this is in the form of a rhetorical argument that both Latin and Old Norse poetry derive from the Greek, because the Norse gods came from Troy (Ólsen, ed., *Den Tredje og Fjærde Grammatisk Afhandling*, p. 12). This introduction, while intriguing and potentially important, has tended to be somewhat over emphasized in scholarship on the treatise (Clunies Ross, *Old Norse Poetry*, pp. 190–1, see references there; C. Santini, “‘Kenningar Donati’: An Investigation of the Classical Models in the Third Icelandic Grammatical Treatise”, *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 1 (1994), 37–44, at pp. 39 and 42).

Linguistic thought within the Icelandic grammatical treatises is a vital component to understanding medieval Icelandic intellectual history and textual culture as a whole.

Al-Bakrī and the Bretons

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Arabic writers in al-Andalus referred to the Atlantic as the Sea of Darkness, a forbidding, mysterious place, in which unknown dangers and wonders might hide, and from which few returned safely.¹ This paper will venture into tenebrous waters, well beyond the sight of dry land, going a little beyond the comfort zone of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic studies by travelling to al-Andalus, Muslim Spain, in the eleventh century. The purpose in doing so is to present an image of a part of the Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic world, in this case Brittany, from the eyes of an outsider, the Andalusī geographer al-Bakrī. It can be hard to track an idea, and even harder to see how a transplanted idea gets used in a completely different cultural context, with different signifiers of meaning and connotation. This is what this paper is intended to do, by examining the source of al-Bakrī's information on the Bretons and considering the different ways he employed them to speak to his audience.

Abū 'Ubayd 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Azīz al-Bakrī is best known for his geography, *The Book of Roads and Kingdoms*, which survives in fragmentary form.² Al-Bakrī travelled along and visited more than a few roads and kingdoms in his own lifetime. Eleventh-century Muslim Spain, divided into numerous, small, warring principalities or

¹ A. M. H. Shboul, *Al-Mas'ūdī and his World: A Muslim Humanist and his Interest in Non-Muslims* (London, 1979), p. 191.

² There is no complete modern edition of *The Book of Roads and Kingdoms*, but see *Jughrāfiyat Miṣr min kitāb 'al-mamālik wa-'al-masālik li-Abī 'Ubayd 'al-Bakrī*, ed. 'Abd Allāh Yūsuf 'al-Ghunaym (Kuwait, 1980).

taifa, encouraged adaptability in one's career.³ Born the son of the ruler of Huelva, al-Bakrī was forced to flee the city of his birth after it was conquered by Seville in 1051, ending up in Córdoba, a much diminished place after the fall of the Umayyads two decades earlier.⁴ There he studied under the last generation of scholars who could remember the days when there had still been a Caliph in al-Andalus. As his own reputation for learning grew, al-Bakrī came much into demand, spending time as a scholar and an envoy at the courts of Seville and Almería. It was in the latter city in the late 1060s that al-Bakrī began working on *The Book of Roads and Kingdoms*, finishing it at some point before 1086.

In his geography, al-Bakrī celebrates his native al-Andalus, declaring that it combines all the best features of Syria, Yemen, India, Ahwāz in Iran, China and Aden.⁵ Much of this text seems to hark back to the glory days of Muslim Spain. Al-Bakrī defines the northern border of al-Andalus in antiquated terms, including within its territory Barcelona, Narbonne, Beziers, Toulouse and Carcassonne, cities which had not been reached by Muslims since the days of Charles Martel.⁶ He also discusses lands beyond Spain, and is our best source for West Africa in this period. Turning north, he presents a picture of the Galicians of northern Spain, before crossing the Pyrenees to comment favourably on the Franks.

It is here, in a rather startling passage, that al-Bakrī mentions the Bretons, saying, 'They have a language that the ears reject, a repulsive aspect and bad customs. Some of them are thieves, who attack and rob the Franks. The Franks in turn torture them when they

³ D. Wasserstein, *The Rise and Fall of the Party-Kings: Politics and Society in Islamic Spain, 1002–1086* (Princeton, 1985).

⁴ N. F. Hermes, *The [European] Other in Medieval Arabic Literature and Culture, Ninth-Twelfth Century AD* (New York, 2012), p. 57.

⁵ al-Bakrī, p. 20; Hermes, *The [European] Other*, p. 61.

⁶ al-Bakrī, pp. 15–16. I owe this point to Dr Ann Christys.

catch any of them'.⁷ The vitriol directed at the Bretons is unexpected and seemingly inexplicable, but more surprising still is the presence of the Bretons in this account at all. Arabic ethnography tended to be rather vague about the people of Western Europe, often fitting them into a system of climes inherited from Greek thinking, heavily influenced by Claudius Ptolemy in particular.⁸

Saʿīd b. Aḥmad, writing in Toledo in 1068, serves as a case in point. He argued that the effect of the cold climate on the people of northern Europe was to render them more like beasts than men, for 'Their temperaments are therefore frigid, their humours raw, their bellies gross, their colour pale, their hair long and lank. Thus they lack keenness of understanding and clarity of intelligence and are overcome by ignorance and apathy, lack of discernment and stupidity'.⁹ If they were not content to name all Europeans Romans, most Arab geographers referred to the peoples of Western Europe as *ifranj* or Franks.¹⁰ Rarer still were the likes of al-Masʿūdī (d. 956), writing in the tenth century, who commented at length on the difference between Franks, Lombards, Galicians and Slavs.¹¹ Al-Bakrī was not a particularly original scholar, and drew much of his material

⁷ al-Bakrī, p. 23.

⁸ Hermes, *The [European] Other*, p. 47; A. al-Azmeh, 'Barbarians in Arab Eyes', *Past and Present* 134 (1992), 3–18; T. Abdullah, 'Arab Views of Northern Europeans in Medieval History and Geography', in *Images of the Other: Europe and the Muslim World before 1700*, ed. D. R. Blanks (Cairo, 1997), pp. 73–80.

⁹ Abdullah, 'Arab Views of Northern Europeans', p. 75; C. Hillenbrand, *The Crusades: Islamic Perspectives* (Edinburgh, 1999), p. 270.

¹⁰ A. Samarrai, 'Some Geographical and Political Information on Western Europe in the Medieval Arabic Sources', *The Muslim World* 62 (1972), 304–22, at p. 305; D. König, 'The Christianisation of Latin Europe as seen by Medieval Arab-Islamic Historiography', *The Medieval History Journal* 12 (2009), 431–72.

¹¹ al-Masʿūdī (transl. C. Barbier de Meynard and A. Pavet de Courteille, *Les Prairies d'Or*, 9 vols., rev. ed. C. Pellat (Paris, 1965), at II, p. 344).

on the world beyond the Pyrenees from al-Mas'ūdī, but the latter makes no specific mention of Bretons or Brittany in his work.¹²

Such references as there are to the Bretons in Arabic geographies, and there are not many, are scattered. It is often unclear whether Brittany or Britain is meant in these accounts. In a story preserved by al-Qazwīnī, an Andalusī ship reached a land called al-Bartūn in 900. One of the crew caught an enormous fish with the words 'there is no god but God', 'Muḥammad' and 'the Apostle of God' written on it on different places on its body.¹³ The first clear allusion to the region of Brittany comes from the Andalusī historian Aḥmad al-Rāzī (d. 955), who notes that it lies to the north west of Spain.¹⁴ Al-Idrīsī (d. 1165/6), working for Roger II, king of Sicily, in 1154, presents it as being a stepping point on the way to the Channel, a land of 'mists and rain', where 'the sky is always overcast'.¹⁵ This is not to say there was no contact between Brittany and Muslim Spain. Arabic stories of fishermen and whalers braving the Sea of Darkness hint at a wider sea-faring community in the Bay of Biscay.¹⁶ But Brittany, and ethnographic information about Bretons in particular, seem not to have formed part of the Arabic geographical tradition. The origin of al-Bakrī's picture of the Bretons clearly comes from elsewhere.

Ibrāhīm b. Ya'qūb al-Isrā'īlī al-Ṭurṭūshī is most likely to be familiar to specialists of the Scandinavian world for his description of the Danish settlement of Hedeby. Al-Bakrī attributes much of his information about Europe to him, including the material on the

¹² Shboul, *Al-Mas'ūdī and his World*, p. 191.

¹³ D. M. Dunlop, 'The British Isles according to Medieval Arabic Authors', *Islamic Quarterly* 4 (1957), 11–28, at p. 18.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

Bretons.¹⁷ As his name suggests, al-Ṭurtūshī came from the northern Spanish city of Tortosa and was either a practicing Jew or of Jewish descent.¹⁸ In the 960s al-Ṭurtūshī travelled through much of Europe. The purpose of his journey is unclear; he may have been a merchant, diplomat or spy, or some combination of all three.¹⁹ His own account of his adventures has not survived, but extracts were preserved by later writers, including al-Bakrī, and what has come down to us suggests a truly epic expedition.²⁰

Al-Ṭurtūshī famously provides the first written notice of the city of Prague and a description of the Polish kingdom of Mieszko I.²¹ On his journeys he met Pope John XII and conversed with the Emperor Otto I on the subject of Amazons.²² More importantly for this discussion, while his route away from Spain was initially across the Mediterranean via Marseilles and Genoa, his return passage was overland, passing through Verdun and Rouen using the transport networks of the merchants there. The *Life* of John of Gorze indicates that the fair of Verdun was often used as a starting point to travel to al-Andalus and there are suggestions in some of the Norman material

¹⁷ al-Bakrī, p. 22. On al-Ṭurtūshī, see A. A. El-Hajji, ‘Aṭ-Ṭurtūshī, the Andalusian Traveller, and his Meeting with Pope John XII’, *Islamic Quarterly* 11 (1967), 129–36.

¹⁸ A. K. Bennison, ‘The Peoples of the North in the Eyes of the Muslims of Umayyad al-Andalus (711–1031)’, *Journal of Global History* 2 (2007), 157–74.

¹⁹ El-Hajji, ‘Aṭ-Ṭurtūshī, the Andalusian Traveller’, pp. 131–2.

²⁰ A. Nazmi, *Commercial Relations between Arabs and Slavs (9th–11th centuries)* (Warsaw, 1998), p. 40.

²¹ al-Ṭurtūshī, p. 147.

²² al-Ṭurtūshī, p. 147; El-Hajji, ‘Aṭ-Ṭurtūshī, the Andalusian Traveller’, p. 133; Samarraï, ‘Some Geographical and Political Information’, p. 311. On another engagement between Cordoba and the Ottonians see M. Barceló, *El Sol que Salíó por Occidente: estudios sobre el estado omeya en al-Andalus* (Jaén, 1997), pp. 163–86.

of Iberian links.²³ Dudo of St Quentin in his *History of the Normans* has Count Richard I of Normandy instruct servants of his from Contentin to guide people to Spain.²⁴ If, as al-Bakrī says, the eleventh-century geographer's views on Bretons can be attributed to al-Ṭurṭūshī, it seems that their ultimate source was the Franks that al-Ṭurṭūshī encountered and talked to on his travels.

The work of Julia Smith has illuminated a long tradition of abusive Frankish ethnography targeted at the Bretons, stretching back to Gregory of Tours, who characterises them as duplicitous and treacherous.²⁵ This theme was continued by the Reviser of the *Royal Frankish Annals*, who refers to the 'fickleness of a perfidious people'.²⁶ The Astronomer, the anonymous biographer of Emperor Louis the Pious, writing shortly after 840, is little better, describing the Bretons as arrogant and insolent.²⁷ Most spectacular are the fulminations of Ermold the Black. In addition to being 'unfortunate, ignorant and quarrelsome' and 'dishonest and pompous', the poet claims that among them:²⁸

²³ Life of John of Saint-Arnoul (ed. and transl. M. Parisse, *La Vie de Jean, Abbé de Gorze* (Paris, 1999), p. 144).

²⁴ Dudo of St Quentin, *Historia Normannorum* (transl. E. Christiansen, *History of the Normans* (Woodbridge, 1998), p. 162).

²⁵ J. M. H. Smith, 'Confronting Identities: The Rhetoric and Reality of a Carolingian Frontier', in *Integration und Herrschaft: ethnische Identitäten und soziale Organisation im Frühmittelalter*, ed. W. Pohl and M. Diesenberger (Vienna, 2002), pp. 169–82, at p. 178.

²⁶ Royal Frankish Annals 799 (ed. F. Kurze, *Annales regni Francorum inde a. 741 usque ad 829, qui dicuntur Annales Laurissenses maiores et Einhardi*, MGH SS rer. Germ. 6 (Hannover, 1895), p. 109).

²⁷ The Astronomer, *Vita Hludovici* (ed. E. Tremp, *Thegan, Die Taten Kaiser Ludwigs. Astronomus, Das Leben Kaiser Ludwigs*, MGH SS rer. Germ. 64 (Hannover, 1995), p. 386).

²⁸ Ermold the Black (ed. E. Faral, *Poème sur Louis le Pieux: et épîtres au Roi Pépin*, (Paris, 1932), p. 100).

A man will lie down with his sister; one brother will rape another brother's wife; everyone lives incestuously with everyone else; wickedness abounds. They live in briar patches and sleep in the woods and rejoice to live by theft in the manner of beasts. The force of justice claims no hall for itself with them, and the proper kinds of judgement escape them.²⁹

According to Ermold, the appropriate treatment for these people is to fight them until 'the poor Bretons fill up the swamps and marshes like slaughtered beasts'.³⁰ The denigrating descriptions of Bretons mentioned above were written in a specific ninth-century context, where Carolingian rulers were attempting to assert their authority over Brittany, with very mixed success.

Other Frankish accounts, such as that of Regino of Prüm, are more even-handed.³¹ There are fewer Frankish references to Bretons in the tenth century, when al-Ṭurtūshī was in the region, and the narratives in general are more neutral, although the major source of the period, Flodoard of Rheims, is notoriously neutral about nearly everything.³² That anti-Breton prejudice did not die is suggested by the Burgundian Ralph Glaber's *History*, written in the 1020s and 1030s. As well as characterising the Bretons as cowardly and

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 104. I have used T. F. X. Noble's translation of this line in *Charlemagne and Louis the Pious: The lives by Einhard, Notker, Ermoldus, Thegan, and the Astronomer* (University Park, 2009), p. 164.

³¹ W.-R. Schleidgen, *Die Überlieferungsgeschichte der Chronik des Regino von Prüm* (Mainz, 1977), pp. 14–16 and 109–11.

³² J. Dunbabin, 'West Francia: The Kingdom', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History. Volume III: c.900–c.1024*, ed. T. Reuter (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 372–97, at p. 374. Flodoard is undergoing a revival at present; M. Sot, *Un historien et son église au Xe siècle: Flodoard de Reims* (Paris, 1993) needs to be read in light of the work of E. Roberts, 'Flodoard, the Will of St Remigius and the See of Reims in the Tenth Century', *Early Medieval Europe* 22 (2014), 201–30.

treacherous, Glaber says they are ‘utterly devoid of civilisation, possessed of uncouth customs, petty angers and foolish chatter’, celebrating their slaughter by Fulk Nerra in 992.³³

Although not identical, we can see in this material some of the same ideas as in al-Bakrī: Bretons as thieves, Bretons as untrustworthy enemies of the Franks, harsh Frankish treatment of defeated Bretons, Bretons as the possessors of bad customs. A possible context in which al-Ṭurtūshī might have encountered derogatory opinions about Bretons could have been his time in Rouen, where memories of Norman fighting in Brittany in the previous three decades might have provided a suitably poisonous atmosphere.³⁴ It is unclear whether the inhabitants of Rouen would have considered themselves Frankish or Norman although their leaders probably tended toward the latter.³⁵ Hostility to the Bretons might have united both ethnic groups in any case. Writing in the tenth century, Dudo of St Quentin describes the Bretons in the 940s as ‘wild and deaf to reasoning’, although he is not much more complimentary about Franks.³⁶

Whatever its precise lineage, the structure of al-Bakrī’s extract suggests a Frankish perspective, being primarily presented in terms of their relationship to the Franks. This is followed by an approving description of the Franks, praising the craftsmanship of their

³³ Rodulfus Glaber, *Historiarum librum quinque* (ed. and transl. J. France, *The Five Books of the Histories* (Oxford, 1989), p. 58).

³⁴ D. Bates, *Normandy Before 1066* (London, 1982), p. 10; E. Searle, *Predatory Kinship and the Creation of Norman Power, 840-1066* (London, 1988), p. 53.

³⁵ On Norman identity, see G. A. Loud, ‘The *Gens Normannorum* – Myth or Reality?’, *Anglo-Norman Studies* 4 (1981), 104–16; C. Potts, ‘*Atque unum ex diversis gentibus populum effecit*: Historical Tradition and the Norman Identity’, *Anglo-Norman Studies* 18 (1995), 139–52; P. Bauduin, *La Première Normandie (Xe-XIe siècles): sur les frontières de la haute Normandie; identité et construction d'une principauté* (Caen, 2004); N. Webber, *The Evolution of Norman Identity, 911–1154* (Woodbridge, 2005), 20–52.

³⁶ Dudo of St Quentin, *Historia Normannorum* (transl. E. Christiansen, p. 62).

metalwork and swords.³⁷ His description of Frankish organisation is reminiscent of al-Mas'ūdī, who called them 'the most invincible and the most equipped' of Europeans, 'the most disciplined, the most acquiescent and obedient to their kings'.³⁸ Al-Bakrī comments that the land of the Franks is 'abundant in fruits and has many rivers which spring from the melting snow. Also it has excellent forts and extremely well-built towns'. Al-Bakrī's enthusiasm suggests that in his brief description of the Bretons we can hear the distant echo of Frankish voices.

But al-Bakrī was not simply regurgitating Frankish abuse. He instead reframed it in Andalusī terms and used it in a number of ways to develop some of his broader themes within *The Book of Roads and Kingdoms*. The first thing I want to consider here is the way it works within al-Bakrī's handling of Galicians. As Nizar Hermes has observed, there seems to be a parallel between al-Bakrī's treatment of the Bretons and his material on the Galicians, the word al-Bakrī uses to refer to the Christians of northern Spain.³⁹ While 'they have great valour', al-Bakrī says the Galicians are 'people of distrust and misdemeanour'.⁴⁰ They:

Have a treacherous and vile nature and do not clean or wash more than once or twice a year with cold water. They do not wash their clothes after they put them ... they believe that wearing clothes dirty with sweat grants health and wellness to their bodies. Moreover their clothes are very thin, tattered and showing between gaps most of their bodies.⁴¹

³⁷ Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, p. 272.

³⁸ al-Mas'ūdī (transl. Barbier de Meynard and Pavet de Courteille, *Les Prairies d'Or*, p. 344).

³⁹ Hermes, *The [European] Other*, p. 63.

⁴⁰ al-Bakrī, p. 20.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

Al-Bakrī is here tapping into a wide range of topoi familiar to Arabic ethnography of the unhygienic, immodest and savage northerner, reminiscent of Ibn Fadlān's descriptions of the Rus, Oghuz, Pechenegs and Bashkirs.⁴² Ibn Fadlān's description of the Rus as 'The filthiest of all Allāh's creatures: they do not clean themselves after excreting or urinating or wash themselves when in a state of ritual impurity [coitus] and do not wash their hands after food' contains many of the same ideas, although without the focus on poverty.⁴³

Al-Bakrī emphasises the martial prowess of the Galicians as a problem, as they represent a danger to the civilised people of al-Andalus. Caliph 'Abd al-Raḥmān III has to fight 'many battles' against marauding Galicians in the text.⁴⁴ An analogy between the Galicians and the Bretons on the one hand and the Franks and the people of al-Andalus on the other suggests itself.⁴⁵ The Galicians, like the Bretons, are savage, physically repulsive, possessed of bad customs and act as a menace to their more cultured neighbours. Al-Bakrī introduces the Galicians as 'the enemies of the Franks', hinting at a congruence between the Muslims of Spain and the Franks in sharing an uncivilised foe.⁴⁶ In his support of Frankish atrocities against the Bretons, al-Bakrī may be making a statement about the appropriate treatment of Galicians.

As al-Bakrī was all too aware, the age of the Umayyad Caliphs, when 'Abd al-Raḥmān III could cow the Christians of Northern

⁴² A. Al-Azmeh, 'Mortal Enemies, Invisible Neighbours: Northerners in Andalusian Eyes', in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. S. K. Jayyusi (Leiden, 1992), 259–72, at pp. 267–8; Hermes, *The [European] Other*, pp. 81–2.

⁴³ J. E. Montgomery, 'Ibn Fadlān and the Rūsiyyah', *Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 3 (2000), 1–25, at p. 7.

⁴⁴ al-Bakrī, pp. 21–2; Hermes, *The [European] Other*, p. 65.

⁴⁵ Hermes, *The [European] Other*, p. 66.

⁴⁶ al-Bakrī, p. 21.

Spain through raw military power, had ended in 1031.⁴⁷ Since then, the kings of Northern Spain had been able to extort tribute from the rickety kingdoms established amidst the wreckage of the Caliphate. In his geography, al-Bakrī refers to Count Ramon Berengar I of Barcelona who had demanded tribute from Lleida and Zaragoza from 1045.⁴⁸ In 1063, the year before al-Bakrī arrived in the city, Ferdinand the Great, king of Léon and Castile, raided the territory near Seville and had to be paid to withdraw. Even as al-Bakrī wrote, a young man named Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar was embarking upon the career that would lead men to call him El Cid.⁴⁹

Assessing how the passages concerning Bretons and Galicians fit within al-Bakrī's wider text is difficult, as the *Book of Roads and Kingdoms* has not been edited or published in its entirety. A valuable comparison can be made however with his material on the Slavs of Eastern Europe.⁵⁰ Here al-Bakrī does not integrate all of his material, instead choosing to explicitly recount the comments of first al-Ṭurṭūshī and then al-Mas'ūdī. Although his sources agree on some matters, including the lack of unity among the Slavic peoples, they present very different accounts. Al-Ṭurṭūshī is highly sympathetic to the Slavs, writing positively about cities such as Prague and Krakow.⁵¹ Their lands are extremely rich and beautiful and among the peoples of the north they are the most gifted at agriculture.⁵² His depiction of the kingdom of Mieszko I is one of wealth, organisation and military valour.⁵³ Al-Mas'ūdī is less flattering, calling Slavs 'the strongest and most rapacious people', waging unceasing war on their neighbours.⁵⁴

⁴⁷ Wasserstein, *The Rise and Fall of the Party-Kings*, pp. 55–81.

⁴⁸ al-Bakrī, pp. 27–8.

⁴⁹ On El Cid, see R. Fletcher, *The Quest for El Cid* (London, 1989).

⁵⁰ Collected in al-Ṭurṭūshī, pp. 145–51.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 147 and 149.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

Although some are Christian, many are pagans who respect no Scripture or religious law.⁵⁵ Their women are sexually promiscuous before marriage and the people never take baths. Al-Mas'ūdī makes much of the extreme cold of the climate.⁵⁶

The second description of the Slavs included by al-Bakrī sounds very reminiscent of those of the Galicians and the Bretons. As with these last two peoples, the fact that the Slavs are depicted as inimical to the Franks heightens the association of savagery with hostility to the Franks. The inclusion of al-Ṭurṭūshī complicates the picture. Al-Ṭurṭūshī's sympathy for the Slavs does make his harsh treatment of the Bretons stand out more clearly. Al-Bakrī makes no attempt to reconcile the two portrayals or to prefer one over the other. Although he was interested enough to copy down the material, the Slavs as a people, as opposed to individual Slavs who could be found in al-Andalus, did not threaten upon the Peninsula sufficiently for al-Bakrī to take the same level of concern as with the Galicians.

The nuance of al-Bakrī's depiction of foreign peoples is also exhibited in his celebrated passage on the inhabitants of Africa. Al-Bakrī was familiar with the long Arabic ethnographic tradition concerning Africa. His account of Africa, particularly the famous description of Ghana, is heavily indebted to the lost work of Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Warrāq (d. 973), but also employs material found in the writings of Aḥmad al-Ya'qūbī (d. 897/8) and Ibn Ḥawqal (d. 978).⁵⁷ Although al-Bakrī clearly used some older ideas, he was very selective about what he included. Al-Mas'ūdī, whose output was so important for al-Bakrī's discussion of Slavs, also wrote about Africa and stands in for much earlier ethnographic writing. Al-Mas'ūdī begins with the descent of Africans from Ham (Ḥām) son of Noah (Nūḥ), cursed by his father 'that his face should become ugly

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History*, ed. N. Levtzion and J. F. P. Hopkins (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 21, 49 and 62.

and black, and that his descendants should become slaves'.⁵⁸ This was a common theme among Arabic writers, mentioned by other geographers such as Ibn Qutayba (d. 889).⁵⁹

Al-Bakrī makes no mention of this. He employs considerably fewer tropes of the savage, making no reference to cannibalism or physical monstrosity and only limited allusion to divergent sexual practices.⁶⁰ Many of his descriptions of the tribes resemble in their details those of the Bretons and Galicians, but without the hostility directed at the latter peoples. Of the Banū Lamtūna, a nomadic group belonging to the Ṣanhāja Berber confederation, he notes, 'They know nothing about tilling the land, nor cultivating crops, nor do they know bread. Their wealth consists only of herds and their food of meat and milk'.⁶¹ Despite this apparently barbaric existence, they are otherwise described positively, with their leaders praised for their wisdom. Nor were they alone in receiving al-Bakrī's acclamation. His account of the pagan king of Ghana is glowing and we are told that 'he led a praiseworthy life on account of his love of justice and friendship for the Muslims'.⁶²

This praise can be explained relatively straightforwardly. Simple though their existence might be, the tribes of the desert lived as Muslims. The king of Ghana was well-disposed to followers of Islam. Unlike the Galicians and the Bretons, who appear to al-Bakrī to be a threat to Muslims or to civilisation in general, the peoples of Africa are not an obvious danger and therefore get a much less damning review. This becomes particularly apparent in comparison to al-Iṣṭakhrī (d. c. 951) one of the first to write a *Book of Roads and*

⁵⁸ *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources*, p. 34.

⁵⁹ Ibn Qutayba, *Ibn Coteibas Handbuch der Geschichte*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld (Göttingen, 1850), p. 13.

⁶⁰ *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources*, pp. 37, 83 and 85; see also al-Balādhurī, *The Origins of the Islamic State*, ed. P. K. Hitti (Piscataway, 2002).

⁶¹ *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources*, p. 70.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 79.

Kingdoms, who explained his brief reference to Africa by saying that the tribes there lacked all characteristics of ‘orderly government’ such as ‘religious beliefs, good manners, law and order, and the organisation of settled life directed by sound policy’.⁶³ Al-Bakrī’s pejorative description of Bretons and Galicians stands out in contrast to his even-handed treatment of Africa.

In this context, al-Bakrī’s discussion of the Bretons should be seen as commentary on the relationship between the rulers of al-Andalus and the Christian kings of northern Spain. This was not the only function Bretons perform in the geography. Al-Bakrī follows his first reference to Bretons immediately with the somewhat puzzling observation that ‘Bretons, Galicians and Basques served as the troops of Titus in Syria, when he went to Jerusalem’.⁶⁴ This forms the entirety of his Breton material. Hermes interprets this as further evidence for al-Bakrī creating equivalence between Bretons and Galicians.⁶⁵ Their joint participation in the destruction of the Temple of the Mount, one of the holiest sites in Islam, confirms al-Bakrī’s description of their barbarity and dangerousness.

The importance of Jerusalem to Islam is clear. Muslim scholars have traditionally identified the Farthest Sanctuary where, in the Qu’rānic sūra al-Isrā, Muḥammad travelled through heaven and hell, with the al-Aqṣā Mosque on Temple Mount. Muḥammad’s followers initially prayed in the direction of Jerusalem, only later changing to facing the Ka’ba in Mecca.⁶⁶ Many of the *hadiths* concerning the Temple Mount identify the Jewish temple with the al-Aqṣā Mosque,

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁶⁴ al-Bakrī, p. 23.

⁶⁵ Hermes, *The [European] Other*, p. 66.

⁶⁶ *The Qur’ān* 2.142–52 (transl. A. J. Droge, *The Qur’ān: A New Annotated Translation* (Sheffield, 2013), pp. 15–16).

tracing the Mosque back to Adam and declaring that ‘Solomon renovated al-Aqṣā Mosque’.⁶⁷

But Titus’ sack of the Temple in 70 was interpreted in a variety of different ways by Muslim scholars of the period. In the Qur’ān (17.7), God speaks to the Jews, saying, ‘If you do good, you do good for yourselves; and if you do evil, [it is likewise] to yourselves ... [We raised against you servants of Ours] to cause you distress and to enter the Temple, as they entered it the first time, and to destroy completely what they had conquered’.⁶⁸ This is often interpreted as a reference to events of the year 70 and could easily be read as an indication that Titus had been doing God’s work. The tenth-century Iraqi historian al-Ṭabarī, whose *History of the Prophets and Kings* was the most influential universal chronicle of the period, presents Titus as avenging Jesus, ‘Titus destroyed [the Temple] and slew numerous Israelites in his wrath over the fate of Christ’.⁶⁹

If the direct significance of al-Bakrī’s reference to Titus is a little ambiguous, the line does serve to bring his narrative within the wider history of the world and link it to the ancient past. Al-Bakrī centres his al-Andalus within a much older era, attributing its administrative zones to the Emperor Constantine and discussing the Greek etymologies of Hispania.⁷⁰ Al-Bakrī refers to stories of Seville being founded by Julius Caesar and Octavian.⁷¹ In his great paean of praise to his native land he refers to the relics of antiquity present within the Peninsula. Al-Andalus ‘contains distinguished ruins of the Greeks, masters of knowledge and bearers of philosophy. Among the kings who raised the old buildings in Spain was Hercules. To him was dedicated the monument of the temple on the island of Cadiz, the

⁶⁷ A. El-Awaisi, *Jerusalem in Islamic History and Spirituality* (Dunblane, 1997), p. 14.

⁶⁸ *The Qur’ān* 17.7 (transl. A. J. Droge, pp. 175–6).

⁶⁹ al-Ṭabarī, *History of the Prophets and Kings* (ed. M. Perlman, *The History of al-Ṭabarī Vol. 4: The Ancient Kingdoms* (Albany, 1987), p. 126).

⁷⁰ al-Bakrī, pp. 16–17.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

temple of Galicia and also the temple of Tarragona, which has no comparison'.⁷²

Al-Bakrī was one of a number of eleventh- and twelfth-century writers who celebrated al-Andalus in reaction to the traditional cultural supremacy of the East.⁷³ In his discussion of the ancient past, al-Bakrī positioned Spain within the same sort of antique narratives as Syria and Iran.⁷⁴ By inserting Galicians, Basques and Bretons into the story of Titus' sack of Jerusalem, al-Bakrī gave al-Andalus and its concerns a much wider significance, right at the heart of the Islamic understanding of history.

Much work in the past has centred on the material evidence for contact and interest between al-Andalus and the Christian world. It is always assumed that carried with the physical items that are preserved were ideas and perspectives. In this discussion of a comparatively short passage within al-Bakrī, I have tried to identify an example of one of those ideas and the means of its transmission. But the concept did not remain static. Al-Bakrī adapted and used it imaginatively to serve his message, one embedded within his own context. These ideas did not just travel, they were used in a manner which suggests a much greater comprehension than simple copying. Leaving the dangers of obscure waters for the safety of solid land, this paper has sought to demonstrate that someone very far away from Brittany could nonetheless be very interested in it indeed, even if he only saw it across a dark sea, dimly.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁷³ Hermes, *The [European] Other*, p. 62.

⁷⁴ For an eastern example, see H. Yücesoy, 'Ancient Imperial Heritage and Islamic Universal Historiography: al-Dīnawarī's Secular Perspective', *Journal of Global History* 2 (2007), 135–55.

Anglo-Saxon Writs: Aspects of their language, form and function

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A corpus of around 120 writs survives from pre-Conquest England, the majority from the eleventh century and issued at the behest of Edward the Confessor.¹ These documents, cast in the vernacular, took the form of a concise letter in which the king or another figure gave an announcement, typically regarding land, legal privileges or administrative affairs. Some writs sought resolution to local disputes and illuminate a corner of the complex world of Anglo-Saxon litigation.² As historical evidence, the corpus of writs demonstrates how the royal ‘centre’ attempted to communicate with the localities, and how that centre distributed its complex constellations of tenurial, legal and economic privileges.³ Moreover, the documents show how royal power was integrated with local society and regional political

¹ The corpus was edited by Florence Harmer in an edition that formed the culmination of a series of volumes of vernacular documents; see F. E. Harmer, *Anglo-Saxon Writs*, 2nd ed. (Stamford, 1989), and S. D. Keynes, ‘Introduction’, in *Select English Historical Documents of the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, ed. F. E. Harmer, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 2011), pp. i–v. All subsequent studies of vernacular documents are indebted to the groundbreaking work of these scholars.

² For example, S 1383 (*Sherb* 13), in which Bishop Æthelric sends a message of complaint to the ealdorman Æthelmær and refers to a land dispute in Devon. See Harmer, *Writs*, pp. 269–70, and for the wider context to dispute and its local setting, see A. G. Kennedy, ‘Disputes about *Bocland*: the Forum for their Adjudication’, *ASE* 14 (1985), 175–95, at p. 185.

³ A useful conceptualization of early medieval privileges, immunities and exemptions, drawing principally on Merovingian and Carolingian sources, can be found in B. Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space, Power, Restraint and Privileges of Community in Early Medieval Europe* (Manchester, 1999), pp. 1–23.

structures, offering a glimpse into the functions of the shire courts and the nature of the proceedings conducted there.⁴ Within these documents, we observe the king interacting with archbishops, bishops, abbots, royal priests, shire reeves, earls, thegns and other magnates: not a representative cross-section of Anglo-Saxon society at large, but an important insight into the world of the mid-eleventh-century élite and its regional power brokers. It is the aim of this paper to begin to re-approach these documents in light of more recent developments in Anglo-Saxon legal and diplomatic studies, and to assess the relationship between their distinctive language and their function as instruments of political and legal control.

Our understanding of what Anglo-Saxon writs actually looked like in their original form needs to be carefully considered, since most of the writs that make up the corpus have survived as later transcriptions or occasionally as translations into Latin or Middle English. A small group of seven single-sheet writs, deemed by Harmer, Bishop and Chaplais to be authentic and contemporary with their contents, offers vital clues concerning the nature of these documents in their original form.⁵ Like most other vernacular documents that have survived as original single-sheet *cartae*, these writs are wider than they are tall, and all display evidence of folding at some point in the past. An important study by Susan Thompson has provided a palaeographical survey of forty-nine pre-Conquest vernacular documents ‘presumed by experts to be original’, with the intention of establishing connections and features of consistency

⁴ The importance of the shire court as the setting for the conveyance of writs is emphasized by R. Sharpe, ‘The Use of Writs in Eleventh-century England’, *ASE* 32 (2003), 247–91, at p. 251.

⁵ For this group of writs, spread over five different monastic archives, see Harmer, *Writs*, pp. 117–18, and for life-size reproductions, see T. A. M. Bishop and P. Chaplais, ed., *Facsimiles of English Royal Writs to A.D. 1100, Presented to Vivian Hunter Galbraith* (Oxford, 1957). The group consists of: S 1071 (*Writs* 11), S 1084 (*Writs* 24), S 1088 (*CantCC* 179), S 1105 (*Writs* 55), S 1125 (*Writs* 81), S 1140 (*Writs* 96) and S 1156 (*Writs* 115).

within and between the various genres and typologies of document.⁶ These seven writs were drawn up in an Insular minuscule of the mid-eleventh century, and although none of them can be connected as works of the same scribe, certain common features do emerge. The group displays a striking uniformity in terms of script size, with the height of minims typically standing at 2 mm, and ascenders varying slightly between 3 and 4.5 mm in height.⁷ Thompson remarks that overall these writs ‘exhibit better draftsmanship than most other vernacular documents’, and Bishop and Chaplais also note the ‘well-formed’ and ‘well-proportioned’ scripts of one of the two single-sheet Bury St Edmunds writs and the authentic segment of the Canterbury Christ Church writ. They note certain scribal similarities between them but stop short at the suggestion that they might be the product of the same scribe.⁸

Another striking feature in the case of the single-sheet writs, within the context of this wider corpus of surviving vernacular documents, is the uniformity of the overall size of the document when folded. Although when opened out the parchment size varies from 14 mm to 261 mm in width and 23 mm to 93 mm in depth, Thompson notes that when folded along their creases they each have a measurement of between 17 mm and 23 mm in one direction, and between 28 and 57 mm in the other.⁹ Combined with the evidence of sealing or former sealing, which can be found in all but two of the

⁶ S. D. Thompson, *Anglo-Saxon Vernacular Documents: A Palaeography*, Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies, Occasional Publications 1 (Manchester, 2010), p. 1.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 40, and Bishop and Chaplais, *Facsimiles of English Royal Writs*, plates II and III. Bishop and Chaplais commented on several scribal similarities between one of the Bury St Edmunds writs, S 1071 (*Writs* 11) and the first three lines of S 1088 (*CantCC* 179), which are almost certainly authentic. In addition to their comments, we might note their shared use of gracefully executed initial capitals, strictly vertical ascenders and the dotted *y*.

⁹ Thompson, *Vernacular Documents*, pp. 7 and 38.

original single-sheet writs, there is strong evidence to suppose that the form of these documents reflected a very functional purpose. As such, we can imagine that they were kept folded and secure in a bag during their outward journey to the shire courts, and then unwrapped, unfolded and proclaimed, with the seal providing a visual, symbol-laden source of authentication for the assembled crowd.¹⁰

Taking the corpus of Anglo-Saxon writs as a whole, then, we might turn to consider the distinctive features of the language and lexical register of these documents. Florence Harmer recognized that Anglo-Saxon writs are: ‘highly developed documents ... linked together by similar conventions and similar formulae’.¹¹ Underlying any analysis of these formulae must be an awareness of how writs and the linguistic forms they employ overlap and intersect with other types of vernacular document involved in legal processes, such as wills, letters and dispute agreements. We might think of these texts as together forming a kind of ‘correspondence discourse’—a discourse that was integral to the effective functioning, not just of the eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon royal court, but also the world of non-royal ecclesiastical and lay élites.¹²

The most homogenous of the conventions within Anglo-Saxon writs is found in the protocol or opening clause: all the vernacular

¹⁰ The two single-sheet Bury St Edmunds writs, S 1071 (*Writs* 11) and S 1084 (*Writs* 24) have been trimmed, probably in the post-medieval period, cutting through the ascenders and descenders of the script and therefore obliterating possible evidence of wrapping ties or former sealing.

¹¹ Harmer, *Writs*, p. 61.

¹² A small but crucially important group of writs were issued at the behest of non-royal individuals, preserved across five different archives. These are: S 1404 (*Abing* 143); S 1427 (*Bath* 25); S 1386 (*CantCC* 150); S 1383 (*Sherb* 13) and S 1243 (*North* 21). For the wider historical significance of this type of ‘private’ charter, see G. Declercq, ‘Between Legal Action and Performance: The *Firmitio* of Charters in the Early Middle Ages’, in *Medieval Legal Process: Physical, Spoken and Written Performance in the Middle Ages*, ed. M. Mostert and P. S. Barnwell (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 55–73, at pp. 55–6.

royal writs, with just two exceptions, employ the verb *gretan* ('to greet' or 'speak to') in the third person.¹³ The greeting is usually modified by an adverb indicating affection or respect, typically *freondlice* ('friendly') or *eadmodlice* ('humbly'). Els Schröder has highlighted the emergence of a distinct language of 'friendship and favour' in the context of late Anglo-Saxon élite culture, and, drawing on sources from *c.* 900 to the end of King Æthelred II's reign, emphasizes the 'centrality of friendship within a nexus of formal and informal power'.¹⁴ Indeed, a significant number of wills and, to a lesser extent, royal diplomas, also contain direct references to different modes of 'friendship'—but arguably it is within the writ protocol that this language becomes much more standardized and formalized. The words *freondlice*, *eadmodlice* and their orthographic variants appear consistently across the corpus of Anglo-Saxon writs, with the exception of just five writs of the Confessor. We might see this highly uniform protocol, then, as a distinct type of address that reflected how the royal court customarily greeted meetings of the shire court, part of a discourse that had evolved in the course of the tenth century.¹⁵

The writs then conventionally shift their voice to the first person, during the delineation of the specific notification or instruction, usually employing a variant of *ic cyðe eow þæt* ('I make it known to you that'). Both the third-person use of *gret* and the use of the verb *cyðan* in the first person are also a prominent feature of vernacular wills, particularly multi-gift wills directed to the king, and *cyðan* appears in

¹³ Harmer, *Writs*, pp. 61–73.

¹⁴ E. Schröder, 'Friendship and Favour in Late Anglo-Saxon Élite Culture' (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Univ. of York, 2012), p. 121.

¹⁵ See III Edgar 5:1 and II Cnut 18, in *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, ed. F. Liebermann, 3 vols. (Halle, 1903–16), I, pp. 202–3 and 320–1, for evidence of the frequency of shire court meetings, which seems to have been at least twice yearly by convention. For further discussion, see Sharpe, 'The Use of Writs', p. 251, and A. Williams, *The World Before Domesday: The English Aristocracy 900–1066* (London, 2008), p. 55.

the opening of the early tenth-century Fonthill Letter, directed by Ealdorman Ordlafe to the king and detailing the intricacies of a local dispute.¹⁶ In her discussion of the social setting of Anglo-Saxon wills, Linda Tollerton has gone as far as to posit that conventions such as these used in writs, which dealt with the weighty issue of land and its ownership, formed the basis of these similar conventions and formulae found in wills.¹⁷ Intersection and mutual influence within and between these different types of vernacular discourse certainly merits further critical discussion.

These opening clauses are typically followed by the stipulations of the writ, termed by Harmer the ‘main announcement’ clause, and framed by the use of various formulaic word-pairs.¹⁸ These word-pairs are often but not always alliterative, and occur across the corpus of writs regardless of the individual writ’s intended recipient, its specific regional audience and its archival background. Alliterative devices like those found in writs are a persistent feature of a variety of Latin and Old English legal and diplomatic texts from the pre-Conquest period, prevalent again in wills, within certain groups of charters such as the so-called ‘alliterative’ charters of the 940s and 950s,¹⁹ and in texts such as *Swerian*, a compilation of oath-formulae

¹⁶ For the Fonthill Letter, S 1445 (*CantCC* 104), see M. Gretsch, ‘The Language of the “Fonthill Letter”’, *ASE* 23 (1994), 57–102, at p. 64, and S. D. Keynes, ‘The Fonthill Letter’, in *Words, Texts and Manuscripts: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Culture presented to Helmut Gneuss on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. M. Korhammer, with K. Reichl and H. Sauer (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 53–97.

¹⁷ L. Tollerton, *Wills and Will-Making in Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, 2011), pp. 23 and 26.

¹⁸ Harmer, *Writs*, pp. 63–5.

¹⁹ See S. D. Keynes, ‘Church Councils, Royal Assemblies and Anglo-Saxon Royal Diplomas’, in *Kingship, Legislation and Power in Anglo-Saxon England*, Publications of the Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies 13, ed. G. R. Owen-Crocker and B. W. Schneider (Woodbridge, 2013), pp. 17–182, at p. 76.

most likely used during acts of commendation.²⁰ Alliteration was a central principle of Old English poetry, and like such poetry, alliteration when found in these legalistic texts implies a context in which public performance and oral declamation were crucial to how the document was intended to function.

Indeed, these word-pairs have the effect of structuring the writ's main announcement clause in a highly distinctive way. They are often used to emphasize the legal privilege's totality and continuity, both spatially and temporally. The privileges are to be maintained: *inne tid and ut of tid* ('in festive season and outside it') and across the urban and rural landscape: *on stræte and of stræte* ('on street and off street') and *on made and on watere* ('in meadow and in water'). The clauses framing the main announcement are simply structured and highly perspicuous, with a strong tendency towards parataxis, giving the images described an equally prominent weight and significance.

The complex array of specific legal privileges found within writs sometimes took the form of alliterative word-pairs, most commonly *sake and soke* and *toll and team*, terms that are embedded elsewhere in Anglo-Saxon charters and other documents.²¹ References to these legal concepts also abound in Domesday Book, and the phrases continue to appear in newly issued charters until just after the middle of the twelfth century, occurring afterwards only in enrolments of older charters.²² Their association with the various other specifically judicial terms indicates, according to David Roffe, that *sake and soke*

²⁰ For the wider context to oath formulae in relation to commendation, see S. Baxter, *The Earls of Mercia: Lordship and Power in Late Anglo-Saxon England*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford, 2007), p. 204.

²¹ See N. P. Hurnard, 'The Anglo-Norman Franchises', *EHR* 64 (1949), 289–323, and L. Oliver, 'Legal Documentation and the Practice of English Law', in *The Cambridge History of Early Medieval English Literature*, ed. C. A. Lees (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 499–529, at p. 519.

²² B. O'Brien, 'Translating Technical Terms in Law-Codes from Alfred to the Angevins', in *Conceptualizing Multilingualism in England, c. 800–1250*, ed. E. Tyler (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 57–76, at p. 74.

and *toll and team* were concerned principally with the rights and profits of the processes of law and the legal sale of goods within a defined territory.²³ More recent scholarship has emphasized the economic dimension of these rights, with Stephen Baxter arguing that royal grants of *sake and soke* did not license lords to hold private courts as such, but empowered the recipients of this privilege to collect the profits of justice administered through royal courts, under the auspices (or, indeed, coercion) of royal officials.²⁴ As Barbara Rosenwein notes, whilst on the face of it early medieval immunities appear to relinquish central power to local groups, in fact such immunities were flexible tools that allowed kings to articulate authority and manipulate the use and reorganization of land.²⁵

The phrase *sake and soke* appears for the first time in a mid-tenth-century charter of King Eadwig (S 659, *North* 2), concerning a grant of land within the Danelaw, which announces that Archbishop Oscytel is to receive the privilege over a cluster of estates focused around the central manor of Southwell: *Dis sint ðam tunes ðe birað into Sudpellan mid sacce and mid sacne*—the dependencies are then listed.²⁶ In his recent edition of the charter, David Woodman has made the intriguing suggestion that the term *sake and soke* actually emerged, specifically at this time, as a result of Archbishop Oscytel's desire to augment the tenurial rights of the York archbishopric—and hence that it was a conscious innovation, rather than the invocation of

²³ D. Roffe, 'From Thegnage to Barony: Sake and Soke, Title and Tenants-in-chief', *ANS* 12 (1990), 157–76, at p. 157.

²⁴ S. Baxter, 'Lordship and Justice in Late Anglo-Saxon England: the Judicial Functions of Soke and Commendation Revisited', in *Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald*, ed. S. Baxter, C. Karkov, J. L. Nelson and D. Pelteret (Farnham, 2009), pp. 383–419, at pp. 384–5.

²⁵ Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space*, p. 6.

²⁶ S 659, *North* 2, in *Charters of Northern Houses*, ed. D. A. Woodman, Anglo-Saxon Charters 16 (Oxford, 2012), pp. 97–110: 'These are the villages which belong to Southwell with sake and with soke' (transl. D. Whitelock, *English Historical Documents c. 500–1042*, 2nd ed. (London, 1979), pp. 556–7).

some, perhaps more archaic, legal right.²⁷ This is an intriguing theory and, in the absence of evidence for an Anglo-Saxon formulary, provides a useful paradigm for understanding how and why such legal formulae developed.

In contrast, Florence Harmer perceived the alliterative quality of these linked phrases and word-pairs to be evidence of their deep antiquity, positing that ‘it is entirely probable that before the laws were committed to writing, legal forms were arranged for remembrance among the Germanic peoples in rhythmical and alliterative patterns’.²⁸ But recent work on word-pairs in Old English, summarized by Matthias Ammon in his semantic study of vernacular pledges and agreements, indicates that alliterative devices like these increase over time in written law, and may thus be deliberate and functional rather than a reflection of the conservatism of legal discourse—a point which, in turn, gives added weight to Woodman’s interpretation of S 659 (*North* 2).²⁹

Within writs, the rhetorical formulae and word-pairs that frame the main announcement clause occur most frequently in notifications of grants that deal with the weighty issue of land and legal privileges for individual religious communities and monastic foundations. They occur, with similar frequency, in writs that announce a royal grant of land and legal privileges to individual ecclesiasts, and within the small but important group of writs that give permission for religious

²⁷ Woodman, *Charters of Northern Houses*, pp. 97–110.

²⁸ Harmer, *Writs*, p. 87.

²⁹ M. Ammon, ‘Pledges and Agreements in Old English: A Semantic Field Study’ (unpubl. PhD dissertation, Cambridge Univ., 2010), p. 60. A similar point has been made in relation to medieval Scandinavian legal documentary culture: see S. Brink, ‘Oral Fragments in the Earliest Old Swedish Laws?’ in *Medieval Legal Process: Physical, Spoken and Written Performance in the Middle Ages*, ed. M. Mostert and P. S. Barnwell (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 147–56, at pp. 147–8.

communities to draw up their own diploma or *priuilegium*.³⁰ They also appear in the few writs that grant land and privileges to laymen, probably the fossil record of a much later, now lost, corpus of such records.³¹

Equally worthy of note are those writs in which no such formulae are found. These tend to be writs that detail the nature of long-running disputes, or provide individual testimonies concerning legal quarrels of various kinds. These writs have a strong personal voice: for example, the aforementioned writ of Bishop Æthelric (S 1383, *Sherb* 13), in which the bishop complains that his *scypgesceote*, probably a local tax levied for the supply of ships, is being evaded in various locales in his shire. This sub-group of writs has a more pragmatic, active and urgent tone, sometimes involving appeals for political action in on-going and unresolved disagreements.

Bruce O'Brien has argued that technical legal terms are a 'conservative part of a language', and that 'where poets lead, courts have to be dragged'.³² Whilst there is, of course, a certain truth to this, we must consider too the ways in which rhetorical formulae and legal word-pairs actually functioned in their contemporary context and political setting. In the case of writs, we must consider such formulae—alongside the physicality of the documents themselves in their contemporary single-sheet form—and interrogate the rôles they may have played within their intended social and political settings.

Taking the small but precious evidence of contemporary single-sheet writs with their functional script and compact size alongside the linguistic register of the corpus as a whole, a strong case can be made

³⁰ The importance of this group, consisting of: S 1105 (*Writs* 55), S 1067 (*North* 13) and S 1115 (*Wells* 37), has been emphasized by Harmer, *Writs*, pp. 34–41, and, more recently, Keynes, 'Church Councils', p. 45.

³¹ See, for example, S 1063 (*Writs* 1) in which King Edward grants his housecarl Urk littoral lands and legal privileges near Abbotsbury. The lack of immediate monastic interest in such grants must have militated against the preservation and ultimate survival of this type of document.

³² O'Brien, 'Translating Technical Terms', p. 60.

that the rhetorical formulae of writs functioned in a very deliberate way. Their effect was to emphasise and clearly mark notifications of dispositive grants and other privileges during the proceedings of the Anglo-Saxon shire court. The consistency of the formulae across the corpus implies deliberate usage, with the aim of ensuring that grants of legal and tenorial privilege could be understood by both literate and non-literate ranks of the shire court. Any attempt to reconstruct the obscure proceedings of the pre-Norman shire court in the eleventh century should place writs and their formulae centre stage, as an integral part of the legal culture of late tenth- and eleventh-century England.

‘Ef eigi kæmi troll milli húss ok heima’: Monstrousness and the Communication of Power in *Sverris saga*

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Although scholars have not analysed it as an outlaw narrative or compared it directly to the Icelandic outlaw sagas,¹ *Sverris saga* does depict Sverrir Sigurðarson’s early career as the leader of a group of outlaws called the Birkibeinar, who are outlawed because of their political opposition to Magnús Erlingsson, the reigning king of Norway. These initial episodes in *Sverris saga* have parallels in other outlaw narratives, but differ in that Sverrir survives his outlawry, unlike the Icelandic outlaws, and goes on to claim the Norwegian throne. Consequently, Sverrir is exceptional amongst saga outlaws in that he is afforded significant opportunity to come to terms with his outlaw past. Furthermore, Sverrir undergoes certain experiences at both extremes of his society’s framework—from the societal exclusion of outlawry to the central institution of kingship—which naturally contrasts with the permanently marginalized experiences of the Icelandic outlaws.

¹ The Icelandic outlaw sagas are typically identified as *Gísla saga Súrssonar*, *Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar*, and *Harðar saga Grímkelssonar eða Hólmverja saga*, as indicated by recent collections choosing to group them under the same category (see *The Complete Sagas of Icelanders, Including 49 Tales*, 5 vols., ed. Viðar Hreinsson (Reykjavík, 1997), II; *Three Icelandic Outlaw Sagas: The Saga of Gísli, The Saga of Grettir, The Saga of Hord*, ed. and transl. A. Faulkes (London, 2004)). There is a strong case to be made for considering other *Íslendingasögur*, such as *Fóstbræðra saga*, alongside this established trilogy, but for the purposes of this article the phrase ‘Icelandic outlaw sagas’ refers primarily to *Gísla saga*, *Grettis saga* and *Harðar saga*.

In this regard, the expressions of monstrousness used of Sverrir in the saga are of particular interest, given how they affect the ways in which power is communicated within the saga. The outlaws in the Icelandic sagas are often compared to monsters during their outlawry,² as is Sverrir, but the same language continues to be used of Sverrir when he is no longer an outlaw, which strongly alters its effects. There has been little scholarship on the elements of monstrousness in *Sverris saga*; Terry Gunnell's research into the folklore surrounding the Icelandic monster Grýla, discussed below, is the most direct contribution, but covers only one aspect of the topic. This absence may be because monstrousness is only one aspect of the multifaceted text that is *Sverris saga*; Sverrir, as king of Norway, becomes less monstrous by the latter stages of the narrative, whereas *Grettis saga*, for instance, dominates analysis of monsters in the Icelandic outlaw sagas because its protagonist is explicitly troll-like throughout and its supernatural scenes are at the forefront of its narrative.³ *Sverris saga* also often treats elements of monstrousness

² For discussions of inhumanness and monstrousness in the Icelandic outlaw sagas, particularly in reference to *Grettis saga*, see E. R. Barraclough, 'Inside Outlawry in *Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar* and *Gísla saga Súrssonar*: Landscape in the Outlaw Sagas', *SS* 82:4 (2010), 365–88; R. L. Harris, 'The Deaths of Grettir and Grendel: A New Parallel', *Scripta Islandica* 24 (1973), 25–53; J. Hawes, 'The Monstrosity of Heroism: Grettir Ásmundarson as an Outsider', *SS* 80:1 (2008), 19–50; A. Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the Beowulf-Manuscript* (Toronto, 1995), pp. 140–68.

³ The various monstrous epithets used to describe Grettir include *óvættir* ('evil being'), *margýgjuson* ('son of a sea-ogress'), *dólgr* ('devil'), *vágestr* ('woe-stranger'), *heljarmaðr* ('man of hellish strength'), and, on more than one occasion, *troll* (*Gret*, chs. 38, 39, 52, 58, 59, 57 and 64, pp. 130, 133, 167, 187, 192, 184 and 211). Elizabeth Ashman Rowe further notes that the 'conflict' section of *Grettis saga*—in other words, Grettir's episodic wanderings, during which he encounters the supernatural beings of the narratives, and is himself often described as a monster—takes up 'seventy-eight percent of the saga and contains no less [*sic*] than five interlaced sub-plots' (E. A. Rowe, 'Generic

with more humour than the Icelandic outlaw sagas do,⁴ so it may be that recent scholarship has overlooked the saga's approach in favour of more serious considerations of monstrousness. Nevertheless, such monstrousness is still an important characteristic of *Sverris saga*, and in particular of its first section. This is indicated as early as the saga's preface,⁵ which refers to the first section of the narrative, covering Sverrir's outlawry, as *Grýla*.⁶ As aforementioned, Grýla is the name of an Icelandic giantess, whose name appears in many medieval contexts that suggest the name had especially wild, monstrous connotations

Hybrids: Norwegian "Family" Sagas and Icelandic "Mythic-Heroic" Sagas', *SS* 65:4 (1993), 539–54, at p. 542).

⁴ See R. L. Harris, 'Phraseological Approaches to the Composition of *Sverris Saga*', *Concordance to the Proverbs and Proverbial Materials in the Old Icelandic Sagas* 10 (2008),

http://www.usask.ca/english/icelanders/applic_Sverrissagapaper1.html (viewed 2 April, 2015).

⁵ All the manuscripts that contain a full-length version of *Sverris saga* include a preface to the saga (Þorleifur Hauksson, ed., *Sverris saga*, Íslenzk fornrit 30 (Reykjavík, 2007), p. liii), but there are two versions of the preface: the more common shorter preface, which appears in the manuscripts AM 327 4to, Eirspennill and Skálholtsbók yngsta, and a longer variation that only appears in the Flateyjarbók version of the saga.

⁶ The exact length of the *Grýla*-section of *Sverris saga*, written by Abbot Karl Jónsson, is unclear; Theodore Andersson notes that 'the exact parameters of "Grýla" have led to one of the most inconclusive debates in all of kings' saga studies' (T. M. Andersson, 'Kings' Sagas (*Konungasögur*)', in *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature: A Critical Guide*, ed. C. J. Clover and J. Lindow (Toronto, 2005), pp. 197–238, at p. 215). *Grýla* begins with the first chapter of the saga, but there have been many different thresholds suggested for where this section ends, including chs. 17, 31, 39, 40, 43, 100 and 109 (L. Holm-Olsen, *Studier i Sverris saga* (Oslo, 1953), pp. 30–2; Þorleifur Hauksson, ed., *Sverris saga*, p. lvii). Nevertheless, even the earliest of these estimates includes the period that is most characteristic of 'outlawry' in *Sverris saga*: namely, the point at which Sverrir initially takes up the leadership of the Birkibeinar up to the beginning of his direct skirmishes against Magnús and Erlingr (*Svrs*, chs. 9–17, pp. 14–30).

for the writers of the sagas.⁷ These characteristics are reflected in the reasoning given by the saga's longer preface for adopting this name: *Margir menn töluðu, at þá efnadist nokkurr ótti eðr hræðsla sakeir mikils stríðs ok bardaga, en mundi skjótt niðr falla ok at alls engu verða.*⁸ Gunnell notes the similarity between these sudden bouts of *ótti eðr hræðsla* and the predatory attacks of Grýla, and argues that 'comparisons might ... be made between Sverrir's early life as a semi-outlaw figure and that of Grýla in the mountains':⁹

For the common people of the settlements of Norway, and almost certainly for their children, Sverrir must have commonly been seen as an ever threatening spirit that could appear in human form anywhere, at any time, to make demands of food and shelter. One can see how Sverrir's name and that of the travelling, skin-clad 'Grýla' ... might even have become synonymous.¹⁰

⁷ For a comprehensive account of instances of Grýla in the sagas, as well as Grýla-parallels across the North Atlantic islands, see T. Gunnell, 'Grýla, Grýlur, "Gröleks" and Skeklers: Medieval Disguise Traditions in the North Atlantic?', *Arv: Nordic Yearbook of Folklore* 57 (2001), 33–54; T. Gunnell, *The Origins of Drama in Scandinavia* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 160–79.

⁸ *Flat* III, preface, p. 142: 'Many people believed that they would have to prepare for a certain fear or dread caused by great strife and large battles, but that this would swiftly fall away and vanish completely'. The shorter preface's explanation for the naming—*svá sem á liðr bókina vex hans styrker, ok segir sá inn sami styrker fyrir ina meira bluti* (*Svrs*, preface, p. 3: 'As the book progresses, so his [Sverrir's] strength grows, and the larger part of the saga tells of that same strength')—is rather vague and does not offer as specific a connection between the clearly monstrous Grýla and Sverrir. Translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

⁹ Gunnell, *Origins of Drama*, p. 178, n. 425.

¹⁰ Gunnell, 'Grýla', p. 47.

The significance of the *Gryla*-section is emphasized by the preface's claim that *yfir sat sjálfr Sverrir konungr ok réð fyrir hvað rita skyldi; er sú frásagn eigi langt fram komin*.¹¹ Richard Harris, however, has rightly argued that the monstrous aspects of *Sverris saga* run deeper than the saga's naming of the *Gryla*-section, because the saga's many idiomatic allusions are similarly themed around fear and Otherness: 'The persistent voice of *Sverris saga* ... reinforced by the tone of its phraseology, seems to revel in the fear which the *Gryla*-like intruder and his army struck among the Norwegians'.¹² It is this revelling, this often comedic embrace of accusations of monstrousness, that differentiates Sverrir and his saga from the more serious accusations made in the Icelandic outlaw sagas. This is evident in the two most prominent expressions of monstrousness in *Sverris saga*: the idiom *ef eigi kæmi troll milli húss ok heima*,¹³ used of Sverrir when he is an outlaw, and a later variation on the same idiom, used by Sverrir, arguably of himself, when he is king. The imagery of the idiom is that of the intrusive Other, the monstrous troll, entering the space between the safe places of the farmhouse and its outbuildings, thereby endangering that intermediary space and the familiar domestic spheres nearby. It is difficult to be certain how well known the idiom *troll milli húss ok heima* was across medieval Scandinavia, and consequently to determine how the subject of such an accusation would have critically considered its metaphorical supernatural aspects. The deliberate paralleling of this idiom at the saga's conclusion, however, creates a framework reaching back to Sverrir's outlawry from his position as king, which demonstrates the significance of the idiom within the narrative of *Sverris saga*.

¹¹ *Svrs*, preface, p. 3: 'King Sverrir himself sat over [the writing] and decided what should be written; that story has not come from far off [i.e. is not far-fetched]'.
¹² Harris, 'Phraseological Approaches'.

¹³ *Svrs*, ch. 15, p. 26: 'If no troll came between outhouse and home'.

It is important to be cautious as to how seriously one treats the intentions of a speaker using such idiomatic language to refer to someone else as a troll, but it is worth considering why *Sverris saga* creates this idiomatic parallel and teasing out how both episodes play with the idea of monstrosity for humorous effect. In the first instance, Sverrir is depicted as a dangerous Other in possession of supernatural power, as is the typical motivation behind most expressions of monstrosity, but Sverrir willingly plays up to this depiction by acting in a subversive, monstrous fashion. Sverrir's own allusion to the idiom later in the saga differs in context and effect, but the situation is also one of Sverrir attempting to live up to his monstrous reputation, albeit with considerably less success. This article focuses on these episodes in *Sverris saga*, with reference to similar language in the Icelandic outlaw sagas *Harðar saga* and *Grettis saga*, to analyse how *Sverris saga*'s more playful approach to monstrosity both reflects and subverts how such language communicates power, an essential component of any system of control. It first discusses recent research into the psychological phenomenon of dehumanization to illustrate how comparisons to monsters obfuscate normative notions of power when used of the societally disempowered, and then considers how Sverrir's change in societal context from outlaw to king alters the effects of such comparisons.

MONSTROUS OUTLAWS: DEHUMANIZATION AND SUPERHUMANIZATION

In order to understand how expressions of monstrosity function and to comprehend the dehumanizing effects of such language when it is used of outlaws, it is essential to identify the various ways through which dehumanizing effects are produced. Dehumanization

is ‘the complete denegation of humanness to others’,¹⁴ and is distinct from such related phenomena as infrahumanization (through which human qualities are not completely denied to external groups or individuals, but are simply more readily attributed to members of one’s own community) by how fully it denies humanness to others. Both phenomena seek to contrast levels of humanness as a means of differentiating various groups, but the effect that infrahumanizing language has on power relations is necessarily more relative than the effect dehumanization has. Although the effects of infrahumanizing language may differ in severity, infrahumanization nevertheless deals with groups in terms of exactly *how* human they are perceived to be. Dehumanization, on the other hand, is absolute in how it structures power: it restricts humanness exclusively to one group, and thereby denies its victims any of the forms of normative power or agency that would be extended to humans.

There are two main types of dehumanization: subhumanization and superhumanization. Most scholarship has focused on different kinds of subhumanization, such as mechanistic dehumanization, which represents others as artificial, non-human constructions, and animalistic dehumanization, which includes representations of individuals or groups as non-human animals.¹⁵ Nick Haslam defines these terms as follows: ‘Denying uniquely human attributes to others represents them as animal-like, and denying human nature to others represents them as objects or automata’.¹⁶ Both forms of subhumanization function in the same way: they compare a group to something considered less than human in order to portray them as

¹⁴ S. Demoulin, V. Saroglou, and M. Van Pachterbeke, ‘Infra-Humanizing Others, Supra-Humanizing Gods: The Emotional Hierarchy’, *Social Cognition* 26 (2008), 235–47, at p. 235.

¹⁵ A. Waytz, K. M. Hoffman and S. Trawalter, ‘A Superhumanization Bias in Whites’ Perceptions of Blacks’, *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 8 (2014), 1–8, at p. 1.

¹⁶ N. Haslam, ‘Dehumanization: An Integrative Review’, *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 10:3 (2006), 252–64, at p. 252.

undeserving of normal human privileges. An example of subhumanizing language in *Sverris saga* is when Sverrir and the Birkibeinar are compared to animals during their passage through Járnberraland on their exhausting march through the forests of Norway: *Mátti svá at kveða at þann mann fyndi eigi er skyn kynni á konungsmönnum eða vissi hvárt þat váru menn eða dýr.*¹⁷ This confusion is partially at the expense of the Járnberralanders—their ignorance of the king–retainer relationship, and the fact that they are said to have been *þá enn heiðit*,¹⁸ are evidently intended to be examples of their backwardness—but it also makes clear that the distress Sverrir and his men endure in the forests physically marks their bodies enough to significantly affect perceptions of their humanness. Without the privileges and protections afforded by normative society, Sverrir and the Birkibeinar are not just reduced to a state below their desired societal standing, but also find that the definite boundaries of their humanity become blurred.

The key element here is the effect of subhumanizing language on the perception of Sverrir’s power, as he and the Birkibeinar are clearly portrayed as weak and pathetic. Were this kind of language to be used by a more dangerous opponent than the provincial Járnberralanders, it is not difficult to imagine it being used to delegitimize Sverrir’s claim to the throne and to justify violence against him, given that the consequences of being dehumanized are invariably negative and usually violent.¹⁹ With subhumanization, the power relation is readily apparent: the speaker places themselves in a position of power over

¹⁷ *Svrs*, ch. 12, p. 21: ‘It might so be said that no one could be found there who had knowledge of “king’s-men”, or who knew whether they [Sverrir’s men] were men or animals’.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, ch. 12, p. 20: ‘[They were] still heathen at the time’.

¹⁹ See Haslam, ‘Dehumanization’, pp. 254–5; A. C. Moller, and E. L. Deci, ‘Interpersonal Control, Dehumanization, and Violence: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective’, *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 13:1 (2010), 41–53, at pp. 43–4.

the subject, using the language of known entities that are familiarly perceived to be less than human.

Subhumanizing language is less effective, however, when its subject cannot be easily portrayed in such familiar terms. In this respect, it is notable that outlaws in the sagas are not generally represented in subhumanizing terms, but are instead most often described through overtly superhumanizing language, which instead uses monsters for its comparisons. This is likely because outlaws and monsters occupy the same literary and topographical spaces of marginal, intermediary locations. Outlaws survive on the fringes of normative society, inhabiting the unfamiliar woods and wildernesses of the surrounding landscape, but they are still reliant to some extent on their non-outlawed kin who live within that society. Gísli, for example, receives help from his wife Auðr, who memorably rejects the attempts at bribery by Gísli's enemy Eyjolfr by taking up the bag of silver he offers her and bloodying his nose with it.²⁰ Similarly, when Grettir tells his family that *eigi mun ek þat lengr til lífs mér vinna ... at vera einn saman*,²¹ Grettir's brother Illugi offers him support by accompanying him in his outlawry. Furthermore, because an outlaw's identity and agency is defined by his legal status (or lack thereof) in relation to the mainstream society of his geographical and socio-political context, it is inaccurate to suggest that outlaws can ever be completely detached from that society. Outlaws inhabit the intermediary spaces between the normative and the Other, interacting with both spheres without ever being contained satisfactorily within either one, and they therefore represent some level of danger to the normative sphere. Their survival represents a challenge to the status quo, a reminder that the presence of the Other is not so easily separated from human civilization.

²⁰ *Gísl*, ch. 32, pp. 100–1.

²¹ *Gret*, ch. 69, p. 222: 'I shall no longer have any use from my life ... if I am to be alone'.

Monsters function in a similar way. Dana Oswald notes that ‘a monster is ... an outlier within its race or “kind”, whether that kin-group is human or animal. The monster is always read against the bodies of those who are not monstrous—the so-called “normal” humans or “normal” animals’.²² Trolls, like outlaws, also inhabit the marginal wildernesses outside of society’s borders. Although the intermediary nature of the locations in which these trolls exist is sometimes less apparent—the trolls that haunt the farm at Sandhaugr in *Grettis saga*, for example, are generally detached from human society, apart from their attacks against the farm’s inhabitants²³—most trolls in the Icelandic outlaw sagas are connected to normative society through their former kinship ties, in much the same way as these outlaws are. After Grettir kills the troll Kárr, for instance, he is reprimanded by Kárr’s son Þorfinnr, who only forgives Grettir after he is given Kárr’s treasure, which Grettir had retrieved, as a form of blood-money: *Fyrir því at ek veit, at þat fé er illa komit, er fólgit er í jörðu eða í hauga borit, þá mun ek ekki gefa þér hér skuld fyrir, með því at þú færðir mér.*²⁴ The remark in *Harðar saga* that the once-human *draugr* Sóti var *mikit troll í lífinu, en hálfu meira, síðan hann var dauðr,*²⁵ further indicates that trollishness is best thought of as a malleable state between the normative and the Other, rather than as a definite categorical classification.

Given the liminal nature of both outlaws and monsters, it is unsurprising that outlaws in the sagas are more frequently dehumanized through superhumanizing language than

²² D. M. Oswald, *Monsters, Gender and Sexuality in Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 2.

²³ See *Gret*, chs. 64–6, pp. 209–17.

²⁴ *Gret*, ch. 18, p. 60: ‘Because I know that treasure which is hidden in the ground or buried in mounds is wasted, I will not hold you to a debt for this, especially because you brought it to me’.

²⁵ *Harð*, ch. 14, p. 39: ‘[He] was a great troll in life, but far more so after he died’.

subhumanization. Like monsters, outlaws are unfamiliar because they refuse ‘to participate in the classificatory “order of things” ... [and] resist attempts to include them in any systematic structuration’,²⁶ and superhumanizing language similarly reaches beyond the bounds of familiarity by definition:

Superhumanization [is] the representation of others as possessing mental and physical qualities that are supernatural (transcending the laws of nature), extrasensory (transcending the bounds of normal human perception), and magical (influencing or manipulating the natural world through symbolic or ritualistic means). Thus, superhumanization involves representing others as nonhuman, but not as subhuman animals or objects—superhumanization implies characterisation of others as *beyond* human.²⁷

It is important to make this distinction between subhumanization and superhumanization, not only because the two phenomena deal with separate fields of imagery—the familiar and the unfamiliar—but also because the effect of superhumanization on power relations is distinct from that of subhumanization. Subhumanizing language invariably disempowers its subject in comparison to the speaker, thereby creating a simple power dynamic in which one party clearly has the upper hand. Conversely, the language of monstrousness, as used of the fundamentally disempowered—groups and individuals that, like outlaws, can be easily considered monsters from a normative perspective—looks to empower its subject, but only in such a way as to make that subject appear threatening, dangerous and inherently Other. By using superhumanizing language to further Other an already marginalized subject, thereby depicting that societally

²⁶ J. J. Cohen, ed., *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (Minneapolis, 1996), p. 6.

²⁷ Waytz, Hoffman and Trawalter, ‘Superhumanization Bias’, p. 1.

disempowered subject as simultaneously powerful in a supernatural, monstrous way, the power relation between speaker and subject must become Othered itself. Such a relation can no longer be understood in the normative sense of one side being more or less powerful than the other, or of both sides having equal power. For outlaws, entirely disenfranchised from the power structure of hegemonic society, such language depicts them as powerful only to further Other them.

This Othered form of power relations is evident from the episode in which the idiom *troll milli húss ok heima* makes its first appearance in *Sverris saga*, as the literary context of the episode reflects the subversion of normative expectations. Sverrir—who has already invaded many of his opponents' homesteads in true *Gryla* fashion, and has stolen several ships²⁸—spares a fleet of merchant-ships on the basis that he refuses to attack merchants, but the saga then uses mercantile imagery to describe Sverrir's own attacks on the fleets of his opponent Ívarr:

Fim tigur byrðinga lágu við Rauðabjörg. Konungr vildi ekki við þá eiga, því at þat váru allt kaupmenn ... en Sverrir konungr vildi aldri kaupmönnum mein gera ef þeir kynni meta sik. Þar lágu ok tólf skútur ok eitt langskip er Ívarr hafði saman dregit. Þeir flýðu þegar ok þorðu ekki við Birkibeina at eiga. En konungr fór út til Agðaness ok fundu þar skútur níu, ok þegar lagði Sverrir konungr at þeim. Þeir fengu þess konar *kaupferð* at þeir seldu klæði sín ok vápn í *mót* knúskan ok illleikni, létu ok allt laust þat er þeir höfðu fémætt ... Eftir þat fóru þeir suðr á Mæri ok fundu þar tólf skútur eða þrettán. Var þeim mönnum *settr inn sami markaðr* sem inum fyrrum, því at hváirtveggju ætlaðu til Ívars at fara ef eigi kæmi troll milli húss ok heima.²⁹

²⁸ *Svrs*, chs. 14–15, pp. 23–6.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, ch. 15, p. 26. Italicisation added.

Fifty merchant-ships lay by Rauðabjörg. The king did not wish to fight with them because they were all merchants ... and King Sverrir would never do harm to merchants if they could value themselves rightly. Twelve skiffs and one longship that Ívarr had gathered together also lay there. They immediately fled and did not dare to fight the Birkibeinar, but the king travelled out to Agðanes and found nine skiffs there, and King Sverrir attacked them at once. They got this kind of *deal*: they handed over their clothes and weapons *in exchange* for knocks and bad treatment, and yielded up everything they had that was valuable ... After that they [Sverrir and his men] travelled south to Mœrr and found there twelve or thirteen skiffs. *The same market was set out* for these men as for the previous ones, because both groups had intended to travel to Ívarr—if no troll came between outhouse and home.

This episode sets up two paradoxes: (1) merchants are to be exempted from violence, but such violence is associated directly with mercantile acts; and (2) Sverrir is figured by his opponents to be a powerful supernatural enemy, despite his complete disempowerment within and detachment from the normative societal nexus. All roles are reversed, including that of the power relation between the two parties: power is communicated in a monstrous, non-categorical way. The scene is not overly serious, however, as it treats monstrousness in a rather more playful fashion. The willingly subversive descent into gleeful violence by Sverrir and his men is communicated with dry humour through the antithetical imagery of diplomatic trade, with the humour showing through particularly well in the sardonic use of the phrases *þeir fengu þess konar kaupferð* and *var þeim monnum settr inn sami markaðr sem inum fyrrum* to describe Sverrir's assaults. Furthermore, the phrase *troll milli húss ok heima* itself also contains humorous imagery, as *hús* refers to 'the outdoor privy'—in other words, Sverrir and the

Birkibeinar are depicted as having caught their opponents with their trousers down.³⁰ When Harris claims that the primary purpose of troll idioms in *Sverris saga* is to provide a means of ‘humorously emphasizing the powerfully destructive potential of the insurgent forces’,³¹ this episode in particular must be at the forefront of his thinking.

In the Icelandic outlaw sagas, however, such language is hardly to be taken lightly, as it is most frequently invoked in order to justify the use of excessive violence against those outlaws. After Grettir is killed, for example, his longstanding enemy Þorbjörn ǫngull decides to mutilate the corpse, framing his own actions as consistent with monster-killing elsewhere in the saga: *Þeir sögðu þessa eigi þurfa, þar sem maðrinn var dauðr áðr. “At skal þó meira gera,” segir ǆngull. Hjó hann þá á háls Gretti tvau hogg eða þrjú, áðr af tæki hofuðit.*³² Þorbjörn does not explicitly call Grettir a monster, but there are parallels between Grettir’s death and the troll-killings that Grettir himself performs.

³⁰ The idea of monsters surprising people while they are on the toilet also appears in the similarly humorous *Þorsteins þáttr skelks*, in which a drunk Icelandic man encounters a demon in the outdoor privy (*Flat* I, pp. 462–4). The use of the privy as a liminal space is often both humorous and monstrous, as Carolyne Larrington notes: ‘The dominant tone is comic [but] the comedy plays also with ideas of terror; the trip to the privy in darkness lays one open to supernatural forces, visiting a place that is both necessary and unwholesome’ (‘Diet, Defecation and the Devil: Disgust and the Pagan Past’, in *Medieval Obscenities*, ed. N. McDonald (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 138–55, at pp. 152–3).

³¹ Harris, ‘Phraseological Approaches’. Harris’s assertion certainly applies to this episode; however, whilst the final troll idiom of *Sverris saga* is also grounded in a humorous context, it differs significantly from this first instance as the humour is arguably used to undermine the destructive potential of Sverrir’s men, as will be explained in greater detail below.

³² *Gret*, ch. 82, p. 262: ‘They said there was no need for this, as the man there was already dead. “Nevertheless, there is more that must be done,” said ǆngull. Then he struck two or three blows at Grettir’s neck before he removed his head’.

Earlier in the saga, Grettir ritually beheads the trolls Kárr and Glámr to make sure that they are dead,³³ which Þorbjörn also reveals to be his motivation for beheading Grettir in a similar fashion: *Nú veit ek víst at Grettir er dauðr.*³⁴ The reaction of Þorbjörn's men, however, who object to the mutilation of Grettir's corpse, demonstrates that the situation is not as clear-cut as Þorbjörn wishes to present it. As monstrous as he often appears throughout the saga, Grettir is still ultimately a man, not a troll; as Ármann Jakobsson observes, whilst some saga protagonists may be interpreted as trolls, 'of course, they are not, since they are the heroes of their sagas and a troll is never the hero'.³⁵ In Þorbjörn's eyes, however, the invocation of monstrousness through the definite assertion that *skal meira gera*—a phrase he uses to try to absolve himself of responsibility for his actions by implicitly comparing his actions to the necessary rituals for slaying trolls—is justification enough for treating Grettir's body as if it were a troll's corpse and undertaking actions that would be otherwise unthinkable. Janice Hawes also notes that Þorbjörn claims to have been sent by Christ to kill Grettir—a claim with which Grettir takes issue—and argues that 'with these words, [Þorbjörn] seems to be demonizing Grettir, as he implies that he was sent by Christ to cleanse Drangey of the monster Grettir'.³⁶ From the start, Þorbjörn frames his dubious actions in pseudo-heroic terms by attacking Grettir as if the outlaw were a monster.

Hqrðr's death at the climax of *Harðar saga* is also compared to a monster-slaying by his enemies. Whilst the members of normative society readily kill most of the members of the Hólmverjar, Hqrðr's

³³ *Ibid.*, chs. 18 and 35, pp. 58 and 122.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, ch. 82, p. 262: 'Now I know for certain that Grettir is dead'. For fuller accounts of parallels between Grettir's death and troll-beheadings, see Harris, 'Deaths of Grettir and Grendel' and Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, pp. 164–6.

³⁵ Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Trollish Acts of Þorgrímr the Witch: The Meanings of *Troll* and *Ergi* in Medieval Iceland', *SBVS* 32 (2008), 39–68, at p. 51.

³⁶ Hawes, 'Monstrosity of Heroism', pp. 47–8.

gang of outlaws, as soon as they get the opportunity, they are reluctant to kill Hǫrðr himself when he is finally captured by his brother-in-law Indriði: *Hann rétti þá fram oxina ok teiknaði til, at nokkurr skyldi vega at Herði, en engi vildi þat gera.*³⁷ This reticence is likely a result of Hǫrðr's ideological differences with the Hólmverjar and his attempts to restrain their destructive natures; whereas the Hólmverjar are defined primarily by their criminal behaviour in the saga, Hǫrðr is often set apart by his desire to follow a more honourable path, going so far as to ask the Hólmverjar to change their way of life because *þykki mér ... illt ráð vart at svá búnu, at vér lifum við þat eitt, er vér rænum til.*³⁸ Consequently, Hǫrðr's opponents appear to only be able to justify killing Hǫrðr after he is provoked, when he is magically restrained from escaping,³⁹ into acting like a troll, enabling the killing to be framed as an act of monster-slaying:

‘Mikil tröll eiga hér hlut í, en ekki skulu þér þó hafa yðvarn vilja um þat, sem ek má at gera.’ Hjó hann þá Helga sundr í miðju ok kvað þá eigi skyldu drepa fóstbróður sinn fyrir augum sér ... Svá var Hǫrðr þá reiðr ok ógurligr at sjá, at engi þeira þorði framan at honum at ganga. Torfi sagði, at sá skyldi eigi hringinn Sótanaut, sem Hǫrðr hafði á hendi sér, sem þyrði at vega at Herði. Þá slógu þeir hring um hann.⁴⁰

[Hǫrðr said:] ‘There is great trollishness here in this part—and yet you shall not have your way about anything that I can affect.’ Then he [Hǫrðr] struck Helgi asunder at the middle, and said they would not kill his foster-brother

³⁷ *Harð*, ch. 36, p. 86: ‘He [Indriði] held out the axe and indicated that someone should kill Hǫrðr, but no one wished to do it’.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, ch. 30, p. 76: ‘It seems to me ... a bad decision of ours that at present the only way we live is by robbery’.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, ch. 36, p. 87.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

before his own eyes ... Hǫrðr was so angry and terrible to behold that none of them dared to go up to the front to [face] him. Torfi said that the one who dared to fight Hǫrðr would have the ring Sótanautr, which Hǫrðr had on his arm. Then they surrounded him.

Although Hǫrðr hacks his own foster-brother in half—a shocking act, even though *þótti monnum sem Helgi mundi mjök svá dauðr áðr* before Hǫrðr cuts him asunder⁴¹—and becomes far more threatening through his monstrous appearance, his opponents are still reluctant to attack him until Torfi claims that whoever successfully defeats Hǫrðr may take the ring Sótanautr from Hǫrðr’s corpse as a reward. As Hǫrðr had himself taken the ring from the troll Sóti after defeating him, Torfi’s suggestion creates a direct parallel between Hǫrðr and Sóti, implying that Hǫrðr should be treated and dealt with as if he were a troll. Whilst a monstrous appearance is not justification enough for Hǫrðr’s enemies to readily use excessive violence against him—on the contrary, his appearance actually acts as a deterrent—Torfi’s vocalization of Hǫrðr’s perceived monstrousness enables the attackers to frame the killing as a necessary act of monster-slaying, justifying violence through superhumanization.

It is clear that the effects of superhumanization often have fatal consequences for outlaws, and the humour with which *Sverris saga* treats Sverrir’s superhumanization is unusual by contrast. There is, however, an important distinction between Sverrir and the Icelandic outlaws as regards the reasons for Sverrir’s outlawry. Sverrir is not condemned to outlawry as a result of bad fortune, which is given as a significant reason for the heroic protagonist’s outlawry in all the Icelandic outlaw sagas,⁴² but opts to become the leader of an outlaw

⁴¹ *Ibid.*: ‘People thought that Helgi was all but dead already’.

⁴² *Flest öll verk þín snúask þér til ógæfu ok hamingjuleysis* (*Gret*, ch. 35, p. 121: ‘Most of your deeds will bring you misfortune and a lack of luck’); *hann væri eigi í öllum*

gang for political reasons: to radically emphasize his opposition to Magnús Erlingsson, the symbolic centre of normative society, and to give himself a practical chance, through amassing an (albeit ill-equipped) army, of taking the Norwegian throne. Consequently, Sverrir's actions as an outlaw differ somewhat from those of Grettir and Hǫrðr, neither of whom exerts a determined agency to actually *become* an outlaw. For Sverrir, becoming an outlaw has its advantages, and the extent to which he embraces the trollish subversiveness in the above episode implies that Sverrir also feels that monstrousness has similar advantages—rather than simply having the label of 'troll' or 'Grýla' forced upon him by his opponents, Sverrir is willing to actively assume and play up to that monstrous role. There is even some precedent for the name *Grýla*, with its wild, monstrous connotations, being voluntarily taken up to describe oneself, as evidenced by a verse in *Sturlunga saga* that Loftr Pálsson speaks when riding to attack his enemy's farm at Breiðabólstaðr:

Hér ferr Grýla
í garð ofan
ok hefir á sér
hala fimmtán.⁴³

Here comes Grýla
down into the yard,
and she has on her
fifteen tails.

Whilst Ármann Jakobsson suggests that 'being a troll is not a self-constructed identity' because although 'many people call others trolls,

hlutum gæfumaðr (*Gísl*, ch. 36, p. 115: '[Gísl] was not a lucky man in all things');
hann væri eigi auðnamaðr (*Harð*, ch. 36, p. 88: '[Hǫrðr] was not a fortunate man').

⁴³ *Strl* I, ch. 44, p. 281.

few call themselves trolls',⁴⁴ it appears that in some circumstances, such as Sverrir's decision to actively become an outlaw, troll identities can be readily assumed, if not self-constructed, by a superhumanized subject. Sverrir's enemies see him as a monster because he is an outlaw, a liminal figure standing far apart from their normative mindset, but, unlike other saga outlaws, Sverrir is willing to embrace this reputation to achieve his own ends.

A MONSTROUS KING?

As aforementioned, Sverrir's change in social status on becoming king does not stop his enemies referring to him as a monster. Sverrir is described with similar troll idioms on two subsequent occasions in the saga, the first happening shortly before the unsuccessful attack on Niðaróss by an enemy faction called the Baglar. Sverrir's opponents refuse to take their ships ashore at Brøtteyrr, their first port of call, because they *þótti þar óbreint fyrir er þeir kenndu at Sigrflugan var á lofti*.⁴⁵ The phrase *óbreint fyrir* ('unclean ahead'), found in the versions of the saga in the manuscripts AM 327 4to and Eirspennill, does not only refer to the idea that the land is distasteful to the Baglar because of Sverrir's presence, but carries the implication that the Baglar believe Sverrir to be haunting the land in much the same way that a supernatural threat would. The lexeme *breinsa*, meaning 'to cleanse, purge', is also found in *landbreinsan*, which means 'land-cleansing' and refers to the removal of troublesome monsters from a contaminated location. The term is used in *Grettis saga*, after Grettir manages to slay the trolls haunting the farm at Sandhaugr: *Þótti Grettir þar gort hafa*

⁴⁴ Ármann Jakobsson, 'Trollish Acts', p. 51.

⁴⁵ *Svrs*, ch. 156, p. 237: '[They] thought that place unclean ahead when they recognized that the Sigrflugan [King Sverrir's mark] was aloft'.

mikla landbreinsun.⁴⁶ The supernatural connotations of the passage in *Sverris saga* are made even more explicit in the texts of *Skálholtsbók yngsta*, which reads *reimt* ('haunted'), and *Flateyjarbók*, which contains the most explicitly monstrous variation on the phrase: *Þótti þar troll fyrir dyrum*.⁴⁷ This variation is comparable both to the Old Norse idiom *troll standi fyrir dyrum*, which translates to 'a troll standing before the door',⁴⁸ and the modern Icelandic idiom *óvattur fyrir dyrum úti*, which Þorleifur Hauksson compares directly to the earlier phrase *troll milli húss ok heima*.⁴⁹ The two idioms *troll fyrir dyrum* and *troll milli húss ok heima* are also similar enough to invite direct comparison in terms of their choice of imagery, given that they both place monsters in intermediary locations, whether that is before a doorway, which acts as a portal between the safety of the domestic sphere and the uncertainty of the outside world, or in the space in between the normative locations of the farmhouse and its outbuildings. The differing contexts, however, mean that the effect of this imagery is greatly altered. Sverrir is no longer a marginal figure, but is now the central pillar of normative society, both supporting the mainstream societal structure and being empowered by it. To imply that Sverrir also has supernatural power suggests that the Baglar view Sverrir's empowerment as unjust or contaminated, given the 'uncleansed' imagery of the parallel phrase *óbreint fyrir*, but it does not obfuscate the nature of power relations as in the earlier episode. It is surely no coincidence that this is the least humorous of the troll idioms in *Sverris saga*.

⁴⁶ *Gret*, ch. 67, p. 218: 'It was thought there that Grettir had performed a great land-cleansing'.

⁴⁷ *Flat* III, ch. 118, p. 300: '[They] thought in that place there were trolls before the doorway'.

⁴⁸ R. Cleasby and Guðbrandur Vigfússon, *An Icelandic-English Dictionary* (Oxford, 1874), p. 641.

⁴⁹ Þorleifur Hauksson, ed., *Sverris saga*, p. 26, n. 5: 'An evil being before the outside-door'.

The effect is rather less straightforward, however, on the second occasion that Sverrir, as a king, is framed in monstrous terms. Towards the end of the saga, Sverrir besieges a small force of around two hundred Baglar, who have taken up shelter on the rock of Túnsberg. Sverrir and the Birkibeinar try many different strategies to break the Baglar's resistance, but their attempts are invariably met with failure.⁵⁰ Of these strategies, the most elaborate involves Sverrir commanding the Birkibeinar to stage a fake battle to tempt the Baglar away from their rocky stronghold:

Síðan skulu þér fylkja hvárutveggja liðinu ok láta sem þér berjizk, ok þyrmizk þó raunar, sem skylt er. En þér er ór böenum farið, þér skuluð falla fyrir hinum er til sækja, ok gerið mikinn ysinn ok látið sem þeir hafi betr, ok at lykðum snúizk þér allir á flóttu. Ok þá mynda ek eigi vita nema Baglar gengi af berginu, ok mætti þeir koma milli húss ok búanda.⁵¹

Afterwards you must draw up in two groups and pretend that you are fighting—and yet forbear [from violence] really, as is required. But those of you who travel out from the town, you must fall before the others that pursue you, and make a great noise and make like they have it better, but at the end of it you will all turn around to flee. And then I am not sure what will happen—unless the Baglar leave the rock, and they might come between outhouse and yeomen.

Sverrir's playful suggestion at the end of the passage—*matti þeir koma milli húss ok búanda*—clearly alludes to the earlier idiom *ef eigi kemir troll milli húss ok heima*. In his 1899 translation of *Sverris saga*, J. Sephton appears to feel that Sverrir's allusion to the earlier idiom is significant

⁵⁰ *Svrs*, chs. 171–6, pp. 267–74.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, ch. 175, p. 272.

enough to warrant expanding it in full: ‘I expect the Bagals will then come down from the rock; so we shall place some of our troops in ambush close to it, and “trolls will come between house and yeomen”’.⁵² Sephton’s translation usefully emphasizes a parallel between this episode and the earlier passage that a modern audience might not otherwise recognize, but it is significant that Sverrir’s variation on this phrase does not use such the original idiom’s explicit language of monstrosity, and opts instead for allusiveness. By alluding to the earlier phrase while simultaneously omitting any explicitly superhumanizing language, thereby merely implying that the *þeir* (‘they’) of the variation are trolls, Sverrir removes the obfuscating presence of supernatural power from the phrase and presents a far more straightforward communication of power: one side must have clear control over the other. Furthermore, Sverrir’s plan of attack—through which he hopes to defeat his enemies, the Baglar—clearly indicates that Sverrir intends to depict his men, the Birkibeinar, as the sole powerful group in this phrase.

There is some ambiguity, however, as to how the imagery in Sverrir’s statement applies to each side. Whilst the allusion to the idiom *troll milli húss ok heima* indicates that the subject of *þeir koma milli húss ok búanda* should be read as a counterpart to the trolls of the original, the wording is unclear as to exactly which group it is—the Baglar or the Birkibeinar—that Sverrir is attempting to compare to the trolls, and this detail must affect how the phrase is interpreted. There are two particularly prominent factors that contribute to this ambiguity. First, even if this phrase is analysed in direct comparison to the earlier phrase *troll milli húss ok heima*, there is no clear parallel on which to draw. Whilst the troll in the original phrase is a marginalized Other, as the Baglar are in this episode, it is simultaneously depicted as a powerful monstrous aggressor, which more closely parallels the Birkibeinar’s assault on the Baglar, especially given the deceptive

⁵² *Sverrissaga. The Saga of King Sverri of Norway*, transl. J. Sephton (London, 1899), p. 225.

nature of Sverrir's plan. Second, the Baglar's continued use of expressions of monstrousness to describe Sverrir and his men means that it is the Birkibeinar who are primarily associated with monstrousness throughout the saga, rather than the Baglar.

The key aspect in solving this problem is Sverrir's omission of the word *troll* in the phrase *þeir koma milli húss ok búanda*, as this omission alters the effect of the original idiom *troll milli húss ok heima* to the extent that it suggests Sverrir is speaking not of the Baglar, but of himself and the Birkibeinar. It might usually be assumed that because Sverrir is the speaker of the phrase and the Baglar are his opponents, the Baglar should be the trolls of the allusion because of their oppositional nature; as Ármann Jakobsson points out, trolls 'are external ... they belong to the Other, rather than Us'.⁵³ But whilst the Baglar are clearly the external force in this episode, this reading is problematic because of the lack of an explicit comparison to a monster in Sverrir's variation. If it were intended that the Baglar should be interpreted as the trolls of the allusion, Sverrir would therefore have to be suggesting that the 'trolls' in this situation are completely powerless, as they do not even possess some level of supernatural empowerment. It is not usually beneficial to portray one's opponents as weak when also attempting to superhumanize them; as shown above, the most frequent use of superhumanization against outlaws in the sagas is to justify violence against the marginalized subject. It seems unlikely that Sverrir, seeking to lure the Baglar into a violent skirmish, would purposely allude to an idiom previously used against him, only to decisively weaken the effect it has on his enemies. Furthermore, although there are few explicit expressions of monstrousness in the passages describing the deaths of Grettir and Hqrðr, such slayings are typically framed as ritualistic monster-killings, whereas the phrase *troll milli húss ok heima* depicts a monster in a position of supernatural power. Sverrir's plan—to lure the Baglar away from their stronghold on the rock, and in so doing to

⁵³ Ármann Jakobsson, 'Trollish Acts', p. 51.

place the Birkibeinar in between the Baglar and their place of safety—also appears to directly mirror the imagery of both *koma milli húss ok búanda* and *troll milli húss ok heima*. That Sverrir alludes to the latter idiom while omitting the word *troll* may actually indicate that he wants to refer to the Birkibeinar as trolls: in other words, Sverrir jokes to his men that if they act in the same way they did as in their outlaw days, they can add supernatural power to their societal empowerment. Although it may appear strange that Sverrir would want to refer to himself and his men as monsters, the earlier analysis of the previous episode that Sverrir specifically alludes to in this scene demonstrates that there are occasions in *Sverris saga* when Sverrir is keen to portray himself as monstrous. Given the myriad of failures that Sverrir endures in attempting to remove the Baglar from the rock of Túnsberg, it makes sense that Sverrir might reach back to his outlaw past to try one last unusual strategy, especially given Sverrir's earlier willingness to play up to his reputation as a monstrous outlaw and the continuation of this reputation into his kingship.

Sverrir's attempt to depict himself monstrously is, however, markedly less successful on this occasion. His plan fails spectacularly:

Þá eggjuðu Baglar Hreiðar at þeir skyldu ganga af berginu ok veita sínum mönnum, láta Birkibeina eigi komask inn aftur um díkit. Hreiðarr svaraði: 'Sjám fyrst hvernig þeir skiptask við. Ef Birkibeinar láta rekask fram at díkinu þá mun þeim seint verða at klífa upp á krakana, ok munu várir menn drepa af þeim slíkt er þeir vilja.' Ok enn mælti hann: 'Undarliga ferr þessi flótti, ok sýnisk mér sem þetta sé leikr nokkurr. Sé þér at þeir leita sér fallstaða þar er þurrt er undir eða elligar á skjöldu sína ofan? Sé þér nokkut blóðug vörn þeira eða klæði? Nei,' sagði hann, 'hvártki sé ek, ok man þetta vera prettr Sverris.' Ok er konungr sá at Baglar

vörudusk at ganga af berginu þá sneri hann aftr til herbúða sinna ok allt lið hans.⁵⁴

Then the Baglar urged Hreiðarr that they should leave the rock and help their men, not let the Birkibeinar come within the ditch again. Hreiðarr replied: ‘Let us see first how they deal with one another. If the Birkibeinar are made to be driven back to the ditch they will be slow to climb up the stakes, and our men will kill as many of them as they wish.’ And yet he said: ‘This flight proceeds strangely, and it seems to me that it might be some kind of game. Do you see how they look for places for themselves to fall down where it is dry underneath, or otherwise fall on their shields? Do you see any of their weapons or clothes somewhat bloodied? No,’ said he, ‘I see neither, and this must be a trick of Sverrir’s.’ And when the king saw that the Baglar were wary about leaving the rock, he and his entire troop turned back to their camp.

Sverrir’s plan fails because his opponents see through it as a clear deception and, worse, think of it as a harmless, ridiculously farcical game.

Harris suggests that the trollish idioms in the saga should be viewed as a pattern because they all use humour to exaggerate Sverrir and the Birkibeinar’s destructive potential,⁵⁵ but Harris’s interpretation does not account for the fact that the humour in this final situation arises instead from Sverrir’s *failure* to cause sufficient destruction. As king and retainers respectively, Sverrir’s and the Birkibeinar’s pretence at being monstrous is unbelievable, and all too easily exposed. Despite Sverrir’s playful attempt to depict his men as powerful in both societal and supernatural terms, the episode

⁵⁴ *Svrs*, ch. 175, pp. 272–3.

⁵⁵ Harris, ‘Phraseological Approaches’.

undermines their power in the eyes of the Baglar as a result of the Birkibeinar's embarrassing retreat. The plan's failure, which is otherwise unexplained, is also more congruous with the Birkibeinar-troll reading above: Sverrir mischievously encourages his men to embrace their reputation of monstrosity, but, due to their change of circumstances and the distinct shift in the context of this language, such monstrosity is a concept to which he and his men can no longer truly commit. Consequently, the deceptive nature of Sverrir's plan is exposed in thoroughly humiliating fashion. Whilst it is possible for the outlaw Sverrir to live up to his reputation of monstrosity when such accusations of monstrosity are made by his opponents, it appears that when King Sverrir tries to use similar language of himself, his enemies are more inclined to see the funny side.