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Comparisons and Correlations

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An Introduction to the Problems

Paweł Szczepanik and Sławomir Wadyń

INTRODUCTION

Research into space – especially space perceived to be sacred – and its role in culture, is a very important problem in the study of the past. It is worth noting, however, that archaeologists seldom attempt to develop their own methodology concerning the identification and description of sacred landscapes and objects. Instead, they resort to methodologies developed in other areas of the humanities, especially in the phenomenology of religion. However, such use of the conceptual instruments borrowed from other sciences – which in many cases seems intuitive - often leads to the creation of ‘scientific myths’ that are usually taken for granted and sometimes treated almost as paradigms in the scientific literature.

The major aim of our paper is to present a comparative analysis of early medieval north-west Slavonic and Prussian objects and places which are interpreted in a sacral context. The interpretation of sacred objects and sacral landscapes is a very difficult and complex interpretive task with many methodological problems and inconsistencies, which this article will expose. Subsequently, the authors will consider the possibility of creating and using a framework of criteria which could be used to develop an anthropological interpretation of space among Slavic and Prussian cultures. Were there, for example, similar ways of valorising space in those societies?
Modern ways of perceiving and valorising early medieval sacral objects are based mainly on information from medieval chronicles and folk culture. Elements of natural landscapes – holy groves, mountains, lakes, stones – and cultural landscapes that are associated with the category of *sacrum* will be the most significant points in our comparison. Analysis of archaeological sites and objects, especially those with a settlement and/or cultural context, which are most often connected to sacral space, will have a great importance. An exploration of this material, then, will allow us to create a model of the so-called sacred places in early medieval Slavonic and Prussian culture.

**SOME REMARKS ON THEORY AND METHODS OF STUDYING SACRED LANDSCAPES**

Contemporary approaches to the interpretation and understanding of *sacrum* as a category are radically different from the traditional approaches. In archaeological practice a ‘cult place’ is usually defined as space which has no obvious utilitarian function, or its function is unknown. This approach often leads to very complex arguments; where one space is often simultaneously described as both a place of communal cult activity and familial cult activity. It is precisely for this reason that the term ‘cult place’ should be connected to expressions of ritual rather than to a purely archaeological standpoint. Said another way, space, and more specifically the function of that space, need to be considered before passing judgments on its function. It is also worth remembering that sacral places, which played a significant role in the religious experience, were not necessarily the spaces where these ritual activities were performed.1

In archaeological practice concerning the diagnosis and interpretation of sacral places, archaeologists often still use the categories presented by Carsten Colpe in the 1970s.2 In Polish archaeology, however, recent work has begun to question these old categories.3 These new notions of sacral space see the actual places related to the sacral sphere as being characterised by at least one of two categories: repetition or revelation – uncovering or symbolic of extraordinariness. This

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1 We need to remember that Olympus has played such a role. It was the place where gods lived, not where cult activities were. See, P. Słupecki, ‘Miejsca kultu pogańskie w Polsce na tle badań nad wierzeniami Słowian’, in W. Chudziak and S. Możdżioch, (eds), *Stan i potrzeby badań nad wczesnym średniowieczem w Polsce – 15 lat później* (Toruń/Wrocław, 2006), pp. 68-69.


approach assumes a phenomenological attempt of ‘understanding’ the reality of the past by ‘empathizing’ with its specificity. According to A. Posern-Zieliński, such a methodological approach is inappropriate for archaeological interpretation because archaeologists are incapable of empathising, which, after all, is completely unknowable. Although it is difficult to agree with such a pessimistic opinion, it is worth remembering that ‘archaic ontology seems to be a piece of human’s self-consciousness, not a step of it’.

Archaeologists still often use Rudolf Otto’s conception of ‘numinous’ and Eliade’s notions concerning the morphology of ‘holiness.’ Meanwhile, G. Van der Leeuw’s or G. Widengren’s views on the subject seem to be underestimated, even though their influence in the phenomenology of religion remains significant. The current work being done on the phenomenology of environment by Tilley deserves similar attention. Still, we should remember that Tilley’s ideas on archaeological reality are based on a concept of phenomenology of perception first put forward by Merleau-Ponty. Human experience that is mediated by the body is the most important from this perspective. Tilley claims that:

‘Phenomenology involves the understanding and description of things as they are experienced by a subject. It is about the relationship between Being and Being-in-the-world. Being-in-the-world resides in a process of objectification in which people objectify the world by setting themselves apart from it. This results in the creation of a gap, a distance in space.’

Following this definition, the way of being in the world, and its cultural interpretation, is the key concept for the identification and understanding of the specific character of Baltic and Slavonic sacral places. Traditional societies like those of the early medieval Balts and Slavs perceived the world in the category of sacral valorisation. This valorisation was constituted around a certain ‘ontological security’. Thus it is justifiable to utilise the latest ideas in anthropology and religious studies concerning notions of sacred space, in archaeological research on the religious spheres of human activity.

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6 G. van der Leeuw, Fenomenologia religii (Warszawa, 1997); G. Widengren, Fenomenologia religii (Kraków, 2008).
7 C. Tilley, A Phenomenology of Landscape Places, Paths and Monuments (Oxford/Providence, 1994).
8 M. Merleau-Ponty, Fenomenologia percepcji (Warszawa, 2001).
9 C. Tilley, A Phenomenology of Landscape Places, p. 12.
Sacred Landscapes in Written Sources: Importance of Environment for Sacrum

Written sources often emphasise the symbolic meaning(s) of various elements of natural landscapes used for sacred purposes in early medieval societies. According to most of the medieval chroniclers of Prussia the environment held great significance in the sacred sphere. These medieval chroniclers usually indicated woods and groves as the main cult sites. However, written accounts show us only one category of sacral space, which was situated in the ‘natural world’. Through an analysis of these sources, it appears that the natural landscape was very central to the Prussian religion system, which was, after all, based on a type of nature worship. In fact, it is believed that almost all natural landscapes were infused with a type of magical element.

When one looks, however, at the sources that deal with Slavonic spirituality, it becomes clear that there were several different categories of space all playing significant roles within the religious beliefs of Slavic society. The oldest extant source, written by Procopius of Caesarea, mentions not only ‘the one god, the creator of thunders’, but also contains details concerning the worship of, and sacrifices to, ‘rivers, nymphs and other spirits.’ Furthermore, additional written accounts mention two other categories of cult places. The first of these categories consists of the so-called sanctuaries in ‘the world of nature’, and the second concerns the sanctuaries in ‘the world of culture.’ It is noteworthy that such a division outlines a structural dichotomy along the ‘nature-culture’ line. This dichotomy, however, does not conform to any early medieval cultural reality. In our opinion, a completely natural landscape – i.e. not transformed by human activity – belonged to the culture of the world because the natural elements were connected, through the human/world, to a

mythological valorisation of reality.\textsuperscript{17} It is also worth considering whether unworked stone, trees, streams, etc. belong to the ‘world of nature’ or to the ‘world of culture’? Because it is impossible to answer this question definitively, we believe that using terms such as ‘natural sanctuary’ or ‘sanctuary in world of the culture’ are inappropriate. Therefore we propose the study of cult places in the context of their creation, or transformation, by humans.\textsuperscript{18} Holy groves, mountains, islands, trees, stones, and fountains should be treated as not transformed. Temples and statues of gods, and anthropological stone statues represent the second group. Certainly, we need to be aware of the possibility of mixing both groups’ elements and the creation of a new, sophisticated ‘sacred space’.

In a way, such a division corresponds well with the deities and sacral power which were to be worshiped in those places. Confirmation of this division can be found in Helmold’s \textit{Chronica Slavorum}, which states: ‘Some establish strange statues in temples (…) Other gods inhabit forests and groves (…) These are not shown on pictures.’ In the same chapter the chronicler gives us another very important piece of information about Prowe’s grove when he states:

‘We’ve noticed huge oaks between trees that were devoted to Starogard Land’s god Prowe, surrounded by a courtyard. The courtyard was surrounded by a fence, diligently built of wood, with two gates (…), this place was sacred. (…) Entry to the courtyard was banned for everyone except the priest and those bringing the sacrifice, or those in danger of death. Shelter for these was never refused.’\textsuperscript{19}

The existence of the holy groves was confirmed by Thietmar’s chronicle when the author described the activities of his predecessor, Bishop Wigbert:

‘tireless in teaching… he dedicated lambs away from the errors of the worshipped superstition, and, after felling to the ground the grove called Zutibure (Holy Forest), which the natives worshipped as equal to gods and always treated as untouchable, built a church on this place (…)’\textsuperscript{20}


\textsuperscript{18} We acknowledge that such a division is imperfect – how can we classify a cult place consisting of a sanctuary which is located on top of a mountain or an island? – but we use this for the systematization of materials.


Herbord’s accounts also mention four temples existing in Szczecin. The biggest and the most beautiful was dedicated to Triglav.\textsuperscript{21} Other written sources provide additional information about sanctuaries in Rethra, Arcona, Gardź, Wolgast, Gutkow, and Wolin.\textsuperscript{22} Upon analysis of these written sources it is clear that nature had a major role in determining the location for cult activities. It also reveals that a great many of the natural landscape elements were permeated with magic. There are many more sources containing information about religious rituals and sacred places relating to the culture of the North-West Slavs than to the Prussians. Nevertheless, there is some common ground, especially concerning the role of the natural landscape.

**NATURAL LANDSCAPES**

Written sources about Prussian territories confirm that many elements of the natural landscape – such as mountains, hills, rocks, stones, and water – were perceived to be sacred. In fact, almost every single component of nature could have been perceived to be sacred.\textsuperscript{23}

**HOLY GROVES**

Holy groves are the first and the most significant category of natural holy places. Ideas relating to the sacred status of holy groves can be found in almost every Indo-European mythological system whether ancient, medieval, or modern. These places were often dedicated to local deities and were usually inhabited by some type of spirit. In some cases groves were treated as a kind of symbolic connection between the world of the living and the world of the dead. Even today there are restrictions governing hunting, pasturing, and felling of trees in holy groves in India.\textsuperscript{24} Moreover, the concept of a holy grove is still central to the mythology and religious practices in modern Ghana, Nigeria, Japan, and Malaysia.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{22} L.P. Słupecki, *Slavonic Pagan Sanctuaries* (Warszawa, 1994).
\textsuperscript{23} See Dusburg, pp. 52-3; Olivierus, p. 241.
In north-west Slavonic and Prussian constructions of *sacrum*, holy groves also played a central role. The sources relating to the West Baltic cultural circle clearly confirm that groves and forests were the dwelling places of the gods, as well as the places where magical-religious rituals were performed. These places belonged to the sacred sphere only and any non-religious activities were not allowed there. Sources reveal that groves were named ‘*alkā, alkas*, and also ‘*rāmawan*’. It is worth noting too that the Balts’ holy places are usually described using the term *alka* (*alkas*). Additionally, the corresponding words in Prussian (*alka*), Lithuanian (*alka*) or Latvian (*elks*) all have Indo-European roots. The proto Indo-European term *alku/*elku was reconstructed and means ‘elbow, turn’. The Prussian word *alkūns* also means ‘elbow’.

The motive for choosing a place for a sacred grove could be the unusual shape of the tree, which became the centre of such a site and proof of the presence of a supernatural power. Such atypical shapes were found in trees with branches that grew into the trunk or were splintered but joined at the ends, or in trees with unusual growths. An example of such a strange tree was the oak in *Romowe* described by Peter of Dusburg. This tree was believed to symbolise three parts of the cosmos: the underworld, the earth, and the sky.

The issue of holy groves in Slavonic religion looks different. Nondescript forms of fencing or walls, and a sectioning off of the sacral sphere from rest of space, were the most important features of Slavonic groves. These distinguishing traits left traces in the etymology of the word *gaj*. For example, the Slavonic term *gaj* derives from proto-Slavic verb *gojiti* (to live); the term originally meant ‘ritualized space of the earth, a separate part of the forest, which is home of the dead’. Thus, the Indo-European version of the word literally meant ‘the place where the dead live; or where their souls live’. A word which is very similarly in context is *raj*. This word derives from proto-Slavic verb *rojiti* (to flow) and has a primary meaning relating to the space ‘behind a river’, and is related

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30 Dusburg, pp. 52.
with Indo-European beliefs, which located the after-life, behind a river or ocean.\textsuperscript{32} Both terms originally meant the space that was behind the water, and belonged to the world of the dead.

In the context of our considerations about the realization of the idea of the grove/haven it seems that the reality of quotidian experience for members of a traditional culture was both a reflection of their mythical beliefs about reality, identity of image, mythical proto-image, and the mythological ideas and material realisation of the main elements of these cultures.\textsuperscript{33} Such an interpretation implies that holy groves in the culture of the north-west Slavs were an example of a completely raw landscape devoid of human intervention and were usually limited to the separation of a space with unspecified boundaries. This separation in all Indo-European cultures is an essential feature of the grove as a place of a physiographic realisation of a mythical centre.\textsuperscript{34}

**Holy Mountains**

In almost every religion and mythology mountains are treated in a special way. They are the places where gods and spirits resided, or places where saints or prophets acted. Mountains, because of their grandeur and dominance of the surrounding landscape were, in many cultures, also seen as locations of cosmic axis (*axis mundi*).\textsuperscript{35} According to Eliade, ‘mountains’ are nearest to heaven, giving them a double sacredness: on the one hand they contributed to the spatial sphere of transcendence (‘high’, ‘vertical’, ‘highest’ etc.), and on the other hand they were the highest space, reserved for atmospheric powers and places where gods live.\textsuperscript{36}

In Prussia the category of ‘objects’ (especially in relation to holy mountains), and how they relate to *sacrum* has not been investigated.\textsuperscript{37} This is largely due to the topography of the area in question. None of the known hills were regarded as the seats of gods. In fact, the only holy mountain

\textsuperscript{32} G. Rytter, ‘Rekonstrukcja pl. szeregu słowotwórczo-semantycznego 

\textsuperscript{33} A. Kowalik, Kosmologia dawnych Słowian. Prolegomena do teologii politycznej dawnych Słowian (Kraków, 2004), p. 211.

\textsuperscript{34} A. Kowalik, Kosmologia dawnych Słowian, p. 43.


\textsuperscript{36} M. Eliade, Traktat o historii religii (Warszawa, 1966), pp. 97–99.

\textsuperscript{37} V. Vaitkevičius distinguished such a category of hills (*alka hills*). See V. Vaitkevičius, Studies into the Balts’ Sacred Places (Oxford, 2004), pp. 9–10. The author has collected information about over 70 *alka* hills from the area of Lithuania, 42 from Latvian territories, and 2 from Kaliningrad Oblast area. In most cases these *alka* hills are nothing more than hill forts, often of uncertain chronology. Excavation carried out on some of them have not confirmed the religious function of these objects. In most cases, a modern interpretation of *alka* hills is rooted in modern folk accounts.
mentioned in the sources is Rombinus, which is located on the bank of the Neman River. Other hills in the region, commonly called holy mountains (Holy Mountain near Lekit, Holy Mountain near Dobrocin and a hill fort in Staświny called Holy Mountain), where temples existed and where pagan practices were performed, derive their names from folk culture and, therefore, it is not possible to confirm whether they actually had sacred functions.

The topography of the north-west Slavic region has numerous hills and mountains which served as important and sacred places. Although even a cursory description of these sites is far beyond the scope of this article, we will provide a brief introduction to a few of them.

The most recognized sites in Pomerania include: Góra Zamkowa/Triglav Mount in Szczecin, Góra Chełmska next to Koszalin, Góra Dawida in Trzebiatów, Rowokół in Smołdzin, Góra św. Wawrzyńca in Kałdus, and one of the cult places in Wolin. All of these places are mentioned in written sources. The sheer number of mountain sanctuaries in Pomerania is significant, however, and we should remember that these had different characters. Any of these sites could have been perceived by local communities as an axis mundi. They were also connected with cults of uranic or solar gods. It is worthwhile differentiating between mountain cults (as a specific form of worship) and ritual activities (that just happen to occur on a mountain top).

ISLANDS

An island is a perfect example of the physiographic realization of the idea of ‘gaj’. The ‘nature’ of these sites perfectly corresponds with the idea of the First Land, which is a common feature of Indo-European cosmology. Written sources, however, provide no information confirming the existence of sacred islands in the region of Prussia. Nonetheless, it is worth noting Caspar Hennenberger’s work about Holy Island on the Jeziorak Lake, opposite the village of Tynwald. Local society members used to perform sacred rituals on the island, though the precise location is difficult to pinpoint, as

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40 In addition to these sites, which Wojciech Chudziak called ‘certain sanctuaries’ in Pomerania, we are also dealing with a number of examples of ‘implied sanctuaries’. This situation largely relates to the insufficient archaeological recognition of these sites; see W. Chudziak, ‘Przestrzeń pogańskiego sacrum w krajobrazie przyrodniczo-kulturowym Słowian pomorskich’, in K. Bracha and Cz. Hadamik (eds), Scrum pogańskie – sacrum chrześcijańskie. Kontynuacja miejsc kultu we wczesnośredniowiecznej Europie Środkowej (Warszawa, 2010), pp. 289-317.
The precise location of these activities notwithstanding, it is clear that the Holy Island is situated opposite a place called Jezierzyce.\textsuperscript{42} The review of sites from the north-west Slavonic territories is more interesting, although in this instance it is difficult to speak about physiographic specifics given lack of islands in the Prussian area. As well as the islands mentioned in written accounts, we have more and more archaeological discoveries from Pomerania and north Poland in general.\textsuperscript{43} Of special note are the islands in Żółte (fig. 2), Parsęcko, Żydowo, and also a place named Tucze.\textsuperscript{44}

**Bodies of Water**

Peter of Dusburg tells us that the Old Prussians considered some lakes and other bodies of water sacred. Fishing and other economic activities were not permitted on these lakes.\textsuperscript{45} There were, however, only a few bodies of water that possessed a sacral function. Generally speaking, it is only through hydronomic analysis that the past sacredness of a body of water can be determined. For example, there are names referring to Baltic mythology such as Lake Perkun, or names deriving from the Prussian root ‘svintan’ (holy) such as Lakes Święte, Święcajty, and Świętajno.\textsuperscript{46} Although there are over a dozen hydronyms like this in Prussia, unfortunately, none of them are older than the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Problems surrounding the symbolic role of these bodies of water in the Slavonic natural-cultural landscape were first introduced in the written sources. For example, the spring Glomacz that was mentioned in Thietmar’s chronicle had a dual character. On the one hand it was connected with predictions about times of peace and war, while on the other hand it was also responsible for

\textsuperscript{41} C. Henneberger, *Erclerung der grossen Preussischen Landtaffel*, vol. 2: *Von den See’n, Strömen, etc.* (Königsberg, 1595), p. 11.
\textsuperscript{42} S. Szczepański, ‘Czy pruskie miejsca święte. Nazwy miejscowe i fizjograficzne z obszaru historycznej Pomezanii i obszarów sąsiednich w dokumentach krzyżackich’, *Pruthenia* 5, pp. 135.
\textsuperscript{43} The catalogue of sites located on islands and waterfronts was presented in work of Chudziak, Kaźmierczak, Niegowski; see also W. Chudziak, ‘Wyspa w Żółtym na Jeziore Zarańskim – na pograniczu rzeczywistości i transcendencji’, in T. Sawicki (ed.), *Studia nad dawną Polską*, vol. 2. (Gniezno, 2009), pp. 47-70, at 63.
\textsuperscript{44} Wojciech Chudziak included within the category of island sanctuaries, both an island on Klasztorne lake and an island on Ostrowite lake; see Chudziak, ‘Przestrzeń pogańskiego sacrum w krajobrazie przyrodniczo-kulturowym Słowian pomorskich’, p. 301, fig. 6.
\textsuperscript{45} Dusburg, p. 52.
\textsuperscript{46} S. Szczepański, ‘Czy pruskie miejsca święte, pp. 145–47.
predicting the prosperity of the whole tribe. The lake where Rethra was said to be located had a similar character.

**CULT STONES**

Stones are another category of natural holy place. These stones, often named devil’s stones, are strongly rooted in folklore. Some Teutonic written sources seem to confirm the sacral function of some of the stones too. It is widely believed that these so-called cult stones were the places where sacrifices were made. In general five categories of stones can be distinguished: 1) stone constructions with a boulder inside; 2) individual boulders; 3) sacrificial stones located within the cemeteries; 4) boulders with slots, often in the form of footprints; 5) stones with deposits underneath them. Unfortunately, the settlement context of most of them is unknown. It is also extremely difficult to offer an interpretation of stones that are believed to have been sacred. In most cases they are simply boulders which, for one reason or another, stand out. It is, therefore, quite reasonable to question their connection to *sacrum*. Even stones which have traces of more or less regular cavities cannot be unquestionably associated with the cult sphere. This issue could be, at least partly, explained using petrographic analysis. However, a great many of the studies thus far have overlooked the sacral function in an attempt to link these stones with settlement and funerary sites, regardless of their chronology.

In the region of Pomerania four different types of holy stones can be distinguished: 1) footprint stones (so-called, ‘god’s feet’); 2) drilling or bowl-shaped stones (which may be related to fires); 3) throne stones (such as is found at Ostów Lednicki, Poznań, Kraków, and probably Gniezno); 4) large stones (which have no sign of human activity but are important to folk culture because of their immense size). Unfortunately, a lack of archaeological work on these stones makes determining...
their cultural and chronological context impossible. In such a situation we must rely on ethnographic sources. Although the role that such stones played in the sacred spaces of the regions is immense, it should be noted that the Romantic vision of seeing these stones as places of sacrifice has no archaeological basis.

**CULTURAL LANDSCAPES**

The cultural landscape is a space where we don’t see many similarities between Slavonic and Prussian culture. In our view, the cultural landscape includes objects created by humans, such as monuments, statues of deities, buildings, and probably temples.

In Prussian culture, for example, we have been unable to identify durable buildings connected with the sacral sphere. There is, however, one category that should be included in any discussion of cultural landscape, i.e. stone statues. These statues, called ‘babas’, represent a category that can be connected with *sacrum*.

Despite many publications and attempts at explaining the phenomenon of Prussian stone ‘babas’, the chronology of their origin has only recently been discovered. This breakthrough occurred in August 2007 at a site called Poganowo. It was the first time that a ‘baba’ was found *in situ* and historically contextualized. The statue was discovered by Wyczółkowski during his excavation at site number four in Poganowo which was initially dated to between the ninth and tenth centuries.

Consequently, the discovery at Poganowo sheds new light on the dating of stone ‘babas’ and confirms their relation with the sphere of cult and beliefs. This statue, though significantly different from other statues, is nevertheless of the same basic type. We must also remember that the chronology of these objects is debatable.

Temples had a more important role in the Slavonic cultural landscape. A great deal of ink has been spilled discussing the many controversies surrounding the existence of temples in the Slavonic

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cultural landscape, however, it is our opinion that use of temples in the Pomeranian region cannot be questioned.\textsuperscript{56} Such objects are known both from written sources and archaeological data. Archaeological excavations have confirmed that were temples in Gross Raden (fig. 3), Parchim, Feldberg, Ralswiek, Wolin, and also in Żółte and Parsęcko.\textsuperscript{57}

These examples demonstrate that all of the buildings interpreted as temples were located on an island or on a hilltop. This cannot be an accidental situation. In fact, the role of the surrounding landscape was central to the selection of the place where the temple was located and was undoubtedly a concerted attempt to restore the temple located on the mythical First Earth that emerged from the proto-ocean.\textsuperscript{58} The presence of temples seems to be a fundamental difference between the natural and cultural landscapes characteristic of the north-west Slavic and Prussian regions.

**CONCLUSION**

The perception of both reality and the ‘sacred world’ in traditional societies was very different from that of modern perceptions. Attempts at (re)-constructing these sacral landscapes are, therefore, very complex and difficult tasks for modern researchers. Our comparative analysis of the religious aspects of the north-west Slavic and Prussian cultures can be summarised as follows. Firstly, the basic role of both nature and atmospheric phenomena in the sacred sphere should be treated as a basic common feature of both cultural circles. This is emphasised when one reads any number of the early medieval written accounts of these regions. The presence and important role of holy groves as the key element in the ‘construction’ of sacred sphere in both areas seems to be a major similarity. One of the fundamental differences that we find in the spatial realisation of the idea of the holy grove is in the form of the so-called island sanctuaries and those located on the top of the hills and mountains: a category of sites emerging from the surrounding landscape. In Prussia there are no

\textsuperscript{56} D.A. Sikorski, ‘Świątynie pogańskich Słowian – czyli o tym jak je stworzono’ in S. Rosik and P. Wiszewski (eds), Cor hominis. Wielkie namiętności w dziejach, źródłach i studiach nad przeszłością (Wrocław, 2007), pp. 377-406.


hills that could be perceived in terms of holiness because of the topography. However, we cannot exclude the possibility that some religious rituals may have been performed on or around some mountains or hills. The situation is slightly different in the Slavic areas, where many of the ‘mountains’ were treated by traditional communities as a realisation of the idea of the *axis mundi*. Islands were also a very significant component of the sacral sphere. In Prussia, however, it is slightly more difficult to answer the question of whether the islands (for there are numerous islands in Prussia) were used for religious purposes, or whether this assumption is just a result of the state of research. The cultural landscape is the space where we find fewest similarities. The anthropomorphic stone statues may be treated as the only component of Prussian cultural landscape undoubtedly connected with the cult sphere. Yet despite a long history of research their role has not been adequately explained. It should be noted that there is no evidence for the existence of temples in the Prussian cultural circle. On the other hand in the Slavic cultural landscape they played a significant role.

**Figures**

![Baltic Sea Map with Sites](image)

Fig. 1: Most important sites mentioned in the paper. 1 - Arkona, Ostrügen, Germany. 2 - Ralswiek, Vorpommern-Rügen, Germany; 3 - Parchim, Ludwigslust-Parchim, Germany; 4 - Gross Raden, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Germany; 5 - Szczecin, comm. Szczecin, Poland; 6 - Wolin, comm. Wolin, Poland; 7 - Tucze, comm. Dobra, Poland; 8 - Trzebiatów, comm. Trzebiatów, Poland; 9 - Żółte, comm. Drawsko Pomorskie, Poland; 10 - Parsęcko, comm. Szczecinek, Poland; 11 - Stare Borne, comm. Bobolice, Poland; 12 - Góra Chełmska, comm. Koszalin, Poland; 13 - Rowokół, comm. Smołdzino, Poland; 14 - Kaldus, comm. Chełmno, Poland; 15 - Tynwałd, comm. Ilawa, Poland; 16 - Dobrocin, comm. Małdyty, Poland; 17 – Perkun’s lacun (former lake), comm. Górowo Iławeckie, Poland; 18 - Krokowo, comm. Jeziorany, Poland; 19 - Poganowo, comm. Kętrzyn, Poland; 20 - Staświny, comm. Miłki, Poland; 21 - Rombinus, Lithuania; 22 - Romanovo (former Pobethen), Kaliningrad oblast, Russia.

Fig. 3: Gross Raden, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Reconstruction of a 9th century Slavic temple http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1a/WalRhad.jpg.
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At first glance, doing comparative research seems relatively easy. Comparison, after all, forms the basis of many of our everyday observations. Any observation can thus be said to be implicitly comparative: against the backdrop of the observer’s individual perspective, previous observations and theoretical background, similarities and differences are brought to the fore, which in turn helps formulate an interpretation of what is seen or what is going on.¹ When such observations turn into a veritable research topic, into a qualitative comparative analysis of various phenomena, the

comparison simply becomes more explicit, and turns the similarities and differences between phenomena into the main object of research. However, such an endeavour may become a different challenge entirely when the phenomena under scrutiny – or the researchers involved, for that matter – have such different backgrounds or operate in such different contexts that not just the objects of research become the subject of comparison, but the methods employed to study them as well.

This is one of the points where the SFB *Visions of Community*, the project within which both authors are working, is breaking new grounds. Many methodological commentaries written thus far have been based on the premise of comparative research within a single discipline, or on one researcher comparing different cases. Rather than looking at comparison as a method only, however, this article also explores the necessity to zoom out even further and look at the implications of having different researchers with different backgrounds and agendas come together in an interdisciplinary project where each of them brings one case to the table. The fact that the researchers themselves usually tend to be deeply entrenched into one side of the comparative watershed almost automatically leads to a willingness to explain differences and similarities using the terminology and discourse that comes to mind most readily, from the cultural and academic background of the disciplines involved. In turn, this engenders most interesting dialogues when attempting to communicate one’s findings to another, and makes comparative research a challenge not only on an individual level, but also from a trans-, cross-, or interdisciplinary perspective. The contributions written for an upcoming Special Issue of *History and Anthropology* already allow us a glimpse of the challenges ahead, and provide some tentative answers, and the message is clear: when attempting cross-cultural comparative studies, we are not only comparing the subject of research – we are also holding our own expertise against the light.

This article should be seen as a first attempt to build upon these initial observations. More specifically, it aims to highlight the methodological challenges encountered in the course of a comparative analysis of religious communities in various cultures, and to present one of the methodological tools developed in the course of the project. After a short introduction, two case

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studies will be presented, each coming from the respective specialisations of the authors – one specializing in Early Medieval Europe from a historian’s perspective, and the other taking an anthropological approach to Medieval South Arabia. First, in order to present a ‘European backdrop’, the Lotharingian monastery of Saint-Mihiel between its foundation in the late eighth century and the composition of the *Chronicon Sancti Michaelis* about three centuries later will be described. Far from taking for granted the communal identity of Saint-Mihiel or the role played by monastic narratives in the construction or consolidation thereof, this section will highlight the role of learning in the self-representation of the community as a dynamic, permeable institution. Additionally, it came into its own at the height of the Carolingian dynasty, right around a time when worldly interests and religious ideas overlapped to a point that to exercise power meant to engage in a certain degree of self-reflection. This could, in short, be considered a time when monastic life and royal ideology were not diametrically opposed, but rather attempted to act in close concord. While not wholly representative for European monastic life throughout the Middle Ages, the fact remains that knowledge was indeed being fostered in a local context with a view towards supporting a larger social whole also served to delineate its boundaries and anchor the community in the world surrounding it. Then the focus will shift to medieval South Arabia, where we will take a closer look at a type of community that is decidedly un-monastic, and which has proven deceptively hard to grasp by modern researchers and contemporary observers alike. These are *hijras*, villages inhabited by those who claimed to be descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, acting as centres of Zaydi Islamic religious and scholarly activity in the turbulent tribal context of medieval Yemen. Finally, it will be argued that, while it remains difficult to find common ground between the two fields, the alienation caused by comparative research and the dialogue between the disciplines does allow for the development of fresh perspectives on both types of communities highlighted.

The goal of these two case studies will not be to demonstrate how the communities studied are indicative of universal tendencies in the ideological or practical aspects of religious communal life. Rather, they are used to propose ways to ‘compare the incomparable’ without adhering too closely to a singular typology, and shed new light on the weals and woes of comparative studies. While neither case is wholly representative of their respective region or religion as a whole, wondering about the Carolingian situation will raise questions concerning the South Arabian context, and studying *hijras* will shed new light on the relation between monastic communities and the world

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When attempting cross-cultural comparison, a logical first step would be to look for phenomena that are at least superficially alike, in order to be able to start the comparative analysis on an empirical level. Even if the ultimate goal of such a research project is not merely to produce quantifiable results, it seems like a worthwhile opening gambit to do a simple side-by-side comparison first, if only to identify those criteria that seem most likely to yield qualitative results as well. Looks may be deceiving, however, and in an interesting case of a self-fulfilling paradox, the simple fact that one starts a comparative analysis from the notion of existing similarities could already lead to getting trapped in other, deeper preconceived notions – a difficulty that is especially palpable in projects consisting of many researchers with as many academic backgrounds and different conceptualisations of the question at hand.

Within each discipline, there often are fundamental differences in understanding the relation between theory and data. Furthermore, any model developed to make sense of the relations between ideal and reality is inherently artificial, as is the exact context in which each sense of community is used in the sources. The discussions and tensions over these ideals that we see in our sources and how to implement them is the object of the comparative approach attempted here, not the development of a reduced model of ideal-types of identities or communities. Choosing which ideals to represent as the important ones for the actors studied also necessitates an explanation of the ‘social logic’ of the sources through which we gauge these ideas and visions.

It is at this point that Verfremdung may prove to be helpful. It is a nigh untranslatable term, popularized by Bertolt Brecht in his work on epic theatre. In its most condensed form, it entails

‘zunächst einfach, dem Vorgang oder dem Charakter, das Selbstverständliche, Einleuchtende zu nehmen und über ihn Staunen und Neugier zu erzeugen (…). Verfremden heißt also Historisieren, heißt Vorgänge und Personen als vergänglich darzustellen’.\textsuperscript{15} According to Brecht, this would be accomplished by, for example, commenting upon the plot as it unfolded, and by continuously reminding his audience that they were essentially spectators who were called upon to actively engage with what they saw. \textit{Verfremdung} would thus be established by steering an audience’s perceptions based on an expectation of their preconceived notions, but all the while reminding them that the narrative is toying with their expectations, and not necessarily with their (f)actual knowledge.

Obviously, this is easier to accomplish in the controlled environment of the theatre than in the infinite complexity of real life; attempting comparative research through interdisciplinary dialogue would imply being author and audience at once. However, the establishment of a \textit{Verfremdungseffekt} is possible in the controlled environment of a comparative study, and could help break through some of the methodological barriers thrown up by academic tradition and cultural background. Researchers should attempt to create a sense of wonder about their own subject as well as about that of others, by engendering a dialogue and by not taking anything for granted – remaining perpetually aware of what they are doing.\textsuperscript{16}

\textbf{ENCLAVES OF LEARNING}

In the course of comparing Christian and Islamic religious communities, it became clear to the authors that the term ‘monastery’ inherently skewed the debate towards a certain degree of Eurocentrism. The term is, after all, bound up with a European Christian tradition. As such, a first step towards \textit{Verfremdung} would be to drop this as a concept denoting anything but European Christian communities, in order to avoid any sense of familiarity whatsoever. For instance, whereas the etymology of the Latin Christian concept of the \textit{monasterium} carries with it the notions of isolation and seclusion, in practice they served a host of additional purposes in addition to their ostensibly religious functions.\textsuperscript{17} As such, in the course of the early Middle Ages, they came to represent an increasing number of socio-economic characteristics that clashed with the


\textsuperscript{17} Cf. the lemma in J.F. Niermeyer et al., \textit{Mediae Latinitatis Lexicon Minus} (Leiden 2002), pp. 702-3.
understanding of a monasterium as an essentially secluded enclave.\footnote{The wide-ranging functions a monastery could attain have been studied for the case of Redon by W. Davies, Small Worlds: The Village Community in Early Medieval Brittany (London, 1988), more generally (but also restricted to one region), see M. Innes, State and Society in the Early Middle Ages The Middle Rhine Valley 400 – 1000 (Cambridge, 2000).}

Conversely, the word hijra is a combination of two almost similar words. Within the specific Islamic discourse where these communities were most prevalent, hijra refers to the act of emigration, away from an unjust ruler and the act of setting up an enclave where the religious law can be upheld and where a righteous religious ruler can be followed.\footnote{For the meaning of this term, see: W Madelung, ‘The origins of the Yemenite Hijra’, [first published in: Arabicus Felix: Luminosus Britannicus: Essays in Honour of A. F. L. Beeston on his Eightieth Birthday. (ed.), Alan Jones, Ithaca 1991], in Religious and Ethnic Movements in Medieval Islam (Ashgate, 1992); R. B. Serjeant, ‘Chapter 5: Ṣanʿāʾ the protected Hijra’, in R.B. Serjeant and R. Lewcock (eds.), Ṣanʿāʾ An Arabian Islamic City, (London, 1983). For earlier meanings of the term hijra, see also P. Crone, ‘The First-Century Concept of Hijra,’ Arabica XLI (1994).}

In Yemen, towards the end of the eleventh century, we see the term being used for specific villages, towns or centres, and not just for the act of emigration. In the discourse of the local tribes, however, the very similar term hajar (and tahjīr) refers to the concept of neutral territory, which must be protected by the surrounding tribes. A market can be declared as neutral, as well as a town, or the house of a scholarly family or a local judge or mediator. Thus the concept of hijra has combined both these meanings, further embedding these communities in a context that was as influenced by local tribes as it was by over-arching religious visions of community.\footnote{Although these communities are not necessarily ‘institutions’ as such, many ideas proposed by K. Thelen, ‘How Institutions Evolve: Insights from Comparative Historical Analysis’, in J. Mahoney and D. Rueschemeyer (eds.), Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 208-40, at pp. 230-35 have been very useful for the current study as well.}

Given these significant differences at both emic and etic levels, a logical next step would be to find a descriptor that distills these communities down to comparable proportions. If ‘community’ is too broad to use, and ‘monastery’ too specific or Eurocentric, a workable compromise could be to find a conceptualisation that encompasses both the form and (part of) the function of the communities we want to compare.\footnote{Cf. on this use of ‘fuzzy concepts’, R. Belohlavek and G.J. Klir, ‘Fuzzy Logic: A Tutorial’, in R. Belohlavek and G.J. Klir (eds.), Concepts and Fuzzy Logic (Cambridge MA, 2011), pp. 45-88, and also, in the same volume and by the same authors, ‘Fallacious Perceptions of Fuzzy Logic in the Psychology of Concepts’, pp. 121-48.}

In the social sciences and humanities, the concept of enclaves usually designates an entity that is spatially, temporally, and by other socially defined means and borders separated from its wider
environment, while simultaneously interacting with it.\(^{23}\) By necessity, this phenomenon results in three forms of co-existing and intersecting relations, namely inside each enclave, among various enclaves of similar or related types, and as the main and defining form of the enclave(s) within the world around them. Enclaves may have various purposes – some of them quite explicit and others more implicit, some of them of primary importance and others only of secondary.\(^{24}\) One way of analytically distinguishing enclaves across different historical periods and various cultural realms is thus the identification of one or the other of their main purposes, according to the actors living there and to the researchers involved.\(^{25}\)

Among the many commonalities between our enclaves, the way they guarded, managed, communicated and (especially) used knowledge necessary for their continued existence, as well as the importance of this learning for the religion they represented, gives us a clear ‘insider’s perspective’ of the tensions between ideal and reality they had to cope with. This, in turn, allows us to more fully understand the visions of community underpinning the existence of the hodgepodge of the – sometimes admittedly bizarre – people we study. As David Ganz has pointed out, studying learning and education highlights ‘the tensions between spiritual fulfilment and resistance to (…) authority’.\(^{26}\) Although the existence of monasteries in the early Middle Ages was often ideologically justified by referring to their mastery over the Power of Prayer, they also functioned as havens of education and managers of knowledge.\(^{27}\) This function connected their idealism to their more earthly concerns – and whenever tensions occur between the two, boundaries are drawn, communities grow together, and enclaves spring into existence.\(^{28}\) For the situation in early Medieval Europe, these tensions and their role in shaping and re-shaping monastic communal identities have been the subject of many multi-faceted studies, approaching this problem from as many angles as the source material would allow.\(^{29}\) This rich research tradition serves as a jumping-
off point for the current research project as well, which aims to expand the conclusions drawn from European studies by applying them in a multi-cultural setting – and *vice versa*. It is for this reason that knowledge, learning and tradition have been singled out here, and the role these play in the ideologies described by contemporary actors, we can attempt comparisons that transcend the boundaries of time and cosmology, between European monasteries and their cross-cultural counterparts. Looking at the ways the actors in religious communities communicated their ideals and practices to subsequent generations is one way to accomplish this.\(^{30}\) As will be argued in this article, this could be a fruitful, if challenging, avenue of comparison.

The lack of a clear definition for ‘enclaves of learning’ as a concept is as much a blessing as a curse in this respect.\(^{31}\) On the one hand, it does leave the object of research open to intuitive selection by the researchers involved, which requires intensive cooperation and a willingness on the part of everybody to familiarize him- or herself with the contexts presented by their colleagues and the ways data models and theories have been connected. ‘Learning’, after all, does not apply solely to the transfer of knowledge *per se*. It encompasses a wide range of interdependent aspects, such as the political or societal ideologies expressed in the knowledge possessed;\(^{32}\) the religious contents and ideas steering the learning itself;\(^{33}\) and of course the practices involved in both processing and using the knowledge gained.\(^{34}\) On the other hand, however, it allows for comparisons that go beyond notions that steer initial impressions, and opens up possibilities to include communities that defy a more classical, narrow ‘monastic’ definition.\(^{35}\) Maintaining a certain degree of abstraction, of

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Verfremdung, may complicate the acquisition of definitive results, but it does catalyse an ongoing discussion into the nature of the communities under scrutiny – and as we will see, it is from the discussions and tensions that the most valuable insights may arise.

**A SHINING EXAMPLE: THE MONKS OF SAINT-MIHIEL ON THE VIA REGIA**

To some extent, both types of enclave under scrutiny have been founded on a religious, ideological basis, and it is precisely such ideals that impinge upon our preconceptions when attempting comparative research at all. With all that in mind, it is now time to turn to the first case study, in which we will take a closer look at the self-representation of the monastery of Saint-Mihiel as an ‘enclave of learning’. Saint-Mihiel, situated in the north-east of present-day France, seems especially suited to the purpose of this study. Firstly, it was founded right around the time that the Carolingians took power, and more or less grew alongside the dynasty itself. Thus, although it could not boast a long and venerable history, such as, for example, the monasteries of Corbie or Fulda, it had to develop its communal identity in the context of the Carolingian reform movement. Conversely, unlike monasteries such as Aniane or Kornelimünster, Saint-Mihiel was not founded in the wake of this same reform movement, but became an intrinsic part of it all the same thanks to the writings of Smaragdus, one of its most important abbots. In his writings, he managed to describe his own ideals about monastic life – and Christian life in general – in such a way as to reflect upon the life in his own community and the empire within which it functioned. Studying these texts as well as their Nachleben will therefore not only enable us to probe deeper into the conception of monastic life of monasteries in the Carolingian age, but also give us a European example which may serve as a benchmark for a comparative look at the hijras of South Arabia.

Saint-Mihiel was founded by the Lotharingian count Wulfoald in the early eighth century, after relics of Saint Michael had almost literally taken root in the region by attaching themselves to a tree. The monastery rose to prominence not only thanks to its central position in the Carolingian

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37 On these monasteries, see especially W. Kettemann, Subsidia Anianensia: Überlieferungs- und textgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur Geschichte Witiza-Benedikts, seines Klosters Aniane und zur sogenannten ‘anianischen Reform’ (Duisburg 2000); N. Kühn, Die Reichsabtei Kornelimünster im Mittelalter. Geschichtliche Entwicklung, Verfassung, Konvent, Besitz, Veröffentlichungen des Stadtarchivs Aachen 3 (Aachen, 1982).


Empire, close to the city of Metz, but also by its association with the court.\(^{40}\) This was already palpable in 755, when Pippin III donated the still-growing cell to the monastery of Saint-Denis in Paris, but only came to full fruition when Smaragdus, ecclesiastical advisor of Charlemagne and Louis the Pious, was made abbot.\(^{41}\) Through this association, as well as through the acquisition of some important relics, the monastery remained a favourite of kings, bishops and nobility, and persisted as a reasonably prosperous foundation until its dissolution in 1790.

The timing is important. From the second half of the eighth century onwards, in the wake of the Carolingian takeover of the Merovingian throne, the new rulers had embarked on a program of ecclesiastical reforms that was as comprehensive as it was ambitious.\(^{42}\) What was at stake was a complete re-definition of what it meant to be a good Christian in a good ‘Christian Empire’, from the top of the hierarchy all the way down to the lowliest parishioner.\(^{43}\) Kings and judges, abbots and bishops, monks and priests all found their positions appraised, and were called upon to reflect upon their own responsibilities and their function in the greater scheme of things. These reforms arguably reached their apex in the last decades of the reign of Charlemagne – set in motion with the issuing of the famous *Admonitio Generalis* of 789 – and the first half of the reign of Louis the Pious, who actually incorporated a considerable amount of monastic ideology in his ‘model for empire’.\(^{44}\) However, they should really be seen as a continuous process of negotiations between prelates and nobility, with the court setting itself up as the ultimate arbiter in the best tradition of the Christian Roman emperors of Late Antiquity.\(^{45}\) Needless to say, education, learning and knowledge stood at the centre of this improvement movement.

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41 It was under Smaragdus, for example, that the monastery received an imperial immunity charter: A. Lesort, *Chronique et Chartes de l’Abbaye de Saint-Mihiel*, 4 vols, Mettensia: Mémoires et Documents Publiés par la Société Nationale des Antiquaires de France 6 (Paris, 1909-1912), p. 320. On the meaning of such charters in the time of Louis the Pious, see T. Kölzer, *Kaiser Ludwig der Fromme (814-840) im Spiegel seiner Urkunden* (Paderborn, 2005).
44 Noble, ‘The monastic ideal as a model for empire’.
The Carolingian ecclesiastical reform efforts did not leave Saint-Mihiel unaffected either. At a most basic level, the monks of this community, like the inhabitants of many other monasteries in the realms, were prompted to evaluate their position, construct their communal identity, and consolidate their place in the Carolingian Empire. Doing so also involved interacting with others who were in the same boat: the community of Saint-Mihiel was involved in large synods where the new world order would be decided, and Smaragdus, its most visible abbot, even weighed in on questions that affected the theological underpinnings of the empire as a whole. And, as explained above, each of their actions at each of these levels would have affected their vision of the community they lived in as well. Thus, one of the paths they followed to find their way in this bewildering world was to set themselves up as an exemplary ‘enclave of learning’ – a move that proved so influential that it was still tangible centuries later.

We can trace the history of Saint-Mihiel through a late twelfth-century cartulary, which contains documents (some falsified) going back to the eighth century, and a small Chronicle that is included in the cartulary, but which was written sometime between 1036 and 1050, during the abbacy of Nanterus. In fact, the chronicle reads more like a *Gesta Nanteri*, as almost two-thirds of the text is taken up by his abbacy, the *furta sacra* he undertook, and the miracles performed by the relics he procured from Rome. It is the story of a community that was no longer centrally positioned in the empire, but ended up in a contested border region, ruled by a count whose allegiance to the emperor was tenuous at best. Religious life was still in full development: the influence of the Cluniac model was making itself known, for example, and preludes to the Gregorian Reform were becoming tangible through the activities of people like Pope Leo IX – himself a Lotharingian. In this context, the actions of Nanterus were vital for the well-being of Saint-Mihiel. Apart from the relics he obtained, he also secured new lands by interceding with the emperor, and thus breathed new life into the community. In the process, he bridged the growing divide between Church and empire, by claiming spiritual support from Rome and material support from the emperor, Conrad II. This is the story of a community still negotiating the lay of the land, carefully manoeuvring between local nobility, imperial power, and papal authority. It also was the story of a venerable institution with a

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long history, though, and that is the narrative arc contained in the first chapters.

After calculating the date of foundation, the author tells how the sanctuary that emerged around the relics of Saint Michael was endowed with the possessions of Wulfoald, and how the monks are granted a royal immunity, first by Pippin, and later by Charlemagne. The author then states that ‘Concerning the abbots leading this place before the time of Charlemagne, we have found nothing written’, so the story picks up in the late-eighth century, when another relic is added to the monastery's collection. Conveniently enough, the author never mentions the charter of 755 in which Saint-Mihiel is conferred to the protection of Fulrad of Saint-Denis after Wulfoald had been convicted of treason (a charter that is only extant in the archives of Saint-Denis, for obvious reasons). A holy place is born, with prestigious relics demonstrating divine favour, and local and supra-regional power-brokers showing their support.

Then, Smaragdus, whose reputation and merits shine ‘like a precious gem’, was elected abbot. The author continues:

'It would be superfluous to sing his praise and glory, because, even if we remain silent, the books he edited are sufficiently eloquent, and they show with a bright light how ingenious he was in matters divine and secular. Above all, that book called the Diadema Monachorum shines as an example of his piety and sanctity. In fact, he could not have given such a lucid teaching on virtues if he had not himself had the experience of their practice'.

What is more, Smaragdus, ‘prudent and discerning’ as he was, considered that the hilltop sanctuary would be too difficult to reach, and established a second monastery in the Meuse valley, the place we now know as Saint-Mihiel, although the relics of Saint Michael remained on their hilltop. ‘However’, the author justified the decision, ‘this change of scenery was not contrary to the archangel's will, (...) because, although his angelical purity usually chooses high places for his veneration, (...) we reckon he would not deem it unworthy for humans who require places more apt for their condition, so that

51 Chronicon Sancti Michaeli, cc. 3-4, at p. 80: ‘De abbatibus autem qui loco praefuerunt ante tempora Caroli Magni nihil dictum reperimus’.
54 Chronicon Sancti Michaeli, c. 5, at pp. 80-81: ‘Qui Smaragdus revera praesagio se sui nominis conformans, inter celebres sui temporis viros ut pretiosa gemma meritis et fama resplenduit....’
55 Chronicon Sancti Michaeli, c. 5, at pp. 80-81: ‘... de cuius laudibus et gloria nos aliuud garrire superfluum est, cum eas nobis taciturnos libri quos edidit sufficienter eloquentur – in quibus luce clarius appare, quam perspicaci ingenio in divina et saeculari claruerit – praecipueque liber ille, quem Diadema monachorum intitulavit, religiositatem sanctitatatemque eius evidentissime declaret. Non enim tam lucidam de virtutibus doctrinam dare posset, nisi ipsarum in sese naturam exercitorum experientia persensisset’.

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they may implore the intercession of the angels in heaven’. According to his epitaph, Smaragdus had in effect made Saint-Mihiel ‘suitable for humans’, and created a place from where they could learn how to reach the city on the hill only six miles away.

In this sense, it is interesting that the author picked the *Diadema Monachorum* as the quintessential work by Smaragdus. His entire corpus was actually much larger, and also included a treatise on the *Ars Grammatica* by Donatus, a Commentary on the *Regula Benedicti*, explaining how the (re)implementation of the ‘original’ *Regula* and the accompanying Carolingian reforms should be incorporated into local monastic traditions; and a work commonly seen as an early example of a *Fürstenspiegel*, the *Via Regia*. Of these, the last two, together with the *Diadema Monachorum*, form something of a trilogy on monastic life – or even on Christian life in general.

First, the *Via Regia* uses the road as a metaphor for the education of people in a position of authority. The *Via Regia* is called holy by the prophet [Isaiah], and would enable those taking heed of its teachings to ascend towards Heaven. As also used in several other moral treatises at the time, the Biblical *Via Regia* was a road through enemy territory that the people of Israel wished to use (peacefully) – it is not a road for kings exclusively, but a road that is kept safe through the ability to govern one’s self, which one may accomplish by following the ‘way, truth and life’ represented by Christ.
As such, the *Via Regia* was not so much a mirror for princes *per se*, but rather a reflection on the perfect Christian life, the life of those walking on the 'king's highway' as a metaphor for the difficult road to perfection made accessible through the *Regula Benedicti*. It is therefore hardly surprising that similar imagery was used as a recurring motif in the *Commentary* to show how the *Regula* is a road, a ‘narrow path to life’, a ‘*via sancta*’ that enables monks to ‘climb swiftly to the golden realms’. The *Rule*, according to Smaragdus, was called a ‘*via regia*’, which ‘regulates the monk’s mind’.

If the *Commentary* was composed as a way of showing how the regular life ought to be lived in individual monasteries, and the *Via Regia* was meant to demonstrate how all Christians have a responsibility to themselves to become worthy of walking the King’s Highway, the *Diadema Monachorum* continued this train of thought by showing how it is the internalization of Christian teachings that allowed more experienced monks to acquire a *diadema* – a symbol of spiritual authority conferred upon people who are able ‘to feel invisible, spiritual joy about the chastity of the body and the cleanliness of the heart’ just as ‘we rejoice externally about the consecration of an altar in a house of God’. Although it is clear that this work was aimed primarily at a monastic audience, Smaragdus seems to continuously imply that this *diadema* was not exclusively meant for monks. It was meant for all good Christians – but monks had the opportunity to live in circumstances where they could truly aspire to live a perfect life, and thus serve as an example to those around them. One way to accomplish this was through prayer, described as a ‘matter of the heart, not of the lips’ – which might in turn be accomplished by constant (self-) education.

In the Prologue to the *Regula*, Benedict characterized monasteries as ‘Schools for the Lord’s service’, and Smaragdus comments that:

‘…just as boys in a school learn – and are disciplined – what is necessary for them and grasp...'

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68 Smaragdus, *Diadema Monachorum*, c. 100: ‘Et quomodo visibiliter de templi altaris consecratione gaudemus, sic invisibiliter de corporis castita e vel animi puritate spirituale gaudium habere mereamur’.
what profits them in the future, so monks in the school of a regular monastery must learn both what enables them to live uprightly in the present, and what may make them happy in the future; and they must put this into practice'.

As he further explains in his *Diadema*, the understanding thus gained can be deepened by praying and reading, which opens a dialogue with God. ‘When we pray, we speak to God’, Smaragdus states, ‘but when we read, God speaks to us’. And so one continues to learn a ‘well-ordered way of right living’, ‘because sacred scripture in some way grows with its readers: it becomes familiar to its unskilled readers, and yet the learned always find new things there’.

Taken together, these three works represent Smaragdus’ reaction to the tensions experienced by the Carolingian ecclesiastical reform movement, thanks to which monasteries could no longer simply rely on their status as Christian communities par excellence. They would have to bring more to the table, and it was up to Smaragdus to show how monks, through learning and education, should become enclaves unto themselves, with their ‘internal cloister’ strengthened by the purity of their demeanour. As if living up to a strictly monastic idealism was not difficult enough, they would now have to carve out a place as Christian communities in a thoroughly Christianized empire – which had in turn partly modelled itself on the ideal represented by the monasteries upon which it was founded. It is hardly surprising that these tensions still echoed through the Meuse Valley two centuries later, and that the author of the *Chronicle of Saint-Mihiel* singled out the work of Smaragdus as one of the cornerstones of his community. In fact, between Smaragdus and Nanterus, no one abbot seems to be worthy of his particular attention – he merely lists their names. To the author, it was Nanterus who ushered Saint-Mihiel into the new millennium, but the true strength of the monastery was within the community of monks, and the heart and soul of that community was shaped thanks to Smaragdus. His role in the *Chronicle* was a vital step towards Saint-Mihiel’s development into an ‘enclave of learning’, which, as Smaragdus explained, need not be limited to one single person or one individual community:

‘…if the dwelling of one person is properly called a monastery (...) we must ask why the dwelling of many persons established in one place is also called a monastery, unless perhaps

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70 Smaragdus, *Diadema Monachorum*, c. 3, at col. 597D: ‘Nam cum oramus, ipsi cum Deo loquimur, cum vero legimus, Deus nobiscum loquitur’.


...it is because there is one faith, one baptism, one heart and one soul [cf. Ephesians IV.5] in all monks who are living good and upright lives, just as there was earlier in the religion of those who believed rightly and lived good lives.74

His lucid teachings allowed these monks to remain unified and thereby become a beacon in these turbulent times. To retain this status, they would have to learn and keep learning, and thus be able to guide others along the via regia as well.

The religious and educational function of monasteries in Medieval Western Europe has long been established in modern research. More work still needs to be done to fully comprehend the place of Smaragdus in the history and historiography of his community, and of the purpose of his writings – and the use he makes of his patristic source material – in the wider context of the Carolingian correctio-movement. However, the author of the Chronicle of Saint-Mihiel seems to have wanted to stress it was Smaragdus who formulated the importance of monasteries as part of the sacred foundations of the Carolingian Empire. As such, while it remains to be seen to what extent Smaragdus was representative for the Carolingian ecclesia as a whole, he did give his own community a clear sense of purpose that tried to steer a course between conservatism and reforming zeal by focusing on the learning that allowed the monks to become good Christians. Their function as ‘managers of knowledge’ has in a way disconnected the works of Smaragdus from an a priori (Christian) monastic identity that would be inextricably bound up with the (Christian) ideology of the Carolingians.74 Having done so, it has become possible to use the case of Saint-Mihiel as a background to an attempt to further our understanding of a type of community that is altogether more difficult to define. These are the hijras of medieval South Arabia – and it is to these hijras that we now turn.

MANAGERS OF KNOWLEDGE: HIJRAS IN MEDIEVAL SOUTH ARABIA

‘A place in which there is something like a convent (khānaqāh) inhabited by worshippers and scholars (ahl al-‘ilm).75

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73 Smaragdus, Expositio, c. 3: ‘Monasterium enim, ut praedictum est, etiam unius monachi habitation dicitur. Sed quaeerendum est, si unius habitatio proprie monasterium vocatur, propert idia Graecae linguae, qua dicitur monas unum, cur multorum habitatio in uno positorum monasterium dicatur, nisi forte, ut arbitror, properterea quia una fides, unum baptisma, cor unum et anima una est in omnibus bene et iuste viventibus monachis, sicut prius in religione recte credentium et bene viventium fuit’.

74 On this ideology, see, in addition to Noble, ‘Monastic ideal’, also M. de Jong, ‘Sacrum palatium et ecclesia: L’autorité religieuse royale sous les Carolingiens (790-840)’, Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales 58.6 (2003), 1243-1269.

Starting from this explanation of what a Yemeni *hijra* is by the geographer Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī written sometime between 1212 and 1229 for his contemporary readership in the Levant, the following section will present a comparative case focusing on the institution of the *hijra* in medieval South Arabia (ca. 900-1300 AD) and how it was represented by some of their inhabitants.\(^7\)

Far less research has been done on *hijras* than on monasteries in Europe. For our purpose, this is not necessarily a disadvantage, since it allows us to maintain enough distance to discuss how to actually conceptualize and understand what a *hijra* is. It is a case that is sufficiently different from the European one and can serve the purpose of *Verfremdung*. Thus it is highly comparable in the sense that it can provide us with new alternative understandings of ‘enclaves of learning’. The aim is not to study one specific *hijra*, but rather to provide a generalized and representative overview of *hijras* in the medieval period with a focus on the management of knowledge in a way that is useful in a comparative perspective. The historical anthropological case has been written after having interacted with scholars of European medieval history and medieval monasticism and although the case may seem exotic for a Europeanist readership, it is intended to be clear also for historians in general and historians of European monasticism in particular.

The mountainous and slightly barren landscape of the highland plateau in the north western part of today’s Yemen favoured religious communities and networks who operated within the existing tribal political landscape and who cooperated with various fragments of tribes or with local lords. The institution of *hijra* is thus distinctively tribal in that it could only exist in the form we know it in a tribal context, even though the inhabitants of the *hijras* saw themselves as fundamentally different from the tribal elites and communities. Similar ‘enclaves of learning’ in the Sunni lowlands of Yemen were rather called ‘schools’ (*madrasas*) or *ribāṭs*\(^7\), and tended to be situated inside urban centres like Zabid. The actors in the *madrasas* did not depend on a genealogical defined community in the same way as did the Zaydis in their *hijras*. The Zaydi *hijras* also had a separate identity representing the Zaydi tradition or branch of Islam, while most schools in Lower Yemen were Sunni, thus being more integrated into the form of Islam followed by a majority of the people in the Islamic world at the time.

According to tradition, the first person to introduce Zaydism to the highlands of Yemen was Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn in the year 897 AD. He came from the area around Medina in northwest Arabia, and

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76 This explanation of what a *hijra* is was found under Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī’s [1179-1229] entry of ‘Waqash’, which was the main *hijra* of the *Mutarrifiyya* in their mature phase before they were declared to be heretical and put down. Ismā‘īl al-Akwa’ (ed.), *Al-Buldān al-Yamanīyya ūnda Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī* (Beirut, 1988), p. 301; Madelung, ‘The Origins’, p. 26.

claimed to be a descendent of the Prophet Muhammad. He initially settled as a mediator among the Khawlan tribes in the northern part of Yemen, but soon claimed to be the leader of the community of believers and took the imamic title ‘al-Hādī ilā al-Ḥāqq al-Mubīn’ (‘The Guide to the Clear Truth’). He set up a mosque and established an enclave of learning just outside the market town of Sa’da. He took most of the northern highland south towards Sanaa through military campaigns, uniting some of the previously conflicting tribes in the process, if only for a short period.

After al-Hādī’s death in 911, Zaydism was mainly confined to the area around Sa’da where his descendants lived, and it was not until several centuries later that politically strong Zaydi charismatic rulers (‘imams’) appeared, along with a whole new class or stratum in society. Most of the Zaydi elite claimed to be descendants of the Prophet and that they therefore had a naturally elevated and authoritative role in terms of managing the Zaydi Islamic tradition of knowledge. Most explicitly, they were the only group out of which the imam could be recruited. At first, they were called Ashraf (sing. Sharīf), sharaf originally meaning honour – although in modern times they are called Sāda (sing. sayyid). One can say that they formed an elite in terms of religious knowledge, partly based on idealised genealogies of religious authority – something made all the more visible by the fact that they did not allow their daughters to marry into the local Yemeni population.78

However, this form of elite Zaydism with strong political ambitions was not the only form that emerged after its initial introduction to the Yemeni highlands. In the years around 1050, or even before, we also see the start of a populist movement, largely consisting of local Yemeni tribesmen or low-status individuals.79 Seeking protection from local wealthy landowners, they set up their own enclaves of learning where they engaged in scholarly activities, discussions and rituals. Some of them were part-time members, and only came to visit certain times of the year.80

Those participating in the formation of these hijras were also represented as men of honour and personal quality (fāḍl), not because they were related to the Prophet by descent, but because of the merits they had earned by showing generosity and hospitality towards their fellow Zaydis/Muslims and because of their love for God, knowledge and fellow community members. At least, this is how they are presented in one of the main historiographical/hagiographical works written about their

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sect, composed around 1150 by one of the most prominent Zaydi scholars of his time, Musallam al-Lahjī.81

The branch of Zaydis described by him was called the Muṭarrifiyya after its alleged eponymous founder Muṭarrif b. Shihāb, even though the movement had probably already existed in an early form before his appearance.82 These Muṭarrifis usually called themselves Zaydis, probably to invoke the orthodoxy of their tradition, something that was often disclaimed by the Ashrāf-Zaydis, whom the Muṭarrifis called al-Mukhtariʾa, after a theological concept much discussed at the time.83 It was the Muṭarrifiyya who first set up enclaves of learning explicitly called hijras, especially after 1100.84 Most of these were located in the areas west of Sanaa at a distance from the Zaydi imams who usually controlled the areas further north, especially after 1150. This explains how they were able to continue their activities, while opposing the Ashrāf-dominated Zaydis (al-Mukhtariʾa) in doctrinal and theological matters. Eventually, however, the conflict between the Muṭarrifiyya and the Imam al-Manṣūr ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥamza (d. 1217) escalated to the point that he, after having them declared heretical in 1215–6, sent in his army to destroy their enclaves, and stop their activities altogether. After this decisive historical event, hijras were places only inhabited by Zaydi Ashrāf, and from then onward a hijra became synonymous with an enclave of ashrāf population in an otherwise tribal context.85 Towards the end of the medieval period, several of these hijras increasingly became involved in the administration of the Zaydi theocratic state, although many of them also remained quite independent or even centres of opposition.

Most hijras had the term ‘hijra’ in the name, like Hijrat Waqash (meaning ‘the Hijra of Waqash’). However, many of the early hijras were not explicitly called a hijra, and therefore it is problematic to define them as such. This especially applies to Ashrāf-dominated villages in the early period under scrutiny here. In those cases, one would have to look at other criteria, such as the presence of scholarly activities and the presence of protection agreements with the surrounding tribes to see if we can categorize them as hijras even if they are not called so in our sources. To complicate matters further, some hijras were hijras for a generation or two, but then took the appearance of a regular village of farmers populated by Ashraf. Oftentimes, the name-element hijrat would be dropped, whereas other villages called hijra today may not fit to the ideal type of an enclave of learning as defined in our comparative project. Again, contextualization as well as awareness of time, place and

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81 Idem.
82 Heiss and Hovden (forthcoming).
83 The name al-Mukhtariʾa comes from the theological concept of ikhtirāʾ, (creation ex nihilo). See ʿAlī Muhammad Zayd, Tayyārāt.
84 This point is elaborated by Madelung in The Origins.
85 The exception to this are hijras inhabited by Zaydi scholarly families not descending from the Prophet, the so called fiqahāʾ or qudāḥ (‘jurists’). Examples of this are well known from more recent periods.
circumstance is of the essence.

From this short historical overview, at least four criteria or characteristics for a *hijra* emerge:

1. A village as a protected enclave in agreement with surrounding tribes
2. Inhabited by Ashrāf/Sāda (but not so for the *hijras* of the Muṭarrifīyya)
3. Centres of religious-scholarly activity
4. That such settlements were explicitly called a *hijra* at a point of time, for example ‘Hijrat Waqash’.

Not all of these four criteria would always be fulfilled in the period under scrutiny. Some historians, such as Ismāʿīl al-Akwa, tend to emphasise aspects of learning and managing knowledge when writing about the history of *hijras*, while for other historians the Zaydi identity is a more important feature. Moreover, the idea that the inhabitants of a *hijra* set themselves outside the tribal system by establishing a ‘de-militarized’ zone devoted to scholarly activities exclusively is also problematic; many Ashrāf settlements were not neutral enclaves, and many were involved in local armed conflicts. A tribal meeting ground, market, scholar, mediator or *shaykh* can also be declared to have *hijra* status of protection, but this phenomenon would only partly fit with the phenomenon we want to describe here. Thus, the limits of our proposed definition are not absolute. Depending on which phenomena we are want to represent, we can and should keep the definition open and flexible, with several alternative ideal types in the middle.

Using ‘Enclaves of Learning’ as a tool, even more questions can be raised about life in these *hijras* and the visions of community the inhabitants promoted. One of the most central notions was the focus on (Islamic) learning and the study and upkeep of this vast written culture. Inhabitants of *hijras* engaged in a wide range of scholarly and religious activities. Some of these were institutionalised through foundations (*waqf*), which offered salaries for teachers and scholarships for students. But probably, most of these activities were informal and based on loose networks, and on

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87 See Puin, *The Yemeni Hijra Concept*.
88 So far, we only have few examples of endowments and foundations (*waqf*) from the early medieval period in the Zaydi areas of Yemen, only much later, from the Ottoman (after around 1550) and following Qāsimī period do we know with certainty that *waqf* was common. The important Yemeni historian Ismāʿīl al-Akwa only found two schools (*madāris*) in the northern Zaydi areas referred to as ‘schools’ in his seminal work on madrasas in Yemen, namely Madrasat al-Shāhīl and Madrasat Raḥbat al-Sūd. He relates that the important scholar Ḥumayd b. Aḥmad al-Muḥallī donated foundations of land (*waqqafa‘ amrādī*) for these two schools and that he died in 1254, *al-Madāris* pp. 135-6. Perhaps his father was the al-Faqīḥ Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Muḥallī who, on the order of the imam al-Manṣūr ʿAbd Allāh b. Ḥamza, was sent to teach
patronage from wealthy individuals, especially in the early history of the Mutarrifi-Zaydi hijras of the mediaeval period. Some of the scholars were local inhabitants living with their families; others were travelling around to various hijras. When a hijra was a village of Ashrāf population, we must also assume that most of the individuals were not experts in religious knowledge but rather engaging in agriculture, not to mention their families including women and children. From ethnographic evidence from more recent periods we know that within or near hijras there could also be low status individuals and families who performed work considered demeaning for the Ashrāf.

The internal social sphere in most hijras was thus much larger than the circle of student and teachers active there: a hijra was often more of a full-scale village, including activities and institutions of learning, rather than the school only.

Al-Akwa' writes that few Zaydi madrasas (schools) existed, or at least that this term was not employed all that often. For him and for many other historians, a madrasa came to mean a Sunni institution while in the Zaydi areas the scholarly activities took place in hijras. One example of the few Zaydi madrasas was Madrasat Sharaf al-Dīn at Kawkabān which was built shortly after 1500. However, this madrasa was not like the grand and elaborate schools founded by the elites of the Rasūlid or Īthārid dynasties in Sunni, Lower Yemen; this was more a local mosque that happened to be called a madrasa, according to al-Akwa'. In Lower Yemen, we know of madrasas being founded already from the time of the Ayyubid occupation of 1197-98 and onwards. Some few Zaydi madrasas were later built in cities and urban areas such as Sanaa and Dhamār by Imam Sharaf al-Dīn (r. 1506-55). Still, scholarly activities in the rural Zaydi north was mainly confined to numerous small hijras where there was usually no specific building or institution called madrasa, but where schooling probably mostly took place in the local mosque or reception rooms, supported financially by donations from wealthy families and/or through foundations (waqf) for that purpose, and probably managed by the guardian (mutawallī) of the local mosque.
Most students in the *hijras* probably only learned how to read and write, to recite the Quran and the basics of Islamic law. Only educated individuals engaged in high-level discourses of philosophy, theology, history and wrote legal and exegetical commentaries. Sometimes this high-level discourse took political dimensions when different political elites supported various fractions of theologians and these theological differences were re-moulded into populist slogans and made more generally understandable, as for example during the many debates around the years 1150-1200 on the topic on natural or divine causality.\(^93\)

Important historical sources from this time are biographies of various Zaydi imams, in addition to the already mentioned biographically arranged history of the Muṭarrifiyya sect written by one of its main leaders, Musallam al-Laḥjī (probably died in 1150). His work describes various members of this local, bottom up form of Zaydism, which started roughly a century and half before his writings.\(^94\) Of course, he did not claim that this sect only started then: in the first volume\(^95\) he begins with the first Zaydi imams in Yemen, al-Hādī and his two sons and throughout his work he emphasises that the ‘Zaydis of Yemen’, as he called his own sect, were founded on Zaydi orthodoxy, especially in the doctrines of the first imam who introduced Zaydism to Yemen in 897, al-Hādī ilā al-Ḥaqq. The *hijras* mentioned in al-Laḥjī’s work are places where pious individuals, students and teachers of the religious sciences, and worshippers could meet and stay together, but without the strict laws and rules we know from European monastic culture. For al-Laḥjī, personal piety, hospitality and sharing of wealth were the first order personal qualities (*fadl*) originating, and manifesting themselves in, love for God, love for knowledge and the fellow Muslims. According to him, living together in confined *hijras* was not the only way of being a good Muslim, but it was a good place to practice and engage with the faith and to keep contact with the fellow believers.

By describing the sect members in this way, al-Laḥjī also created a counter-discourse to the genealogy based (*nasab*) honour of the Ashrāf Zaydis and their imams. For instance, through his use of narratives attested by chains of transmissions and sect members, he ‘documented’ that the earlier members of the Muṭarrifiyya had the piety, hospitality, wisdom and knowledge to exist in their own right, based on individually achieved merit rather than on descent from the Prophet. Especially

\(^93\) For a description of the doctrinal ‘battle’ between the Muṭarrifiyya and the Mukhtari’a Zaydis, see: Jan Thiele, *Theologie in der jemenitischen Zaydiyya: die naturphilosophischen Überlegungen des al-Ḥasan ar-Raṣṣās* (Leiden, 2013); Zayd, *Tayyārāt, ʿAbd al- ʿAfī, al-Ṣīrāʿ al-fīkārī*. For an example of a story of such a ‘populist’ version were the arguments are made understandable for others than experts, see the story about hail in al-Sīra al-sharīʿa al-Mansūriyya vol. 2, pp. 852-53.

\(^94\) al-Laḥjī, *Akhbār al-Zayidiyya*. The most important of his extant works is the fourth volume, in which he describes members of the Muṭarrifiyya and their lives and acts since around 1000 until his own time.

radical was his assertion that low-status individuals with demeaning jobs could have good personal qualities. Thus, he gives us a unique insight into the social history of that time – especially so in the vivid descriptions of the ‘enclaves of learning’ that were so important to his sect.

CONCLUSION: A SENSE OF WONDER

The two case studies presented in this article not only demonstrate the differences between, for instance, Arabian and European ‘enclaves of learning’, but also the different approaches and methodologies used by each of the co-authors – which in turn showcases the advantages of a comparative approach involving multiple specialists in their respective fields. The broad approach to the study of hijras, necessitated by the fact that these communities and the texts they produced are still a largely untapped phenomenon in the field of South Arabian studies can be streamlined by observations made from the study of European monasticisms, where cultural familiarity and long-standing academic traditions allow researchers a relatively high level of sensibility towards questions of community formation and consolidation, as well as regarding the interplay between idealism and pragmatism as evidenced by the sources. On the other hand, the Verfremdungseffekt created by the comparison with the South Arabian enclaves presented here have caused helpful creative tensions which enabled the researchers to re-evaluate their own preconceived notions both on an emic and an etic level.

The comparative process may teach participants not only about the object they study, but also about the methodologies they employ. The fact that the community Saint-Mihiel, and especially its abbot Smaragdus, had its roots in a context where learning and self-reflection were seen as important qualities for their sort monastic endeavour further emphasise this point. Rather than considering Saint-Mihiel to be an enclave of learning representative for the general intellectual climate at the time, however, the insights that Smaragdus – and, more importantly, his representation in the Chronicon several centuries later – first and foremost elucidate ways in which the community was aware of itself as an enclave of learning. More research is definitely needed to extend these observations to a larger early medieval European context, by comparing these initial observations to depictions from other cases in the same cultural sphere.

97 W. Pohl, ‘History in Fragments: Montecassino’s Politics of Memory’, Early Medieval Europe 10 (2001), pp. 343-74 for both a methodological approach and a case study showing how this functioned on a pragmatic, communal level.
The description of the *hijras* in the second case study relies on generalised hypotheses and models of how we can see the Yemeni medieval *hijras* in a comparative light. These generalisations have, in turn, been guided by ‘learning’ as a theme. The problem of how to define the medieval *hijras* and classify them could only be touched upon briefly here and indeed much more research is needed before one reaches the level attained by researchers of European medieval monasticism. For now, however, a level of abstraction and generalisation was unavoidable. Still, once a certain point of *Verfremdung* is reached, we can study *hijras* as ‘enclaves of learning’. The questions posed by European medieval scholars of their sources may help guide further research into the question what a *hijra* was, and how it was understood and communicated by various authors and actors at the time as well as in subsequent centuries.

The discrepancy between the levels of community in the case studies presented may hamper our ability to draw conclusions applicable to both cases. It is, after all, difficult to identify commonalities and differences based on a close reading of the source material emanating from a single monastic community on the one hand, and a contextualized overview of the developments of regional religious communities and their institutions on the other. However, this ought not to be the ultimate aim of cross-cultural comparative studies. Any similarities that do occur, as far as they have not served as the basis for the comparison in the first place, should be the basis for further questions in the specific fields rather than the start of a search for the lowest common denominator, which would lead to conclusions that are so broad as to become meaningless. If anything, multi-angled, qualitative comparative research should make people more sensitive to the vicissitudes of contextualization and generalisation, and sharpen the edge of local social logics instead of grinding them down.

The goal of our enterprise has not been to define ‘enclaves of learning’ in a way applicable to all cultures, and it should also be noted that this conceptualization has been tailor-made to suit the needs of this particular comparative study.99 As a soft concept, it has proven useful to bounce ideas off and formulate new questions concerning the many ‘shades of meaning’ involved in explaining the existence and function of the communities studied in Europe and Arabia.100 For instance, the concept has proven useful to re-appraise the function of monastic communities in Europe in the face of ever-changing religious reform movements throughout the early and high Middle Ages, which in turn led to a bewildering diversity of different communities hidden under the guise of ‘orders’,

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99 D. Rueschemeyer, ‘Can One or a Few Cases Yield Theoretical Gains?’, in Mahoney and Rueschemeyer (eds.), *Comparative Historical Analysis*, pp. 305-36 points out the weaknesses of using only a limited number of cases, which according to him leads to ‘virtually insurmountable obstacles’ to obtaining usable comparative results. However, his underlying assumption is that comparative research should ideally lead to ‘a universally applicable social theory’, whereas the goal of this article is to make more theoretical gains and possibly prepare the way for a more substantial comparative analysis of our ‘enclaves of learning’.

‘monasticism’ or other broad and abstract concepts. Using the idea of an ‘enclave’ to make them comparable also helps bridge the gaps between the ideology they represented in the sources they produced and the pragmatic considerations they had when inscribing them. Conversely, describing these communities in terms of guarding, fostering and communicating knowledge and teaching(s) will allow students of hijras to regard them as the permeable enclaves they were, and not merely as a network of teachers. More generally, it has allowed participants to go beyond the dichotomy of communities either reacting against or acting in conformity with their surroundings. It has created a more acute sensitivity to the possibilities and shortcomings of the sources used, which were themselves the product of compromises – they were part of negotiations between the different levels of community that come together in enclaves of learning. Like the comparative method itself, they show the fluidity and multiplicity of the concepts that have acquired a much more static, high-threshold meaning in individual disciplines operating in isolation.

On a methodological level, ‘enclaves of learning’ represent the need for a certain awareness required for every trans-disciplinary comparative enterprise. Awareness of the starting point of the research, for example – whether to begin from a community within a larger framework of conflicting ideologies and practices, or to start from an ideal type and see whether individual communities measure up to it. Far from attaining a compromise, it is important to allow for a concept that enables researchers to look in either direction. Additionally, it should also help to remind all those involved that that every discipline is inherently idiosyncratic and relies on long and valuable traditions. In order to reach a situation in which the comparative researchers can communicate on an equal footing, a dialogue must be established. At its most basic level, ‘enclaves of learning’ is not an answer to the question of what is being compared, but part of the question itself, intended to spark debates about what is studied in the first place. In the process, the idea is to lower the walls between disciplines instead of erecting a conceptual labyrinth.

The point is to not look at borders around our (and our subjects’) categories, but to try to see how these borders are constantly breached and crossed in pragmatic ways often contrary to the ideal. This is why we need etic and analytical terms to describe what we see, which does not fit with what should have been seen in the first place. Verfremdung consists of the language of analysis and etic descriptions we use to make our study of objects comparable, and it is through interdisciplinary debates and discussions that researchers may keep the distance to their study objects that is

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necessary to compare them. As such, a comparative project such as this, which almost forces its participants into a state of Verfremdung, is also about rediscovering one’s own subject, reappraising one’s own discipline, and re-establishing a sense of wonder about the world behind the sources. The authors strive to be sensitive to similarities without taking them at face value, and acquaint themselves with different discourses before starting our mission. ‘Enclaves of learning’ still have something to teach us.
INTRODUCTION

Historians can be described as monarchists in their assessments of the tenth and eleventh centuries. The structures of royal government have been explored and extolled as the precursors to modern notions of democracy and nationalism. This line of enquiry has focused on the period through an administrative lens, thus seeing the study of royal courts, laws and offices. The greatest example of this can be seen in the ‘maximum view’ developed by James Campbell, who reasoned that the English kingdom in the tenth century was a nation state defined by its central authority, uniform institutions and national language.¹ However, this creates a determinist outlook with kingships and

kingdoms appearing as the inevitable form of rule in the Middle Ages. Furthermore, it has cast the aristocracy as rebellious and traitorous because they were the only social group that could muster power within a kingdom to challenge a king’s ‘central’ authority. A crucial problem in the construct of Campbell’s paradigm is that the ‘uniform’ administrative structures such as shires, earldormanries and, later, earldoms can be seen in the previous centuries through the former Anglo-Saxon heptarchy kingdoms. Moreover, the theory negates the possibility of the existence of regional cultures that were based not only on past kingdoms, but also on geographical landscapes. I intend to challenge the ‘maximum view’ of Campbell in favour of a regional model and, therefore, a framework that promotes the authority of regional aristocratic lordship. This will show that cultural provinces prevailed and were inhabited by pre-existing identities that did not perceive themselves through the rule of a monarch. By contrast, they understood their identity in relationship to personal family ties, culturally symbolic locations and geographical features. However, before providing an overview, it is crucial to highlight the benefit of comparative study in research. A comparative framework will allow an investigation into the levels of regional identity in North Sea Europe. In his paper on comparative history and his assessment of the methodology’s place in the field, Chris Wickham successfully outlined the key reasons for its use. He stressed that comparative studies were the closest point a historian could come to testing theories. Wickham stated that ‘no historical explanation can be regarded as convincing without some attempt at comparative testing; everything else is provisional.’ Comparative studies are not new within research into the Middle Ages; however, they are an underused medium. Therefore, an additional aim for this paper will be to promote comparative research. The paper will first explore the North Sea as a zone for interaction in the Middle Ages. Following this, the key regional terms will be explained; these include territory, cultural provinces, contact zones, and central place theory. This will allow progression to the four regions in question, which include Essex in eastern England; the Vexin and Arques in Eastern Normandy; Guines in western Flanders; and Trøndelag in central Norway. In all four case studies evidence will be derived from written texts in line with Wickham’s argument for the use of similar


sources when investigating a comparison.6 Unfortunately, this paper is not able to explore the religious impact on aristocratic territory. However, for the Christian kingdoms, the majority of sources used are from ecclesiastic authors who contribute to our understanding of medieval territory. Monastic communities, collegiate churches and cathedral priors were often maintained through the patronage of local aristocrats. Aristocrats participated in patronage as it was believed that it would provide salvation for the soul.7 The family would impart gifts for, or found, a monastic community and in return would be the beneficiaries of prayer and have a place of burial. These gifts were seen as an integral part of their status.8

The North Sea is the interconnecting cog of the comparative analysis of the four regions (see fig. 1). Only recently has enquiry arisen into North Sea Europe for the earlier medieval period. Robert Liddiard asserted in a recent publication on the North Sea World and its relationship with medieval East Anglia that this sea should not be seen as a barrier; rather, it should be considered as a means of connection for people, goods and ideas.9 Additionally, Tom Williamson, in the same publication as Liddiard, argued that Essex and Northern France were closer to the Channel than the North Sea world itself; however, Liddiard maintained that the North Sea world could be one that contained numerous worlds.10 The revival of the North Sea Network during the late-tenth and early-eleventh centuries did not occur because of political authority. Instead, the revival was instigated by trade.11 Furthermore, it was not simply an outlet used by Scandinavian raiders as often can appear the case in modern historiographies. Lords such as Hereward the Wake can be seen traversing across the North Sea in search of service.12 Now that the existence of a network of exchange has been established, we will define the key regional terms that aid in the identification of regional distinctiveness.

David Harvey investigated the influence of territory on social identity in medieval Cornwall and its effects on ecclesiastical organisation. He correctly urged that the study of territory can provide the historian an outlet to explore the sources of identity. In order to achieve this he defined territory as a ‘geographical expression of social power.’ This authority was able to influence people and

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6 Wickham, ‘Problems in Doing Comparative History’, p. 8.
8 Ibid., p. 302.
relationships within a geographically defined area. Historiography has often perceived territory as nations and their administrative units. However, it is through regionalism that an understanding of territory can be uncovered that is more contemporary to the aristocrats of the North Sea, an area which was not bound to the royal image.

Charles Phythian-Adams, a member of the Leicester Local History School, outlined the parameters of regional study and postulated the concept of a cultural province. He defined cultural provinces as general ‘focussed areas of influence and regional interaction’. He believed that, in early medieval society, lineage played a crucial role through the mode of inheritance in establishing local social structure. Phythian-Adams stated that the only spatial formations that could fit this criteria were, ‘great centrally focussed river-drainage basins on the one hand or, on the other, those de-centralized but localized groups broadly parallel or slightly convergent rivers that are delimited inland in each case by the same watershed line, and which share an identifiable stretch of coastline at the outlet points.’ The dominant rivers will be navigable ‘far upstream to moorings from which contact may be made with the very heartland of the entire river basin or its de-centralized equivalent.’ Therefore, with the concept of a cultural province established, how do we define spheres of influence that inevitably overlap?

John Morrissey appropriately described areas where distinct cultures interacted as ‘contact zones.’ Morrissey applied this to late medieval Ireland; he identified the various groups and their descriptors, for example Anglo-Irish, Anglo-French and even Cambro-Norman. He argued that interpreting Ireland as bi-ethnic was subscribing to the national view. By contrast, identities multiplied where there was interaction and overlap. A crucial instance was the cultural impact on the settlers from England, ‘from the moment of cultural contact, the ethnic identities of both the colonists and the host population are thereafter mutually constitutive of each-other.’ Ultimately, he viewed the landscape as networking through marriage and fosterage that initiated alliances and cultural links. Previously, Phythian-Adams called these areas ‘intermediary zones’ and reasoned that they were colonised from opposing sides and would see gradual interaction as they came closer

16 Ibid., pp. 10-11.
17 Ibid., p. 10. Also see; N. Higham, The Origins of Cheshire (Manchester, 1993), p. 213. Higham argued that the River Mersey was a ‘major frontier’ between Mercia and Northumbria in Northern Cheshire.
19 Ibid., p. 554.
20 Idem.
21 Idem.
to each other.22 In addition to exploring cultural overlap, it will be crucial to explore ‘central place’ theory in order to understand the cultural impact of settlements and aristocratic buildings within territory.

Dagfinn Skre investigated the concept of central places as a method for discovering why particular settlements were larger than others. He applied this to medieval Norway and, due to its regional focus, the concept is beneficial to this comparative study. Skre affirmed that a central place was a location of cultural custom and not just dictated by economic factors.23 It is an area from which power was exhibited. The factor of a location being a central place was ‘ascribed’ by the people that they served; thus, it would be easier to discover in more regional sources.24 Skre argued that an aristocratic estate did not necessarily have central functions for the community. Even those on the estate may not have had central dealings outside the rents owed to the landlord. Skre reasons that, in a community, different strata had separate centres.25 For example, in Norway an aristocrat may have an affinity to a regional thing. By contrast, a peasant may have had a connection with a harbour or local market.26 Skre advocates the difficulty in discovering central places of the lower orders. However, he stresses that frequent mentions in sources such as sagas may identify their former status.27

As a consequence, we must identify the aristocrat’s central place. In the North Sea, this was embodied by aristocratic residences, which could be fortified. Castles have long been seen as imposing structures on the landscape which provide ‘an expression of hierarchies of power.’28 They were designed to impress contemporaries as well as intimidate them. To highlight the differences in the North Sea, and further identify the importance of buildings in particular, the psychology of aristocratic structures will be evaluated.

It is often overlooked that an aristocratic hall performed similar functions to a fortified building, although its defences were not as impressive. This was the case for England and Norway, where castles were not as prevalent as they were in Flanders and Normandy. Ann Williams identified that the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle’s first reference to a castle was in 1051.29 The chronicle had previously been using terms such as burh, geweore and herebeorg. Burh in particular was a flexible phrase

24 Ibid., p. 223.
25 Ibid., p. 229.
26 Ibid., p. 223.
27 Ibid., p. 222.
referring to prehistoric earthworks, former Roman camps, Anglo-Saxon fortification, fortified houses, manors, and market towns.\textsuperscript{30} This was similar to the Norman chronicler Orderic Vitalis, who used several Latin words when referring to castles in Normandy.\textsuperscript{31} Williams argued that sites such as Goltho can logically point to the conclusion that the Norman fortifications seen after the Conquest were, in fact, built over pre-conquest sites.\textsuperscript{32}

Similarly, in Norway, fortifications were not common. For example, a site situated in Skiringssal, Vestfold, south-east Norway, has a history that can be dated to the eighth century when a town called Kaupang was founded. Skiringssal of the Viken area was mentioned in Snorri Sturluson’s \textit{Heimskringla}.\textsuperscript{33} The area held the council known as a \textit{thing}, called \textit{bjóðalyng}, where nobles from the locality converged to resolve conflicts and legal disputes.\textsuperscript{34} The site was occupied by a hall between seventy and eighty metres long, which has been hypothesised to be the residence for a petty king and his retinue.\textsuperscript{35}

Leonie Hicks has explored the symbolism within these aristocratic residences in Normandy. She believed that a ‘visual presence of a leading member of the seigneurial family was necessary for the maintenance of order within the household on a daily basis.’\textsuperscript{36} Furthermore, she highlighted the symbolic relationship these structures held in the medieval period.\textsuperscript{37} This can be seen in the \textit{Bayeux Tapestry} which portrays castles as centres of defiance in its illustration of Earl Harold Godwinson and Duke William on campaign. The tapestry depicts fortifications at Rennes, Dol, and Dinan in Brittany. The Norman force appears to be besieging the fortress at Dinan after taking the castle of Dol.\textsuperscript{38} It clearly demonstrates that, not only were the castles used as defensive structures, positioned on mounds overlooking the landscape, but they were also locations from which rebellions were staged. The sequence on the tapestry ends with Conan, duke of Brittany, handing over Dinan’s keys to William.\textsuperscript{39} It is intriguing that the tapestry’s portrayal of this conflict has no other events after the surrendering of Dinan.\textsuperscript{40} Therefore, this suggests that rebellions depended on fortifications as symbols of continued resistance. The evidence also indicates that the central place for an aristocrat was the hall of his residence rather than fortifications. A hall provided a location for lordship to be

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{30} Idem.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Williams, ‘A Bell-House and a Burh-Geat’, p. 231.
\item \textsuperscript{34} Skre, ‘Centrality and Places’, p. 225.
\item \textsuperscript{35} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 226.
\item \textsuperscript{36} Hicks, ‘Magnificent Entrances’, p. 59.
\item \textsuperscript{37} Idem.
\item \textsuperscript{38} \textit{The Bayeux Tapestry}, ed. D. Wilson, \textit{The Bayeux Tapestry} (London, 2004), plates 21-23.
\item \textsuperscript{39} \textit{Ibid.}, plates 23-24.
\item \textsuperscript{40} \textit{Ibid.}, plates 24-27. After the engagements in Brittany William and Harold proceed to Bayeux, where Harold swears an oath to William and returns to England.
\end{itemize}
performed in and it symbolised the lord’s authority within his respective territory. The defences that surrounded the hall were intended to not only protect the important structure but also to extend the hall’s authority by dominating the landscape. Now that the key regional frameworks have been explored this paper will progress to the regional case studies, starting with Essex.

Fig. 1

**Essex**

Historically, Essex was bordered by the North Sea on its eastern boundary, while the northern reaches of the territory consisted of thick woodland and the River Stour, which separated it from East Anglia. The southern reaches of the region included the Thames (see fig. 1). Finally, the
The western border has often been surmised as the modern boundary of Essex.41 The principal towns within the region included the former Roman settlement of Colchester and the port town of Maldon.42 The ealdormanry constituted the whole of modern Essex; however, it is uncertain whether the administrative unit consisted of more. Nicholas Banton postulated that since London, Surrey, and parts of Huntingdonshire were included at the kingdom of Essex’s zenith, they could have been incorporated into the ealdormanry, too.43

Ealdorman Byrhtnoth is arguably the most famous ealdorman of Essex. This is due not only to his longevity in office but, more importantly, to the events that occurred at Maldon that saw his death and his army’s famous defeat. He was not the son of the previous incumbent, Ælfgar; however, he was married to the latter’s daughter Ælflæd, consequently keeping a sense of continuity of office.44 Byrhtnoth’s patrimony was in Cambridgeshire, which he had received from his father Byrthhelm.45

The earldom and earldormanry land holdings can be garnered from the wills of Byrhtnoth, his wife and his father-in-law, in addition to that of his sister-in-law, Æthelflæd. In Essex, the basis of his estates were in the north, close to the River Stour and Colchester.46 In Suffolk, the two estates of Elmset and Buxhall were in the authority of the ealdormanry.47 Intriguingly, Suffolk was within the remit of the ealdormanry of East Anglia. The family of Ælflæd, Byrhtnoth’s wife, were patrons of Stoke-by-Nayland, which was just over the Suffolk border.48 This is significant as aristocratic families would often endow the same church so that they would receive prayer and a place of burial.49 The church would usually be located in a region within the family’s traditional land holdings.

There is no chronicle of deeds regarding the earls and ealdormen of Essex in existence; however, the Liber Eliensis provides crucial insight into the importance of the territory.50 The Liber Eliensis was a Latin composition divided into three books covering the seventh to the twelfth centuries. This

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43 Banton, ‘Ealdormen and Earls’, p. 208. Banton also believed the ealdormanries represented the heptarchy kingdoms.
was a cartulary chronicle and, as a result, ‘not one piece of historiography.’ The author is unknown, but his motive was to synthesise material over five centuries. Janet Fairweather believes this material was predominantly local in origin. Jennifer Paxton described the Liber Eliensis as part of a Fenland textual community in eastern England. The Ely text described the renewed Viking threat to eastern England before the events of Maldon in 991. These incursions had seen towns in East Anglia raided. It should also be noted that during this period, the ealdorman of East Anglia was infirm. This left Byrhtnoth as the most prominent nobleman in the area. The reaction against the threat saw the description of all the chief men in the region binding themselves to Byrhtnoth against the Viking incursion. The entry continued by describing Byrhtnoth’s journey to Maldon; he originally travelled to Ramsey, asking for provisions and lodging. Byrhtnoth was alleged to have moved on to Ely, as the abbey of Ramsey could only support him and seven other soldiers. In prosaic language, Byrhtnoth stated he would not dine without his men as he would not fight without them.

When he arrived at Ely, Byrhtnoth received hospitality suitable for a king. The ealdorman granted the abbey several estates, thirty mancuses of gold and twenty pounds of silver, in agreement that his body was to be interred at the abbey if he was slain at Maldon. Byrhtnoth’s endowment to Ely was in keeping with his contemporaries and similar donations can be evidenced in his father-in-law’s will. However, the events described leading to the Battle of Maldon raise some interesting issues.

Byrhtnoth’s lands in Essex were in the far north of the region, in close proximity to Colchester. However, Maldon was situated further to the south, where, although the ealdormen of Essex are known to have held land, it was certainly less than in the north. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle informs us that, before the defeat of Byrhtnoth, the Vikings had raided Folkestone and Sandwich in Kent as

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52 Idem.
53 Idem.
55 Liber Eliensis, Book II, Chapter 62, pp. 133-6, at p. 134. ‘Brithnodo autem duci omnes provinciarum principes, quasi invincibili patrono pro magna ipsius probitate et fide sese fidelter alligabant, ut eius presidio contra inimicam gentem securius se defendenderent.’
56 Ibid., p. 135. Byrhtnoth’s quote was ‘Sciat dominus abbas, quod solus sine istis nolo prandere, quia solus sine illis nequeo pugnare’.
57 Idem. ‘Receptus ergo cum omnibus suis regali hospitalitate procurator’.
58 Idem. ‘Exponens negotium ad quod ibat aliisque maneria sub hac conditione consecsit, scilicet Fruiburhe, Theveresham, Impetune, Pampewrè, Crochestune, et Fineberge, Tripelaue, Herduuic, et Summeresham cum appendiciis eius, et super hec triginta mancas auri, xx libras argenti, ut, si forte in bello occumberet, corpus illius hoc allatum humarent.’
59 ‘The Will of Ælfgar’, pp. 6-9. Ælfgar’s will included gifts to the church of Stoke-by-Nayland and also made provisions for Saint Mary’s foundation at Barking.
well as Ipswich in Suffolk. In all three cases, there was no evidence of an ealdorman performing his ealdormanic duties of mustering the defence. Furthermore, towns in the late-tenth and eleventh century were far more related to the power of kings than aristocrats. Yet, using Skre’s hypothesis, Maldon may have developed to become a central place in Essex, especially as it was in an ideal location for trade. As a consequence, if Byrhtnoth had not defended the town, he may have been seen as ineffective in the Essex region. Nevertheless, for evidence of an East Saxon cultural province, and others in England, The Battle of Maldon poem is a more appropriate source than the Liber Eliensis.

The Battle of Maldon, composed in Old English by an anonymous author shortly after the events in question, is an incomplete account of the battle and there are still issues concerning the intended purpose, audience, and date of its composition. Despite these shortcomings Donald Scragg urged that the source should be viewed as a reliable account on the events of Maldon. The poem raises the subject of regional distinctiveness in England. Although it described Byrhtnoth as Æthelred’s earl, it also highlighted various other local identities. For example, the leaders of the army at the battle are described as the foremost men of the East Saxons rather than as English commanders. In addition, after Byrhtnoth falls, we are told of speeches by members of his household. Among these men were Ælfwine, who was from a great kin among the Mercians and he would not allow thegns to reproach him in that land for leaving the army now that his leader, lord and kinsman was dead. This continued with Leofsunu, Byrhtwold and Dunnere, all of whom fail to mention the king or the realm, but just mention their lord. Finally, there was a hostage of the Vikings, Æscferth, who was described as a man from a bold Northumbrian kin. Throughout the poem the author revealed the different cultures within the realm in the late-tenth century. He acknowledged three former regional kingdoms of the Northumbrians, Mercians, and East Saxons in addition to an English identity. Otherwise, the author could have described these men as English lords from powerful English families. These men were at the battle through ties of lordship to Byrhtnoth rather than national defence through connection to Æthelred. The case for the regional identity in

63 Ibid., p. 229.
65 Ibid., pp. 17 and 34.
66 The Battle of Maldon, p. 26, ‘Æpelredes eorl’.
67 Ibid., p. 20, ‘Eastseaxena ord’.
68 Ibid., p. 26, ‘þæt ic wæs on Myrcon miccles cynnes’ and ‘Ne sceolon me on þære peode þegenas ætwitan, þæt ic of þisse fyrdes fæstan wille, eard gesecan, nu min ealdor lige, forheawen æt hilde…he wæs ægðer min mag and min hlaford’.
69 Idem.
70 Ibid., p. 28, ‘he wæs on Norðhymbren heardes cynnes’.
Essex becomes clearer when we make comparisons to its North Sea equivalents. Therefore an examination of eastern Normandy will now be presented.

THE VEXIN AND ARQUES

Eastern Normandy represents the Normans’ territorial heartland and is often referred to as Upper Normandy. This region represented the former Neustrian march under the influence of Charles the Simple in the early-tenth century and acted as a buffer against Breton incursion. The far reach of the eastern border of Upper Normandy was Eu, where Rollo had been defeated while raiding in the early-tenth century. The northern border is the coast which is connected to the Channel and the North Sea. The patrimonial lands of the tenth-century dukes of Normandy centred on the River Seine. The southern border was adjacent to the hotly-contested region of the Vexin between the Normans and the French king (see fig. 1).

The Vexin represented a contact zone in Upper Normandy. In a frontier region, families held a greater amount of independence. In 911, the River Epte was a boundary between the Norman dukes and the French king. It bisected an old pays called the Vexin, and the diocesan boundaries of bishoprics and archbishoprics did not match the areas of influence. An excellent instance of these overlapping interests can be seen in the account of the Crispin family by Milo Crispin.

Milo Crispin, a monk from Le Bec, wrote during the twelfth century about the Crispin family and the Holy Virgin’s appearance to William Crispin. William was the son of Gilbert Crispin, castellan of Tillières in the Eure region, and he would later become a famous warrior in Normandy and France. William Crispin’s brother Gilbert would inherit Tillières castle from their father; however, William would be granted the office of vicomte in the Vexin and the castle of Neaufles from Duke William the Bastard. Milo described that William Crispin made his home in the region and placed his family and garrison there also to prevent French incursions. William Crispin married Eve who was from a noble family which was French in origin. Ultimately, William Crispin was ambushed when returning to his castle from Le Bec by French forces; the account continues that he survived

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74 Ibid., p. 48.
75 Milo Crispin, Miraculum Quo B. Maria subvenit Guillelmo Crispino seniori; ubi de nobili Crispinorum genere agitur, ed. J. Migne, Patrologica Latina 150, cols. 735-44.
76 Ibid., col. 737. ‘donans illi castrum ipsum et Vilcasini vicecomitatum jure haereditario custodiendum’.
77 Ibid., col. 737. ‘at ille ibi mansionem sibi constituit, familia et milites in loco positus contra irruptiones Francorum’.
78 Ibid., col. 741. ‘Haec Eva de gente Francorum, claris natalibus progenitá’.

Networks and Neighbours
after calling on the protection of the Holy Virgin. From Milo’s account it can be argued that lords were aware of culturally symbolic locations within a cultural province. However, it is important to state that those who occupied areas of overlapping influences preferred to create affiliations on both sides. This is likely to be the reason why William Crispin married a French noblewoman. This marriage would have allowed him to participate in two cultural identities that would have been recognised in his territory. This was why Judith Green theorised that the Norman dukes were unable to rely on the Vexin lords in the eleventh century.

The significance of castles being used by the aristocracy as a method for asserting their dominance can be seen in the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*. When discussing Duke William’s minority, William of Jumièges complains of the Norman lords’ sudden construction of castles. It is plausible that the lamenting of such constructions was based on the fear that regional lordships were strengthening as new fortifications exerted greater authority over the landscape. In this next example, a castle features heavily as the central location of rebellion against the duke.

Count William of Arques was hostile to William the Bastard’s rise to power and William of Poitiers recorded the count’s rebellion. William of Poitiers, from 1050, spent his life in Normandy and was a chaplain of William the Bastard. Originally, William of Poitiers trained as a knight and, as a consequence, fought in wars. This makes his work a valuable resource for studying military actions in Normandy as he had first-hand experience in conflict. Marjorie Chibnall reasoned that William of Poitiers relied on the accounts of participants of the duke’s campaigns before the Battle of Hastings. In addition to this, he was an admirer of the duke for his ‘speed, his prudence and, above all, his careful planning.’ Therefore, his record of the rebellion by Count William of Arques provides a ducal interpretation of the conflict, but reveals much in regards to the power of regional lordship in eastern Normandy. The count would succumb to defeat in his endeavour, but it is the application of his cultural influence that made this rebellion possible and a genuine threat. The county of Arques was positioned on the far eastern border of Normandy and, from this region, the

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79 Ibid., col. 742. ‘Beatam Domini Matrem inclamitans, voce magna: o Sancta Maria Becci, adjuva me, sancta Maria Becci, adjuva me.’
80 Green, ‘Lords of the Norman Vexin’, p. 61.
84 Ibid., p. xv.
85 Ibid., p. xxxi.
86 Ibid., p. xxiii.
count was able to gather support for his rebellion. William of Arques attempted to not only deny access to his castle in Arques, but also he tried to prevent entry to the land east of the Seine to those west of the river. William of Poitiers’s description continued with the Duke of Normandy seizing the castle of Arques; nevertheless, the duke’s men surrendered it quickly back into the count’s authority. Despite an attempt by the French king to provide aid, Count William relinquished the castle to Duke William following the second siege.

The case of Arques raises many additional points. Firstly, and most importantly, it demonstrated the authority of regional lordship. The count of Arques was capable of exploiting his stature across the Seine by inspiring rebellion in the area, as was explored above with Dinan in Brittany on The Bayeux Tapestry. This was because the count, like Byrhtnoth, was the central authority for the territories’ inhabitants. Secondly, the castle of Arques was the central hub of the rebellion. It was the key objective for both Williams to hold and its surrender concluded the count’s unsuccessful uprising. Therefore, the incident emphasises that the aristocratic residences were culturally symbolic of regional lordship. Thirdly, we see evidence of contact zones allowing interaction and cooperation. Being on the periphery of Normandy, the count of Arques received aid from powerful contacts – in this case, the king of France. Finally, and perhaps the most intriguingly, was the fact that, with the conclusion of the turmoil, Duke William allowed the count to keep his patrimony, but removed his title. This suggests that it was problematic for the duke to remove William of Arques entirely from the region, signifying that the central authority in Normandy had to engage with the local politics. Therefore, this contributes to the case that administrative titles were based on regional cultures and it was difficult to remove established lords in favour of more cooperative men from outside the cultural province. This had been experienced in England, where Tostig was ousted.

87 William of Poitiers, Gesta Guillelmi: The Deeds of William, Book I, Chapter 23, p. 34. ‘Mutus dissensionum aliorumque superius commemorat in aliquanta digestorum malorum, nonnullos ipse, caput principale, concitauit, plerosque exemplo, consilio, favore et auxilio incitauit, auxit, confirmauit’
88 Idem. ‘Multa et inquieta, longique temporis, eius molimina fuere, pro sua et contra domini sui magnitudinem, cuius accessum modo ab Arcensi castro, uerum etiam ab ei propinqua Normanniae parte, quae citer flumen Sequanam sita est, arcere saepenumero surrexit.’
89 Ibid., I, 24, p. 34. ‘Ob haec et alia tot eius et tanta ausa, dux, uti res monuit, suspiciens plura et maiora ausrum, receptaculi, quo plurimum confidebat, editius firmamentum occupaut, custodiis immittens, in nullo amplius tamen ius eius imminuens. Nempe eas latebras, id munimentum initatis atque dementiae, ipse primus fundaut et quam operosissime extruxit in praedii montis Arcarum cacumine. Ceterum malefidi custodes non multo post castri potestatem conditori reddunt, muneron pollicitatione et impensius imminente varia sollicitatione fatigati subactique.’
90 William of Poitiers, Gesta Guillelmi, I, 26, p. 38. ‘Audiens uero rex Henricus inclusum esse cius usanias fiantur erat atque consulator, auxilium ferre festinat. For William’s eventual surrender see; p. 40. ‘Cernit tandem angustiarum oculo Papiae partus rapiendi contra dominum suum principatus cupidinem malesuadam esse’.
91 The Bayeux Tapestry, plates 23-24.
92 William of Poitiers, Gesta Guillelmi, I, 26, p. 38.
93 Ibid., I, 28, p. 42. ‘Patriam ei concessit’. Also see; p. 42, no. 1. It is important to note that in Orderic’s interpolations he states the count was exiled and flees to Boulogne. Chibnall believes that William of Poitiers, although hesitant to record the duke’s crueler side, was telling the truth in that William of Arques would have lived off his lands. For Orderic’s interpolation see; William of Jumièges, The Gesta Normannorum Ducum, Book 7, Chapter 4 (7), pp. 102-05.
as earl by the regional aristocracy of Northumbria in favour of the local lord Morcar. Similar experiences can be exhibited in western Flanders, which was east of Normandy and, like the duchy, shared a border with the county of Ponthieu. It is the county of Guines where this paper’s next case study lies.

Guines

The county of Guines was sandwiched between two regions under the authority of the count of Boulogne in western Flanders. Guines shared its northern border with Boulonaisse land, also known as the viscounty of Merk, and its western boundary was shared with the traditional county of Boulogne land holdings. To the south, Guines had a border with the castellany of Saint-Omer and, in the north west of the county, was Guines’ coastline (see fig. 1). Guines was under the remit of the counts of Flanders. Leah Shopkow highlighted that the county of Guines was not created by the Flemish and, therefore, was often independent as it operated within a ‘peripheral’ zone. The evidence of this sense of otherness from the Flemish is exemplified in the origin story at the start of a chronicle. However, the discussion will analyse the origin story of the Guines chronicle first.

Lambert of Ardres wrote about aristocratic residences and intimated their symbolism to their respective regions. He wrote The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardres in the late-twelfth and early-thirteenth centuries. The narrative of the work ends in 1203 and Shopkow has hypothesised that Lambert was possibly writing up to 1206. By authoring the chronicle, Lambert intended to gain the good graces of the counts of Guines as his patron was its count, Arnold II. The book, in fact, is divided into three parts; the first is Lambert’s lineage of the counts of Guines; the second was by a different author named Walter of Le Clud, who wrote on the lords of Ardres; and the third and final part was a compilation of the two histories by Lambert. Despite there being another author, the compilation of the works is Lambert’s doing. Lambert defended the county’s independence from rival claims of sovereignty. The rival claim emanated from the monks of Saint-Bertin, who he believed would assert that the counts of Guines held the land in fief from the monks. Lambert used a character called Siegfried and linked him to the principal fortress of Guines. According to the chronicle, Siegfried wanted to expand his fortress with another earthwork.

96 Idem.
97 Ibid., p. 2.
98 Ibid., p. 3.
99 Ibid., p. 4.
100 Idem.
However, due to a lack of space, he exchanged property with the steward of the area near his keep for five shillings a year. François-Louis Ganshof explored the dispute and noted the donation to Saint-Bertin, which later monks had presumed to be the whole county, but consisted only of the town of Arques. However, it is clear that Lambert, when stressing the ties between the counts of Guines and the principal fortress of the region, was maintaining a commonly held belief of where power resided within the locality. He knew that the people within Guines would understand the regional ruler as residing in this residence. Therefore, by establishing the counts were there lawfully and free from services to an external authority, Lambert makes the lords of Guines the unquestioned leaders within the cultural boundaries. Lambert informed the reader that the county of Guines occupied the land between the River Aa in the east, the springs of Nielles to the west and the River Hem to the south, and in the north was dominated by a large marsh. In addition to this, the land was hilly, covered with little woods and thickets. The area also held marshlands and pasturelands fertile for sheep flocks and was called Bredenarde. These geographical features fit into Phythian-Adams’s assertions on how a cultural province can be recognised. The descriptions by Lambert give the reader an impression of an inland island surrounded by rivers and marsh. Lambert claimed that Siegfried was from Denmark and was renowned because he was second in status after the king. He was a nephew to the king’s advisor too. Lambert maintained that, before Siegfried arrived in Guines, there was a Count Walbert and the land had been usurped by Arnold of Flanders. Thus, Siegfried gathered his retinue and made for Guines, which was wooded, uncultivated and inhabited by few residents at the time. From there, Siegfried proceeded to fortify

101 ‘Lamberti Ardensis historia comitum Ghisnensium’, ed. J. Heller, in Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores XXIV (Hanover, 1879), pp. 550-602, Chapter 4, p. 565. ‘Sed cum postea Ghisnensis nobilitatis et generis auctor Sifridus Ghisnensis oppidi munitionem sive dunionem fossato duplici circumcingere voluisset, nec ei ad perficiendum in propria terra locus sufficeret, de tota terra censuali incta dunionem tunc existenti villico concumbium dedit, et sic demum fossatum perfect. Et sic de terra illa censuali que fere octoginta iugera sive geometricalium perticarum mensuras continet, singulis annis unum fiertonem vel quinque solidos iam dictis reddidit cenobitis.’

102 F.L. Ganshof, ‘Saint-Bertin et les Origines du Comté de Guines’, Revue belge de philolgie et d’historie 10 (1931), pp. 541-56. Ganshof highlighted that between the ninth and twelfth centuries the abbey of Saint Bertin held claims over the town of Arques. Later in 1383 Jean d’Ypres would escalate this claim to the whole county! Ganshof concludes that there was a misunderstanding of the term comitatus, which between the ninth and twelfth centuries could be the geographical unit and the authority of a count. This Arques was a different settlement from the previously discussed county of Arques.

103 ‘Lamberti Ardensis historia comitum Ghisnensium’, Chapter 13, p. 568. ‘Fuit enim diebus illis locus quidam pascus, amplus admodum eutarius, inter flumen quod dicitur Vonna ab orientali plaga et Neleios vel Nileios vel Niletos vel Nileos fontes ab occidentali, et inter flumen quod a re veris, id est amenitatis effectu, vel a rei vero Reveria nuncupatur a meridie usque in oppositam marisci partem spaciosi ad aquilonem longe lateque diffusus et extensus’.

104 Idem. ‘Hec situidem terra a latitudine pasture vulgo Bredenarda dicta est’.


106 ‘Lamberti Ardensis historia comitum Ghisnensium’, Chapter 7, p. 566. ‘ducens originem, nomine Sifridus, qui eo quod regi Dachorum plurimis servavit annis agnominatus est Dachus, vir quidem in bellicis apparatibus admodum strenuus et per totam Dachium, utpote nepos et cognatus germanus regis et colateralis et a rege secundus, famosissimus extitit et nominatisissimus.’

107 Idem. ‘Cum duatino duciis sustinisset et hinc illine in auribus, fame rutilante penna et verissima scripti genealogici assertione, de predecessore suo, comite videlicet Walberto, et filio eius Bertino necon et de fratre eiusdem Walberti Pharone et Phara surore simuliter eorum rei perceptiss eventum, et Flandrie comitem Arnoldum Magnum, sicut et predecessores suos, Ghisnensis terre comitatum… usur passe’.

108 Ibid., p. 567. ‘licet adhuc silvestrem et incultam et paucis habitatoribus habitatam’.

Networks and Neighbours
the keep with a motte and double earthwork which, apparently, was achieved without consulting Count Arnold of Flanders. Lambert reports, however, that Siegfried does homage to the count later and the pair became good friends.

The authenticity of the origin story has been examined. It has been recognised that, if Siegfried had existed, it was likely that he was a Viking war leader. Also, it has been postulated that Guines, similarly to Normandy, was granted to the Viking leader as a way of protection against future raids. The origin story has another function, too; it represents the connection of the land and principal fortress of Guines to the count of the territory. Lambert, as stated earlier, described the land as not well-developed, with very few people established in the area. The description of a sparsely populated area maybe figurative; nevertheless, he links the creation of this territory directly to the lords of Guines. Furthermore, he establishes an identity outside the remit of the Flemish counts by underlining the county’s creation not being achieved by the Flemish.

The west of Flanders also had another powerful regional lord in the counts of Boulogne, who acted very independently, particularly if one looks at Boulogne’s foreign diplomacy compared to the Flemish policy. On many occasions, the counts of Boulogne were backing a rival party of the allies of Flanders. Lambert was keen to address the possible issue of Boulogne claiming an authority over the Guines county. Lambert outlined that there were no chronicles of Flanders or Boulogne, nor were there any stories from elders stating that Erniculus of Boulogne divided his patrimony between his three sons, one of whom received Guines. This creates a cultural province comparable to the East Saxons. None of the titles represented a jurisdiction created by either the West Saxon kings or the Flemish counts. The jurisdiction represented a previously understood area of authority for the East Saxons and the people of Guines. Furthermore, all cultures have an identity that is linked to royal power outside of the contemporary monarchs. In the case of Guines, the stress has been placed on leaders connected, through Siegfried, to the Danish royal house, whereas the Anglo-Saxon ealdormanries represented a previously understood political entity for the region. The final

109 Ibid., Chapter 8, p. 567. ‘inconsulto Flandrie comite’.
110 Ibid., Chapter 10, p. 567. ‘Facti sunt itaque sub illa die amici, et Sifridus Flandrensium principi super Ghisnnensis terre dominio debita cum reverentia primus prestitit hominui’.
112 Idem.
114 H. Tanner, Family Friends and Allies: Boulogne and Politics in Northern France and England, c. 879-1160 (Leiden, 2004), p. 117. Eustace of Boulogne between 1050 and 1056 supported King Edward of England and maintained alliances with his southern border and King Henry I. In contrast, Baldwin V maintained alliances with the dukes of Normandy and harboured the exiled family of Earl Godwine. Baldwin would also campaign against Henry I.
115 ‘Lamberti Ardensis historia comitum Ghisnensium’, Chapter 15, p. 569. ‘Ghisnensium enim terra, circumspectis, lectis et relectis omnibus tam Flandrie quam Bolonie chronicis, si qua sunt, autenticis, auditis etiam et intellectis plurimorum narrationibus antiquorum et fabulis, nonguam et nusquam Boloniensis terre portio vel appendicium inventur aut auditur, sed Flandrensis dignitatis ditioni post comitem Walbertum totaliter inclinata et subiecta.’
case study moves north into the region of Trøndelag in central Norway, a predominantly pagan realm.

TRØNDELAG

Norway, and Scandinavia as a whole, has often been viewed as outside of Europe in medieval historiography. However, the Norwegian historian Dagfinn Skre has asserted that it is time to bring it into the discussion as he believed that, across the North Sea, many cultural traits were shared, including ties within the aristocracy, fragility of kingdoms and rivalry of honour.\textsuperscript{116} Western Norway has been considered to be the origin of supra-regional power in Norway in the ninth and tenth centuries. As a political unit, Norway was unstable due to ‘alternating domination and rival elites.’\textsuperscript{117} Norway had one of the earliest known provincial laws in the law of Gulathing and would see Trøndelag and eastern Norway submit to the western kings in the tenth and eleventh centuries respectively.\textsuperscript{118}

The earls of Lade ruled the Trøndelag in central Norway and the district had Trondheim (also known as Nidaros) as its principal settlement. The region’s eastern border was marked by the Keel mountain range, which separated it from the Swedish kingdom. Trøndelag’s southern boundary incorporated several dales, including the Gaulard Dale, and was closed off by the Totharfjord and a mountain formation extending from the main body of the Keel. The district had a North Sea coastline to the west and this could be accessed through the Trondheimfjord, which was above the settlement of Trondheim. Finally, the northern border narrowed with the Keel and included the Naumu Dale (see fig. 1).\textsuperscript{119}

By contrast to the other regions assessed, the evidence for central Norway is not derived from monastic chronicles, and instead the material is gathered from sagas. The most prominent saga used is \textit{Heimskringla} believed to be authored by Snorri Sturluson, therefore making it a thirteenth-century composition.\textsuperscript{120} The work follows an oral tradition and Snorri cites that his sources were known to be ‘well-informed men’.\textsuperscript{121} Snorri’s history is a conscious document meaning that he, like

\textsuperscript{118} Idem.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., p. xxiv.
\textsuperscript{121} Snorri, \textit{Heimskringla, Preface}, p. 3.
other medieval historians, created an account of his own understanding of the past for a contemporary audience. Therefore Snorri was not writing at the time and as a saga writer it is difficult to extract the author’s assessment of the events. Furthermore, it is believed that Snorri had used other compositions, for example Ágrip Af Nóregkonungsögum for the Saga of Harald Fairhair. In his publication assessing Snorri’s work and its insights on society, Sverre Bagge identified that Snorri was a medieval historian who applied source criticism to his work. Furthermore, Bagge believed that there is no certainty that Snorri had anticipated ‘modern principles of source criticism.’ However Snorri’s work has value as a historical source and it is important to note that Snorri himself had been a powerful chieftain in Iceland and had travelled to Norway where his uncle, Earl Skúli, was regent and, while in Norway, he visited the regions of Trøndelag. Therefore, Snorri, like Orderic Vitalis in Normandy, had an insight into the mechanics of earldoms and knowledge of the land in central Norway. The earls had their own origin myths that not only made them distinctive from Christian Europe, but also similar in the sense that these myths tied them to the land they ruled. There were two types of myth. The first was simply rulership through conquest by a dynasty. The second, and more insightful when understanding the concept of territory in Norway, described the gestation of peoples through relationships between gods and land. This can be called ‘sacral kinship.’

Adam of Bremen’s perception of Norway placed it as the last country within the circle of the world and far away from the centre of Jerusalem. The earls of Lade were described by Adam as having descended from a race of giants. Gro Steinsland assessed the origin myths of pagan Norwegian rulers and examined their longevity. She aptly postulated that the importance of land was crucial in these myths. Steinsland stated that the ruling elite within Viking society all had exceptional origins and, as a result, had exceptional deaths too. These myths can be seen for an earl and his territory.

130 Adami Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum ex recensione Lappenbergi. In usum scholarum ex monumentis Germaniae historicis recusa, ed. altera, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores XVII (Hannover, 1876), Book 2, Chapter 22, p. 57. ‘Haccon iste crudelissimus, ex genere Inguar et giganteo sanguine descendens, primus inter Nordmannos regnum arripuit, cum antea ducibus regenterut.’
131 Steinsland, ‘Origin Myths and Rulership’, p. 17.
According to the earl of Lade origin myth, Odin and Skadi had engendered him in the earl’s land of Trøndelag. Steinsland argued that the ‘metaphor of the land as the ruler’s bride shows that power was understood to refer to territory rather than to people.’ So, the earls of Lade were the rulers of land rather than the people. The land is described metaphorically as a wild woman from Utgard who needs to be ‘conquered and tamed through sexuality.’ The aristocrats of the Christian territories discussed did not have origin myths as vivid or elaborate as the Lade earls. This was predominantly due to Christianity, in which the king was anointed ruler by God. However, the concept of ruling the land first was shared. Previously, it has been discussed that the counts of Guines, when they first arrived on their land, ruled over an area that was sparsely populated. It can be asked, what is the use of ruling where no one was settled? However, if we understand, in light of the Trøndelag ethos, the ideology was associated with rulership of the physical landscape; therefore, the cultural identity of the Medieval aristocrat was intrinsically linked to the topography. This connection to the land can also be viewed in the aristocratic residences. These buildings held similar characteristics to the other North Sea lords previously discussed.

In addition to origin myths, the sagas provide tangible evidence of existing cultural provinces within Norway. The Saga of Harald Greycloak provides insight into the territory of the earls of Lade. The saga outlined the earls’ struggles with the kings of Norway, who were situated in western Norway. Earl Haakon Sigurdsøn of Lade ascended to the earldom after his father, Sigurd Haakonsøn, was killed by King Harald of Norway east of the Trondheimfjord in ca. 963. Haakon was selected by the people of the ‘Trondheim shires’ as they rushed to arms in response to the murder of Sigurd. Haakon was able to keep the region within his remit and deny revenues to the king who, during this period, dwelled within Horthaland and Rogaland in west Norway and southwest Norway respectively. A peace between the two sides was established, although we are informed that each faction remained wary of the other. Following the easement of conflict, Haakon allied himself with the Uppland kings, Tryggvi Óláfsson of the Viken, Guthröth Bjarnarson of the Vestfold and Guthbrand of the Dales in Heithmork. These three men ruled to the south of the earl and to the east of the king of Norway. The earls of Lade assist in reinforcing the concept of cultural provinces in the Christian territories. Norway at this point as a kingdom is considered less developed administratively and, as seen in the sagas, did not as yet portray an encompassing power. Therefore, we see cultural provinces binding themselves to their principal lords rather than to the king.

132 Ibid., p. 32.
133 Idem.
134 Idem. For the origin myth of the earls of Lade see; Snorri, Heimskringla, Saga of Ynglings, pp. 12-13.
136 Snorri, Heimskringla, Saga of Harald of Greycloak, Chapter 6, p. 134.
137 Idem.
138 Ibid., p. 136.
139 Ibid., Chapter 9, p. 137.
than the monarch for protection. The cultural province in the earldom of Trøndelag is comparable when we look back at the evidence for the ealdormanry of Essex. In both cases, the identity of the province is tied to a specific family ruling the region, thus suggesting the source of lordship was more through personal connection than ownership of an office.

CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to establish that the aristocracy of the North Sea world ruled through lordship of regional territory rather than through a royal office or title. Such lordships were centred within cultural provinces that had an inherent connection with the land through distinctive geographical features such as rivers. The lords of the North Sea sought to create relationships with the land, so that they were part of the regional identity. Aristocrats, as shown with Guines and Trøndelag, would attempt to promote an origin story that saw their families bound to the land itself.\textsuperscript{141} In addition, a lord would emphasise his lordship by inhabiting a principal residence that was a central place within the region. The proposition that this period saw strong central authorities rule across an administratively defined realm would appear too simplistic.\textsuperscript{142} It would suggest that the aristocrats did not interact with the social identities within their territory, but rather conformed to a national ethnicity. Administrative offices such as ealdorman and count did not solely represent a central organisation; but also, they reflected cultural provinces. These were defined from dominant geographical features such as the River Stour between the East Saxons and the East Anglians.\textsuperscript{143} These boundaries allowed the region to distinguish who was part of the social identity. The lords of the North Sea were acutely aware of this and, as has been shown, utilised it in their lordship. However, we should caution against simple boundary drawing based on geography, particularly as this is a twentieth-century phenomena and not a reality of the tenth and eleventh centuries. In fact, these features in the landscape represented a zone of interaction where two identities would meet, network and form a new culture, as exhibited in the Vexin region with the account of William Crispin.\textsuperscript{144} These peripheral cultures saw very little influence from a central authority and were contested between rivals such as the duke of Normandy and king of France.\textsuperscript{145}

The North Sea’s cultural provinces have shown that a central place within a locality would be situated where locations had connotations with power, as Colchester had with the Romans.\textsuperscript{146} Aristocrats would seek to build their residences in these locations to take full advantage of this

\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., p. 56 and Steinsland, ‘Origin Myths and Rulership’, p. 32.
\textsuperscript{142} Campbell, ‘The United Kingdom of England’, p. 31.
\textsuperscript{143} Hart, \textit{The Danelaw}, p. 25.
\textsuperscript{144} Milo Crispin, ‘Milo Crispin, on the Origin of the Crispin Family’, p. 88.
\textsuperscript{145} Green, ‘Lords of the Norman Vexin’, p. 47.
symbolism. The examples of Count William of Arques, Earl Haakon of Lade and William Crispin demonstrate that these dwellings did not only function as a location to exert authority over a landscape, but also acted as staging grounds for war and as emblems of resistance. As a result, the fall of these aristocratic homes represented the failing or failure of regional rulership. However, whether a central place could be changed due to economic factors in the tenth and eleventh centuries remains open to question. Walter Le Clud described Arnold of Ardres moving the aristocratic residence from Selinesse to Ardres; it is possible, in this instance, to say that economic motives conspired to transfer the central place of a region to a location where the lord followed the locality’s inhabitants. However, at this point it is difficult to say whether this was the case for the rest of the North Sea.

Ultimately, a further comparative study on the North Sea world in particular will allow for new insights into medieval society (this does not discount the value of other comparative works in other seas such as the Mediterranean or the Baltic). Moreover, the application of this line of research will allow the continued testing that Wickham argued for, though in a context away from the traditional outlook of central Europe. This is particularly crucial because the North Sea, as a network in northern Europe in the tenth and eleventh centuries, is a new line of inquiry. If not for comparative elements, national historiographies would see aristocratic landholding within individual kingdoms and fail to contextualise it amongst foreign contemporaries.

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147 ‘Lamberti Ardensi historia comitum Ghisnensium‘, Chapter 109, p. 613. ‘Ab illo ergo die, magno Selnescensium mansionis loco commolito et contrito, edificisique apud Ardeam contractis atque delatis, deleta est cum castello memoria etiam Selnescensium, adeo ut ab Ardea etiam ubique predicaretur et nominaretur Ardensium protector et dominus.’
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INTRODUCTION

The Christianization of Northern Europe is closely linked to concepts of cultural transfer, transmission, and influence. Latin Christianity was essentially foreign to the medieval North, and foreign expertise was needed for the implementation of the Christian faith and for the formation and development of ecclesiastical institutions. Consequently, the subject makes an excellent case for comparative studies. Indeed, when discussing the effects of the Christianization, comparison is essential. For Scandinavia, where written sources from the conversion period, as well as for the following phases of establishment and consolidation of the churches, are scarce and archaeological evidence rarely conclusive, it is often necessary to look for parallels abroad in the areas from where the Christian missions came.

The study of English influence in Scandinavia has attracted particular attention and the importance of English contacts for the Christianization of Scandinavia is well-established.¹ In Denmark, English contacts become most apparent from the late-tenth century when raids across the North Sea were renewed, a period often termed ‘England’s second Viking Age’. The

Danish campaigns culminated in the conquests of England, first by the Danish King Swein Forkbeard in 1013 and three years later by his son Cnut the Great who came to rule both England and Denmark until his death in 1035. The contacts forged in this period changed the ecclesiastical scene in Denmark – at least for a while. The question of how the English contacts affected the processes of Christianization – especially in terms of ecclesiastical organisation – in Denmark does, however, remain elusive. The scarcity and ambiguity of the historical as well as the archaeological evidence has called for comparisons across the North Sea in an attempt to establish the internal organisation of the early Danish Church. But the differences of the circumstances of the Danish and English Churches in their origin as well as their later structure make direct comparisons tenuous.

Here, I will suggest that identifying the channels through which influence would have been carried will make it possible to correlate the English evidence with the Danish and determine the nature and extent of English influence on the early Danish Church. Accordingly, this paper is divided into two parts. It begins with short review of the state of the English Church at the beginning of the eleventh century with a focus on ecclesiastical organisation. It then considers the historical evidence of English presence on the ecclesiastical scene in Denmark from the late-tenth century into the eleventh and suggests that the picture of English influence on early Danish church organisation is more complex than previously supposed. The second part of this paper provides a new focus for the study of English influence on early medieval Denmark that takes into account the variety of contacts that extended between Denmark and England in the eleventh century.

**THE ENGLISH CHURCH: FROM MINISTERS TO PARISH CHURCHES**

In his major work on *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, John Blair convincingly demonstrated how the English Church underwent a transition from minsters to parish churches in the period 850-1100. The mother-parishes, or minster *parochiae*, had been the central model of ecclesiastical organisation in England since the seventh century. The large parishes were serviced by central churches, i.e. the minsters. While most minsters at this time were established by acts of royal or episcopal policy, they were otherwise diverse in origin, and secular minsters served by colleges of priests existed together with monastic communities.² In return for pastoral care the minsters received a number of specific church dues. Tithes were only

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introduced as part of obligatory church dues in England in the late 920s. From the late-ninth century a system of local proprietary churches, patronized by local magnates, was gaining ground in a process of general socio-economic change, accelerated by Viking invasions. In this process they encroached on the rights and dues of the minsters; as a result, the latter entered a slow process of decline and underwent a fragmentation of their large parishes. In Edgar’s law on church dues (959-72) the local churches were officially recognised, and it was ordered that a thegn who had a church with a graveyard on his land should pay a third of his tithe to this church. With the local churches came the local parishes, and by the beginning of the eleventh century two models of parochial organisation coexisted in England: the large mother parishes, served from the central minsters, and the small local churches, often with their own priests, churchyards, and part of the tithe. According to Blair the central minsters and their large parishes did, however, remain the official unit of parochial authority into the reign of William the Conqueror, and their financial integrity was supported and maintained by the kings.

In 1014 a law code on the breach of sanctuary could differentiate between four kinds of churches: a ‘head minster’ (heafdomynster), a ‘moderate minster’ (medemre mynster), ‘one yet smaller’ (gyt læsse), and a ‘field church’ (feldcyrice). John Blair has identified the first as a cathedral, the second as a normal clerical minster, the third as the thegn’s estate-church, and the fourth as a chapel without rights. This is, of course, a simplistic representation of the complexity of the English Church. Still, we may draw an important point from it: by the beginning of the eleventh century, when Danish kings ruled on both sides of the North Sea, the structure and organisation of the English Church was complex and therefore we cannot, solely on the basis of this picture, determine precisely what element(s) of ecclesiastical organisation might have been transferred to Denmark. Much would have depended upon the channels through which they were transmitted.

**ENGLISH PRESENCE IN THE EARLY DANISH CHURCH: AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

One of the primary pieces of evidence for possible English influence on newly Christianised Denmark is found in Adam of Bremen’s *Gesta Hammaburgensis*, written in the 1070s, and is often

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7 VIII Æthelred 5.1 in Liebermann, *Die Gesetze Der Angelsachsen*, p. 264.
called upon by historians. According to Adam, the Danish King, Swein Forkbeard, appointed the ‘bishop Gotebald, who came from England, to teach in Skåne’. This occurred around 999. Some ten years earlier (by 988) Swein had exiled the four bishops who had been appointed to Denmark from Hamburg-Bremen and effectively dismissed the authority of the archdiocese. Swein’s ecclesiastical policies were (initially) continued by his son Cnut when he ascended to the Danish throne c. 1019, and his reign provided new conditions for the transfer of ecclesiastic personnel from England to Denmark – and with them the transfer of models and materials.

In his Brevis historia regum dacie (c. 1188), the medieval Danish historian Swein Aggesen states that Cnut brought many priests and bishops with him when he came to Denmark from England to secure the throne c. 1019. According to Adam of Bremen, he appointed three English bishops to Denmark in 1020-22: Bernard was placed over Scania, Gerbrand over Zealand and Reginbert over Funen. A fourth bishop, Odinkar, a Danish noble, had been taken to England to be ‘instructed in letters’ and was appointed to the diocese of Ribe. Thus in the early decades of the eleventh century the episcopal sees of Denmark were dominated by Englishmen. It is only reasonable to suppose that the dominant position of the English bishops in this period left its trace on the church. According to Ellen Jørgensen’s pioneering studies of foreign influence on the early Danish Church, the early phases of Danish church formation were ‘characterized by strong English influence that became especially visible in ecclesiastical vocabulary (the Old Danish words ærkibiskup, guþfæur, kristindom originate in Old English arcebisceo, godfæder, cristendom) and hagiolatry (a number of English saints occur in Danish church dedications and liturgies, e.g. St Botwulf, St Alban, and Ælfheah). The comparatively short period of the reigns of the Anglo-Danish kings and the English bishops appointed at this time has been the central focus of the discussion of English influence. One of the key objectives for the early bishops would have been the foundation of churches, and

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12 Adam of Bremen, Gesta, II.55
13 ‘eruditus litteris’ Ibid., schol. 25.
the co-operation between king and bishop is likely to have been one of the driving forces behind this development. During the reign of Cnut (or possibly already at the time of Swein) churches were founded in the emerging towns of Lund and Roskilde, and possibly Viborg as well. According to Stefan Brink, the impact of the work of the English bishops should not be underestimated. He argues that the foundation of the early Scandinavian churches was laid by ‘representatives of the Anglo-Saxon Church’, and that they may have been organised along the lines of the English minster system. In Denmark, this model has been proposed specifically for the early foundation of the Church of the Holy Trinity in Lund and extended to a number of other foundations across medieval Denmark.

For a brief period following the death of Cnut in 1035 the rule of England and Denmark was divided between his sons Harald and Harthacnut. There is no indication, however, that this situation changed the character of Anglo-Danish relations and the possibilities of English influence in Denmark. Harthacnut, who had succeeded his father on the Danish throne, had considerable English experience and connections. Furthermore, in 1040 he also acceded to the English throne. In Denmark his rule has left few marks. At the death of Harthacnut in 1042 direct Danish access to the resources of the English Church ceased to exist. But as the case of Swein Forkbeard’s appointment of Gotebald has shown, this was not a prerequisite for Anglo-Danish contacts on the episcopal level. Hereafter followed a period of unrest in Denmark during the struggles for power between Magnus and Swein Estridsson. When peaceful times prevailed in the reign of Swein from 1047, a new agenda was set and c. 1060 the diocesan structure of Denmark was reformed. The bond to Hamburg-Bremen was maintained, but simultaneously attempts were made to establish an independent archiepiscopal see for Scandinavia.

On the basis of the written material, again most notably Adam of Bremen, the presence of

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English bishops in Denmark seems to have slowly diminished from the late 1020s, and especially after the fragmentation of the North Sea Empire following the death of Cnut. Whether this development should be seen as a decline in royal involvement in church affairs (at least for a short period) remains uncertain, but it does seem clear that the appointment of English ecclesiastical personnel was used, in part, as a policy to counter the involvement of Hamburg-Bremen throughout the eleventh century. In 1059/60 the Danish king Swein Estridsson appointed the English bishop Henric, who had previously acted as the treasurer of Cnut the Great, to the see of Lund. Later, in the 1090s, the English contacts were called upon again for the foundation of the first Benedictine community in Denmark. At the invitation of the king a group of twelve monks from the monastery of Evesham in England settled in Odense c. 1095; shortly before 1100 Hubald, another English Benedictine, was consecrated to the episcopal see of Odense and established a monastic cathedral chapter drawing on English models. According to Peter King, it was the interests and relations of the Danish kings that brought and maintained the English influence in Denmark.

Unsurprisingly, the kings and bishops stand out as the main actors in the establishment of the Danish Church. Indeed the point is often repeated in scholarship dealing with the Christianization process in Scandinavia that the co-operation between king and bishop was the driving force behind the first implementation of Christianity and the initial organisation of the churches. This picture, however, is partly a consequence of the type of sources available to us. What the historical and documentary sources actually tell us amounts to little beyond the fact that English bishops and priests worked in Denmark throughout the eleventh century and that most seem to have been brought there by subsequent Danish kings as a consequence of the connections established in the reigns of Swein and Cnut. A closer look at how these main propagators interacted with the church in England – and in Denmark – seems the natural starting-point for a further investigation into the ways in which the presence of English bishops in Denmark and close contacts across the North Sea on the royal level may have influenced the


\[^{23}\] King, 'The Cathedral Priory of Odense in the Middle Ages', p. 4; King, 'English Influence on the Church at Odense in the Early Middle Ages', p. 150.

formation of the Danish Church. Before moving on it must, however, be noted that it is problematic to view the English – or any other – Church as a pattern for Danish Church organisation on the whole. The early network of churches was both complex and composite and cannot be captured in one simple, cogent model. The emerging Danish Church of the eleventh century was markedly different from the English Church in the same period and several features also separate their respective processes of Christianisation.25 As two cases in point, the itinerant character of the early Scandinavian bishops had no direct parallels in England, and contrary to England in the seventh century, Denmark (or Scandinavia) did not have its own archbishop during its process of establishment and consolidation. Here, multiple interests and influences interplayed and it is more than likely that several systems were in place at different (or even the same) location at a given time, and it is possible that the meeting of different practices and multiple influences in new circumstances could have created something new that does not fit within any strict systems or models.

**ANGLO-DANISH KINGS AND BISHOPS**

Unfortunately, we know little about the English bishops who moved to Denmark apart from the locations of their sees. Only Gerbrand is mentioned in a source outside Adam of Bremen’s Gesta. His name appear as ‘Gerbrand of Roskilde parish of the Danish people’, in charter of Cnut the Great granting land to the Monastery of Ely.26 Niels Lund has argued that Cnut planned to establish Roskilde as an archiepiscopal see with precisely such a purpose in mind,27 although this aim seems to have been abandoned in 1027 when Cnut travelled to Rome and met with the German Emperor.28 We are consequently left with the examples of the kings.

When Swein Forkbeard conquered England in 1013 he only held power there for a very brief period until his death in 1014. No sources connect Swein to the English Church or the English administrative systems. Our image of him in England is thus limited to the picture of a conqueror. We know little more about his dealing with the church in Denmark. Adam of Bremen’s story of his heathen uprising has long been dismissed as a construction, while the information given on the appointment of an English bishop, Gotebald, to the newly established

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26 ‘Gerbrandus Roscylde parochiae Danorum gentis’, S 958.
see of Scania (Lund) in Denmark some time before the year 1000, should be considered comparatively reliable.\textsuperscript{29} This appointment took place before Swein’s conquest of England and cannot therefore be attributed to his later (but brief) access to the English Church as king. It must instead be the result of on-going Anglo-Danish contacts and additional relations forged by Swein himself in the last decades of the tenth century.\textsuperscript{30}

Adam of Bremen’s entry on Gotebald states only that he came from England and was appointed to teach in Scania.\textsuperscript{31} Nothing further is revealed about his function or about the church he entered, but the early date of his appointment makes it likely that his duties were mainly missionary. His possible role in the formation of the early Danish Church may, however, be illuminated by archaeology. On the basis of dendrochronological analysis of the surrounding graves Maria Cinthio has dated the remains of the wooden church below the Church of Holy Trinity in Lund to the 990s.\textsuperscript{32} She subsequently identifies it as the church built by Swein Forkbeard mentioned by two written sources. The \textit{Encomium Emmae Reginae} (written c. 1041/42) tells the story of how the body of Swein Forkbeard was brought back to Denmark by a ‘certain English matron’ where it was placed ‘in the monastery which the same king had built in honour of the Holy Trinity, in the sepulchre which he had prepared for himself’.\textsuperscript{33} By a combination of (later) written evidence and the archaeological dates Cinthio connects the Church of the Holy Trinity in Lund with Swein Forkbeard and the bishop Gotebald. But the nature of the evidence does not allow us to make any further assumptions about the function of this early wooden church and the work of Gotebald.

Anglo-Danish relations were strengthened during the reign of Cnut the Great, and it seems clear from the written evidence that the decision to appoint English bishops to Denmark was a conscious choice of both Swein and Cnut to circumvent the influence of the Archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen. One of the main features that distinguishes the period of Cnut’s reign is the degree of cultural openness between Denmark and England brought into effect by the double kingship, and through it the Danish access to the knowledge and workings of the Anglo-Saxon state and Church. Despite the importance of Swein Forkbeard’s contacts in England, however, he primarily encountered the church through his Viking attacks. But during Cnut’s reign

\textsuperscript{29} Gelting, ‘Elusive Bishops’, pp. 169-231.
\textsuperscript{31} Adam of Bremen, \textit{Gesta}, II.41, schol. 26.
peaceful contacts prevailed, and the situation was changed; as king of England, Cnut engaged with the English Church in ways that his father could not have done. Cnut’s relations and preferences in his dealing with the different levels and elements of the English Church may cast some light on the influence that he and his English bishops are likely to have brought to Denmark and shall be considered here in more detail.

As Timothy Bolton has shown, Cnut enjoyed close relations the English archbishops; most notably Wulfstan of York. He was furthermore in regular contact with other bishops and abbots that attended his court and councils, and priests were working within the royal household. More importantly, Cnut was a great benefactor. He granted and confirmed gifts of land, involved himself in the transferral of saints’ relics, and donated a great number of precious objects. From the evidence of English charters it seems that it was especially the monasteries, like Evesham and Bury St Edmunds, and the larger episcopal churches, like Canterbury and Winchester, which received Cnut’s patronage, although some smaller churches also benefited from his pious generosity. It may also be noted that the majority of Cnut’s grants and donations went to monastic foundations and episcopal churches and not to moderate minsters. According to the *Encomium Emmae*, he built and dignified churches, and in 1020 he founded a minster at the site of *Assandun* to commemorate his victory here. At his death, Cnut the Great was buried in the Old Minster, the Cathedral Church of Winchester.

From this evidence we may conclude that that Cnut was concerned particularly with the higher levels of the church, the cathedrals and monasteries. While some of the churches supported by Cnut may have developed from minster sites and while some held on to parts of their old parochial privileges, only few had this as their primary function. Most of the churches considered in the charters of Cnut were either episcopal centres or Benedictine monasteries. Although English minsters were still in function in the first half of the eleventh century they do not seem to have been the primary focus of Cnut the Great.

As mentioned above, a number of problems are connected with direct parallels between the Danish and English Churches in the eleventh century. While Cnut encountered in England a well-established ecclesiastical system, in Denmark he was charged with the challenge of

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36 Out of eighty-eight grants and gifts issued by Cnut the Great (see P.H. Sawyer, Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography (London, 1968)) four churches are specifically named ‘minsters’ but all seem to have either episcopal or monastic stratus.
37 *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, II.19.
creating one. For this reason it is relevant to examine in further detail the one example of an English church founded by Cnut. For the year 1020 the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle writes: ‘In this year King Cnut came back to England. And in this year he went to Ashingdon and had a minster built there of stone and mortar, for the souls of the men who had been slain there, and gave it to his own priest whose name was Stigand.’

The Chronicle describes the church at Assandun as a minster (a minster). Warwick Rodwell has argued that this confirms ‘its status in the hierarchy of ecclesiastical foundations of the era’. John of Worcester, writing in the first half of the twelfth century, calls it an ecclesia. Due to the ambiguity of these terms nothing conclusive can be drawn from this basis. More important are the attempts to identify the location of the battlefield of Assandun and consequently of the memorial church. The traditional identification with Ashingdon has been questioned by Cyril Hart who favours the site of Ashdon. Neither of the churches at these two sites does, however, fit the requirements of a minster.

Rodwell puts forward the possible explanation that Cnut’s church is no longer standing and notes that it might have failed some time during the Middle Ages since it is never again mentioned after 1020. But as Rodwell emphasises, by 1020 the minsters were no longer the sole focus of parochial organisation and their large parishes were gradually broken up. If the church founded by Cnut was a minster it had to be ‘fitted into in anachronistic system’. As a consequence, it is unlikely that Cnut’s minster at Assandun resembled the minsters of the seventh and eight centuries. It is then possible that the church at Assandun was not a minster in the most accepted definition of the word: a central church administering pastoral care for a larger parish and served by a collegiate of priests. Instead it might fall somewhere between the categories of minster and local (perhaps proprietary) church. It clearly served an important function as a memorial church, but as long as the church is unidentified it remains impossible to ascertain its place within the ecclesiastical hierarchy of early-eleventh-century England. Of its staffing we know nothing but what the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle tells us, namely that the church was given to, or perhaps left to the charge of, Cnut’s own priest, Stigand.

Although Cnut’s engagement with the level of the society that upheld the parochial organisation

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of the minsters might suggest that he would have supported this model for Denmark, no specific links can be assessed between Cnut and this level of the English Church. The composite organisation of the Church in England on the eve of the Danish conquest makes it difficult to accept the ‘minster model’ as a reliable model of comparison for the Danish Church.\textsuperscript{43} The fact that the distinctive parochial organisation of the early medieval English Church was in a process of fragmentation already before the eleventh century challenges the hypothesis that a system of Danish minsters was developed in the time of king Cnut and his immediate successors.

From the sparse evidence available, Cnut’s dealings with the Danish Church seem to mirror, on many points, his engagement with the Church in England – though on a different level and scale. In Roskilde we may have an example of a Danish episcopal see endowed by Cnut. According to Lund, the great wealth of the bishop in Roskilde can be attributed to Cnut.\textsuperscript{44} Roskilde’s special status might be further highlighted by the so-called ‘Copenhagen Wulfgstan Collection’.\textsuperscript{45} The manuscript was likely produced in Worcester under the direction of Archbishop Wulfgstan of York in, or a few years before, 1022. It contains thirty-four texts, many of them annotated in Wulfgstan’s own hand, relevant for the work of a bishop. Johan Gerritsen has suggested that the book was presented to Gerbrand at his consecration and later accompanied him to Denmark.\textsuperscript{46} If this was indeed the case, it might suggest an interest in the nascent Danish Church on the highest ecclesiastical level in England – possibly mediated by the relationship between Archbishop Wulfgstan and Cnut the Great.

Alongside this, Cnut’s involvement in the appointment of bishops continues the impression of the Danish king’s interest in, and engagement, with the higher levels of the church. As mentioned above, this is unsurprising. The important point lies in the fact that Cnut’s dealings with the Danish Church, as far as they can be followed in the written evidence, leave no indication that he should have proposed a specific ecclesiastical organisation. His preference of the English Church is more likely to have depended on considerations of possibilities and control. This does not imply that an ecclesiastical system based on the model of the English minsters could not have been implemented in Denmark in the early-eleventh century. The

\textsuperscript{44} Lund, ‘Ville Knud den Store gøre Roskilde til ærkesæde?’ pp. 3-12.
greater part of the task of establishing the Danish Church, though probably directed by the
king, would have been left with the bishops. But the fact that the English minster organisation
was under pressure and slowly disappearing makes it a tenuous claim.

Some elements of the English ecclesiastical organisation were however adopted in Denmark as a
result of close Anglo-Danish relations. The main example in this context is Lund, and according
to Maria Cinthio a number of architectural parallels exist between the successor of the wooden
Church of the Holy Trinity in Lund and the Old Minster in Winchester. Anglo-Danish
relations in Lund were significant and have been attested by archaeology, numismatics, as well
as historical evidence, and there almost certainly was English there. But to argue that a
minster-like organisation existed in early medieval Denmark implies that more churches formed
part of the same system. There can be no doubt that a number of early Danish churches did
serve central functions and it is generally agreed that some churches exerted supremacy over
smaller foundations. But this is not enough to suggest a foreign pattern of organisation. The
establishment of central churches is well known in the context of missions and may be
considered a condition for missionary activity.

Although English bishops were appointed to Denmark after the end of the reign of Cnut, it is
difficult to recognise any specific English influence on ecclesiastical organisation in this period.
The short period of Harthacnut’s rule makes it difficult to follow his actions in relation to the
English Church in any detail, but from the evidence available he seems to have followed the
example of Cnut. It is likely he would have done the same in Denmark. In the latter half of the
eleventh century English bishops ceased to play a dominant role, and they seem to have been
mainly called upon when specific political strategies favoured (partial) autonomy from the
Archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen.

The lack of any specific ‘English’ mark on Danish Church organisation does not, however, mean
that the presence of English ecclesiastics in Denmark in the eleventh century was without
impact. Behind the English connections held by kings and bishops ran a large network of
Anglo-Danish contacts that encompassed a variety of people of higher and lower rank, who are
not included in the main conversion and Christianization narratives, but some of whom might
have had the opportunities and resources to found and patronize churches. Their contribution to
the establishment of the early Danish Church should not be dismissed. According to Lesley

lundaborna’, pp. 159-73.
50 He continued grants to monasteries (S 995; S 993) and bishops (S 994).
Abrams, the close relationship between king and bishop was one of the defining characteristics of the early Scandinavian churches, but its impact on the extension of ecclesiastical organisation was modest. Instead she draws attention to the (largely invisible) role of other secular and religious actors.51

MOBILE ELITES AND THE FORMATION OF THE EARLY DANISH CHURCH

The fragmentary nature of the written sources from the eleventh century does not permit any comprehensive picture of Anglo-Danish contacts, but close readings of a range of different historical and documentary sources reveal a small number of named individuals who travelled from England to Denmark in the course of this period. One example is Gunnhild, a kinswoman of Cnut the Great, who is mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and John of Worcester’s Chronicon ex Chronichis. Gunnhild was exiled from England in 1045 and left for Denmark with her two sons Heming and Thorkell.52 Later, in the aftermath of the Norman Conquest, Turkil Harmeworth, a thegn who had held land in Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire, left England and went over to the Danes ‘who were his kinsmen’, as is recorded in the Red Book of Thorney.53 And Turkil was not alone. According to William of Malmesbury’s Gesta regum Anglorum, written in the 1120s, the harshness of William the Conqueror caused members of the English elite to leave England. Some went to Denmark, where they assembled armies.54 The Domesday Book records the name of Eadric, a middle-ranking landowner from East Anglia, who became an outlaw in Denmark at this time.55 The same seems to have been the case for Ringwulf who is mentioned in a property statement of the Abbey of St Benet of Holme.56 These seemingly unique incidents appear to be part of a larger network of North Sea connections that is worth considering as representing potential channels of cultural transfer – also within the sphere of religion.

A second group of people, who came from England to Denmark in the course of the eleventh

52 ASC 1045 D; John of Worcester, Chronicle, 1044.
53 ‘Thorney Monastery’, in W. Dugdale and others (eds.), Monasticon Anglicanum: A History of the Abbies and Other Monasteries, Hospitals, Frieries, and Cathedral and Collegiate Churches, with their Dependencies, in England and Wales; also of all such Scotch, Irish, and French Monasteries, as were in any Manner Connected with Religious Houses in England. Together with a Particular Account of their Respective Foundations, Grants, and Donations, and a Full Statement of their Possessions, as Well Temporal as Spiritual, vol. 2 (London, 1819), II.604.
century, are the moneyers. The first coin bearing the name of an English moneyer was struck under Swein Forkbeard c. 995. The reverse legend states that the moneyer was named Godwine. A pen case lid from Lund, inscribed with the name Leofwine, might have belonged to a moneyer working there. English names continue to be prominent on Danish coins throughout the eleventh century, but their part in the total number of coins struck falls from the mid-eleventh century onwards, that is, during the reign of Swein Estridson. Of course, the names alone do not give incontrovertible evidence of the import of English moneyers, but the ambiguity of the onomastics is compensated by the coins themselves. A large part of Danish coins struck in the eleventh century imitate Anglo-Saxon models or were struck from dies that can be linked to England. The movement of people between England and Denmark is also evidenced in the archaeological record. Pottery from the early urban centres of Lund, Viborg, and Roskilde suggest, not only the import, but the local production of Torksey and Stamford ware – a skill that must have been transferred along with people. In addition, riding equipment that combines Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian designs demonstrates a shared cultural affiliation on both sides of the North Sea. The examples found in Denmark are likely to have belonged to – and travelled on – an Anglo-Scandinavian warrior elite centred on Cnut the Great, as has been argued by Anne Pedersen and Else Roesdahl.

Although a few Anglo-Saxons are recorded to have travelled to Denmark in the eleventh century, the majority of the people who came from England were of Danish origin. While in England, some had held positions as earls or thegns for longer or shorter periods of time. They were part of a shared Anglo-Danish culture and as such, just as they brought their Scandinavian culture to England, they must also have brought elements of English culture back to Scandinavia. All these people can be associated with the higher levels of English society – a group which were known as founders and patrons of churches. In England the status of the Danes as second-generation Christians does not seem to have prevented them from interacting

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59 P. Hauberg, Myntforhold Og Udmyntninger i Danmark Indtil 1146 (Copenhagen, 1900), p. 104.
with the church on equal terms with their English peers. I would therefore argue that some of these were in a position, and had the experience, to act as carriers of English Christian and ecclesiastical culture. We are then left with a picture of Anglo-Danish contacts that extends from the late-tenth to the late-eleventh century, and consequently goes beyond the kings and their bishops. Furthermore, it seems that many of the people who came to Denmark from England in this period did so after the time usually associated with English ecclesiastical influence. This observation might, however, be a result of an imbalance in the available sources.

The possible diversity in the ways in which Anglo-Danish contacts may have affected the early Danish Church has often been neglected in Danish scholarship. This oversight can be accounted for, mainly, by the overshadowing effect of the close links between kings and bishops in the early phases of Christianisation. But it is also due, in part, to the fact that the concept of English ecclesiastical influence has been associated with overarching models, such as the ‘minster model’. This has left little room for the consideration of local and private initiatives in relation to Anglo-Danish contacts. Yet the manifold connections between England and Denmark outside the royal-episcopal sphere make a case for revisiting the Danish evidence. According to Adam of Bremen, writing in the 1070s, Denmark was replete with churches: three hundred in Scania, half as many on Zealand, and a third on Funen. The archaeological evidence for the earliest phases of Danish church formation is, however, extremely meagre, and it is likely that the construction of churches did not make progress before the mid-eleventh century. Although no connection can be proved, it is interesting to note that this is the time when the movement of people from England to Denmark may have increased as the result of the Norman Conquest.

It has often been noted that the earliest Danish towns had a comparatively high rate of small urban churches and that this was a result of English influence. Much can be said in favour of this interpretation, as the highest number of churches is found in towns where high levels of English presence are otherwise well established. Twelve churches have been attested in Viborg, fourteen in Roskilde and more than twenty in Lund. In comparison, the early town of Ribe had only six and Schleswig eight. In England, small urban foundations were established especially from the late-tenth century as a part of the general development towards private and

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63 E.g. Ulf, whose name is inscribed on a sundial in the parish church in Aldborough, East Yorkshire. It states that Ulf ordered the church to be erected for the sake of his soul. E. Okasha, *Hand-List of Anglo-Saxon Non-Runic Inscriptions* (Cambridge, 1971), p. 47.
64 Adam of Bremen, *Gesta*, IV.7
68 Ulrichsen, ‘Fremmed indflydelse i vikingetid og tidlig middelalder’, p. 103.
The new churches were diverse in origin, but mainly associated with magnates of higher or lower status. Urban churches listed in the Domesday Book were mainly private foundations in the hands of magnates, priests, and burgesses, and it is likely that the urban class of moneyers was involved as well. It is worth noting that this development coincided with a period of extensive Anglo-Danish interaction, and that the expansion was largely concentrated in East Anglia and the East Midlands – precisely the areas where we find the heaviest degree of Danish presence. Small churches related to rural estates become visible in English records from the late-tenth century, and archaeological evidence suggests that the juxtaposition of church and lay residence became typical and widespread at this time. Like the urban churches, the rural foundations were most prevalent in the eastern part of the country.\(^69\) If the Danish pattern of small urban church foundations was, indeed, a result of English influence, then the churches must have been private initiatives, as was the case in England.\(^70\)

CONCLUSION

The earliest phase of church building in Denmark was directed by kings and bishops, who established a network of central churches. It is often argued that a significant element of English influence, brought by the bishops of Swein Forkbeard and Cnut the Great, helped shape this development, but the hypothesis that this influence should have extended to include a specific model of English church organisation – such as the minsters – seem tenuous. The network of central churches was shortly followed by local and private foundations, and it is likely that contacts with England were more important in this context than previously supposed. A brief comparison between the Churches of Denmark and England in the eleventh century shows significant parallels of local and private foundation of churches. The channels through which this influence would have travelled extended from the late tenth century until after the Norman Conquest, thus providing us with a wider timeframe for English influence than the one surrounding the bishops. We should, consequently, widen our perception of English influence on the early Danish Church – socially, geographically and in time.


\(^70\) A runestone dated to the late Viking Age and found near the Church of St Stefan in Lund supports this claim. It reads: 'Toki had the church made and ...': 'Tōki lēt kirkia gorva ok ...' DR 315"Runedatabasen Danske Runeindskrifter," Nationalmuseet and Nordisk Forskningsinstitut, Københavns Universitet, http://runer.ku.dk/ (accessed December 20, 2012).
The traditional image of Vandal North Africa is one of oppression, persecution, military aggression, and, ultimately, societal decay: the antagonistic thassalocracy of Gaiseric, the Arian strong-arming of Huneric, and the weak decadence described by Procopius. This viewpoint has, ever increasingly, been shattered under the weight of modern scholarly investigation. In recent years, scholars from various fields have come together to greatly enhance, and fundamentally alter, our understanding of the Vandal Kingdom of North Africa. One facet of this research has been the investigation of Vandal North Africa’s place in the wider history of the Late Antique world. This work geared at contextualizing Vandal North Africa has centred especially upon Mediterranean interconnectedness.

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1 The roots of the modern understanding of the Vandal kingdom of North Africa are to be found firstly in the seminal works of Christian Courtois and, more recently, in the works of Frank M. Clover, many of which are conveniently collected in his *The Late Roman West and the Vandals* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1993). The twenty-first century upsurge in Vandal scholarship really begins with the crucial collection edited by A.H. Merrills, *Vandals, Romans and Berbers: New Perspectives on Late Antique North Africa* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), and follows the subsequent work of the scholars featured within it. Three of the most recent, and most important, works published by the vibrant academic community working on the Vandals are Das Reich der Vandalen und seine (Vor-) Geschichten, ed. by Guido M. Berndt and Roland Steinacher, *Forschungen zur Geschichte des Mittelalters* 13 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2008), A.H. Merrills and R. Miles, *The Vandals* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010) and J. Conant, *Staying Roman: conquest and identity in Africa and the Mediterranean*, 439-700 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
as witnessed in political, economic, and theological issues.\textsuperscript{2} A crucial aspect of this interconnectedness, however, has largely been overlooked: literary and intellectual culture flourished in fifth-century North Africa, and the Vandal Kingdom produced one of the most important and prominent poets of Late Antiquity, alongside a number of other lesser figures.\textsuperscript{3} This key figure was Blossius Aemilius Dracontius. Dracontius himself provides us with an interesting case-study: a Catholic Afro-Roman Senator (by birth, leastwise), an illustrious member of the Carthaginian intelligentsia, a court poet ultimately imprisoned by his ruler, and a master of the Late Antique art of poetry. Dracontius is also of vital importance for the investigation of cultural and intellectual interconnectedness in the late-fifth-century Latin West, and it is with this that we are here concerned. The central question of the current paper, then, is this: what can the works of Dracontius tell us regarding the nature and depth of the cultural and intellectual connections between North Africa and Europe during the period of Vandal rule in Carthage?

In seeking an answer, the present investigation will centre upon an analysis of Dracontius’ use of contemporary and near-contemporary source material. The strict methodologies practiced by the poets of Classical and Late Antiquity provide the modern scholar with a superb opportunity to study cultural influence and interconnectedness. A study of Dracontius’ \textit{loci similes} (points of similarity with other texts) shows us that the poet had a wide, deep, and pervasive knowledge and understanding of the cultural inheritance of the late-fifth century.\textsuperscript{4} Going far beyond the Classical inheritance, Dracontius knew the literature (stretching from poetry to theology) of the fourth and early-fifth centuries: but this, of course, only shows us that the works that had been translated to Africa (or written there) before the Vandal conquest were preserved. This, indeed, is an important piece of information, but it should not be terribly surprising and forms only a backdrop for the matter at hand. Of particular importance for the present study is the relationship between the works of Dracontius and the works of the two great fifth-century poets working in Gaul: Sidonius Apollinaris in the middle of the century and Avitus of Vienne at the century’s end. The answer to our question lies in this relationship.

The principal works of Dracontius, the \textit{Satisfactio} and the \textit{De Laudibus Dei}, were written sometime between Dracontius’ imprisonment during the reign of the Vandal king Gunthamund and that

\textsuperscript{2} Central to this discussion is Conant’s \textit{Staying Roman}.

\textsuperscript{3} While the literary output of the so-called ‘Vandal Renaissance’ has indeed been the focus of a substantial amount of high-calibre scholarly attention, much of this has revolved around either the purely literary study of the texts (D.J. Nodes being the most prominent here) or their purely historical aspects (such as in A.H. Merrills, ‘The Perils of Panegyric: The Lost Poem of Dracontius and its Consequences’, in \textit{Vandals, Romans and Berbers}, pp. 145-62).

\textsuperscript{4} M.L. Tizzoni, ‘The Poems of Dracontius in their Vandalic and Visigothic Contexts’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leeds, 2012), pp. 28-31 for use of \textit{loci similes} as cultural indicators, pp. 103-5 for summary of Dracontius’ relationship to the Late Antique cultural heritage. Included in the Appendix of this thesis is a comprehensive list of Dracontius’ \textit{loci similes}.
king’s death in 496, most likely between 489 and 492. Sidonius Apollinaris flourished in the decades just prior to the composition of Dracontius’ works with the bulk of his poetry published in 469. Parallels with his work, therefore, bear witness to cultural and intellectual interchange in the period stretching roughly from the 460s to the late 480s. Avitus, on the other hand, was slightly younger than Dracontius: his De spiritualis historiae gestis must be dated to sometime before 506/7, and could possibly have been composed sometime in the 490s. Any relationship between the works of Dracontius and Avitus, consequently, allow us to track Dracontius’ early transmission. Although it will need to be returned to, this basic chronological framework allows us now to enter upon the analysis of the textual interconnectedness in earnest.

Several parallels, of varying strengths, exist between the works of Dracontius and those of Sidonius. All told, the works of Dracontius contain seven such generally attributed loci similes; four in the Carmina profana, two in the De Laudibus Dei, and one in the Satisfactio. The locus similis between Dracontius, Carmen 6, 60-66 and Sidonius, Carmen 5, 41-50 affirms the strong stylistic similarities between the two authors. Both passages contain ‘catalogues’ listing a number of related items. For example, Dracontius pens a list of what one might refer to as emotional states and the implications following them, whereas Sidonius created a list of geographical areas and their most noted products. While the lists themselves have very little in common at first glance, both the reasoning

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6 Sidonius published the bulk of his verse in 469 upon his entry to priesthood, although several of his panegyrics were likely published earlier. Sidonius published the first seven books of his epistles in around 477, and books eight and nine in the years following. The dating of Sidonius is discussed in detail by J. Harries, Sidonius Apollinaris and the Fall of Rome, AD 407-485 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 3-10.
8 While the possibility does exist that Avitus’ works could be older than Dracontius’ it is very unlikely and the evidence of the texts, discussed below, strongly indicates otherwise.
9 The passage in Dracontius (Carmen 6, 60-6) reads:

‘ibat in obsequium Risus, Amplexibus haerens
iusta Libido coit, uenit et moderata Voluptas,
candida legitimas ascendens Gratia taedas
occurrit, uenit alma Fides, Petulantia simplex,
casta Pudicitia procedit mente quita,
Sobrietas per cuncta uigil deuota cucurrit
et quidquid iustos solite comitatur amores.’

Sidonius, Carmen 5, 41-50, reads:

‘Ergo ut se mediam solio dedit, advolat omnis
terra simul. tum quaque suos provincial fructus
exposuit: fert Indus ebur, Chaldaeus amomum,
Assyrius gemmas, Ser vellera, tura Sabaeus,
Atthis mel, Phoenix palmas, Lacedaemon oliuum,
Arcas equos, Epirus equas, pecuaria Gallus,
arma Chalybs, frumenta Libys, Campanus Iacchum,’
and the aesthetic behind them have the same impetus, and catalogues such as these are an important part of the Late Latin poetic method. The stylistic similarity here (and elsewhere) asserts a shared cultural heritage, and shared cultural practice, in the minds of both authors. Yet, no other Late Latin authors employ the catalogue so vigorously as Sidonius and Dracontius, thus suggesting close ties between the two authors. The same is true of the looser resonance between Dracontius, Carmen 7, 147 and Sidonius, Epistle 4, 8, 5. Stylistic resonances, however, only suggest interconnectedness: stronger evidence for cultural interaction indicated by shared style lies in verbal parallels. One such verbal parallel in the Carmina profana is located between Dracontius, Carmen 8, 477 and Sidonius, Carmen 2, 307.10 This lexical locus similis revolves around an atypical use of the already uncommon adjective obuncus.11 Generally, the word obuncus is used to refer to curvature in a beak, whether in the possession of a bird, a ship, or otherwise (Vergil, Aeneid, 6, 597, in regards to the beak of a vulture, being the principle example).12 Yet, in both of these Late Antique passages, obuncus is used synecdochically and qualifies the relevant creature itself, as opposed to the creature’s beak as in the Vergilian passage: all three uses, it should be noted, are in a mythological context.13 Additionally, in both the Sidonius and Dracontius passages the word obuncus occurs in the plural at the end of a hexameter line with the qualified construction preceding it, whereas Vergil has the singular at the end, with the qualified noun placed earlier. Thus, while both Sidonius and Dracontius are referencing Vergil, Dracontius himself is more closely paralleling Sidonius and this use of obuncus should also be seen as a Sidonian resonance. The strongest Sidonian parallel in the Carmina profana, however, is between Carmen 8, 381 and Sidonius, Epistle 8, 6, 15.14 The passage from Dracontius’ De raptu Helenae (Carmen 8), lines 381-382 reads: ‘subducitur ancora mordax, uela leuant nautae.’ The relevant passage from Sidonius reads: ‘priusquam de continenti in patriam uela laxantes hostico mordaces anchoras uado uellant.’ As is often the case, underneath both of these passages lays a Vergilian reference. In this case, the parallel is with Aeneid 1, 169, which along with part of the previous line, reads ‘hic fessas non uincula nauis/ ulla tenent, unco non alligat ancora morsu.’ The line from Dracontius comes in a passage dealing directly with Aeneas, and this makes the Vergilian parallel all the stronger. The Sidonius passage, on the other hand, describes the Saxon practice of human sacrifice prior to weighing anchor. The resonance between Dracontius and Vergil is unmistakably clear. Nevertheless, at least one element in Dracontius’ passage points specifically to a link with Sidonius.

aurum Lydus, Arabs guttam, Panchaia myrrham,  
Pontus castorea, blattam Tyurus, aera Corinthus;  
Sardinia argentums, naves Hispania defert  
fulminis et lapidem; […]

10 Dracontius’ line reads: Martis et inferni uolucres raptoris obuncas. Sidonius’ line reads: Nun cades, o Paean, lauro cui grypas obuncos.


12 The line in Vergil, which is relevant here, reads: porrigitur, rostroque immanis uultur obunco.

13 Despite the mythological nature of all three passages, the parallel is purely lexical and the passages within which they appear are not particularly relevant to each other.

14 The official publication of this letter took place sometime between 477 and 481. Harries, Sidonius Apollinaris and the Fall of Rome, p. 8.
This element is the combination of anchor and sail. The passage in Vergil mentions only anchors and anchor chains, the latter of which is absent in the other two authors. It should also be noted that, despite the difference in subject matter, the Late Antique passages share another difference with the Vergilian: Vergil was describing a calm harbour (no need for anchors) whereas both Sidonius and Dracontius are describing ships departing. Although the contexts themselves differ somewhat, the verbal parallel between ancora mordax uela and uela... mordaces anchoras is unmistakably clear. While both passages do possess a Vergilian resonance, the similarity between the two Late Antique passages is rather too great to be coincidental and argues for Dracontius’ familiarity with Sidonius’ work.

The Satisfactio and De Laudibus Dei provide further evidence for Dracontius’ knowledge of the works of Sidonius. The locus similis in the Satisfactio, although somewhat problematic, is also reasonably strong. This parallel occurs at line thirty-nine of the text, in a section of the poem particularly heavy with Classical, Late Antique, and Biblical resonances. Indeed, the passage in question is itself also a Biblical parallel. The difficulty with the resonance in question, however, is that it depends upon a textual emendation.15 This notwithstanding, the emendation can reasonably be upheld when its contexts are fully evaluated and the nature of the change examined. The parallel comes at a point when Dracontius is attempting to excuse his wrongdoing, the praise of an ignotum dominum and his failure to praise the current king, as something which God had driven him to, and to insert it into a framework of people whom God had changed in some way.16 He starts with Nebuchadnezzar (in a passage laden with Vergilian and Ovidian resonances) and then moves to Zacharias, the father of St John the Baptist.17 Dracontius writes ‘liquit et antistes serus pater ille Iohannis/ elinguisque fuit uoce tacente silens’.18 Sidonius, in his poem ‘Euchariston ad Faustum Episcopum’, written sometime between 460 and 469, when speaking of the great deeds of the Holy Spirit, refers to Zacharias by name, and, also describing the binding of his speech, calls him serum patrem.19 Underneath both of these passages is a reference to Prudentius, Psychomachia, 2 which uses the formula serus pater to refer to Abraham. The verbal resonance, between all three passages, is clear, but needs to be contextually rooted in order to establish the validity of the loci similes proper.20

15 Even if one does not accept the emendation, and thus the locus similis, it is, nevertheless, worth discussing.
17 The full passage has two resonances with the Aeneid (1,11 and 2,471) and three with the works of Ovid (Heroides, 14,86; Fasti 5,620; Metamorphoses 1,741-742). Additionally, the passage includes references to Cyprianus Gallus, Arator, Sedulius’ Carmen Paschale, Gellius, Prudentius’ Psychomachia and Apotheosis, Horace’s Satrae, Livy, Tacitus, and Statius’ Thebaid. Line details can be found in Tizzoni, ‘The Poems of Dracontius’, p. 280.
18 Dracontius, Satisfactio, 39-40.
20 While the shared serus pater is the crux of the parallel, the locus similis itself has much wider scope than these two words,
The Biblical account referenced by both Sidonius and Dracontius provides the most logical starting point. Luke 1, 5-25 gives the story of Zacharias and the birth of John the Baptist. In the Vulgate version of the passage, Zacharias and his wife are described as ‘processissent in diebus suis’, ‘having advanced in their days’, and Zacharias declares himself a ‘senex’.21 Nowhere in the Biblical passage, whether in the Vulgate or the Vetus Latina, does one find the formula *serus pater*, although this formula does indeed represent the sense of the original perfectly well. The absence of *serus* from the Biblical text helps to affirm the relationship between Dracontius’ text and Sidonius’, but one could still argue for its being coincidental, as variation in vocabulary is indeed one of the traits of the Late Antique style.

The contexts of the passages within the works in which they occur shed further light. A few lines above his use of *serus* for ‘old’, Sidonius uses *senex* to refer to the prophet Elijah.22 Therefore, his use of *serus* can be explained by a desire to avoid repetition with the previous *senex* and solidify the reference to Prudentius. Dracontius’ use, however, cannot be explained in such a way. Neither *senex*, nor any other word meaning ‘old’, occurs in the vicinity of line thirty-nine, and so there is no need to choose *serus* in order to avoid repetition. While the desire for lexical diversity could explain his choice here, it stands as a weaker answer. The passage already possesses a substantial amount of variation, as is shown by his use of the word *antistes* for priest, instead of the more common *sacerdos*. Additionally, *serus* is a fairly standard Classical Latin usage, and would not really contribute to the lexical variation of the passage. Therefore, Sidonius’ use of *serus* is explained by his need to avoid repetition, but no such reason can be found for Dracontius. Indeed, the only reason for the employment of this phrase is that it fits the metre. While *serus* is a clever way to convey both of the phrases referring to Zacharias’ age used in Luke, it is precisely this double use that would have allowed Dracontius to use multiple adjectives, as is often his wont. Yet he did not. Instead, he chose to employ exactly the same phrase as used by Sidonius of exactly the same person, and while doing so include a reference to Prudentius. This certainly suggests more than mere coincidence.

More light can be shed on this if we look at Eugenius II of Toledo’s redaction of Dracontius’ text.23 This passage is indeed one which Eugenius changes. The only real change Eugenius makes to this passage is, in fact, to *serus*, which he replaces with a rather weak *verus*. This seems a somewhat odd

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21 Luke 1, 7, 18. *Senex* is also the reading found in the Vetus Latina, excepting one reading of *senior*, found in Itala Codex d. The Vetus Latina is most readily available through Vetus Latina Database, the online version of the texts supported by Brepols.

22 Sidonius, *Carmina*, 16, 32. The proximity of *senex* and *serus* strengthen the parallel between Sidonius and Prudentius.

23 The text of the *Satisfactio* and *De Laudibus Dei* Book 1 were redacted in mid-seventh-century Visigothic Spain by Bishop Eugenius II of Toledo. In his redaction, Eugenius altered the texts more-or-less regularly and his ‘corrections’ fit basic patterns. The only comprehensive modern study of Eugenius’ redaction, and its methods, is Tizzoni, ‘The Poems of Dracontius’, pp. 173-292 and throughout. The traditional work on the redaction, written from a very different viewpoint from my cultural historical/socio-rhetorical stance, is K. Reinwald, *Die Ausgabe des ersten Buches der Laudes dei und der Satisfactio des Dracontius durch Eugenius von Toledo* (Speyer: Jäger, 1913).
change. Certainly, the reference to Zacharias’ old age finds its source in the Bible, and, while the allusion to his age is not strictly necessary either for the sense of the passage or the Biblical reference, it does make the latter somewhat stronger. If Eugenius had retained *serus*, the Biblical reference would have been clearer. This is interesting, because in the surrounding lines Eugenius alters Dracontius’ text to make the Nebuchadnezzar reference stronger. Perhaps Eugenius simply wished to emphasize Zacharias’ ‘genuineness’, or ‘rightness’, or simply that he was John the Baptist’s real father, over the fact that he was old. Perhaps he wished to delete the link between Zacharias and Abraham suggested by the Prudentius resonance. He may have been trying to improve the overall sense of the passage, and this most probably represents the best answer, as the main idea behind this section of the *Satisfactio* is a rather unorthodox statement, in that Dracontius is essentially attempting to pass the blame for his actions on to God. Eugenius does, of course, remove this idea from his redaction and replaces it with a more theologically acceptable one.\(^24\) The other possibility is that Eugenius was trying to make sense of a corrupted text. Eugenius’ modification tells us something. If he read *serus* only as a clever rendition of the Biblical description of Zacharias, why would he have changed it? Generally, Eugenius’ amendments on Biblical matters tend either to clarify, or to correct, Dracontius’ use. Thus, if Eugenius viewed it solely as a Biblical reference, it would be out of character for him to change it. However, if Eugenius viewed this as a resonance with Sidonius and Prudentius, and felt as though he could improve Dracontius’ text by removing it, he certainly would have done so, as he does elsewhere. Because he changed it, we can reasonably assume that Eugenius viewed the use of *serus pater* for Zacharias as a literary resonance. Eugenius’ discomfort with the Sidonius parallel is further supported by the nature of Sidonius’ poem.\(^25\) It contains inaccurate Christian material, and the works of Faustus, to whom it was addressed, were later condemned as heresy. While this condemnation of Faustus of Riez occurred long after Dracontius’ composition, and long before Eugenius’, it deserves mention, as Eugenius himself was very much concerned with heterodoxy.\(^26\) One can see why Eugenius, an orthodox bishop in the former Arian kingdom of the Visigoths, might wish to remove such a reference.\(^27\) Yet, 

\(^{24}\) The theological correction of the text was a crucial part of Eugenius’ redaction. For a study of Eugenius’ methods, see Tizzoni, ‘The Poems of Dracontius’, pp. 196-216. The *verus* itself, however, does very little to achieve this goal.

\(^{25}\) Eugenius knew the works of Prudentius and referenced them frequently in his own writings. A summary of Eugenius’ *loci similes* with Prudentius can be found on pp. 432-3 of P. F. Alberto, ed. *Eugenii Toletani Opera Omnia*, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina CXIV (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005) within Alberto’s comprehensive *Index Fontium* (which runs from pp. 413-438).

\(^{26}\) Faustus of Riez, a native Briton serving as a bishop in Riez in Provence, was condemned for his affinity with Pelagianism. He was not really ‘finalised’ as a heretic until Caesarius of Arles in the early-sixth century. The fight to define orthodoxy in the fourth and fifth centuries was a very close-run thing, and the definitions of orthodoxy were still very much up for grabs in the fifth, and even the sixth, centuries. It should also be noted that Sidonius is absent from Isidore of Seville’s *De viris illustribus* (the modern edition of which is Carmen Codoñer Merino, ed., *El ‘De viris illustribus’ de Isidoro de Sevilla: Estudio y edición crítica, Theses et studia philologia Salmanticensia*, 12 (Salamanca: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto ‘Antonio de Nebrija’, Colegio Trilingüe de la Universidad, 1964).

\(^{27}\) While Sidonius is no heretic, this particular poem does exhibit a lack of Biblical knowledge (for example, he gets the story of the taking up of Elijah wrong), and the poem is addressed in friendship to a man condemned as a heretic. Eugenius could logically have possessed a desire to distance himself from this particular work, without casting aspersion on the
the very fact that Eugenius was operating in a post-Arian kingdom might also explain a certain amount of accommodation. Either way, his treatment of this passage is in line with his treatment of other literary passages, and suggests that he viewed it in the same way as he viewed Vergil or Sedulius.\(^2\) As Eugenius almost certainly had the same evidence to hand as we do here, his decision serves to confirm the validity of this passage as a genuine Sidonian resonance.

Yet, if this *serus pater* does represent a genuine parallel with Sidonius, why are there no others in the *Satisfactio*? The answer to this question is fairly simple. The lack of Sidonian resonances and parallels in the *Satisfactio* owes itself to the separate natures of the works. Sidonius wrote several shorter pieces, mainly *epigrammata*, along with several longer works, in addition to a number of letters. His longer works, while essentially the same length as the *Satisfactio*, are of a much different nature. Three of these are imperial panegyrics, addressed to Anthemius, Majorian and Avitus. The rest are either *epithalamia* or somewhat flattering pieces addressed to important personages. Dracontius engaged with his sources, and selected them not only because they were good literary pieces, but because they bore a relevance to his own work. This is seen most clearly in his use of Ovid's poems of exile for his *Satisfactio*, which is in essence his own poem of exile. He focused more heavily on them, rather than on the more well known and celebrated *Metamorphoses*.\(^3\) The same process of selection is at work here. Sidonius' poetry is largely of a secular nature, even if imbued with Sidonius' own Christianity.\(^4\) The *Satisfactio*, while in a way secular in nature, is really a Christian poem, as it often argues its points in terms of Christian ideas or concepts. This is why Dracontius used several overtly Christian Late Antique sources for the work, such as the Biblical epics of Sedulius and Prudentius. The parallel in question, however, is a place where the work of Sidonius and that of Dracontius touch. The same is true of the resonances in the *Carmina profana* discussed above.

As mentioned above, however, there is one problem. The line in question, that is, line thirty-nine of the *Satisfactio*, appears corrupted in the more important of the two manuscripts which contain the poem, namely Vaticanus Reginensis Latinus 1267, dating from the ninth century. This manuscript appears to have *senis*, or possibly *senex* written in the first hand, and *senior* written in the second where the present study, following Vollmer's *MGH* and the *Budé* edition, has read *serus*. The third works of Sidonius as a whole. Then again, it may not have mattered to him at all. For Sidonius, see Harries, *Sidonius Apollinaris and the Fall of Rome* and P. Rousseau, *‘In search of Sidonius the bishop’*, *Historia* 25 (1976), 356-77.

\(^2\) Depending upon his preference, Eugenius frequently either adds or removes literary resonances (usually the latter).

\(^3\) Dracontius references the much shorter poems of exile ten times (the *Tristia* accounts for six of these), and the *Metamorphoses* six times. A list of known *loci similes* can be found in the appendix to Tizzoni, *The Poems of Dracontius*, pp. 280-98. Additional lists appear in the *apparti critici* of most editions of Dracontius.

\(^4\) Though the 'pagan' aspects of Sidonius' culture have often been emphasised, Sidonius was always solidly a Christian. W.M. Daly, *‘Christianitas Eclipses Romanitas in the Life of Sidonius Apollinaris’*, in *Religion, Culture, and Society in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Thomas F. X. Noble and John J. Contreni (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 1987), pp. 7-26, see esp. pp. 7, 17-18.
modern editor, Speranza, has chosen to read ‘sancti’, following a similar passage in Dracontius’ *De Laudibus Dei* (2, 686), but with seemingly no other merit, except a barely legible marginal note.\(^{31}\)

The second manuscript of the *Satisfactio*, Darmstädensis 3303, also from the ninth century, and, at parts, rather damaged, has the reading ‘senex’. ‘Senex’ and ‘senior’ both possess Biblical parallels, the former Vulgate and the latter *Vetus Latina*. Yet none of the three function according to the scansion of the line, which is in dactylic hexameter, being the first line in an elegiac couplet. ‘Serus’ does, although it is rather spondaic. ‘Senis’, which is the original reading in the Vatican manuscript, does not make any sense in the line, as it would have to agree with ‘Iohannis’. While it may not necessarily be the case, it is even possible that Vollmer actually derived his ‘serus’ from the Sidonius poem, which would, of course, make the argument for it being a parallel circular. Yet, as is often the case with various hands, ‘senis’ and ‘serus’ can potentially look very similar, if not identical, on the page, as both contain the same number of minims, and a minuscule ‘ru’ can easily be turned into an ‘ni’ if the scribe is not careful and the hand is a confusing one. While the Beneventan hand in which this manuscript is written is a generally neat hand, the level of dissension on this word (as all three editors actually disagree on what the first hand wrote), suggests that something of a scribal error may well have taken place. Additionally, we do not know what type of manuscript the existing copies were made from, nor what hand that original was written in. A similar difficulty is to be found with the work of Zosimus, pointed out by Philip Bartholomew in relation to Romano-British studies, where the misreading of his Greek has led to a misreading of Late Antique British history that lasted for many years.\(^{32}\)

The further parallel with Prudentius also lends weight to the reading of ‘serus’.

According to Vollmer, both of our extant manuscripts, along with the three Eugenius manuscripts which agree rather better with each other, form distinct stemmata from a lost manuscript somewhat removed from Dracontius.\(^{33}\) This leads us to the other piece of evidence we have at our disposal in determining the correct reading: the redaction of Eugenius. Now, it is dangerous to build too much from this redaction, as Eugenius’ expressed goal is to change the original.\(^{34}\) However, in this circumstance, it is very useful. We must recall that Eugenius emended ‘serus’, or whatever word might have been in its place, to ‘verus’.\(^{35}\) Eugenius’ standard practice is to correct any place where Dracontius’ Biblical quotations are sloppy or inaccurate. If Dracontius’ original reading was ‘senex’, as the Darmstadt manuscript suggests, then there would be no reason for Eugenius to change it. It would mean removing an actual solid Biblical quotation, and replacing it with something that is,


\(^{34}\) For this, see the prose *incipit* of Eugenius’ recension of the *De Laudibus Dei*. It should be noted, however, that Eugenius only changed certain parts of the text, and the redaction and the original are actually quite close.

\(^{35}\) It should also be noted that *serus* and *verus* can often be visually similar in earlier manuscript hands.
essentially, rather meaningless. The same would be true for ‘senior’; it would simply be out of character for Eugenius, and contrary to his intent, to replace either of these words. Metre should not be the reason: Eugenius routinely ignores metre, and his lines often do not scan. If, however, the manuscript of Dracontius from which Eugenius wrote read ‘serus’ or ‘senis’, then it would not be out of character for Eugenius to change it, as he would either be deleting a Sidonius quotation, or correcting something which made no sense.

Further evidence can be gathered when one compares the greater context of both passages. Sidonius’ reference to Zacharias takes its place within a list of various Biblical figures through whom the Holy Spirit worked the will of God, including Miriam during the flight from Egypt and the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the furnace, among others. The purpose of the series in Sidonius is to ask God for the aid of the Holy Spirit to help him (Sidonius) write the praises of Faustus, in such a way as he inspired and helped these other great figures. In the Satisfactio, Dracontius includes the story of Zacharias within the framework of a series of examples set to show how God has worked his will upon people to make them act in a harsh or demeaning way. His list contains three figures: Pharaoh (of the Exodus story), Nebuchadnezzar, and Dracontius himself. The similarities (and contrasts) in the context are thus striking.

Firstly, while the themes of the passages are different, Dracontius explaining his misbehaviour as God ‘hardening his heart’ and Sidonius asking for God to inspire him to write as he inspired others to great action, the point of them is the same: both are pleading that God do for them what he has already done for others. While one is a request and the other an excuse, the thought behind both passages is identical. Secondly, the topics of the stories themselves are parallels. Although it is true that Sidonius’ list of figures is more extensive than Dracontius’, the two Biblical figures which Dracontius did use are indirectly, but specifically, mentioned by Sidonius. Firstly, Pharaoh: Sidonius relates the flight of Miriam from Egypt and the dry passage of the Red Sea. While Sidonius focuses on Miriam and does not mention the other two, the reader’s mind would, upon mention of the parting of the Red Sea, think of both Moses and Pharaoh. Dracontius, in his passage, mentions both Moses and Pharaoh by name, telling of the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart at the words of Moses. As he would expect his audience to know, the hardening of Pharaoh’s heart led to his pursuit of the Israelites with an army, which was subsequently swallowed up in the Red Sea, attempting to follow the Israelites in their dry passage. Dracontius’ lines, then, serve as a direct complement to those of Sidonius, referencing, but not overlapping: that key method to the art of Latin poetry.

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36 This section of Sidonius’ poem runs from lines 5–67, and goes chronologically through Old Testament stories, but ends with Christ, theologically speaking the fulfillment of the Old Testament, and an appropriately chosen end to the series. Other figures included, but less relevant to the present inquiry, are Judith, Gideon, David, Jonah, and Elisha.

37 This series runs from lines 11–48.

38 The contextual analysis strongly implies that the Prudentius reference is not the sole literary parallel underneath Dracontius’ use of serus pater.
second passage, deals with the transformation of Nebuchadnezzar into a bellowing ox and back again. This likewise provides strong resonance to the reading, but carefully avoids any overlap. Sidonius mentions the three youths placed into the Chaldean furnace who were miraculously saved by God. This story, regarding Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (the names of the three youths, although not used by Sidonius), comes from chapter three of the book of Daniel. While Sidonius narrates the story well, what he does not name is the one who placed the youths in the furnace, that is, King Nebuchadnezzar. Dracontius takes up the story of Nebuchadnezzar found in the fourth chapter of the book of Daniel: the transformation of the reigning king into a beast, and back again. Just as before, Dracontius gives the perfect complement to Sidonius’ passage. Taken with the Prudentius resonance, this contextual evidence strongly suggests that Vollmer’s emendation to ‘serus’ is correct, and that Dracontius had Sidonius’ poem at the forefront of his mind when writing this passage.

The resonances in the De Laudibus Dei are both much stronger, and much more complex and multi-layered. Both parallels occur in a passage which appears during Dracontius’ description of the Garden of Eden before the fall, found at line 180 and line 199. These loci similes also link us to the next author with whom we concerned: Avitus of Vienne. This passage in Dracontius is densely packed with resonances and needs to be carefully unwound. The passage begins in a way relatively typical of descriptions of Paradise after Vergil. In Book III of the Aeneid, Vergil begins a description of Hesperia, that is Italy, as it were a ‘paradise for the Trojans’, with the words ‘est locus’.39 So too begins Dracontius’ passage.40 Sidonius, in his panegyric on Anthemius, gives a description of a paradise in the farthest East, ‘proximus Indis’, in which dwells Aurora, dawn personified.41 He too begins with the same words.42 So too with these words does Avitus of Vienne open his description of Paradise found in his poem, which begins at Book I, line 183.43 Others could be named. The phrase est locus, however, represents a rather stock method of beginning such descriptions of paradises, and, as such, cannot be distinguished from a genuine locus similis, except perhaps with Vergil, and so, on

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39 Vergil, Aeneid, 3.163. Lines 163-5 in Vergil read:
‘Est locus, Hesperiam Grai cognomine dicunt, 
terra antiqua, potens armis atque ubere glæbac.’
40 The first four lines of the passage read:
‘Est locus interea diffundens quattuor amnes 
floribus ambrosiis gemmato caespite pictus, 
plenus odoriferis numquam marcentibus herbis, 
hortus in orbe Dei cunctis felicior hortis.’
41 Sidonius, 2.407-23. The description of the place is followed by a description of Aurora herself.
42 The beginning of Sidonius’ passage, lines 407-11, reads as follows:
‘Est locus Oceani, longinquus proximus Indis, 
axe sub Eoo, Nabantaeum tensus in Eurum: 
ver ibi continuum est, interpellata nec ullis 
frigoribus pallescit humus, sed flore perenni 
picta peregrinos ignorant arva rigors.’
43 This is of importance, and will be returned to later on.
its own, does not tell us much. If accompanied with further parallels in the same passage, however, it can take on deeper meaning. Such is, in fact, the case with Dracontius’ passage here in question when compared to both the Sidonius and Avitus passages. Lines 199 and 200 in Dracontius’ passage constitute the principal parallel needed to prove the case. They read: ‘ver ibi perpetuum communes temperat auras/ ne laedant frondes et ut omnia poma coquantur’.\(^{44}\) Line 199 contains a rather good selection of resonances and parallels. Vollmer, in his MGH edition, suggests one solid, and four other probable references, whereas Colette Camus, the editor of Book I in the Budé edition, lists three.\(^{45}\) The first given by both, and the only Classical one, is a link to Ovid’s Metamorphoses, 1,107, where, in his description of the Golden Age, Ovid uses the phrase ‘ver erat aeternum’, to describe the blessed state of mankind in that primeval age.\(^{46}\) The second parallel they assert is with Prudentius’ Liber Catheemerinon, which occurs at line 3,103 of that work, where Prudentius writes, also in a description of the Garden of Eden, ‘ver ubi perpetuum redolet’.\(^{47}\) The third parallel mentioned by both occurs in Claudius Marius Victorius’ Aletheia, in a passage highly reminiscent of Ovid’s regarding the Golden Age, and again describing the Garden of Eden. Regarding the familiar eternal spring, he writes: ‘aeternum paribus uer temperat horis’.\(^{48}\) The two parallels which only Vollmer mentions, are the ones most relevant here, issuing as they do from Sidonius Apollinaris and Avitus of Vienne. Sidonius’ passage, already discussed above, uses, to describe the climate in the Garden of Eden, the following words: ‘ver ibi continuum est’.\(^{49}\) Avitus of Vienne, in his own Biblical epic, uses the words ‘hic ver adsiduum caeli clementia servat’ to describe this Ovidian springtime in the Garden of Eden.\(^{50}\)

With all these various resonances in mind, then, we can move to discuss which among them are the strongest, and, therefore most able to sustain the burden of argument. Dracontius’ debt to Ovid is both clear and unsurprising. Indeed all of these accounts are indebted to Ovid not only in language, but in the concept of the eternal spring. Firstly, looking simply at Dracontius’ basic word choice, ‘ver ibi perpetuum’, the most obvious parallel is with Prudentius, whose wording is ‘ver ubi perpetuum’.

\(^{44}\) Trans: ‘In that place perpetual spring moderates the shared breezes/ lest it damage the foliage and that all the fruits may ripen.’

This passage is also discussed in D.J. Nodes, Doctrine and Exegesis in Biblical Latin Poetry, ARCA, 31 (Leeds: Francis Cairns, 1993), pp. 124-7. Nodes’ discussion, however, is limited solely to Dracontius and mainly focuses on exegetical and cosmological matters, and does not touch upon the matters in discussion.

\(^{45}\) For Vollmer, see the note for line 199 on page 32 of his edition. He additionally lists a later parallel with the work of Boethius. For Camus, see Dracontius Œuvres, 4 vols (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2002), p. 274 n. 199, and the list of loci similes, p. 378.

\(^{46}\) It should be noted that, all the descriptions of the Biblical Garden of Eden discussed here, owe a substantial debt to, principally, Ovid’s account of the Golden Age. The actual passage in Genesis, 2: 8-16, is very brief, and mainly describes the four rivers; there is not any perpetual spring mentioned. When one reads these Late Antique passages, one’s mind is instantly called back to Ovid.

\(^{47}\) Trans: ‘Where spring perpetually emits its scent.’

\(^{48}\) Aletheia, 1,228.

\(^{49}\) Sidonius, 2,407.

\(^{50}\) Avitus, 1.222. The passage in Avitus, which runs from 1.193-298, conflates the accounts of the paradise of India, rich in its cinnamon, spices, et cetera, with the Biblical Garden of Eden. The use of Ovid in poetic accounts of the Garden of Eden is, as can be seen in the previous examples, both widespread and well attested.
The echo in the word choice is obvious. Sidonius’ ‘*ver ibi continuum est*’ also represents a close parallel, as *continuus* and *perpetuus* have very similar meanings, being very near to synonyms and as both passages contain *ibi*, ‘there’, which is not a synonym with *ubi*, ‘where’. The parallel with the *Aletheia* has merit, but is not as strong as the others. The Avitus quotation, on the surface, seems rather weak. This, however, is not the case when one investigates more closely. Prudentius’ passage mainly refers to the *smell* of spring (‘*ver redolet*’), and not to the temperature. Claudius Marius Victorius largely refers to the daylight hours of spring (‘*ver paribus horis*’), again differing from what Dracontius actually says. The two closest in meaning to Dracontius are indeed Sidonius and Avitus.

The Sidonius passage in which this second *locus similis* is found reads: ‘There spring is continuous, the ground does not grow pale, having been disturbed by any cold weather, but painted with everlasting blossom the ploughlands know not foreign coldness’.\(^{51}\) This idea of temperature as critical to the eternal spring is much more in keeping with Dracontius’ passage than Prudentius’ concerned with smell. While Dracontius does not specifically mention the threat of cold, his word choice hedges the issue and refers to problems which could be caused by weather both too hot, or too cold. This similarity serves to confirm the verbal parallel.

Much stronger, however, is the parallel with Avitus. The passage in question in Avitus reads as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{Non hic alterni succedit temporis umquam} \\
&\text{Bruma nec aestivi redeunt post frigora soles,} \\
&\text{Sic celsus calidum cum reddit circulus annum,} \\
&\text{Vel densente gelu canescunt arva pruinis.} \\
&\text{Hic ver adsiduum caeli clementia servat;} \\
&\text{Turbidus auster abest semperque sub aere sudo} \\
&\text{Nubila diffugiunt iugi cessura sereno.}^{52}
\end{align*}
\]

In this description we find material more in line with Dracontius’ description. Avitus’ image is of a springtime manifest not in the scent of flowers but in the temperateness of heaven, of the air, which is, of course, where Dracontius’ breezes must lie. The latter part of this passage deals, again, with

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\(^{51}\) Sidonius, 2.409-11. The Latin reads:
‘*ver ibi continuum est, interpellata nec ullis frigoribus pallescit humus, sed flore perenni picta peregrinos ignorant arva rigores.*’

\(^{52}\) Avitus, 1.218-224. Trans: ‘Not here ever does the winter of changing time advance nor here ever do the summer suns return after the cold weather, as when the lofty orbit brings back the warm part of the year, or as when the ploughlands grow hoary from the frosts as the snow grows thick. Here the mercy of Heaven preserves a constant spring; the stormy south wind is absent and always beneath the clear, bright air the clouds disperse so as to give way to continual fair weather.’
weather patterns, which more closely links it with Dracontius’. The beginning of the passage, however, shows a likeness to Sidonius, and it is likely that Avitus had both authors in mind when he wrote his own account. While Avitus’ word choice does differ somewhat from Dracontius’, most notably in the use of *hic* and *adsiduus*, the conception remains very much the same, and the inclusion of *caelum* complementing Dracontius’ *aura* really drives home the parallel. Dracontius’ line may be layered well beneath Avitus’, but it certainly appears present. This passage, highlights several important aspects of the present investigation. Firstly, taken with the Sidonian resonances from the *Carmina profana* and the *Satisfactio*, it clearly displays Dracontius’ knowledge of, and interaction with, the works of Sidonius. Secondly, and combined again with the parallels in the *Carmina profana*, it shows the full range and inner workings of the *locus similis* itself. Indeed, Dracontius’ use of Sidonius’ *corpus* spans the whole gambit of how *loci similes* were used and constructed. Stylistically, Sidonius and Dracontius are very close, and employ many of the same literary techniques. Lexical parallels exist between the two texts, which further suggest close contact. Thirdly, the presence of outright parallels with Sidonius in the *De raptu Helenae* and the *De Laudibus Dei* demonstrate Dracontius’ knowledge of his Gallic predecessor from the previous generation. That there are only very few *loci similes* is also not as suggestive as it appears. The works of Dracontius and Sidonius are of very different characters. Dracontius, like the more skilled of his predecessors, confined himself to relevant sources: Sidonius only appears when convenient and logical. The same is true of Vergil and Ovid. Finally, this *locus similis* leads us to the next author with which we are here concerned.

As one might expect, due to the very close nature of the texts, further parallels do indeed exist between the *De Laudibus Dei* and Avitus’ own Biblical epic, the *De spiritalis historiae gestis*. One rather solid parallel occurs at Book I, line 412. This comes in a passage which sees Dracontius narrating God’s speech to Adam, in which he granted to Adam dominion over all creatures of the land, sea, and air and licence over all things in the Garden, save only the one tree. Dracontius writes:

> sumere quidquid habent pomaria nostra licebit;  
> nam totum quod terra creat, quod pontus et aer  
> protulit, addictum vestro sub iure manebit  
> deliciaeque fluent vobis et honesta voluptas:  
> arboris unius tantum nescite saporem.\(^{55}\)

This poetic passage elaborates rather nicely on the well-known story of the licence and dominion given to Adam, with the notable exception of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

\(^{55}\) Dracontius, *De Laudibus Dei*, 1.411-15. Trans: ‘It will be possible for you to take whatever my orchard contains; for everything that the Earth brings into being, all that sea and air advance, that which has been awarded to you shall remain under your rule and joys and honorable delight shall flow for you. Only know not the taste of the one tree.’
Dracontius places these words in the mouth of God, as instructions to the newly created man. Subsequently to this passage, Dracontius elaborates, for almost forty more lines, upon the blessed and shameless life of Adam and Eve in the Garden, before the Fall.

Avitus’ passage both parallels and contrasts with Dracontius’. The passage in question lies in Book II of Avitus’ epic, which deals with the introduction of original sin. His passage reads as follows:

\[
Quod caelum, quod terra creat, quod gurgite magno
Producit pelages, vestros confertur in usus.
Nil natura negat, datur ecce in cuncta potestas.\
\]

The strength of the verbal parallel between the two passages is striking. Both share the phrase, ‘*quod terra creat*’ with no change in meaning, and, albeit with different wording, cover the sky and the sea, and do this using two verbs, the second of which is located in the following line in both passages. Additionally, the second verbs used in these passages, *proferre* and *producere*, bear a fairly strong resemblance to each other, and are quite close in meaning. Of equal importance to word choice in these lines, stands scansion. Both lines (which, as genre dictates, are in dactylic hexameter) scan identically, with two initial spondees followed by a dactyl, a spondee, and the customary dactyl and spondee ending. The phrase ‘*quod terra creat*’ occupies the same exact place in both lines, further strengthening the parallel. Taken together, these factors give us a solid *locus similis*. When one looks at the two passages’ contexts, however, there is also a great contrast, centred especially upon who in the narrative is delivering the words. Dracontius’ passage, as we have already seen, represents the words of God to Adam. Avitus’ passage, on the other hand, is spoken by the tempting serpent, so often identified with the Devil. Yet, again paralleling each other, both passages immediately progress from the bounty which is allowed Adam and Eve to the fruit of the one tree which they cannot have.\textsuperscript{55} Indeed, while appearing at first to be in sharp contrast to each other, this contrast may, in itself, serve to solidify the parallel between the two texts. Avitus is known both to employ in his poetry exegetical material and to employ his poetic material in an exegetic fashion.\textsuperscript{56} Indeed, Avitus’ primary focus in writing his poetry is, in fact, exegetical, as his own dedicatory letters and his heavy debt to Augustine testify.\textsuperscript{57} It is possible that Avitus used this Dracontian reference to convey the point that often the Devil, or a tempting spirit as it were, can use what is ostensibly good and true for evil purposes. In corrupting the logic of God’s message to Adam in order to encourage

\textsuperscript{54} Avitus, 2.154–6. Trans: ‘That which the sky, which the earth creates, which the sea produces from its great surge, is bestowed upon you for your use. Nature denies you nothing, Behold, power over all things is granted to you.’

\textsuperscript{55} At line 415 in Dracontius and lines 157–9 in Avitus.


Eve to commit the first sin, Avitus shows the Devil in his perhaps most frightening guise, that of the corrupt sweet-talker. The reminder that the Devil corrupts the word of God to his own ends is also a strong warning against heresy, as heresy itself depended upon a non-orthodox reading of the Scriptures, the Devil warping and misusing the Word of God, which is exactly what we see the serpent doing in this passage. Certainly, Avitus was very much concerned with heresy, as several of his letters attest. This warning against heresy would be especially strong if Avitus’ audience was familiar with the *De Laudibus Dei*, as they would see the word of God corrupted into a logic-based argument for sinning. Indeed, the warning partly depends upon previous knowledge of Dracontius. The strong exegetical possibilities of this reference, combined with Avitus’ known employment of exegesis in his poetic works, serve to strongly confirm this as a genuine parallel.

While further resonances do exist between the *De Laudibus Dei* and the work of Avitus, none of them are terribly strong. Points of similarity do occur in various passages in all three books of the *De Laudibus Dei*, although this could potentially be explained at least partially by subject overlap. At several points Avitus describes something which Dracontius himself described, but using rather different word choice. While one could attribute this to a lack of exposure to Dracontius on the part of Avitus, this explanation is also something of an argument *ex nihilo*. This type of avoidance was a hallowed literary practice in the Classical canon: Latin literature contained an inborn struggle between tradition and innovation, and one way of innovating was avoidance. For Avitus, the writer of the last of a long series of Late Antique Biblical epics, the necessity to both reference the existing canon, like Dracontius’ *De Laudibus Dei*, and write a poem that stood out from the others, hung upon a very delicate balance. Indeed, three such references actually make a fairly strong case for Avitus’ knowledge of Dracontius’ text. The other points of vague likeness between the texts, then, could indeed be a result of Avitus’ desire not to show too much of debt to Dracontius, but at the same time display an awareness of his work. This is the way in which Ovid treated the works of Vergil when writing his *Metamorphoses*. As both the *Metamorphoses* and the *Aeneid* dealt occasionally with the same material, Ovid, in a desire to remain original while still paying homage to Vergil, tended to skirt the latter’s stories, and focused instead on peripheral matters. Avitus, on the other hand, could not skirt these stories, because they were all critical to his piece. Instead, he artfully navigated both through the Bible, and through the Biblical epics.

What, then, can the works of Dracontius tell us regarding the nature and depth of the cultural and intellectual connections between North Africa and Europe during the period of Vandal rule in Carthage? Taken together, Dracontius’ *loci similes* paint a picture of close cultural and intellectual

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58 See, for example, *Epistles* 7, 26, 28.
59 It should be noted here that three *loci similes* exist between Dracontius’ *Orestis Tragoedia* and Avitus’ verse. While none are incontrovertible, they do suggest Avitus’ knowledge of the text, and serve to affirm his familiarity with Dracontius’ works. The references are to be found between Avitus 1, 151 and *Orestis Tragoedia*, 396 and between Avitus 6, 302 and *Orestis Tragoedia* 514 and 670.
interaction between Vandal North Africa and the rest of the Latin world. On a basic level, the Sidonian *loci similes* show that Dracontius had access to at least a selection of the works of Sidonius Apollinaris. The verbal parallels with Sidonius are further confirmed by the strong similarity in style and usage between the two authors. This suggests, at the minimum, that some part of Sidonius’ works, both prose and poetry, were transmitted to Vandal North Africa in the latter decades of the fifth century. Sidonius was born in Lyon either in 431 or 432 and died at some point in the 480s. Sidonius, therefore, belongs to the generation directly preceding Dracontius, and the end of Sidonius’ career most probably overlaps with the beginning of Dracontius’. The official dissemination of Sidonius’ poetry occurred in 469 and of his epistles between 477 and 481. Sidonius’ poetry was released directly into the Auvergne and southern Gaul and from thence into the wider world: a similar circulation should be assumed for the epistles. The initial spread of the *Carmina*, therefore, occurred during the reign of Gaiseric in Africa. Sidonius’ eighth book of epistles was published sometime between 477 and 481, which places its dissemination in the early years of Gaiseric’s successor Huneric.

Dracontius wrote the *Satisfactio* and the *De Laudibus Dei* during the reign of Gunthamund, most probably in the early 490s, as discussed above. Since his imprisonment, which was most probably a fairly comfortable house arrest, as witnessed by the authorship of two of his major works during this time, must have placed at least some restraints on him, it would seem most likely that he would have encountered Sidonius’ poem before the accession of Gunthamund. This would mean that the work of Sidonius most probably reached Vandal-occupied North Africa in the decade or decade and a half following its composition. This is very important, for it would tell us that Vandal North Africa, even under two of its most feared monarchs, Gaiseric and Huneric, famed for their persecution of Catholics, was not at all culturally or intellectually isolated or separated from the rest of the West. Following Victor of Vita’s narrative, it is probable that Sidonius’ works arrived in Africa during the earlier years of the reign of Huneric, as, in those years, he was said to have been a tolerant ruler. Yet it need not be so. On several occasions Victor makes indirect reference to Imperial embassies, and one such embassy could have borne along literary material. However long the transmission of this work did take, it could not have been that long, and it quickly became part of the cultural/intellectual canon of Vandal North Africa. If Dracontius had the poem, this would

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61 Harries, Sidonius Apollinaris and the Fall of Rome, pp. 4-5.


63 Such references can be found, for example, at 1, 51 (under Gaiseric) and 2, 2 (under Huneric); both examples were sent by Zeno and dealt with the church in Carthage. It is evident in these, and other, passages that Zeno is well-informed in regards to the condition of the Catholic Church in Carthage, which strongly implies that there was some sort of interchange between Vandal North Africa and the Roman Empire.
mean that Vandal North Africa, in its supposedly most closed-off and isolated days, was nothing of the sort, leastwise not on a constant basis. It remained connected and in tune with the literary and cultural trends of the remainder of the West. The Sidonius references serve to confirm what Dracontius’ poetry itself tells us: Dracontius fully belongs to the contemporary literary trends of the West of his own day. His style bears a strong resemblance to that of Sidonius not because they independently arrived at the same point as, for example, Newton and Leibniz in the invention of calculus, but because they are both part of an ongoing and interconnected aesthetic development, the same Late Antique movement or ‘school’. Thus Dracontius, and the North African literary and intellectual culture of his day, was as a much a part of the Latin West as Visigothic Spain or the Kingdom of the Burgundians.64

This is further confirmed by the parallels with Avitus of Vienne, albeit in the opposite direction. If Avitus did indeed have access to a copy of Dracontius’ De Laudibus Dei when writing his own Biblical epic, as the parallels argued above bear witness to, then the text must have had a rapid transmission to Burgundian Gaul. Avitus’ efforts to avoid overlap with the piece, as well as a subtle warning against heresy dependant upon knowledge of Dracontius’ text, further suggest a significant readership for Dracontius in Gaul, at least among the circles in which Avitus’ own work travelled. The theological warning, after all, only functions if the poem’s audience has already internalised Dracontius’ verse. Certainly this genre still had currency in Gaul, as the composition of Avitus’ own epic testifies. The world of the 490s, however, was not the world of the 460s. Gaiseric and Huneric were dead, and Gunthamund and then Thrasamund presided over the new Vandal order. This was the period of the Vandal renaissance, and North Africa saw a plethora of works, both prose and poetry, composed by various authors, including, of course, Dracontius. The transmission of Dracontius’ work to Burgundian Gaul shows that the culture of Vandal Africa was not just confined to its own borders. It testifies to a wider cultural influence, to a more interconnected cultural and literary world, where authors could draw on sources, both Classical and contemporary, from all over the Latin-speaking world. Africa was not cut off from Europe economically or culturally. We know from Avitus’ Epistula 26 that African Donatists were in Lyon in the early-sixth century. It could be that Donatists such as these brought the text of the De Laudibus Dei with them. This, in turn, would suggest not only that the Gallo-Roman intellectuals received the Donatists, along with the texts which they brought with them, but that the Donatists themselves were an active part in the culture of late-fifth-century North Africa, and not some form of counter-cultural group. The transmission also attests stronger connections between the two regions. Regardless of how it was transmitted, at the very least the presence of Dracontius’ text in late-fifth-/early-sixth-century Gaul demonstrates the cultural and intellectual interconnectedness of Vandal North Africa and the European heart of Late Antique Latin literature and culture. The strong relationship also shows a Late Antique

64 This cultural evidence supports J. Conant’s conclusions, from very different evidence, found in his Staying Roman, pp. 67-129.
literary culture that continued to exist, to be shared, to be transmitted, and to be built upon by the heirs of the Classical tradition throughout the old provinces of the Western Empire.

This philological evidence for literary exchange between Vandal North Africa and the European continent confirms the conclusions coming from the more historical and archaeological investigations represented, among others, by J. P. Conant’s *Staying Roman*. For many scholars studying the Vandal kingdom in North Africa, the issue of interconnectedness is something of a *fait accompli* in light of recent research. Likewise, many scholars of Late Antiquity have expanded their research to factor in developments in the Vandal kingdom.65 Despite the overwhelming success in overturning the traditional viewpoint that North Africa was isolated, the Vandal kingdom centred on Carthage continues to be perceived by many scholars, whether intentionally or not, as the periphery of the Latin West.66 The presence of literary resonances between Dracontius and his Gallic contemporaries argues that Vandal North Africa should hold a much more central position in the discourse on Late Antique intellectual culture. When studying the intellectual and cultural history of Late Antique Gaul, Italy, or Spain, one neglects Africa only at great peril.

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66 Halsall’s *Barbarian Migrations*, for example, spends more time discussing Britain and Ireland than it does North Africa.

This twenty-paper volume is the result of a conference at Utrecht, 24–26 June 1999. The key concept behind the collection is ‘diglossia’: the use in the medieval West of one language for religion and law, and another for everyday speech. Although, as the editors honestly point out in a brief preface, ‘multilingualism’ is now the preferred term to describe the complex relationships between Latin and the European vernaculars in the early middle ages, the use of ‘diglossia’ as an organising principle does not date the research presented here. Instead it provides a welcome focus on the boundaries between Latin and everyday speech, bringing together the individual studies in a way that a volume on multilingualism – a broader concept – would have been unable to do.

As a result, the collection is both subject-coherent and extremely varied, encompassing Anglo-Saxon England, Ireland, Scandinavia, Central Europe, and Francia. Its languages include French and German as well as English, and so despite the omission of Dutch, Italian and Spanish, the volume represents a substantial section of the international scholarly community.

Although subject focus and multilingualism are a great asset to any edited publication and especially to one on language use, the papers in this book do reflect the state of scholarship on the subject as it
was almost fifteen years ago, and while some of them have updated footnote references, it has been considered unnecessary for others. The reader is invited to judge for him or herself the continued relevance of the research presented in each contribution. This is a deliberate decision on the part of the editors that is explained as stemming from the persistent value of the conference papers to scholars of linguistic history today. While much of the material is stimulating, the lack of up-to-date references, as well as several other concerns, seriously reduce the usefulness of this volume. This is discussed below in an overview of the papers, which are not grouped in any way in the volume but which can be divided into three broad clusters by subject matter.

The largest group of papers deals with the subject of various European vernaculars, not including German. It comprises some excellent contributions, including Roger Wright’s ‘A sociophilological study of the change to official Romance documentation in Castile’, though unfortunately there is little material here that has not already been covered by the author in other publications since 1999. A puzzling addition to a volume on the early middle ages is Anna Adamska’s ‘Latin and three vernaculars in east central Europe from the point of view of the history of social communication’, which deals with the period from 1300 to 1500. While this and Inger Larsson’s ‘Nordic digraphia and diglossia’ have intrinsic interest, they are principally historical overviews and present little new research.

The second group of papers focuses on Latin use. These papers range from Walter Berschin’s ‘Die Figur des Dolmetschers in der biographischen Literatur des westlichen Mittelalters (IV.-XII. Jh.)’, in which he simply but usefully lists the known sources of classical and medieval references to translators; to Michael Herren’s excellent comparison of Merovingian and Irish Latin in ‘The Cena Adamnani or seventh-century table talk.’ One might wish for more engagement with primary sources in some of the papers, however. One of these is Albert Demyttenaere’s ‘Qu’une femme ne peut pas être appelée homme: Questions de langue et d’anthropologie autour du concile de Mâcon (585)’, which begins with an interesting but almost excessively detailed discussion of the ways in which modern historiography has responded to the question raised at the council of Mâcon: whether or not women can be designated by the Latin word homo. Although this and the subsequent discussion of what the question may have meant is both stimulating and valuable, there is little sense of the issue being couched in its wider medieval setting and the discussion becomes almost teleological in places. Demyttenaere points out, for instance, that ‘…dire que Dieu désigna l’homme aussi bien que la femme par le mot hébreu Adam, ne dit rien de l’usage d’un mot latin.’ This is true from a linguistic point of view, but it ignores the Christian medieval context of the word homo, whose meaning in this debate was extrapolated from scripture.

The third and final large group of papers deals with Germanic dialects in early medieval Europe, taking a broad historical rather than a narrow linguistic view. It is, therefore, welcome as a selection intended not for Germanists but for early medievalists working with some aspect of Old High
German. This is characterised by the late Dennis Green’s very lucid ‘Writing in Latin and the vernacular: the case of Old High German’. Two final small groups of papers might be added to the three already discussed, their solid contributions dealing with historical linguistics in Merovingian Europe and with Irish texts (the *Auraicept na nÉces* and the *Immacallam in dáThúarad*, discussed by Rijcklof Hofman and Charles D. Wright, respectively).

Although a good deal of the content of this volume is of a high standard, it is clear that there is a very large gap between the strongest and weakest papers. In addition, multiple editorial problems intrude on the reader’s attention. There is no index, list of plates or bibliography, either general or at the end of each paper, and an afterword or summary to draw together the primary conclusions and questions would have been welcome. There is no consensus between the papers as to whether or not quotations in different languages should be translated, with the result that some authors translate and others do not; of those who do, some translate in the main text and others do so in a footnote. Lack of proofreading is clear in numerous mistakes of spelling and grammar. The reader stumbles over phrases such as ‘in this presentation’ (p. 329), a reminder that the piece started out as a conference paper, and ‘when Sweden has become Christian during the eleventh century, the Church met a well-established habit among the leading families of documenting important events […]’ (p. 76). As a result of these obstacles, the volume conveys the impression of a grouping of disparate papers and the unifying effect of the focus on diglossia is much weakened.

A further, less obvious drawback appears to stem from a lack of strong dialogue between the paper contributors. Several of the authors discuss Christine Mohrmann’s Nijmegen School and the conceptual questions presented by medieval glossaries, without mutual reference and without ever really reaching a critical level of engagement. Some, like Elvira Glaser in ‘Typen und Funktionen volkssprachiger (althochdeutschen) Eintragungen im lateinischen Kontext’, while offering a substantial and stimulating discussion of Old High German words, retain the discursive register of a historical overview when describing glossaries and other text types. This seems almost pedestrian in light of the extensive debate and resulting literature on glossaries and glossary-type texts that have emerged in recent years. The issue could perhaps have been remedied at least in part by grouping the papers by subject well ahead of publication to encourage discussion between the authors.

Overall, while this volume offers both coherence and scope, as well as several important studies, its scholarship is both very uneven and out of date. The overall lack of reference to current scholarship does detract significantly from the collection as a whole, despite the interest presented by most of the papers and the updates made to some, and the editorial issues outlined above are disappointing in a book that has been fifteen years in the making. The editors’ aim may have been simply to stimulate further research and debate, which this extensive collection is very capable of doing; but it does not altogether convince as a serious academic volume.
Book Review


This is a book with a mission: to show how the Roman Empire was brought down by the Huns. As such, it is likely to be polarising and I certainly found myself in significant disagreement with the author throughout. Some of this is disciplinary. The fifth century AD is an exciting place, where the fading world of the classicist meets the emerging world of the Middle Ages. Where I as a Romanist see the collapse of traditions sustained for almost a millennium, my medievalist colleagues see rebirth and escape from the shackles of a restrictive past. My classical perspective inevitably permeates my view of the various societies north of the Roman Empire, leading me to privilege factors such as writing, urban civilization including the provision of running water, and a single currency and legal system. And maybe I also am so wedded to the Roman way of doing things that I can only see empires in these terms, and thus am not receptive to a description of the Hun Empire as ‘well-organised and long-lived’ (p. 2). Attila may have been able to threaten, cajole, or influence many people and tribes between the Rhine and the Caucasus in the 440s, but for me that doesn’t make an Empire. It does, however, for Kim.

Kim accepts the recent linguistic arguments of de la Vaissière that the Xiongnu nomads in second century China migrated to become the Huns in fourth century Europe. Some modern scholars follow these arguments; others do not. For Kim, the identification allows him to interpret the Huns as part of an underappreciated cultural continuity of steppe nomads. These Huns (and their
Eurasian cousins) have great influence, so much so that institutions occurring in the classical world such as banquets (p. 55), two rulers (p. 56), and hunting on horseback (p. 153) are argued to be Hunnic or Eurasian. By the sixth century, Kim suggests that the Frankish practice of ‘levying tribute on conquered or vassalized peoples.…rather than just taxing them in the Roman way is also reminiscent of the practice found in Inner Asian and Iranian tributary empires’ (p. 148). While accepting Kim’s point that nomads had some impact on the classical and post-classical world, I think too much is made of this impact.

Some of my discontent is methodological. I’m accustomed to seeing the primary evidence laid out for discussion, not referred to via secondary authors cited in notes. Here, Kim is not helped by the decision (presumably by CUP) to use endnotes rather than footnotes which results in about 160 pages of text and 140 pages of notes. Nonetheless, if an argument is being made that, for example, the Visigoths followed ‘a drastic shift from infantry-based warfare to mounted warfare of the steppe type’ (p. 149), I would like to see some primary sources that back this up. When checked, the reference cited was to a general survey which itself cites no primary sources. Our knowledge of Visigothic warfare is sparse, but assertions like this are misleading at best. With the range of material covered, i.e. Eurasia from the fourth to the sixth centuries and frequent digressions, this is demanding (too demanding?) on the writer, but failure to follow it erodes trust. I also would like to see more awareness that authors write at a place, a time, and for a reason. Here Kim is inconsistent. There are moments of inspired interpretation, like the relation of the Battle of the Catalaunian Fields to the Battle of Marathon (pp. 77-78), but all too often his confident style of writing makes it easy to forget that all of our information about the Huns in Europe between the fourth to sixth centuries comes from non-Hunnic authors. Even when we have eyewitness accounts, care is needed in using them; in this respect, an unfortunate omission from the bibliography is Maas, M., 'Fugitives and ethnography in Priscus of Panium', *BMGS* 19 (1995), pp. 146-60.

Europe is also a big place, though admittedly much smaller than the steppes. Nonetheless, I think time and space matter more than Kim wants to accept. In the sixth century, he argues, there was a Hunnic confederation ‘stretching from Romania to the eastern end of the Kuban steppe… The only thing that makes us feel there is no order in this region is a general unfamiliarity with names which baffle us, not actual realities. In a region as large as Germany and Italy put together there existed a Hunnic confederation under Attila’s heirs’ (p. 142). To reach this conclusion, however, requires some violence to the primary sources. Two sixth-century lists, one of five peoples in Jordanes, the other of thirteen peoples in Pseudo-Zachariah, are edited down to four peoples. I find it easy to accept that these contemporaries (and other sixth-century writers like such as Procopius and Agathias both of whom also think the Kutrigurs were different from the Utigurs) had some reason for claiming that they were separate peoples. I prefer this conclusion to un-argued statements such as ‘Utigurs, Kutrigurs and Onogurs were in all likelihood identical with the Bulgars’ (p. 141).
Again, maybe because I’m a Romanist, I also wanted to know more about Hun interaction with the Romans. Kim rejects Heather’s influential (though controversial) 1995 *English Historical Review* article, though still laying responsibility for the fall of the Western Empire firmly on the Huns. My meta-narrative is obviously different from Kim’s (and Heather’s for that matter), but I still think the reasons for the fall of the Roman Empire are not agreed on by historians, many of whom might suggest causes other than the Huns. I also remain unconvinced that Attila’s empire ‘from its foundation as an imperial entity in the 370s persisted in continuous expansion until the 450s’ (p. 89).

I would have liked to see Kim deal with some of the problems presented by the evidence for his argument. In particular, I would point to the fact that although the Huns arrived in Europe in the mid-late fourth century, no Hun ruler can be named until the early fifth century. Nor can we trace succession from one Hun ruler to another until we reach the succession of Rua in the 430s by his nephews Bleda and Attila. And I wanted to know much more about how this imperial entity was run when there is no evidence of Hunnic administration comparable to what we know of settled Empires, i.e. no evidence of written administration, administrative structures such as provinces or officials, professional administrators, or codes of law. Of course the Huns had hierarchies, aristocrats, and secretaries, but I find it hard to reconcile this sort of evidence with the claim that ‘their Empire was a politically advanced military state’ (p. 156). There is more evidence of administrative structures in thirteenth century BC Knossos (Linear B tablets), sixth century AD Gaul (various law codes), or seventh century AD England (Tribal Hidage) than there is of the fifth century AD Hun Empire, none of which I would describe as politically advanced.

I’m clearly guilty of many of the blinkered points of view warned about in the beginning of the book (p. 2). Despite this, I was very much engaged by this short and easy to read book. For a graduate seminar on medieval history it would be an excellent text to start discussions. If readers (students) have time to read two or three books on the Huns this volume is well worth considering; if there is only time for one then Christopher Kelly’s *Attila the Hun* is a better introduction to the role played by the Huns in the end of the Western Roman Empire.
The Anglo-Saxon period is far from being secondary in the history the English-speaking world, as it comprises events such as the progressive disappearance of the concept of Roman Britain and the emergence of a new cultural and political entity, England (‘the land of Angles’). To describe this age, Nicholas J. Higham and Martin J. Ryan adopt an interdisciplinary approach, in which burial records, settlement archaeology, palaeo-ethnicity and place-names are considered alongside more known sources like Bede, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* or the *Domesday Book*. The resulting picture reveals a world which is complex and unexpectedly colourful, in open contrast with the reconstructions of many scholars of the past, often all too happy to rely almost exclusively on the few great narratives that survived, uncritically accepting their biased perspectives.

In the Introduction, Higham and Ryan explain why a history of the Anglo-Saxons is still relevant today and define the concept of ‘being Anglo-Saxon’ from a linguistic and cultural point of view. The chronological limits are fixed with clarity, and the general organization of the book is explained. An interesting feature is the series of short essays entitled ‘Sources and Issues’ following each chapter, aimed at providing a general discussion on the main primary sources and historiographic debates.
Chapter 1, ‘Britain in and out the Roman Empire’, is an updated overview of the history of Britain under the Romans (c. AD 43-410), where the main administrative divisions of the province and its level of ‘Romanization’ are carefully assessed in order to provide a solid background for the discussion of the end of the Roman occupation of the island. It is inferred that in the mid-fifth century there still was a ‘Roman’ elite running Britain, notwithstanding the return of most of the legions to the continent, but that Roman Britain gradually collapsed because of the lack of imperial intervention.

Chapter 2, ‘The Origins of England’, discusses the adventus Saxonum (c. AD 430-570), considered the principal event that caused the final collapse of Roman Britain. The proposed model sees the ‘English settlement’ not as a sort of ethnic cleansing, as often described in Victorian times, but a small-scale social transformation fuelled by the migration of bands of German warriors that progressively filled the gaps left open by the disappearing civil elite of the island. This resulted in a cultural shift that marked the ending of ‘Roman’ and ‘British’ and the birth of something new and ‘Anglo-Saxon’.

Chapter 3, ‘From Tribal Chieftains to Christian Kings’, is an open challenge to Bede, who saw the coming of St Augustine in Kent in 597 as the most crucial event between the sixth and the seventh centuries. The authors convincingly show that, even if the Conversion to Catholicism was clearly important, other changes should not be underestimated, such as the emergence of the first Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and the revival of trade. Moreover, the story of the Conversion does not seem as unproblematic as Bede’s account suggests. Not only was there a certain opposition to Christianity, but Rome was not the only protagonist of the story: Frankish influence should be taken in consideration too, together with the support of Scottish and even British missionaries.

The central chapters of the book deal with the progressive creation of England, making sure to avoid an a posteriori perspective that would see the period as a series of trial runs at political unity. Each event is seen in its contemporary context in order to highlight its unique features. So, in Chapter 4, ‘The Mercian supremacies’, the overkingship of the Mercians over the Anglo-Saxons during the eighth century is put into discussion, showing that the influence of their kings was fluctuating and often contested. Of particular interest is the successful attempt to put England into a broader European context, considering, for example, the contacts that Offa had with Charlemagne and the trade relations that developed between the island and the Continent.

Chapters 5, ‘The Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings, c. 825-900’, and 6, ‘Conquest, Reform and the Making of England’, cover the turbulent period of the ‘heathen invasion’. Here as elsewhere, a great variety of sources are employed. Therefore, if the increased sense of instability is reconstructed by references to ninth century charters and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, the changes taking place in
urban life are reconstructed with an analysis of archaeological evidence, while the extent of the
Scandinavian settlement is assessed using place-names and material culture.

The issue of the over-abundance of sources concerning key-figures is dealt with by a careful analysis
of each work, highlighting the immediate context in which it was produced and the political agenda
of its author. This is the case, for example, with Alfred the Great, but also with the main historical
figures appearing in the last two chapters of the book, 7, ‘The Age of Aethelred’, and 8, ‘The
Transformation of Anglo-Saxon England’, discussing the events immediately preceding the coming
of William in 1066. Of a particular interest is the analysis of the Bayeux Tapestry – an illuminating
example of how figurative sources can be used in an historical inquiry.

Writing a book like this one is not an easy task. Higham and Ryan managed to do it brilliantly,
explaining the Anglo-Saxon period with a clear and elegant style, easily accessible to a broad, non-
specialist audience. Because of the introductory nature of the work, the reader should not expect a
series of footnotes explaining every detail of the scholarly debate. However, those interested in
deepening their knowledge of the subject will find an essential tool in the bibliography at the end of
the book, which provides an updated list of the principal publications concerning the discussed
topics.

The only flaw of a book that is excellent from any other perspective is the lack an appendix with a
selection of passages taken from the main written sources of the period. Very often, these works are
described but not quoted, so the reader is unable to have direct experience of their contents. Such
section could have provided an undoubtedly useful conclusion.
In her book, Maddalena Betti attempts to chart the fate of the Methodian mission in Great Moravia and the establishment of *Sancta ecclesia Marabensis* in Moravian territory in the second half of the ninth century. While this topic has been treated previously, she has chosen to look at the formation of ecclesiastical hierarchies in Great Moravia from the perspective of papal policies. For this reason, Betti has studied in detail papal correspondence pertinent to matters of the Moravian mission, especially the letters of John VIII, whose correspondence is particularly concerned with the Moravian mission. Her study is an extremely valuable addition to previous research into Great Moravian Christian culture, as it provides a well-rounded and erudite picture of the papal position on the Methodian mission in Great Moravia. Besides, Betti’s study also contributes to other scholarly inquiries connected with the Moravian state, such as its geographical location.

In the first chapter, Betti provides an overview of the diverse forms of interest in the Moravian mission throughout the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, including by the Orthodox and Catholic Churches, by nationalist groups in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and in the modern national states of Central Europe. As for the scholarly community, Betti shows that both the leading historians writing about Great Moravia in the nineteenth century, Pavel Josef Šafářík and František Palacký, proposed that Great Moravia lay in the territory north of the Danube. This thesis,
supported by the excavation made in 1950s and 1960s in Czechoslovakia, is favored also by Betti. She rejects the theses of Imre Boba, who placed Great Moravia south of the Danube, and of Martin Eggers, who located Great Moravia east of the Danube. Both scholars gave a prominent place to ancient Sirmium (modern Sremska Mitrovica) as the episcopal see of Methodius, a thesis accepted also by Dvorník who considered the ecclesiastical province of Methodius to encompass territories both north and south of Danube.

In chapter two, Betti examines the history of the Moravian mission during the pontificates of Nicholas I (858-67) and Hadrian II (867-72). Her comparison of the two Slavonic vitae of Constantine and of Methodius with the papal letters and other Roman sources reveals discrepancies that reflect the different perspectives and interests of the parties involved in composing the two sets of evidence, particularly with respect to the role of the two popes in the Moravian mission and their reasons for support of the Methodian enterprise. Betti points out that none of the Slavonic sources mention the involvement of John VIII in the establishment of the ecclesia Marabensis. In contrast, they credit either Nicholas I or Hadrian II with the consecration of Methodius as an archbishop of the Moravian diocese and with the approval of the Slavonic liturgy. She believes that it is likely that both Nicholas I and Hadrian II interacted with the Great Moravian elites and with the Moravian missionarises, but it was only John VIII who had a clear stance towards the issue of the establishment of the Moravian Church. Moreover, Betti shows that the Roman sources pay little to no attention to the appointment of Methodius as a head of the newly established ecclesiastical province or to the endorsement of the Slavonic liturgy - matters central to the Slavonic sources - but rather focus on the translatio of the relics of St. Clement to Rome by Constantine. Betti concludes that this was because the papal involvement in Central Europe was an open issue in the times of Nicholas I and Hadrian II, a project which was contrary to the interests of East Francia, a key papal ally at the time.

The third chapter is devoted entirely to the analysis of the correspondence of John VIII. Betti divides the chapter between several topics, such as the pope’s rhetoric in his ‘Moravian correspondence’, Methodius’ place in the context of the missions sponsored by Rome, the changes in perception of the mission and the addressees evident from the papal correspondence, as well as the ‘Sirmian question’. Betti’s most important argument is the shift in papal policy between 873, the year Methodius was freed from imprisonment by the Bavarian clergy, and 880, the year when John VIII addressed his bull Industriae tuae to Svatopluk, the ruler of Great Moravia. In 873, John VIII designated Methodius as an archbishop of Pannonia; while in 880, Methodius was reaffirmed as an archbishop of Ecclesia Marabensis. This change in papal rhetoric reflected the papacy’s changing attitudes towards the missionary activity of Methodius. Originally, John VIII’s strategy was to advocate the re-establishment of the previously extant diocese of Pannonia, which justified papal involvement in the territory with a strong presence of Bavarian, Frankish missionaries without alienating the East Franks, papal allies in the Christianization of Bulgaria. However, the growing
power of Great Moravia under Svatopluk and the failure of the Bulgarian mission by 880 encouraged John VIII to focus on the establishment of a strong and independent diocese in the Moravian territory, without considering the Franks. John VIII was, moreover, willing to acknowledge Svatopluk’s supremacy in Central Europe in 880, and in return expected Svatopluk to serve as a sole protector of the missionary project (rather than seeking multiple guarantors as in 873). Betti also shows that John VIII’s policies fell in line with the strategies of the previous Roman missions of Augustine, Willibrord and Boniface. Finally, Betti provides convincing arguments against the notion that Methodius’ see was located at Sirmium. Not only was the antique city of Sirmium of little importance by the ninth century, but it was also removed from the Moravian territory north of the Danube. Betti’s strongest argument is, however, that the association of Methodius with the See of St. Andronicus - which supposedly points to Sirmium - is a result of the influence of later Cyrillo-Methodian liturgy, in which Paul and his apocryphal disciple were invoked as the typi of Constantine and Methodius, and has little to no connection with Sirmium. Rather, Methodius was not a bishop with a fixed see, but an itinerant bishop whose task was to establish his diocese gradually.

Betti’s arguments are well-founded and convincing and thanks to a historiographic introduction accessible even to non-specialist reader. If there is anything missing in her book, it is a more thorough discussion of the sources referred to in the book. Although Betti refers to Frankish, Byzantine and even Anglo-Saxon texts, beside the Roman and Slavonic sources, she does not provide similar background to them as she does for the latter. Also, it is a bit of a pity that most of the overview of historiography in the first chapter is focused only on the question of the geographical location of Great Moravia. However, these are just minor details and overall Betti’s study of the Ecclesia Marabensis is invaluable for its compelling conclusions about the role of the papacy in the Methodian mission in Great Moravia.
Leslie Lockett’s thorough and impressive study of the cultural conceptualizations underlying texts produced in Anglo-Saxon England is perhaps the best representative of the cognitive turn in medieval studies in the past decade. She is not the first philologist to apply cognitive science to early medieval (especially Old English) sources – many scholars have set the ground for her.\(^1\) However, the valuable contribution she brings to the discussion is, on the one hand, a clearer parting of the

waters from the previous scholarly tradition, and on the other, a more wide-ranging and integrative model of the Anglo-Saxon mind.

The cognitivist trend in medieval studies is emerging now because recent developments in the social sciences (transcultural psychiatry, cognitive linguistics, cognitive anthropology) provide tools and methodologies which fulfill an age-old need felt by Anglo-Saxonists (but also medievalists in general) to understand the Anglo-Saxon way of perceiving and explaining the world (including natural phenomena, bodily and psychic functions) before attempting to interpret Old English texts.

In the 1970s, Wormald summed it up best: ‘it thus seems reasonable to use heroic literature as a window on the mentality of a warrior-aristocracy, whose existence and whose importance is reflected in other sources, historical, legal and archaeological, but whose preoccupations do not seem to be described elsewhere’. The only window available to us is the same as ever – the texts which have been preserved. Yet the latest evolutions in cognitive science allow us deeper and more informed views to what can be seen through the window. For cognitive linguistics sees language and texts not so much as a means of communication, but rather as an instrument for organizing and processing knowledge which thus directly reflects the nature and structure of thoughts and mental patterns.

Lockett’s aim is to bring to light the mental structures and patterns that are at work in Anglo-Saxon literary texts, highlighting the implicit conceptions of their authors, and the society of which they were part, about the human body and psyche. But this involves quite a bit of preliminary work uprooting venerable preconceptions and assumptions about them – manifested throughout the Anglo-Saxon critical tradition – that are sometimes the greatest obstacles to their full understanding and correct interpretation, especially since they are made unconsciously (from an inability to surpass the confines of a modern cultural mindset). Hence, one of Lockett’s preliminary goals is to ‘minimize the reader’s dualist biases and to increase the reader’s receptivity to the nuances of Anglo-Saxon psychologies’.

She groups these assumptions and preconceptions under two headings: the ‘modernist bias’ (the strong mind-body dualism that is so deeply rooted in the modern Western mind that we unconsciously project it onto the psychologies of other cultures) and the ‘medievalist bias’ (the assumption of modern readers – rather too well-versed in theology to be sensitive to alternate modes of thought that survive beneath and beyond all dominant paradigms – that all medieval writers shared the Christian and essentially Augustinian psychological model of a carnal body.

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4 Lockett, Anglo-Saxon Psychologies, p. 11.
opposed to an incorporeal soul which includes the rational mind). The latter partly coincides with what has been termed ‘theologistic bias’, namely the idea that the religious representations of a society make up a fully integrated and consistent set of principles. The point is that this is a projection of the unitary, scientific project of modern thinking on that of pre-modern societies: in the Anglo-Saxon cultural world there was always a wide range of different particular beliefs one could share without much cognitive dissonance.

The modernist bias makes modern readers and critics assume that literal beliefs are literary devices – that the depictions of the mind ‘swelling’ and ‘boiling’ with rage and ‘being constricted’ or ‘cooling’ with sadness are metaphors for processes of the mind. In fact, they reflect literal Anglo-Saxon representations of mental processes that make up what the author terms the ‘hydraulic model’, which consists in depicting the human mind as a corporeal entity located in the chest cavity, susceptible to dynamic changes of pressure and temperature, thus resembling the behaviour of a fluid in a closed container. This is what chapter 3 (the centerpiece of this extremely wide-ranging study) deals with: Lockett makes a substantial cross-cultural study of the hydraulic model, brilliantly arguing for an Anglo-Saxon holistic conception of the mind. Going deeper into this, she discovers a fourfold anthropology of body, mind (mod, hyge or sefa), life-force (feorh or lif) and soul (sawol, the part of the human being participating in the afterlife) that underlies most of the narrative and lyrical representations of human beings in the Old English corpus. Chapters 4 through 8 explore conceptions of the mind in the Anglo-Saxon Latin tradition, proving that non-Augustinian opinions on the soul, mind and incorporeality persisted even among the learned and theologically-minded (such as Candidus Wizo, one of Alcuin’s pupils, and Alfred himself). It is only Ælfric’s dissemination of a Platonist-Augustinian anti-materializing agenda in the eleventh century that seriously challenges the hydraulic model in the population at large.

Saying that Lockett’s study is wide-ranging is almost an understatement, because throughout this massive tome, she goes from tracing the evolution of the cardiocentric model of the soul in the philosophy of Late Antiquity to analysing Old Norse, Old Irish, even Old Japanese texts in conjunction to Old English ones and from explaining the emergence of the hydraulic model of the mind with the latest developments in cognitive science and neuropsychiatry to arguing for the Alfredian authorship of the Soliloquies. Although always thoroughly researched and thoughtfully expounded, this extreme range of topics and approaches may deter some readers (especially non-specialists) from engaging with this brilliant work. And yet, Lockett has succeeded in creating almost single-handedly a theory of the Anglo-Saxon mind that will be henceforth impossible to overlook by any Anglo-Saxonist. Moreover, she brings a sensitivity to alterities which is necessary – though not always to be found – among medievalists and Anglo-Saxonists in particular. For we

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must ‘remain attuned to the strangeness of the cultures of the past’ in order to ‘recognize them as comprehensible systems that have their own integrity, independent of perceptual norms into which we as observers have been acculturated by the accident of our birth’. All in all, Lockett is a truly revolutionary work, and one can only hope it will inspire emulation.

7 Niles, ‘Widsith and the Anthropology of the Past’, p. 181.
Book Review

Phillip Wynn, Ben Gurion University of the Negev


Nineteenth in the Dallas Medieval Texts and Translations series is Damien Kempf’s edition and translation of Paul the Deacon’s brief work of the mid-780s on the bishops of Metz. In the introduction (pp. 1–39), Kempf argues that the Liber is not a work of Carolingian propaganda as some think, but a ‘mythology of power’, the literary relic of an attempt by Angilram, bishop of Metz 768–791, to have his episcopal see elevated in the Carolingian power grid. At Metz, Angilram had succeeded Chrodegang, who had been a powerful close advisor to Pippin III. By 784 Angilram also was attached to the royal court of Charlemagne as arch-chaplain, where ‘until his death in 791, Angilram must have spent most of his time by the side of the king (p. 7).’ In that office, in addition to being the king’s ‘minister of church affairs’ he also managed the royal chancery, and thus bears some responsibility for the texts modern historians rely on for the period.

Early in his tenure as arch-chaplain, Angilram commissioned his fellow courtier Paul the Deacon, whose Lombard lineage and learning Kempf summarizes (pp. 2–4), to write a brief history of the earlier bishops of Metz, including Angilram’s immediate predecessor. Paul cannot hide his lack of sources. The narrative’s spine was largely a bare list of names. The author foregrounded four: Clement, the founder of the see of Metz and the bearer of apostolic charism from St. Peter at Rome; Auctor, bishop when Attila the Hun sacked Metz; Arnulf, bishop in the early seventh century, and a
big player in Merovingian politics; and Chrodegang. It is Paul’s account of Arnulf that has drawn most scholarly attention. ‘Paul provides the first genealogy of the Carolingian dynasty … that places Arnulf … at its origins (p. 1).’ ‘The Liber is the first document to provide the names of Arnulf’s sons (pp. 15-6),’ one of whom, Ansegisel, was Charlemagne’s great-great-grandfather, having married Begga, the daughter of the Pippinids’ eponymous ancestor, Pippin I.

Kempf questions the idea that the rise of the Carolingians was based on this union of two supposedly co-equal, powerful families, for the evidence that the earlier Carolingians valued their familial link to Arnulf is slight to none. In 708 Pippin II’s son Drogo was buried at the church of the Holy Apostles at Metz (later the abbey of Saint-Arnould), where Arnulf himself was buried. Other than this isolated instance, no Carolingian was buried at St. Arnulf’s until Adelaid, Pippin III’s daughter, interred there by her father before his own death in 768. Carolingian charters of 691 and 715 that refer to Arnulf as an ancestor (avus) appear in a late cartulary that is rife with interpolated and forged documents.

Metz, then, was not an early Carolingian center from Arnulf’s time on. It had even been a post of anti-Pippinid sentiment. Only after Charles Martel secured all of Austrasia in the early eighth century did Metz get ‘plugged into’ the Carolingian power grid. Even then, Carolingian onomastic tradition continued to be dominated by Pippini d and not Arnulfing names. It was Angilram, according to Kempf, who was responsible for elevating the Arnulfings in the Carolingian ancestry, and likewise (hopefully) the place of Metz in the political constellation. ‘A personal and historical association is thus accomplished via Arnulf between the Frankish king and the city of Metz (p. 21).’

Paul’s four bishops portray Metz as a political and spiritual capital of the Frankish kingdom. Chrodegang’s reforms as bishop, related in the only section formally patterned according to the more typical episcopal biographies of the Liber pontificalis, made Metz ‘the first Gallic city to adopt a liturgy more romano, soon implemented, though with varying and sometimes unclear results, within the whole Frankish kingdom.’ Metz’s early adoption of Roman liturgy and of Roman chant especially – Metz becoming a center for the teaching of the latter – laid claim to a special connection with the see of St. Peter, a claim reflected in Paul’s references to Rome in the Chrodegang section, and in Kempf’s analysis (pp. 22-9).

Kempf judges this attempt at a ‘mythology of power’ a failure (p. 33), but he may be too harsh. After all, Metz for a while under both Chrodegang and Angilram did rise in the Carolingian political universe, and both men served in the royal ‘cabinet’. The Liber may be less prescriptive of what should be than descriptive of what is, less mythological than panegyric. This takes us back to a reading of the Liber as court propaganda, written by a courtier, Paul, at the behest of another, Angilram. Kempf notes that in Paul’s account of Chrodegang’s escorting of Pope Stephen II to Gaul that he omitted the papal anointing of Pippin III and his sons, the highlight of the visit. This is
because Paul here focuses on Chrodegang’s role in an event of still living memory among the political/religious elite, including royal courtiers, that was much of the Liber’s original audience. They already knew the story, and now were hearing an emphasis on Chrodegang’s role in it. A reading of the Liber as court propaganda would also help explain in the Arnulf section the mini-panegyric of Charlemagne, which segues into an account of his family and the epitaphs of the Carolingian women buried at St. Arnulf at Metz (pp. 74-9). Praise of Metz’s exalted status in the Carolingian realm was necessarily also praise of Charlemagne.

Finally, there is a select bibliography and index, and the translation is good, overall helping to make this work an excellent addition to the series.
Conference Report

Katy Soar, Open University

CONFERENCE TITLE: SENSES OF THE EMPIRE: MULTISENSORY APPROACHES TO ROMAN CULTURE

DATE AND LOCATION: 30 NOVEMBER 2013, OPEN UNIVERSITY, LONDON

SPONSORED BY: THE OPEN UNIVERSITY

Senses are the way in which we understand the world around us, and archaeologists have recently begun to reconsider the ways in which this can help us in understanding past societies. Although, perhaps originally considered immaterial, ephemeral, or impossible to reconstruct archaeologically, sensory approaches are in fact both grounded in the material and reflected in material culture, and as such can make a valuable contribution to archaeological study. Sensory approaches to the past have so far mostly centred on prehistoric contexts, while sensory approaches to the Roman world have focused on literature. This one-day conference, organised by Dr. Eleanor Betts and Dr. Emma-Jayne Graham of the department of Classical Studies at the Open University, aimed to utilise these approaches within the context of the material culture of the Roman world. In particular, one of the main aims of the day was to consider and develop methodologies to recreate experiences of the Roman world. The conference comprised of ten papers which covered the spectrum of the senses. All ten papers also covered a wide variety of topics, ranging in focus from specific urban locales to distinct activities and individual artefacts. This breadth of topics and approaches reflects the wide application of sensory studies, and its potential.
Eleanor Betts (Open University) started the day with her paper entitled ‘The Multivalency of Sensory Artefacts’, which set out a framework for a multisensory approach to the study of ancient Rome. An excellent introduction to the conference, her paper outlined the importance of removing a ‘hierarchy’ of senses, and instead insists on focusing, where possible, on the full range of sensory experiences.

Utilising Merleau-Ponty’s concept of the body as ‘the universal measurement’ as a reference point, Betts considered biological similarities as a tool for accessing the past, but also urged caution in this approach by acknowledging biological differences as well as cultural specificity within sensory responses. Betts argued that sensory artefacts have multivalency, i.e. they varied according to the temporal and spatial conditions in which they existed and the individual(s) who experienced them. An individual’s response to a sensory artefact would be affected by several factors, including their cultural context, degree of sensory sensitivity/deprivation (perhaps caused by disability or aging), and the extent to which s/he had normalised the artefact’s sensory stimuli. However, these issues can be incorporated into our analyses and research, and bring new and interesting research questions.

Another issue which Betts considered was the vocabulary needed for discussing multisensory approaches to the past. Unlike other areas of archaeology, where an objective voice is prioritised, sensory approaches to the past require a more personal voice – and she urged us to consider the way academics in other disciplinary fields such as sociology, anthropology and ethnography have utilised this approach.

Betts considered these issues when discussing sensory artefacts from the Roman Empire – archaeological artefacts overlaid with sensory data, such as amphorae found in situ in a bar in Pompeii. She argued that elements of material culture and texts can be combined with biological sensory data in order to partially reconstruct the physiological experiences of past people. Describing and contextualising these sensory artefacts enables a deeper, more nuanced understanding of life in the Roman world, but it also encourages new questions to be asked of (often familiar) data.

Following on from this introductory paper, Ray Laurence (University of Kent) presented ‘Sensory Space: Opportunities and Challenges?’, and considered the ways in which we can move from mapping physical evidence in space to setting out an understanding of sensory space. Linking the development of understanding Roman space (in particular Pompeii) as a sensory-scape to theoretical developments associated with the spatial turn in urban analysis, Laurence considered the ways in which senses other than the visual can provide alternative readings of space. As well as considering sensual experience of locales such as the Porticus and the Rus in Urbe, Laurence’s paper also considered the relationship between sensory locales and age groups – childhood, adulthood, and old
age – and considered how different stages of life would affect the sensual experience of the Roman city; specifically, the age and height of a child in relation to their ability to participate in a sacrifice at a crossroads shrine.

Anna Foka’s (University of Umeå) paper ‘(Digital) Bread and Circuses: Reframing Ancient Spectacle for Different Screens’ focused on the potential of conceptual digital construction of a Roman amphitheatre for multiple screens. Foka argued that current ‘historically accurate’ digital depictions of Roman amphitheatres are limited to lifeless and sanitized aerial 3D models and proposed that we can gain a better understanding of remote social and cultural concepts by using more innovative and multisensory reconstructions of ancient entertainment sites. Foka considered the different methodological tools that add to our understanding of Roman spectacle. Examples included Matt Ratto’s idea of ‘critical making’, a mode of engagement that is intended to bridge the gap between creative physical and conceptual exploration, as well as ideas of ‘emergence sense-making’ as a way of filling in gaps imaginatively, in a manner similar to conceptual art and design practitioners. These methodologies, which include participatory (peripatetic) and multisensory (particularly audio) recreations, could be utilised to create a deeper understanding of Roman popular entertainment. Foka offered examples from Plutarch, Cicero, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus regarding the sounds (hissing, applauding, music) in the shows which could be integrated with new technical methodologies and media to create a fuller, more sensorial understanding of Roman spectacle.

The fourth paper was ‘Scents of Place and Colours of Smell: Fragranced Entertainment in Ancient Rome’ by Jo Day (University College Dublin). Her paper explored the use of sparsiones – fragrant sprays utilised in the games and theatres of the Roman world. In particular, she focused on the use of saffron in these practices and considered the sensory experience and importance of the use of sparsiones. After considering the purpose and practicalities of sparsiones, Day argued that both the sensory experience of scent and colour were critical to saffron’s importance, and were tied to ideas of munificence and wealth. Saffron is an expensive spice and a pungent one, and Day argued that this combination added another layer of sensory spectacle to the games. Olfactory senses would evoke embodied memories, and the yellowish/orange colour would be redolent of gold, which, when sprayed onto the spectators, would provide a sensory reinforcement of social hierarchy.

Helen Slaney’s paper ‘Motion Sensors: Perceiving Movement in Roman Pantomime’ focused not on the traditional five static senses but instead on the body in movement (kinaesthesia), and in particular the effect of the system of senses found within the brain on the sensations produced by dance. Slaney considered first the negative cultural identity of the Roman dancer (and entertainers in general). By focusing on the haptic experience of imperial Roman tragoedia saltata (tragic pantomime), its costume, staging, and movements. She also discussed the ways in which neurological and vestibular processes could create a corporeal identity within the dancer themselves. Slaney considered these approaches to argue that ultimately a dancer’s identity is mutable and malleable.
After lunch, the first paper was by **Valerie Hope** (Open University), on ‘*A Sense of Grief: The Sights and Sounds of Roman Mourning*’ which examined the sensorial creation of the mourning experience. In Roman mourning, sounds and smells come into play as much as sight, and the mourning process is created through the manipulation of senses. Hope considered how the sensory experiences of people could be upturned through the mourning process, including how the living were deprived of sensory experiences such as taste (through fasting), whilst the body of the deceased was anointed with perfume, and considered the degree to which this was mediated by a person’s social status. She also considered the position of the ‘hired mourner’, and how the experience of mourning differed amongst different social groups. By examining these questions in relation to artistic and literary representations of mourning, Hope argued that although mourning is a multisensory experience, it is not the same experience for all, nor consistent though Roman society.

Next to speak was **Jane Draycott** (University of Wales, Trinity St David) with her paper entitled ‘*Constructing, Deconstructing and Reconstructing a Sensory Profile: Sensory Stimulation, Deprivation and Recalibration in the Temple of Aesculapius*’. Here Draycott argued that the sensory profile of a healing temple was constantly changing – visitors suffered from illnesses of an individual nature, and the body itself was in constant flux. Draycott considered the specific example of the temple of Aesculapius on Tiber Island at Rome to try a methodology for developing a sensory profile more suitable for a medical context, bearing in mind the multiple variables inherent within such a context. She offered a series of factors – pain level, age, frequency of temple visitation, as well as the temple’s location – which need to be considered in order to develop such a methodology.

**Emma-Jane Graham**’s (Open University) paper on ‘*Babes in Arms? Sensory Dissonance and the Ambiguities of Votive Objects*’ considered the sensory experience of a specific type of votive – swaddled babies dedicated in central Italian sanctuaries during the Roman Republic. Graham’s aim was to consider the competing sensory reactions provoked by the handling of such objects. Traditional approaches have seen these votives as fertility offerings or petitions for infant health. However, Graham considered how the ambiguity of a heavy terracotta object creating sensorial experiences reminiscent of handling a real baby was an important aspect of the purpose of these material objects in ritual. Graham argued that this sensory dissonance was in fact crucial to the meaning(s) of such objects, thus encouraging the handler to engage with the liminal worlds in a location – the sanctuary – where these worlds came together.

**Heather Hunter Crawley** (University of Bristol) discussed ‘*Common Sense* and the Lives of the Roman Non-Elite’, in which she applied a ‘common sense’ methodology to the characteristically ‘voiceless’ (in the sense that they are mostly absent from literature) non-elite of the Roman world. This methodology urges us to consider material culture through senses other than sight, and to consider the contextual affordances (properties and potentials for action) of the object. Hunter-Crawley illustrated this methodology with the example of the silverware from the House of
Menander in Pompeii. She considered the tactile versus visual properties of the silverware, and how these dictated bodily engagement with the objects which differed between server and served. As such, using a ‘common sense’ approach allows us to understand how the non-elite would have engaged with the material culture of their world, and offers them an alternative ‘voice’.

The final paper was from Ian Marshman (University of Leicester), titled ‘All that Glitters: Signet Rings, the Senses and the Self’. In this paper, Marshman considered the signet rings and intaglios of the Roman world. However, rather than considering them from an iconographical perspective as minor *objets d’art*, as previous studies have tended to do, his focus was a consideration of the sensorial and experiential properties of these items. This approach was multisensory considering the visual and symbolic impact of specific colours and materials of the rings and their contextual properties, as well as the haptic and tactile sensation created by wearing and using the rings. As such, Marshman argued that there was a potent link between an individual and their ring, which formed part of their interaction with the world around them.

The conference ended with a final discussion which drew the themes of the previous papers together. One key area that came up here was semantics. What terminology – and how personal a voice – is appropriate for use in a discussion of sensory archaeology? Another theme that emerged was a clear desire to move past an emphasis on visual reconstructions of the past and focus as well on other bodily senses as important tools for understanding the ancient world. This is not to demote vision, but rather to promote and investigate all senses equally when possible. Finally, it was noted that not just the elites have senses, and that sensory archaeological approaches to the past can provide new avenues into understanding the world of the ordinary, non-elite Roman. Overall, the conference was stimulating and informative, and offered new and exciting methodologies for understanding the ancient world.
The Text and Identities group met for the first time in 1997 in order to promote cooperation between five centres of the study of the early Middle Ages - the Universities of Vienna, Cambridge, Leeds, Paris, and Utrecht. Twice annually these five universities bring young researchers together to share new ideas, once in the winter season for a PhD conference at one of the universities, and once in the summer season at the International Medieval Congress at the University of Leeds.

This year, seventeen PhD and research Masters students gathered in Paris to discuss their research into early medieval texts and material culture. The papers presented covered the period from the sixth to the tenth centuries and topics as varied as the trading outposts in the Scandinavian world (Lucie Malbos, Paris) and the acquisition of relics from Muslim Spain (Sam Ottewill-Soulsby, Cambridge). The PhD conference was divided into six strands.

THE FATHERS

Four papers were presented in the strand concerned with the great figures of the Late Antiquity and
the early Middle Ages.

**Eleni Leontidou** (Cambridge) discussed how the treatises written by St. Cyprian in the fourth century against the Donatists, religious separatists in North Africa, were used by the sixth-century popes to quell the separatist tendencies in the Roman Church of their own time.

**Zachary Guiliano** (Cambridge) talked about the rapid dissemination of the *Homiliary* of Paul the Deacon, a collection of sermons which was compiled in the late-eighth century and for which we have over 100 witnesses from the ninth and the tenth centuries alone. Although it was produced on the order of Charlemagne, it could not be produced at a single place, but rather had to make use of information networks in the empire that allowed the major intellectual centres to acquire, copy and share the new text.

**Evina Steinová** (Utrecht) showed how texts could be ‘censored’ by adding specific symbols into their margins. Rather than being attacked directly, texts disseminating dangerous ideas could be debased indirectly in this manner.

The presentation of **Warren Pezé** (Paris) focused on the unique practice of annotating manuscripts by Ratramnus of Corbie (d. 870), a Frankish theologian who is associated with compiling several compendia with theological content. Many of the manuscripts used by Ratramnus for making these compendia have been identified thanks to particular annotations left in the margins by the circle of Ratramnus’ aides. Pezé was able to identify additional manuscript used in this manner and add to our knowledge of Ratramnus’ intellectual habits.

**The Very Early Middle Ages; The Borders**

**Otávio Luiz Vieira Pinto** (Leeds) discussed the role of Attila the Hun in the writings of Cassiodorus and Jordanes. He showed that both sixth-century authors depicted the Huns as the Others, in opposition to the Ostrogoths, in order to strengthen the self-perception of the latter and to make them look more Roman. This despite the fact that Goths were among the allies of Attila and that one document even calls Attila, ‘the king of Goths’.

**N. Kivilecm Yavuz** (Leeds) pointed out the changing fortunes of the Trojan narrative, particularly in the form of *De excidio Troiae* of Dares the Phrygian, throughout its history. Dares’ narrative came into being as a novel-like first-person retelling of Homer’s epic in Antiquity. However, the early medieval readers considered it a piece of historiography; for example, it was incorporated into the *Liber historiae Francorum*. 

Ingrid Rembold (Cambridge) discussed the effect of political division on ecclesiastical structures and jurisdiction in the early medieval Carolingian realm. She showed that, at least in some cases, the early medieval archbishoprics were more enduring as building blocks than other political structures.

Lucie Malbos (Paris) examined the references to *prefecti*, *procuratores* and *exatores* in the texts pertaining to emporia in the early medieval Scandinavian world. While it has been assumed that these words referred to royal agents and tax collectors present at the emporia, Malbos showed that, at least in some areas, the trading outposts were independent and not founded by the king. Thus, the *prefecti* played likely distinct roles in certain settings, such as in Scandinavia, even though the same term could be applied to them.

**TEXTS, IDENTITIES AND REAL LIFE; CHARTERS**

The presentation of Salvatore Liccardo (Vienna) dealt with the emergence of ethnonyms in the Early Middle Ages. He showed how ethnonyms helped medieval thinkers to order and categorize the world, and to combine Biblical and Classical ideas with their own notions of the *gentes*.

Adrien Bayard (Paris) discussed the archaeological evidence for the continuity of military settlement in Aquitaine during the eighth and the ninth centuries. He examined how the local elites responsible for the maintenance of the strongholds in the area displayed their loyalty to the kings, but also their regional identity by participating in the local defence lines in times of crisis.

The presentation of Hope Williard (Leeds) examined the concept of friendship in Merovingian Gaul by looking at the vocabulary used by Venantius Fortunatus.

Claire de Cazanova (Paris) treated the redaction of the Passau cartulary, which took place during almost hundred years, between the beginning of the ninth and the beginning of the tenth century.

Fraser McNair (Cambridge) examined the development of the princely charter in France in the second half of the ninth and the first half of the tenth century. He concluded that the nobility began to employ royal vocabulary in these charters once it began to fill the regional power vacuum created by weakening royal authority.

**RELIGION IN EARLY MEDIEVAL NARRATIVES**

Philipp Dörler (Vienna) introduced his project in which he planned to examine systematically the use of the Bible in medieval historiographical texts. His hope is to show what different uses Bible
had in shaping the perception of history, the community and identity.

**Anya Sharma** (Vienna) examined the differentiation between the secular and the profane in the universal history of archbishop Ado of Vienne (d. 875).

**Sam Ottewil-Soulsby** (Cambridge) discussed the *translatio* of relics from the Muslim Spain to the Carolingian Empire in the ninth century. By examining the relevant narratives he wished to throw more light on the relationship between the Carolingians and their Muslim neighbours.

Finally, **Michael Burrows** (Leeds) analysed an episode from the *Decem Libri Historiarum* of Gregory of Tours concerned with the pseudo-Christ of Bourges. He showed that this episode reflected the inter-city politics of Merovingian Gaul, specifically the enmity between the cities of Tours and Bourges, which was framed, in this episode, in terms of religion.

**SUMMARY**

Despite the lack of a unifying theme for the conference, other than the broad notions outlined by the larger *Texts and Identities* intellectual project, some topics were recurrent in the talks. Among them were the focus on the materiality of the manuscript and the archaeological evidence and a strong awareness of narratives as means for the construction of identities and standpoints. In this respect, the participants of *Texts and Identities* 2013 conference followed in trails of their predecessors from previous years.
Conference Report

Catalin Taranu, University of Leeds

CONFERENCE TITLE: INDIGENOUS IDEAS AND FOREIGN INFLUENCES – INTERACTIONS AMONG ORAL AND LITERARY, LATIN AND VERNACULAR CULTURES IN MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN NORTHERN EUROPE

DATE AND LOCATION: 26–27 SEPTEMBER 2013, HELSINKI, FINLAND

SPONSORED BY: THURE GALLÉNS STIFTELSE

ORGANIZED BY: GLOSSA - THE SOCIETY FOR MEDIEVAL STUDIES IN FINLAND, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE CENTRE OF NORDIC STUDIES (CENS) AND HISTORISKA FÖRENINGEN I FINLAND

This two-day symposium and international workshop was held at the charming House of Science and Letters (Tieteiden Talo) of the University of Helsinki on 26th and 27th of September 2013. Although focusing on a very specific geographic area, the symposium gathered a wide array of researchers from very different fields of expertise: folklorists, medievalists, law historians, military and commercial historians, codicologists, runologists, theatre and performance researchers, theologians. Throughout this heterogeneous assembly, ideas were exchanged, cross-fertilized, or even born. Ideally, this is the purpose of all such academic congregations, yet the Helsinki one was particularly successful in achieving this. The interdisciplinary nature of the symposium engendered congenial discussions and forged fruitful relationships between scholars from very different research cultures – something that should be happening more often and more widely.
The symposium focused on medieval and early modern (ca. 600-1600) Northern Europe (defined broadly to include both Scandinavia, the Baltic, the British Isles and Ireland, and the Hanseatic areas of the southern coast of the Baltic Sea) and especially on the way they were characterized by the simultaneous presence of oral and literary as well as Latin and vernacular cultures. Worldviews, ideas, beliefs, customs and norms were neither purely Christian nor purely pagan. Instead, the surviving sources show traces of various cultural layers as a result of cultural blending. Hence, while in some contexts the different elements are easily discernible, in others they are so deeply interwoven that they are virtually indistinguishable. Syncretism applies to both religious and secular texts. The coexistence of Latin and vernacular sometimes appears literally in manuscripts that combined both Latin and vernacular content or used different vernacular languages in parallel. Moreover, some texts (defined in the broadest sense of the word) were never written but remained oral, surviving in later folklore. The Helsinki workshop showed plenty of instantiations of these dynamics, from Danish runic amulets to early Lutheran Finnish hymns, from late medieval English alchemical manuscripts to pretextual legal Old Norse codes. The symposium also provided an academic arena for discussing the complex interactions between oral and literary, on the one hand, and Latin and vernacular cultures, on the other, in medieval and early modern Northern Europe.

There were eight groups of papers which were actually workshops in their own right, since there was plenty of time for discussion allocated after each presentation (the politics of circulating the other participants’ papers in advance made this possible). The sessions were interspersed with breaks during which generous reserves of coffee and nibbles were available for everyone. There were also three keynote lectures punctuating the two days, while the fourth lecture, the culminating point of the symposium, was the special Jarl Gallén lecture given on the second day.

Jarl Gallén (1908-1990) was a Finnish historian and Swedish-speaking professor in history at the Helsinki University. The prize carrying his name is awarded every third year to a researcher distinguished in North European Middle Age Studies. The prize was awarded in 2004 for the first time, and it has previously been received by Sverre Bagge (University of Bergen), Monica Hedlund (University of Uppsala) and Anders Andrén (University of Stockholm). This year, the Jarl Gallén prize was awarded to Prof. Lars Boje Mortensen from University of Southern Denmark. He presented a ceremonial lecture titled *The Rise of Prose – a Comparative View (Greek, Latin, Old French, and Old Norse)*. Lars Boje Mortensen is currently a Professor of Ancient and Medieval Cultural History at the University of Southern Denmark (Odense) and the head of the Centre for Medieval Literature (Odense and York). Prof. Mortensen’s research over the years concentrated on medieval Nordic and Italian book history and historiography, as well as on the dynamics between Latin and the vernaculars.

A summary of the four keynote lectures will be provided first, followed by the individual papers in the chronological order of the sessions.
**KEYNOTE LECTURES**

**Professor Mara Grudule** (*University of Latvia*): ‘The Emergence of Hymns in the Crossroads of Folk and Christian Culture: Latvian Case’

Prof. Grudule’s lecture took us on a journey to the early days of Latvian literature. Since the first (sixteenth- and seventeenth-century) authors were German clergymen who had mastered the Latvian language in order to perform their pastoral tasks, their texts had little influence on the local culture. Not only did books still presuppose a literate and quite wealthy public, but most Latvians still adhered to their old religious customs until the end of the eighteenth century. Their aesthetic and moral values were contained and passed on through folksongs, folktales, charms and other oral traditions. In the first religious hymns composed in Latvia, however, Prof. Grudule identifies the convergence of the two cultures: the texts were Christian and inspired by Lutheran hymns, but they were adapted to Latvian sensibilities. Musicologically, these hymns preserved Latvian folksongs structures and many leitmotifs, as Prof. Grudule demonstrated through her own performance of one such hymn. But the old beliefs persisted also in the wording of the Christian hymns. All in all, the first lecture of the symposium was a very illuminating start for unraveling the nexus of oral vernacular traditions and Latin literate culture.

**Professor Marco Mostert** (*Utrecht University*): ‘Diglossia, Authority and Tradition – The Influence of Writing on Learned and Vernacular Languages’

Prof. Mostert delivered an inspired lecture which opened a very lively and informative debate on the assumptions scholars usually make when discussing medieval literacy. One of the implicit models underlying much research is that there is a binary opposition between Latin and the vernacular, and that each language had its spheres of manifestation quite closed off from the other. This is not the case, as Prof. Mostert demonstrated using several case studies. In Anglo-Saxon England, for example, there were not only Latin and Old English, but also Old Welsh, Old Irish, Old French, Old Norse spoken, interacting with one another and appearing in writings, not only confined to isolated groups of population. The other example was drawn from a forthcoming paper by Andrzej Janeczek in *Using the Written Word in Medieval Towns: Medieval Urban Literacy II*, a volume edited by Marco Mostert and Anna Adamska (forthcoming at Brepols in 2014). The second case study was even more eloquent, since the existence next to each other in communities of several hundred people of up to seven languages is well documented. In late medieval Ruthenian towns (communities typically comprising several hundreds of inhabitants), Old Ukrainian, Polish, Romanian, Hebrew and Armenian were spoken by the respective cultural groups within the town population, with Latin and German acting as official languages and conceivably as *linguae francae*. The coexistence of all
these languages was helped by the fact that the more official languages were native to only a few speakers. This point was elaborated upon, Prof. Mostert emphasizing the importance of a lingua franca for diglossic communities. Instead of the binary Latin/vernacular, elite/folk culture, there was a multiplicity of dialects and even high and low variants of the same language, depending on the context.

Director of the institute Tuomas Heikkilä (Institutum Romanum Finlandiae): ‘Interplay and Influence – The Arrival of Written Culture to Medieval Finland’

Dr. Heikkilä treated us to an impressive lecture on the beginnings of manuscript-writing in medieval Finland. From the first manuscripts dated to the twelfth century up to the rich output of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Swedish-dominated Finland, his wide-ranging presentation made us aware of the complex interplays between local vernacular culture and foreign influences, from the early and very strong connections to medieval England to the later Swedish influence due to political domination, going through the late medieval surge in French manuscripts and stories. Indeed, the first manuscripts of medieval Finland are interestingly either in English or displaying features associated with English texts of the period. In this context, the legendary Bishop Henry, an Englishman who presumably came to Scandinavia and baptized the Finns in the mid-twelfth century, might have historical underpinnings in strong ties with England in the early days of written culture in medieval Finland. The Second Swedish Crusade in the mid-thirteenth century decisively brought the territory of modern-day Finland under Swedish control, an event that was reflected in the manuscript output of the period starting then. Finland became integrated in the global medieval European circuit but only gained real representation of the vernacular with the Reformation and Mikael Agricola’s biblical translations into Finnish.

Professor Terry Gunnell (University of Iceland): ‘The Belief Contexts and Performance of Völuspá – Considerations Regarding the Nordic Judgement Day’

Although not the only impressive keynote lecture, Terry Gunnell’s was unique, as can be expected from the renowned scholar of Old Norse literature, folkloristics and theatre studies. In a fitting mise en abyme (which also perfectly illustrates his main point), his presentation is hard to impart and almost impossible to convey to those who were not attending. Indeed, in a nutshell, this is what Prof. Gunnell argues about the Old Norse Völuspá: this was a poem not meant to be read – it was to be performed, in a special setting, using (quite literally) special effects and creating an experience whose pale shadow is the written text that has been handed down to us.

After helpfully summarizing – in his characteristically performative style – the long and complicated history of the scholarly reception of the Völuspá, Prof. Gunnell went beyond the debates about whether the poem is Christian or pagan, whether a late reworking or a rare survival of an
extremely early text and argued that we are missing the pragmatics of the immediate reception of what the text originally was – an oral poem. And it is the context of the performance what defines the oral poem. One does not simply hear, or see or read such a poem (as we tend to think, separating the elements that make up a holistic performance): one experiences it.

Prof. Gunnell convincingly argued that the performance of Old Norse poems like the *Völuspá* were similar to a musical performance and proved this unraveling the musical quality of the sounds used in different parts of the poem. The varied phonetic patterns (from the grumbling staccato of the Ragnarök section to the peaceful legato of the description of the world made again) came to life again in Prof. Gunnell’s performance. He further explained that the Viking hall setting (where the traditional names of the elements of the building refer to the mythical setting of many of the poems which would have been performed there), with the performer in the high seat near the cauldron, in the obscurity of the hall, with perhaps a helmet on (which would have functioned as an amplifier and distorther of the voice), must have made a strong impression on an audience of euphoric warriors. Using the unique approach of performance archaeology (but also his dramatic experience and skill), Prof. Gunnell succeeded in making the *Völuspá* alive again for the scholarly audience – its text being the last ‘recording’ of the last stage of an oral performance, literally an early multimedia work.

Jarl Gallén Lecture: **Lars Boje Mortensen** (*University of Southern Denmark*): ‘The Rise of Prose – a Comparative View (Greek, Latin, Old French, and Old Norse)’

As expected from a recipient of the Jarl Gallén Prize, Prof. Mortensen’s lecture demolished many uncritical assumptions, opened new paths for research, and left everyone wondering what we really know about anything. First, he argued that the development of written vernaculars in the Middle Ages all over Europe was something very haphazard, and that there was nothing necessary or natural about the rise of prose, as we might tend to think. Before the rise of prose, vernaculars were invisible, because they were not objectified through schools, books, institutions, and thus for an early medieval writer it was inconceivable to write in anything else that Latin, which was objectified and institutionalized. The modern ideals of perfectly inter-translatable languages (ie., that any word in any language can be translated more or less faithfully in another language) and of languages as providers of full representability (ie., languages have words for all phenomena of human life) would have been shocking for the medieval mindset. Latin and vernaculars were simply used for very different things. Then Prof. Mortensen took us on a journey through the history of prose writing, from around 450 BC, when we have for the first time a cluster of prose-writers. However, until Plato, the norm of encoding was verse, for philosophers, dramatists, and historians. In Rome, verse was also the norm until c. 160 BC, when the first prose writings appeared. However, the first prose writers, whether Greek or Roman, did not see themselves as producing canonical literature, or writing for posterity. Rather they saw themselves as recording oral texts which were destined to be
performed, which is why the actual writing was oftentimes quite indifferent to its future reception (note the lack of word division in early prose writing).

In medieval literature, the beginnings of vernacular prose can be dated to around 1200 (Chronique de Normandie, Geste de France etc.), after a long spell of verse writings, even those of a historiographic character. In stark contrast, Old Norse literature is all prose from its beginnings, while verse (skaldic and eddic) comes later, after 1220. Prof. Mortensen forcefully argued that this is due to a de-professionalization of history, which led to the opening of an entirely new space of opportunity in Scandinavia. In conclusion, the rise of prose in medieval Europe took place in three phases: first, a long poetic phase of traditional poetry and Biblical paraphrase, followed by a short burst of prose writing (suggestively described as a ‘love-affair between aristocracy and their vernacular’), and finally the diffusion and canonization of vernacular prose. Throughout the multiple beginnings of prose writing (in Ancient Greece and Rome, in medieval Scandinavia), a common pattern arises: it is always preceded by a critical mass of readers and by the availability of books. Thus, the prose of writing is connected to technologies of writing but is also a matter of contingency. In any case, it is always accompanied by a de-professionalization of and greater opportunity for writing.

SESSIONS

WORKSHOP 1A, CHAIRMED BY DR ANU LAHTINEN (UNIVERSITY OF TURKU), FOCUSED ON LANGUAGE AND WRITING CONVENTIONS IN MEDIEVAL SCANDINAVIAN LAWS

Ditlev Tamm (University of Copenhagen) & Merike Ristikivi (University of Tartu):
‘Archbishop Anders Sunesen and the Law of Scania – A Universal Scholar Looks at Local Law’

Prof. Tamm and Merike presented their work on the treatise on the old law of Scania, found in the text known as the Liber legis Scaniae, attributed to Anders Sunesen, the archbishop of Lund between 1201 and 1223. He renders the Law of Scania as it was written down more or less at the same time in Old Danish, but he deviates from the order of the Danish law and follows his own system adding explanations and sometimes even rules which are not found in that text. He seems to be fond of differences of opinion regarding the law and explains such dilemmas in detail. The two scholars explored the possibilities that the collection of law contained in the Danish text was actually established by the archbishop to be used as material for his Latin treatise, the Danish version being a spin-off, or alternatively, that the Latin version might be a later learned work, when a full Danish text was extant, and without any direct connection between the two. Or, as a third possibility, the two texts may have been redacted more or less simultaneously with different aims, the Latin version influencing the Danish text. For Anders Sunesen, the law was a human artifact and hence only a
contingent phenomenon with the function of helping people to settle their conflicts peacefully. All in all, this joint presentation threw light on the complex interrelations between law, language and learning in the early thirteenth-century text.

**Maria Kallio** (*University of Turku*): ‘Letters to Eternity – Writing Conventions in Late Medieval Swedish Wills’

Maria talked about how the practice of will writing in Sweden provides important insights into the workings of Latin and vernacular and the different rhetorics associated with the two languages. She discussed the writing conventions of medieval wills through the example of the diocese of Turku (part of the Eastern Swedish church province of Uppsala). In some sense the Nordic region was at the periphery of Catholic Europe, making it an interesting place to look at what testament writing tells about local practices. For the structure of the will, its religious rhetoric, and the sometimes very detailed requests reflect not only the teaching of the Church but also the wishes of the testator. The rhetoric used in wills reflects the authors’ attitudes towards death and the afterlife. Interestingly, even if so far vernacular charters have been considered to be more modest and informal than the Latin ones, the closer study of the Swedish testament material leaves the opposite impression. Maria convincingly argued that the vernacular examples were dictated and written using complicated rhetoric and different than in Latin examples.

**Lina Breisch** (*Uppsala University*): ‘Oral and Literary Rhetoric in Swedish Medieval Territorial Law’

Lina cogently argued against earlier research dismissing the Swedish territorial laws as primitive and naive, far from Roman law and continental rhetoric, by expounding the rhetorical function of medieval law, and showing that there existed a rhetorical awareness amongst the lawmen and other contributors to the law. Because during the early Middle Ages Sweden was not yet a centralized kingdom, different territories were ruled by local chiefs and were governed by regional laws. Under the influence of other European countries, Swedish territories began to write down rules and traditions that had previously been passed on orally transmitted at public meetings (*ting*). A lawsayer (*lagman*) was chosen to present and preserve the law in his mind, to give legal advice and solve juridical problems among the people. Lina’s presentation showed that these territorial laws were both a documented memory of the people and a governmental system of authority and legitimacy, which functioned rhetorically as a combined oral and literary statement and a witness of new and old beliefs.

**WORKSHOP 1B**, chaired by **Professor Sverre Bagge** (*University of Bergen*), focused on **Oral Tradition and History**

**Galina Glazyrina** (*Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow*): ‘References to Oral Traditions in Saga Óláfs Tryggvasonar by Oddr Snorrason’
Galina’s presentation focused on the different ways in which references to oral traditions as a source of information are reported in medieval Icelandic sagas. Typically, such references were intended to verify and confirm some of the details of the narrative. The authors of the early Icelandic sagas had few written sources concerning Iceland and Norway at their disposal, and thus oral traditions were naturally a priority source of information. By the time the saga genre fully developed, references to the traditions were often used as literary or stylistic devices, losing their initial pragmatic function. Galina used as a case study Saga Óláfs Tryggvasonar, composed by Oddr Snorrason, a monk at the Þingeyrar monastery c. 1190, thus belonging to the initial period of saga writing in Iceland. The saga abounds in authorial references to oral sources and thus it is a representative example showing how a medieval author combines in his narrative facts that had been reflected in the sources of different provenance, as well as his attitudes to facts and tales that had survived in oral transmission. Oddr had the fortunate chance to get information about many events from the early history of Iceland from the people who lived at the time when the events related had happened or from their descendants. Sometimes Oddr’s preference for the long-running family oral traditions could mean that in deciding between the oral and the written the choice was given to the oral account. Oddr paid particular attention to the cases of eyewitness evidence which, since it had been announced in public, circulated with a reference to a particular informant. The rhetoric of oral references sometimes suggests the fact that it was the origins of the information rather than the informant himself that was more important. However, references to individual traditions are scanty compared to a great number of instances where Oddr Snorrason alludes to collective knowledge. Galina names these ‘ impersonified traditions’, drawing attention to the standard repeated phrases introducing tales identified as oral tales. All in all, her paper was thoroughly enlightening for the attitudes saga writers had towards their oral sources.

**Tatjana Jackson (Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow): ‘Oral Tradition and the ūfærðar saga’**

Tatjana’s paper concentrated on one the so-called ūfærðar saga which tell of the exploits of Scandinavian warriors in distant lands, often in Old Rus’ or even Byzantine territories. These sagas are traditionally considered to have passed along the way ‘from the Varangians to the Greeks’, which was not only of commercial and military significance, but was also a way of achieving cultural contacts and to pass on stories about Scandinavians in the Eastern part of the world back to their homeland. One of these texts, the Icelandic saga of the Norwegian King Haraldr harðráði Sigurðarson, recounts Haraldr’s life and travels first to Gardariki to the court of King Jarizleifr (the Rus’ Prince Yaroslav the Wise), then to Miklagarðr (Constantinople) and his adventures in Africa and Sicily, in Bulgaria, as well as in Palestine. According to the sagas, Haraldr had amassed wealth greater than anyone in Scandinavia. In 1046 Magnús the Good shared Norway with Haraldr Sigurðarson, having received for it half of his immense treasure.
According to Snorri Sturlusson and other references, the privileged informant for all the subsequent sagas written about Haraldr was one of his companions, Halldórr. He is unanimously called a witness, even a participant of many events during this campaign, and also the first narrator of the saga, the one who put it together. However, Tatjana argues that Halldórr and Haraldr did not get along with one another after Haraldr had become king in Norway and that this situation is reflected in the saga which thinks little of the former but unconditionally sings the praises of the latter. This would be strange if Halldórr had been the privileged oral informant for the saga – he would have at least tried to put forward his own merits. The answer to this conundrum, convincingly proposed by Tatjana, was that it was King Haraldr himself who was the original informant and the author of the saga. Haraldr himself is known as a skillful composer of verse. It is hard to believe that Haraldr, with his vanity, energy and outstanding poetic gift, would not tell about his exploits overseas. Thus, as Tatjana impressively demonstrated, he not only brought immense wealth ‘from the Varangians and the Greeks’ when he returned to his homeland, but also his own útferðar saga.

**Catalin Taranu** (*University of Leeds*): ‘Germanic Heroic Poetry Between Two Worlds – Was Sigurðr the Original Dragon-slayer of the Nibelung Cycle?’

Catalin’s paper explored the possibility that, even though Siegfried/ Sigurðr is the archetypal dragon-slayer of Western literature and certainly the protagonist of the many embodiments of the Nibelung cycle known throughout medieval Northern Europe, the earliest forms of the narrative of the dragon-slayer tell a radically different story – Sigurðr may not have been part of its original form at all. The guiding question in the title opens onto the bigger problems of studying what is conveniently – albeit sometimes unhelpfully – known as ‘Germanic heroic poetry’. Catalin’s enquiry started from a simple narrative element (the hero of the dragon-slaying narrative) and continued by looking into its evolution throughout the different temporal and regional layers of the Nibelung cycle, using this element as a marker for tracing the evolution of the entire narrative through time and space. His argument was that there are three separate and very different narrative cores which collided into the grand narrative present in *Völsunga saga* and the *Nibelungenlied*. This paper interestingly explored what this narrative stratification of an apparently monolithic story tells us about how and why these narratives evolved the way they did. Ultimately, Catalin argued that this evolution is inextricably linked to the complex relationships between the binaries which determined the shape of these narrative cores – oral and literate, Latinate and vernacular (Old English, Old Norse, Middle High German), lower-class and elite. Eventually, focusing on two opposite worlds between which these stories were always moving prove to be not entirely helpful, and thus, the need for a new integrative model for Germanic heroic poetry emerges, which Catalin’s proposed solution was to consider Germanic heroic traditions in the manner of a rhizome – a botanical term used to describe a dynamic, open, decentralized network that branches out to all sides unpredictably and horizontally.
Päivi Salmesvuori (University of Helsinki): ‘Shadow of a Monk – Birgitta of Sweden encounters her Critic’

Päivi’s paper focused on Birgitta of Sweden, canonized in 1381, and enjoying a huge fame in her native lands even during her life, especially on how she acceded to authority and power and how she dealt with dissenting voices. Although she became during her lifetime a so-called ‘living saint’, this was not a stable status, for Birgitta had to convince her audiences time after time about her special status. One of her critics was monk Gerekinus, whose claims Birgitta met head on in some of her visions. There, as Päivi argued, she makes Gerekinus a character of the text she authored and could thus counteract his criticism very effectively. One of the images she used was especially striking. She claimed that the monk’s shadow will remain on earth after his death. Päivi offered a convincing explanation for the shadow (its origins are more likely Biblical rather than folkloric) in that it split Gerekinus’s persona through her accusation of duplicity and hidden sins making the accused feel existentially uneasy. Had Gerekinus denied any forgotten or hidden sins, he would have been guilty of pride. It was thus in practice impossible to argue against such a claim. This metaphor, along with other rhetorical devices, shows Birgitta’s creativity in using figurative imagery and also a well-developed sense of human psychology, making her an effective constructor of the text of her own life.

Ásdís Egilsdóttir (University of Iceland): ‘The translated saint – The emergence of Icelandic hagiography’

Ásdís examined the evolution of the hagiographic genre from the classical Latin model to the rise of native Icelandic saints’ lives and cults. Thanks to translations from Latin into the vernacular, the passiones and vitae of all major saints were known to Icelandic audiences and thus paved the way for vernacular texts on Icelandic saints. The most venerated saints were universal and local at the same time. When their relics were brought to a church, and their legends translated into the vernacular, they were localized and became part of their host culture. However, she argues that an Icelandic born saint held a special place in the hearts of the Icelandic people. Ásdís uses the example of the vita of St Þorlákr, whose Latin original texts are now lost. The lives of the Icelandic-born saints were first written in Latin and then translated into Icelandic. Hence, we do not know how closely the preserved Icelandic texts resemble their Latin originals. Ásdís cautions that, although scholars usually define texts like Þorláks saga, Jóns saga, and the Guðmundar sögur as Icelandic, they are basically translations.
In the lives of the Icelandic saints, we see historical persons, (indeed pious) translated into the traditional language of hagiography and a universal model translated into the Icelandic language and scenery. Hence, Icelandic hagiographers did more than write on their own saints. They translated lives of foreign saints, adding characters and scenarios that are Icelandic, but the miracles are universal. Since most miracles were probably oral stories told by their beneficiaries transformed into the written language of the Church by the priests or bishops who listened to them, this transformation is also a translation from one type of discourse into another. Ásdís provided a very useful account of the complex dynamics of literacy and orality in Icelandic hagiography.

**Kirsi Kanerva (University of Turku): ‘Eye pain in medieval Icelandic secular and hagiographical literature’**

Kirsi’s wonderful presentation concentrated on eye pain episodes in both the Íslendingasögur (Icelandic family sagas) and sagas of a hagiographical nature, and discussed the differences between these genres in terms of how they depict this affliction, its causes and consequences, also delving into the possible indigenous and foreign elements in these accounts. In hagiographic writings, the aim of the stories of people catching eye pain appears to be the glorification of the saints. In the Íslendingasögur, on the other hand, both the cause and the consequences differ in that eye pain is usually caused by another person who appears to have magical skills. The victims are important either because they are protagonists in the sagas, or are otherwise presented as respectable and famous men with a genealogy. The events that precede the eye pain are thoroughly explained, as if to imply the motivation behind the behavior of the characters who are struck with eye pain. Thus, eye pain in Íslendingasögur often appears as indicator of guilt and a heavy conscience, and in both types of texts, the reason for eye pain appears to be the same: a punishment for misdeeds. However, what causes the punishment in these two source types is totally different since in the sagas of the St Þorlákr and St Óláfr the cause is divine whereas in Íslendingasögur the inflictor is heathen – though both causes can be categorized as ‘supernatural’.

Relative to the latter category, an interesting parallel is offered by the Anglo-Saxon tradition, in which, according to folk beliefs, elves would shoot arrows and spears at their victims, ‘elf-shots’, which could cause illness and other forms of harm. This power was also ascribed to people skilled in witchcraft. There are equivalents in later Scandinavian tradition in the form of alvskot, ‘elfshot’, and trollskot, ‘trollshot’, sometimes also known as finnskot (Finnshot), both involved the idea that supernatural beings and people skilled in magic, such as elves and the Sami people (ON Finnar), could cause illnesses by sending a magical shot. Kirsi’s paper continued her exploration of the folk beliefs which underpinned these references, reconstructing the magical-religious context in which these afflictions were understood. Kirsi successfully argued that the motif of the eye pain caused by an external agent or force as a punishment, especially in Íslendingasögur, was based on indigenous ideas of the human body as porous and susceptible to external influences.
WORKSHOP 2B, CHAINE BY PROFESSOR MARCO MOSTERT (UTRECHT UNIVERSITY), FOCUSED ON LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

Inka Moilanen (University of Stockholm): ‘Latin and Vernacular Homilies of Anglo-Saxon England – Preaching and Perceptions of Society’

Inka’s presentation focused on homiletic literature in Anglo-Saxon England – a good case study for both oral and literary as well as Latin and vernacular communication, since it was a genre whose main function was not only to spread and explain the word of God, but also to create a sense of community and to establish rules for social behaviour. She began by showing that Ælfric did not believe it possible to convey the word of God without proper vernacular commentary – not only because of issues of different idioms, but also and mainly because of differences in customs and the lack of explanatory context to uncover the allegorical and moral implications of the Scripture – which thus lead him to preach extensively in Old English. Inka then compared this set of attitudes to those of Wulfstan. She convincingly argued that, since Ælfric’s and Wulfstan’s works are among the rare cases that we can study in two languages, both written by the same author, we can discern the ways in which they conceptualized the two languages and their respective cultural spheres. This is an advantage not often manifest in the study of anonymous homilies and sermons. Inka’s conclusion was that whereas Ælfric was more worried about the boundaries between the two languages (especially the knowledge these two languages conveyed) and the ability of the laity to understand the deeper meanings of Christian doctrine, Wulfstan’s attitude was more pragmatic. He, too, simplified and omitted complex theological issues when rewriting and translating his Latin sources, but he also concentrated more on practical teaching than on the theoretical aspects of education. Anonymous homilies, meanwhile, evinced no such concern for using the vernacular.

Ilkka Leskelä (University of Helsinki): ‘Cultural Economics: Late Medieval Praxis of Interregional Trade and Culture Flows between the German Hanse and the Swedish Realm’

Ilkka’s presentation demonstrated the deep-going German dominance in Hanseatic-Swedish trade and located it in a broader, regional and multi-polar Hanseatic-Swedish trading system. The late medieval Baltic Sea had become the mare nostrum of Hanseatic merchants. Middle Low German emerged as the lingua franca of all major trade hubs. German organization patterns, architecture, customs, taste and popular culture could be found all over the Baltic Sea coasts. Ilkka’s case study was the cathedral finances of the Turku chapter, which he located in the larger picture of contact networks and practices between Finland and Nyland on one hand and the Hanseatic cities of Lubeck, Gdansk and Tallinn on the other hand. Ilkka adeptly argued that these practical, economic contacts should be seen as blurring the lines between indigenous and foreign by creating a fruitful forum for cultural contacts and influences. Even small local communities, like Finnish peripheral rural towns, parishes and villages, participated in the interregional exchange. Hence, Ilkka
suggested that the Northern regional elites that were connected to written culture and ultimately Latin Christendom (who produced most of the sources we have left) had to coexist and negotiate with local populations who knew of and were acting in the wider world on their own terms. His presentation proved that when we talk of ideas, influences and interactions, of their direction and intensity, we should look for actual people, actual travel and actual communication (since it is not countries and cities that trade, but people; not culture that travels, but individuals). Although this is a challenging task when we operate with medieval and early modern sources, Ilkka argued that a much better view than is often presented is possible. Thus, he used the rarely preserved merchant correspondence, the sporadically available harbour registers, and individual merchants’ account books can yield new and comprehensive insights into the cultural contacts of such peripheral and remote areas as the north Baltic, Turku, and the Finnish countryside.

Gleb Kazakov (Universität Bielefeld): ‘The Terms for the King’s men in Medieval Denmark – A Glimpse Through the Latin Sources and Vernacular Language’

Gleb’s paper was a thought-provoking display of linguistic and semantic archeology. Focusing on how the semantic spheres of the words for the socio-political category of the ‘king’s men’ overlap very imperfectly between the Latin and the Old Norse sources. This incongruence is due to the fact that although skaldic poetry, the sagas of Icelanders or Norwegian kings, law codes etc. were all composed and written down in Old Norse or other old Scandinavian languages, the very first stage of the Scandinavian medieval literature (from late twelfth-century to the beginning of the thirteenth) was written in Latin with classical Latinate historiography in mind. Hence, terms like konungr, bóndi, lendrmaðr, þræll—well-attested and understandable in the context of Scandinavian medieval society, do not have exact translations in the Latin texts, which describe the social realities they deal with by using primarily classical Latin terms (such as employing rex for konungr, or dux for jarl). There are exceptions, however, and for instance the Latin Lex castrensis (composed in the 1180s by Sven Aggesen, a Danish medieval historian and king’s serviceman) uses the ON huskarlastefna. This suggests that the king’s bodyguards and retainers were known at the time as huskarlar (unattested in any other Old Danish historical sources), though the word used most often to describe a single member of king’s retinue is militaris/miles. Sven Aggesen refers to the retainers of a Danish medieval king by using the classical Latin terms with the meaning ‘soldiers serving together’ (castrenses, contubernales) and ‘servicemen’ (curiales). Gleb deftly compares the uses of these words in other Latin sources (Saxo Gramaticus and others), but also in Old Norse texts (the Heimskringla, Icelandic sagas etc.), tracing the evolution of their semantic content in time. All in all, he demonstrated how the different uses of these words provide unexpected glimpses into the mind of the Danish medieval historians writing in Latin as they struggle to find suitable Latin words to translate the social reality they dealt with, but not shying away from leaving words like huskarlastefna untranslated, thus showing their intimacy with the connotations of vernacular terminology.
Linda Kaljundi (Finnish Literature Society): ‘Indigenous and Foreign Archives – Oral vs. written in Estonian cultural memory’

Linda’s paper showed how the dynamics of the oral and written cultural spheres shaped Estonian cultural memory. As in other emerging modern states from previously non-dominant ethnic groups (e.g., Finland), the collection and study of oral folklore was one of the major projects of Estonian nation building in late nineteenth century. Oral heritage also played a major role in young Estonian nationalism, and even today it holds a privileged role in the nation’s cultural memory as well as identity politics, much more so than any historical monument, or heritage site. Linda traced the rise of oral culture into the centre of the Estonian nation-building from the perspective of cultural memory studies. She proved that the concept of ‘cultural memory’ offers fruitful avenues of inquiry for this multi-sided phenomenon and also that Estonian uses of oral culture also resonates well with a number of debates that have been prominent in memory studies during the past decades. The Estonian case study shows the oral mode of historical memory as an alternative to the recently critiqued status of written archives as neutral depositories (since it is closely bound to the emergence of history as an independent academic discipline in the nineteenth century, which positioned itself as science that studies sources). Hence, Linda’s paper examined the relations between the making of archives and histories in a situation where different communities – Estonian and Baltic German – strove to establish competing versions of the region’s past. She explains the rise in prestige of oral heritage as accompanying the rapidly rising social status of the Estonians and the colonial legacy that loomed large in the Baltic provinces of the Russian empire. Folklore, when projected back to the ancient past, was used to prove that the young nations were themselves ancient *Kulturnationen* and thus to subvert colonial humiliation. Furthermore, the use of oral heritage – especially when opposed to written media – also strongly capitalizes on the rhetoric of authenticity and indigenous as opposed to artificial and foreign (projected on Baltic Germans). The Estonian constructions of the ancient past, she argued, relate and run parallel to the Baltic German media of memory. Linda did a wonderful job of showcasing the Eastern Baltic project of oral heritage as a point of entry into understanding the complex relationship between cultural memories created by dominant and non-dominant groups, documenting the ways in which the emergence of competing and conflicting historical identities and their archives both divided and joined local communities.

Marek Tamm (Tallinn University, Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies): ‘How to Do Things with Words – Medieval Sermon Stories and the Estonian Folk Tales’

Marek’s presentation looked at medieval preaching as performance and speech act which aims both to inform and to form the audience. Medieval sermons as an intermediary between learned clerical
culture and popular lay culture by translating ecclesiastic culture into the categories of thought and linguistic forms of the laity, particularly in recently Christianized areas, like Estonia or Finland, where the preaching was one of the main cultural contacts between the clerics and the native inhabitants. However, Marek wisely abandons the oppositions between lay and clerical, oral and vernacular, focusing instead on the interactions and contacts between these presumably opposite spheres. His main argument was that Estonian folktales are heavily dependent on the medieval (but most probably also on the early modern) preaching. He proved that it is impossible to understand the content and form of the Estonian folktales without taking into consideration the influence of medieval exempla (the small illustrative stories – intended for both lay and illiterate audiences – which combined religious didactics with entertaining tales about human behaviour and miraculous events). Medieval sermons had a significant influence on the Estonian oral traditions. Marek convincingly argues that we can find the influences of the medieval preaching on the Estonian folktales on three separate levels (the level of narrative motifs, of narrative structure, and of social values), and also that the influence of medieval mendicant preaching (based on a very acute social ethos) can be found also on the level of social values that characterize the universe of Estonian folktales. Since the audience of the mendicant sermons were the people who consisted mostly of the poor and illiterate, the joy over the punishments of rich sinners was a message directed to these people, as to keep them happy in this life waiting for retribution, and, what is more, for their vengeance in the future. The belief in the glory of poverty and the wickedness of wealth that is very typical to Estonian folk stories is most probably rooted in the teaching of the mendicant preachers.

Irma-Riitta Järvinen (Finnish Literature Society): ‘Vernacular Transformations of Saints’ Cults in Finland – St. Katherine of Alexandria and St. Anne’

The aim of Irma-Riitta’s presentation was to show how Christian saints were made a functional part of vernacular religion in Finland, which she successfully did. From the viewpoint of lay piety, the aim of vernacular prayers and rituals was to venerate the saints and to call their help, no matter how much the forms used for this differed from the practices taught by the Church. In this context, she showed that the distinction between ‘pagan’ and ‘heathen’ practices is not very helpful; saints were understood and transformed by vernacular imagination in various ways. In vernacular piety the saints were made part of a mythological continuum of beings, who were asked to fulfill human needs. Irma-Riitta focused on two case studies, the cult of St. Katherine of Alexandria and that of St. Anne, the mother of the Virgin Mary, in Finnish-Karelian traditions. St. Katherine was seen as the guardian spirit of the cattle. Irma-Riitta reflected whether this proves that when the traditions of St. Katherine arrived in Finland there was already a set of beliefs about guardian spirits in the household who help to protect the cattle, and thus that the saint took over the tasks of the guardian spirits. In the case of St. Anne, in Eastern Finnish and Karelian hunting charms and prayers she is usually presented as a dweller in the forest. Since in the worldview of Karelian folklore the forest belongs to the sphere of the supernormal ‘other’, an ‘antiworld’ in contrast to the village and its
reality, the popular narratives on St. Anne can be said to go back to pre-Christian symbols and myths. The examples presented by Irma-Riitta cogently showed how vernacular imagination functioned in making the Catholic saints useful in popular piety. Although there is no documentation of folk piety or vernacular cults of St. Anne and St. Katherine in medieval Finland, the fact that both saints were still appealed to in the nineteenth century proves that they were fulfilling an important need in people’s lives. Both St. Katherine and St. Anne were familiarized and entered the spaces which had already been mythologized by ethnic spirits.

**Workshop 3B, Chaired by Jesse Keskiahon (University of Helsinki), Focused on Multilingualism in Sources**

**Helen F. Leslie (University of Bergen): ‘The mise-en-page of Latin and Old Norse Poetry in Old Norse Manuscripts’**

Helen’s paper discussed the distinction between prose and verse in the layout of Old Norse-Icelandic manuscripts. She helpfully showed how the details of the *mise-en-page* provide us with plenty of information about the scribes who wrote the text and the literary culture in which they worked. She used *Ketils saga hængs* as a very useful case study. This text is an Old Norse legendary saga written in prose interspersed with verse with a demonstrably long life since, although probably starting out as oral and the first extant manuscripts are fifteenth-century, its popularity and copying by hand endured well into the nineteenth century in Iceland. Helen first discussed several Latin verses in Old Norse-Icelandic manuscripts and then saga manuscripts written in the vernacular, discussing the layout of verse on the manuscript page. She argued that writers of manuscripts sought to mediate their readers’ response to the text through the layout of the text on the manuscript page. Helen ingeniously used (in relation to Old Norse culture) Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe’s argument that readers in Anglo-Saxon England applied a large amount of oral knowledge in decoding the English manuscript page, since Old English verse was alive in oral tradition, whereas for Latin texts, more visual cues were needed in a manuscript since the readers were alienated from an oral, vital tradition. Hence, Helen prudently argued that although the *mise-en-page* of the Old Norse manuscripts she analyzed might be indicators of residual orality (or alternatively, simply visual aids for finding verses at a glance in performance contexts), this need not characterize an entire culture. All in all, her impressive presentation shed new light on the way orality and performance shape manuscripts and are in their turn shaped by them.

**Leena Enqvist (University of Helsinki): ‘Birgittine Reading Culture – Questions of Literacy, Uses of Latin & Vernaculars, and Reading Aids and Guidelines’**

Leena’s paper attempted to reevaluate the complex ways in which diglossia and literacy interacted and were embodied in English and Swedish Birgittine communities. Although books and reading
were an integral part of medieval monastic life and Birgittine monasteries had a learned and pious reputation, not every nun was literate and even when they were, this was not necessarily a sign of knowledge of Latin. As Leena argues, evaluating an individual nun’s level of literacy is in most cases an impossible task, partly because of problematic definitions of literacy which do not reflect the social realities in late medieval monastic communities. For instance, if a person was completely illiterate, this does not mean that he or she would not participate in the literary culture of his or her monastery – illiterate nuns had access to texts through public reading. On the other hand, owning books does not necessarily mean that they were actually read. The monasteries discussed in Leena’s study housed both those who were *litterati* in a traditional sense of the word (competent in Latin) and those who were either literate in the vernacular or completely illiterate.

In regard to Birgittines, diglossia and literacy are especially problematic since exploiting the possibilities offered by vernaculars was widespread within the Order. If the liturgical material is excluded, Latin books were mainly aimed at private study and devotion, Leena argued, whereas public reading was supposed to be conducted in vernacular so that everybody could understand it. Thus even those who did not necessarily need to read Latin texts had to manage with ritualistic Latin usage. Naturally, this does not mean that those nuns needed to be fully competent in Latin. Yet Birgittine nuns apparently preferred vernacular devotional writings. Leena concluded her valuable paper by remarking how bilingual books reflect the diglossic situation in Birgittine monasteries where two languages are used partly for different purposes – Latin as a ritualistic, religious prestige language and English/Swedish as an everyday language and also as a language of devotional texts.

**Alpo Honkapohja (University of Zurich): ‘Multilingualism in The Sloane Group of 15th-Century Medical and Alchemical Manuscripts’**

Alpo condensed an impressive amount of his postgraduate work in his presentation. This felt all the more fitting since he was just concluding his PhD at Zurich. His presentation focused on the way English, French, and Latin were used in a cluster of related fifteenth-century medical and alchemical manuscripts dating from the second half of the fifteenth century known as the Sloane Group. Alpo drew on pragmatic approaches to the study of bilingualism in present-day societies as well as codicological description of the manuscripts to shed light on the different communicative functions in which each language is used in the manuscripts, but also on the production and audiences of these manuscripts. Interestingly, the Sloane manuscripts may be evidence of systematic commercial production of medical texts, in London or its surrounding areas, slightly before Caxton and the first printing press. More to the point, they are peculiar because Latin and English seem to be on the same level in them. The English texts do not directly gloss the Latin ones, and the contents in both languages are of equal sophistication. Alpo’s paper focused on the latter point. He employed an impressive array of linguistic cognitive and semantic methodologies to prove that despite the
occurrence of texts both in Latin and Middle English in these manuscripts, code-switching is fairly rare and also that the Latin texts do not contain any switches to English or French. Moreover, although the Sloane Group was previously regarded as an example of a manuscript in which Latin and Middle English are of equal sophistication, this view has to be slightly revised. Interestingly, the reader of the manuscripts was expected to have enough functional Latin to be able to understand recipes in Latin or to make astrological calculations based on them. All in all, Alpo’s presentation proved very illuminating for the interactions between medical and alchemical manuscripts, their authors and their public in late medieval Western Europe.

WORKSHOP 4A, CHAIRED BY PROFESSOR MARA GRUDULE (UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA), FOCUSED ON INTERACTION OF INDIGENOUS AND FOREIGN TRADITIONS

Kati Kallio (Finnish Literature Society): ‘What is a Good Poem? Shifts in Poetics, Music and Ideologies’

Kati’s paper analyzed the complex interactions between folk and elite or oral and literate poetic languages, contextualizing them in the attitudes of the elite towards the oral Kalevala-metric poetry and also in the implementation of rhymed meters in folk poetry. Her central argument was that most of the earliest poems were in fact songs, and hence should be understood in relation to musical as well as poetic registers. Kati introduced us to the two main Finnish poetic systems: the Kalevala meter (the traditional language of epic, ritual, and lyrical poems, lullabies, charms and incantations, proverbs, nursery rhymes etc.) and rhymed meters (the newer genre of stanzaic songs of various types emerging from Western influences).

The first poems written in Finnish from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are usually regarded as rather weak and clumsy. Kati tackled the venerable question of why these first poets chose German and Western European meters instead of developing the old oral Kalevala meter. She answers by looking into the cultural and practical preconditions necessary for the use of a poetic meter. The poetic register must not carry unacceptable undertones or associations, and, at the same time, it must be compatible with the musical register in question. Since the first Finnish verse-makers were reformers who drew inspiration for the German Lutheran singing, the attitude to the traditional oral poetic idiom (Kalevala-meter) was one of avoidance. Thus, Kati argued that the choices of the early reformers should not be seen in relation to the oral vernacular idioms only, but also relative to the song registers they had as their models or aims. She concluded that the early rhymed hymns in Finnish may seem clumsy or even difficult to sing for a modern reader, but since they were in use for several hundreds of years without being changed or refined by the compilers of new hymnals, they must have been perceived as good in at least some ways, being probably deeply rooted in local practices.
Tuomas M. S. Lehtonen (Finnish Literature Society): ‘Vicious Pagans, Pious Men, and Pleasures of Singing – King David, St. Augustine, Luther and Väinämöinen’

Tuomas’s presentation focused on how the pleasure of music has been conceptualized and moralized in a series of cultural contexts ranging from St. Augustine to the early Finnish reformers. He started by looking at the prefaces penned by Mikael Agricola and Jacobus Finno for the Finnish translation of David’s psalter and the first Lutheran hymnal in Finnish, where they proposed what could be defined as the first theory of music and singing in Finnish. They both introduced new congregational singing and a new type of rhymed hymns while also creating literary Finnish. Tuomas argued that, since in the Middle Ages Finnish was used only as the local vernacular language for oral communication while the written languages were Latin, Swedish and Low-German, the introduction of congregational singing led to a complex process of changes in cult and doctrine, written and oral as well as in linguistic constellation. Tuomas went on to trace attitudes towards the pleasure derived from music in early Christian thought, where suspicion felt towards sensuous gratification in music was intertwined with awe towards music as a mathematical discipline, an instantiation of beauty as an attribute of God. For Luther and other reformers, music was a gift of God which included reciprocity – receiving the gift of God evokes man to praise him and also a road leading to faith as part of ‘the affective trust of the heart’. Tuomas argued that Luther turned Augustine’s objection towards musical pleasure on its head, since aesthetic pleasure was an innate human ability which makes him to turn toward God’s creation and hence toward God himself. This affective theory legitimized the Luther’s personal love of music as well as his program to renew the liturgical practice among other things with congregational singing of religious hymns, which was accomplished also on the shores of Baltic Sea.

Rikke S. Olesen (University of Copenhagen): ‘Runic Latin – Foreign Influence on the Vernacular Epigraphic Tradition in Denmark’

Rikke’s paper focused on runic inscriptions in Latin – well-known to runologists but perhaps not familiar to scholars in other fields. She showcased her work on Danish runic amulets by discussing the inscriptions from a philological and epigraphic point of view. Rikke expertly argued that the medieval use of runic amulets can be regarded as a continuation and/or a renewal of a very old tradition. Among the innovations brought to this tradition from abroad, the most important seem to have been the use of Latin, the literary and Christian textual formulas, the physical material (lead), and the characteristic way of folding lead amulets. Interestingly, the presentation showed that the folding could reflect the imitation of a foreign ritualistic performance of folding pieces of lead or even parchment. Thus, runic Latin reflects the interactions between the foreign language and the autochthonous characters traditionally used for epigraphic writing in the vernacular. Certain features in the runic spelling of Latin have attracted scholarly attention because they seem to reflect an oral realization and therefore the pronunciation of Medieval Latin in Scandinavia. Rikke also
countered the opinion that runes were seen as being more effective in a magical context by proposing the more practical explanation that the amulet rituals were connected with oral performance. It must have been possible for people with runic skills to read runic Latin aloud even though they might not have been familiar with either Latin or Roman letters. Inscriptions in Roman lettering also show spellings that seem to reflect memorized and not copied pieces of text. Rikke’s presentation successfully unraveled the complex interactions between Latin and Germanic vernaculars and between orality and literacy underlying the runic inscriptions on Danish amulets. She also expressed the ambition to throw more light on this material in the future in a joint project involving museums and universities in and outside Denmark.

**WORKSHOP 4B, CHAIRED BY PROFESSOR TERRY GUNNELL (UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND), FOCUSED ON ECHOES OF THE PAST IN ICELANDIC SAGA LITERATURE**

**Kendra Willson** (*Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies*): ‘Parody and Genre in Sagas of Icelanders’

Kendra’s presentation tackled the thorny issue of identifying irony and parody in Icelandic sagas. This is problematic because, since sagas prefigure the novel in many ways, there is a tendency to read them as novels, especially by a modern audience raised on modernist texts, which may see similar preoccupations in older texts (even though they may be more present in modern minds rather in the authorial intention which studies of medieval texts often aim to reconstruct). Still, Kendra did an excellent job of navigating these difficulties and presented a picture of Old Norse and Icelandic literature which included parody and satyr. She nuances these modern notions by viewing parody in several medieval texts as use of traditional motifs in a comic vein.

For instance, *Fóstbroðra saga* is at once a parody of the genre and a satire of the heroic ethos. It parodies Norwegian sagas inspired by Arthurian romance by drawing the ultimate and often ludicrous consequences of the behaviours propounded in courtly romance. These behavioral codes are intrinsic to the genre, so the distinction between textual parody and social satire is undermined. Kendra prefers to read *Króka-Refs saga* (a fourteenth-century saga which has previously been seen as a parodic pastiche of the saga genre) as making comic use of traditional motifs. In many cases, the more familiar tragic sagas which *Króka-Refs saga* is said to parody may represent a more innovative use of the tradition. In it, motifs are not inherently comic but depend on incongruity in context and genre sensibility for its humor. Hence, she argued that *Króka-Refs saga* does show parody of traditional elements and scenes and generic consciousness. However, in most instances the target of the spoof is a motif or generic element rather than a specific other saga.

**Anne Irene Riisøy** (*Buskerud University College*): ‘Eddic Law – Viking Law – Germanic Law?’

Anne Irene’s paper dealt with legal terms and legal episodes in Old Norse verse and skillfully argued for a Viking Age setting of the Eddic poems, and in some cases possibly also an even earlier
origin. Eddic poetry is replete with ancient legal terminology and often depicts scenes of a legal nature (murder, revenge, compensation, hanging of criminals, how to contract a lawful marriage or become a legitimate heir). While no Eddic poem is itself a legal text, they are dramatic enactments of imagined events in the lives of the gods which demonstrate legal notions and which thus may reflect legal practices in the society in which they originate. Anne Irene’s presentation impressively unraveled the law embedded in these texts (which, she argues, can be firmly tied to a Viking Age reality) by employing semantic archaeology. She focused on legal terms such as þing (in Scandinavia the most common term for assembly), eidd (‘oath’, normally connoting solemn promise, with cognates in all Germanic languages), vargr (the word for ‘outlaw’, but also ‘wolf’). All in all, Anne Irene convincingly argued that Eddic poetry, read together with the earliest skaldic verse, provides the closest possible view of the paths of legal thought among the Germanic people.

Frog (University of Helsinki): ‘Calling Christ bealdor – From Mythology to Meaningfulness in an Oral-Poetic Formula’

Frog offered us an impressive sample of linguistic and semantic archeology from his broad-ranging work. His conclusions had much more far-reaching implications, however, as his rich research output of the past few years has demonstrated. His paper was not concerned (as those of previous researchers) with whether Christ and/or an Anglo-Saxon equivalent of Baldr underlie the Old English poetic word bealdor, but rather with the use of the term in oral poetry, and how it was informed by vernacular mythology. He first explored this line of enquiry by showing that the use of bealdor in Anglo-Saxon poetry is highly formulaic – it was not used generatively in the poetic vocabulary. Frog’s analysis proved that the attested pattern of use of this term is so narrow, even down to its grammatical aspects, that it appears to have been preserved in documentation and maintained in oral use more or less exclusively in oral-poetic constructions. Frog went on to examine bealdor cognates in other Germanic languages. In Old Norse, baldr was not seen as a common noun and all its poetic uses are instantiations of the theonym Baldr. A cognate with Anglo-Saxon bealdor and Old Norse baldr is preserved in a single example from Old High German, found in the intriguing Second Merseburg Charm, the subject of heated debate owing to the possibility that it represents a tradition of the god Baldr among Germanic cultures on the continent.

Frog then reconstructed not so much the form or the exact meaning of the pretextual embodiments of bealdor, but rather the connotations they carried through time and across different Germanic cultures. Thus, he showed that the antecedent of bealdor was used flexibly and even generatively in poetry and presumably in other registers in an earlier period, hence it did not start off in poetry exclusively in a particular formula, but rather dropped out of other daily uses, being preserved in meter. Frog’s survey of the use of cognates in Germanic languages convincingly demonstrated that the term appears strongly connected with the mythological sphere in evidence from all other linguistic-cultural arenas, and was a term applicable to gods that appears by extension to have
become a poetic synonym for lord or leader especially in kenning constructions. Conceivably, the antecedent of OE *bealdor* was identified with a particular god who suffered death as a victim. In time, the mythological narrative and even the god may have become obscure or been wholly forgotten, but the formula’s conventionalized patterns of use, once established as a resource in the register, allowed the formula to be maintained as part of a poetic idiom. Hence, as Frog argued, its connotative significance could remain accessible and interesting as a resource without the need for the mythological referent to be recognizable. All in all, Frog’s presentation was a tour de force across Germanic cultures, poetic traditions and mythologies which provided exciting vistas of research for the pretextual evolutions of words and texts.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

All the presentations and lectures given at the Helsinki symposium concluded along similar lines in regard to the complex dynamics of oral vs. literate, Latin vs. vernacular, elite vs. folk, Christian vs. pagan etc. First of all, we all agreed these embodiments of the ‘Great Divide’ should be abandoned and replaced with other models. The paradigm of a spectre of attitudes seems to be much more helpful than that of opposing binaries. Prof. Mostert’s refutation of simplistic ‘literate vs. illiterate/oral’ approaches and his proposition of intermediate categories (quasi-literate, semi-illiterate etc.) should be adopted and extended to the other binaries and this is what many of the participants to this workshop did in fact achieve. The sixteen presentations and four lectures showed plenty of instantiations of the dynamic interaction between the above-mentioned binaries, from Danish runic amulets to early Lutheran Finnish hymns, from late medieval English alchemical manuscripts to pretextual legal Old Norse codes, but more than that, they proved that these interactions surpass cultural, temporal, spatial, genre boundaries and that they effectively make these texts (in the broadest definition of the word) into much more than they would have been confined to one of the two binaries. Thus, the very presence of one of the terms of the opposing pairs presupposes the (muted) presence of the other. The Helsinki workshop(s) succeeded in making the second term (whether it be residual orality, muted pagan mythology, despised folklore) speak for itself, all the while making us aware that any boundaries between the two terms is a scholarly ideal never discernible in the sources we use.

Finally, I would like to thank the organizers (especially Kirsi Kanerva) for hosting the conference and for providing excellent support and facilities.
Conference Report

Hope Williard, University of Leeds

CONFERENCE TITLE: LATE LITERATURE IN THE SIXTH CENTURY, EAST AND WEST

DATE AND LOCATION: 31 OCTOBER-2 NOVEMBER 2013, PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND, USA

SPONSORED BY: INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR LATE ANTIQUE LITERARY STUDIES, BROWN UNIVERSITY

LATE LITERATURE IN THE SIXTH CENTURY, EAST AND WEST

The International Society for Late Antique Literary Studies was cofounded by David Bright (Emory University), Scott McGill (Rice University), and Joseph Pucci (Brown University) in 2012, after a pair of conferences hosted at Rice University and Brown University in 2011. The organisers intend a broad definition of literature — Christian as well as secular, high as well as low — and envision the sharing of work on literary studies, East and West. This was the first of a series of biennial or annual conferences. The conference limited its focus to the rich body of literature surviving from the sixth century. The organisers encouraged contributions focused on the Greek east, or on the connections between eastern and western literature. This brought together classicists, Latinists, and medievalists in fruitful debate and conversation. The fifteen papers presented over the course of two days were given in the Annmary Brown Memorial (www.library.brown.edu/about/amb/). In what
follows, I will summarize each paper and the conversation it provoked, concluding with a general summary of particular themes drawn out by presenters.

FRIDAY, 1 NOVEMBER

‘Rhetoric and Philosophy in the Ammonius of Zacharias of Mytilene’

RAFFAELLA CRIBIORE (NEW YORK UNIVERSITY)

The conference began with a paper on Zacharias’ Ammonius, written by a Christian author about his pagan teacher. Raffaella started by introducing the audience to the rivalry between philosophy and rhetoric, in existence since the time of Plato. In the first part of her paper, she dealt with the nuances of this rivalry in the fourth and fifth centuries, the subtleties of which were reflected in contemporary rhetoric. In late antiquity, the separation between philosophy and rhetoric started to disappear. Raffaella cited Themistios and Prokopius of Gaza as witnesses to changing ideas. The meanings of the words rhetoric and philosophy changed and developed as they came to be used by fourth-century Christians; but the audience was cautioned that these changes may not have been deliberate, since evolution in meaning also occurred amongst fourth-century pagans. The second part of the paper focused on Zacharias Scholasticus’ presentation of Ammonius, which uses the arguments he had learned from his teacher. Raffaella noted that in Ammonius 995-1003, where the teacher asks some his students to ‘go out’ following Zacharias’ attempt to convert them, he refers not only to leaving the class but also to being outside of the church. Discussion afterwards focused on allusion in texts, with particular attention paid to the metaphor of fish and stones in Ammonius 995.

‘Maximianus Medicus: Greek Medical Theory and the Interpretation of El.5.108’

IAN FIELDING (OXFORD) AND AILEEN DAS (WARWICK)

In this jointly delivered paper, Ian and Aileen focused on the medical knowledge displayed by the poet Maximianus in his fifth elegy. The poet presents himself as a member of the educated class and his fifth elegy includes a diplomatic mission from Rome to Constantinople. Maximianus’ medical knowledge could have come from his diplomatic career or from reading one of the fifth-century medical compilations circulating in the west. The presenters then turned to examining the specifics of Maximianus’ medical knowledge, demonstrating that the poet diagnoses his Greek Girl with uterine suffocation. In lines 37-8, he refers to Aristotle’s idea of the formation of the foetus; a previously unnoticed parallel which highlighted the usefulness of considering poems in light of medical knowledge. The paper concluded by locating the fifth elegy in the context of criticism of
ascetic virginity and the medical knowledge available to Christian authors of the sixth century. Questions and discussion focused on satire and gender role reversal; parallels to Petronius, Apuleius, Juvenal, and Martial were also discussed. The final comment addressed the place of lay and self-diagnosis of medical conditions in Roman poetry.

‘EAST, WEST, AND THE THREE CHAPTERS CONTROVERSY’

HOPE WILLIARD (LEEDS)

This was one of six papers exploring aspects of the writings of Venantius Fortunatus. Hope examined Fortunatus Carm. Appendix 2 for evidence of Fortunatus’ knowledge of the Three Chapters. She began with the Three Chapters and the decreasing accuracy of information the farther news of events travelled from their place of happening. She then discussed the world in which Fortunatus grew up, focusing on Frankish and Byzantine military activity in north-eastern Italy and addressed Fortunatus’ reasons for moving to Gaul. The paper concluded with a discussion of Fortunatus gratiarum actio to Justin and Sophia, Carmen Appendix 2. She argued it is impossible to demonstrate that Fortunatus’ knowledge of the Three Chapters was superior to his Frankish colleagues. However, the poem is interesting because it shows that the continued plausibility of an image of the interconnectedness of the Roman world. Questions and comments after this paper focused on the letters of Pope Pelagius to Childebert I; and on the possibility of shades of meaning in the word reges.

‘MAKING A MODEL: ALLUSIONS TO SIDONIUS IN ENNODIUS CARM. I.9’

MICHAEL HANAGHAN (SYDNEY)

The writings of Sidonius Apollinaris had an influence from the time of their composition to the Renaissance. Michael’s paper discussed the knowledge of Sidonius found in Ennodius’ poetry, arguing that Ennodius knew Sidonius’ poetry well and demonstrates a good understanding of Christian poetry. Specific examples from Ennodius’ writings demonstrated the exactitude of his knowledge. Sidonius, after he became bishop, worried about the incompatibility of his poetry and prose in the eyes of posterity. For Ennodius, allusions to Sidonius demonstrated his doctrine since his audience had to be able to identify the passage cited and place it in its context. In this we begin to see the combination of classical and Christian literary culture. Questions and comments after the paper focused on the ways in which Ennodius manipulates Sidonius, especially by omissions. There were also comments about the poets’ landscape imagery and interpretation; and the game of allusions and aristocratic identity.

‘INSCRIBING THE AINEDAI: TROY, ROME, AND CONSTANTINOPLE IN THE CYCLE OF AGATHIAS’
STEVEN D. SMITH (HOFSTRA)

This paper examined the depictions of the ruin of Troy in the Cycle of Agathias in order to suggest that the poet and historian was not uncritical of Justinian’s conquests. Some of the epigrams in the Cycle were clearly never inscribed on monuments; others seem to have come from monuments or statues. However, Steven argued that the Trojan epigrams were never inscribed because they were not always laudatory. Agathias’ depiction of the conquest of Troy reads the fall of Troy through a Virgilian lens and identifies with the Trojans. The epigrams comment on the war’s human cost and futility, they search for a scapegoat, and find a connection between Troy and Rome. In other writings of the 550s, Agathias recalls the horrors of the Italian campaigns. His interpretation of the fall of Troy can be read as a potential future for Byzantium. Discussion afterwards focused on the existence of the Troy as a place and past inscriptions. Several delegates spoke to the question of sixth-century Greek readers’ sensitivity to Virgil; with some suggesting that Agathias gets to his quotation of Virgil through another route.

‘LOYAL YOKEFELLOWS: CAESARIUS’ ALLUSIONS TO THE FATHERS IN HIS SERMONS ON SEXUAL ETHICS (42–44)’

KETURAH KIEHL (CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA)

Caesarius of Arles thought of the preacher as a prophet, for whom all aspects of life deserved scrutiny. In this paper, Keturah discussed Caesarius’ use of his favourite source, Augustine, to address the subject of sexual ethics. The bishop of Arles adapts and adds to the bishop of Hippo’s sermons on adultery. Caesarius argued that extramarital sex was unacceptable for men and that too much sex within marriage was a small sin. These little sins add up to bigger ones, an image both preachers address. Furthermore, both argue that these small sins defile the human being created in the image of God. Discussion afterwards focused on a possible parallel to Juvenal’s fourth satire in Augustine sermon 9.15 and Caesarius sermon 44.6; another delegate brought up similarities in John Chrysostom’s and Caesarius’ attitudes towards women.

‘PROCOPIUS ON EMPIRE: PATHS UNTAKEN’

CHARLES PAZDERNIK (GRAND VALLEY STATE)

The last paper of the day discussed Procopius’ views of Justinian’s empire. The Gothic wars in Italy were misconceived at the start since the physical and ideological distance between Italy and Byzantium was greater than imagined. Procopius sets up a contrast between Theodoric and Justinian, but Chuck argued that the more important contrast is between Belisarius and Theodoric. In the Wars, Belisarius is the proponent of an ideology which erases difference by putting it under imperial rule. Again, a contrast between Theodoric and Belisarius, who dismisses the Gothic king’s
The episode in which Belisarius is offered the Gothic kingship provides a further instance of Procopius’ parallel treatments of Belisarius and Theodoric. However the general makes different choices than the king, and Procopius allows his reader to question whether Belisarius’ choices were the correct ones. Discussion afterwards focused on the different depictions of Belisarius in the *Secret History* and the *Wars*.

**SATURDAY, 2 NOVEMBER**

‘**REPRESENTING AND CULTURALLY CONTEXTUALIZING A BISHOP IN SIXTH-CENTURY GAZA: CHORICIUS’S PANEGYRICS IN HONOUR OF MARCIANUS**’

**ROBERT J. PENELLA (FORDHAM)**

This paper dealt with Choricius’ first and second Orations. After situating Choricius in the context of the fifth-century school of Gaza, Robert went on to discuss the poet’s praise of Bishop Marcianus’ pragmatic authority. The bishop appears as the builder and restorer of churches, poorhouses, and city defences. These were seen as philanthropic gifts as well as religious buildings. Orations about churches had an audience of leading citizens and were not the place for praise of spiritual and ascetic merits. Unlike their colleagues in the west, eastern writers did not shift from the ‘classical encyclopaedia’; their works quoted the classics rather than the Bible, and biblical names or place-names do not appear. Demonstrating classical *paideia* was a mark of education and high status. However this approach changed as time went on, for example, Paul the Silentiary names Christian figures and does not quote the classics when writing about the rededication of the Hagia Sophia. Questions and discussion after this paper focused on whether use of the classical encyclopaedia is found elsewhere in the School of Gaza (later in the discussion the use of this term was questioned) and the normality of Christian use of pagan modes. Audience influence was discussed. It was pointed out those other poetic forms, such as centos, avoiding the naming of Christian names.

‘**A TANGLED SKEIN: THE COMPOSITION OF THE LIBER PONTIFICALIS, EAST-WEST RELATIONS, AND THE IMAGE OF POPE SILVESTER**’

**RICHARD WESTFALL (PONTIFICA UNIVERSITÀ GREGORIANA)**

This paper examined the reasons for the composition of the *Liber Pontificalis* (*LP*) and its image of Pope Silvester. Richard suggested the account of Pope John I’s visit to Constantinople was based on eyewitness testimony; perhaps one of John’s gifts to emperor Justin I was a copy of the latest recension of the *LP*. He emphasised the complicated nature of the text: it opens with a letter exchange between Jerome and Pope Damasus, which was composed in the sixth century. The lists of donations in the text are problematic as well because their date is uncertain, though they may
have been left by Damasus to his successor, given the schism-laden nature of the early church. Pope Silvester is the subject of the LP’s longest papal biography and is linked to the Donation of Constantine. Richard argued that these characteristics indicate a text written for an imperial audience. His conclusion highlighted more inconsistencies within the text; namely its confusion over dating the popes and the hints that the LP was not written chronologically. Questions and discussion picked up on the text’s mention of Theodoric, the contemporary allegation that Justin I was illiterate, and the date of the LP’s composition based on its Latinity.

‘JOHN MOSCHOS’ PRATUM SPIRITUALE: THE LIMITS OF GENRE, READER RESPONSE, AND THE KEY TO AUTHORIAL INTENT’

**Benjamin de Lee** (SUNY, Cortland)

Opening by addressing the problems of pinning down genre in late antique literature, Benjamin’s paper considered the unique characteristics of Moschos’ Pratum Spirituale. The text includes stories about ascetics but is not organised like a monastic anthology, where sayings are indexed by author. The Pratum Spirituale is a complex text written in simple Greek and sets out to provide pious pleasure for the spiritual monk. After comparing the text and its characteristics to other contemporary sources, Benjamin showed that it is unique in its language of pleasure and delight; it appealed to its audience and was very popular. It exists in 145 manuscripts, none of which contain a complete version; scribes freely add and delete text. These changes may have reflected scribes’ wishes to make the text more didactic and dilute the merely pleasurable aspects of the work. Discussions and questions focused on parallels to other texts (a lively discussion broke out over the origins and history of the image of the bee in Greek and Latin poetry). Final remarks addressed the literary knowledge of monks.

‘THE “THING-NESS” OF LIGNUM IN FORTUNATUS, CARMEN II.2’

**Robin McGill** (Brown)

The afternoon’s papers on Fortunatus began with an in-depth analysis of Carmen II.2. This was one of six poems and hymns Fortunatus composed due to his involvement in Radegund’s attempt to obtain a relic of the cross. Robin then addressed the poem’s characteristics: it engages with the ‘material turn’, its metre is one used for military marching songs, and it conveys the image of the cross as trophy and relic. The poem promotes ‘visceral seeing’ of the relic, with sight, movement, smell, hearing, and singing. The rest of the paper focused on Fortunatus’ use of exegesis and typology. The poet activates multiple layers of meaning around the word lignum. Robin concluded by situating the poem in the context of Christian hymns. It fits in with Fortunatus’ other work by participating in the power and prestige of display. Questions and discussion dealt with the ‘thing-ness’ of the poem; and parallels (including Statius’ idea that wood is the building block of poetry,
Sidonius, and other Fortunatus poems). A final comment addressed the poem’s image of the Christ the saviour bringing things into harbour.

‘THE PURPOSE BEHIND THE COMPOSITION OF IN LAUDEM SANCTAE MARiae BY VENANTIUS FORTUNATUS’

BENJAMIN WHEATON (TORONTO)

Though authorship of *In laudem sanctae Mariae* has sometimes been called into question, it is undoubtedly a work by Fortunatus and contains many similarities to the rest of his work. In particular, the poem shows parallels to Fortunatus’ sermon on the Creed, which shows the influence of the Aquilean theologian Rufinus. The poem had a didactic purpose and supports Chalcedonian Christology; it gives exposition of biblical texts and paraphrases Isaiah. Returning to the question of Fortunatus’ sources, Ben adduced similarities between this poem and African homilies. He also suggested a possible parallel with Romanus the Melodist. He argued that Fortunatus’ Christology is Chalcedonian, paralleling Justinian’s edict. The spiritual geography of the poem shows the saints of heaven gathered to praise Mary; similar scenes are found in *De Virginitate*. Ben concluded that the poem was written during Fortunatus’ bishopric to support Chalcedonian orthodoxy, echoing Fortunatus’ preaching. Discussion afterwards noted the poem lists Constantinople last in the pentarchy and what his reason might have been.

‘FORTUNATUS FAMULUS: SERVITIUM AMORIS AND THE ELEGIAC PARADIGM IN FORTUNATUS’ PERSONAL POETRY’

ADRIANNE LAFRANCE (BROWN)

This paper looked at the persistence of elegiac diction in Fortunatus’ poetry and its potential shades of meaning. Adrianne paid particular attention to Fortunatus’ poems to women, notably his figuring of Radegund as the elegiac *domina* and the terms from the Latin sexual vocabulary used in his descriptions of banquets. An elegiac reading of the poems is possible as well as one which bases the emotions expressed on love and gratitude. Furthermore, Fortunatus shares characteristics with elegists, such as his depiction of his beloveds as family and his passionate poems to men and women. In poetry, erotic diction is a means to the end of elegiac writing and Fortunatus may be exploiting these tensions. Afterwards, delegates expressed scepticism about direct parallels with Tibullus and Propertius and brought up instances where erotic language is used in Late Latin: Jerome’s writings to women, the rhetoric of *amicitia*, and the increased eroticization of epistolary language. The intermingling of erotic and biblical language was also discussed and the conversation closed mulling over the implication of the idea that elegiac relationships always fail.
‘WRITING AND LITERARY PRACTICES IN SIXTH-CENTURY MEROVINGIAN GAUL: EVALUATING THE EVIDENCE FROM VENANTIUS FORTUNATUS’ CARMINA’

BIANCA FACCHINI (Berkley)

In this paper, Bianca gathered and examined Fortunatus’ mentions of the literary practices of his day. He participates in very Roman activities such as creating a manuscript and sending it to an editor but is also influenced by non-Roman practices. He makes reference to Roman and Germanic writing techniques and materials, as well as musical instruments. When Fortunatus refers to the lack of lex and artes in Francia, he does so in a technical sense, as he is bearing witness to a non-classical literary tradition. Latin metrics as used by sixth- and seventh-century Merovingian authors were in a period of transition. However, in instances such as his use of Sapphic metre at Gregory of Tours’ request, and his use of Horace, Fortunatus shows his awareness of participating in a wider literary tradition. His poetry is a witness to continuity and change. The discontinuities can be seen in the influence of Germanic culture and the failure of metrics. Continuity is found in Fortunatus’ awareness of belonging to the Latin literary tradition. Questions and discussion afterwards focused on Carmen 9.7, parallels to Prudentius, and Gregory of Tours’ interest in poetry. An explanation for Bertram of Bordeaux’s mishandling of metrics was suggested and a final suggestion addressed the relationship between the language of the Eclogues and pastoral poetry.

‘FORTUNATUS ON POETRY AND SONG’

MICHAEL ROBERTS (Wesleyan)

The last paper of the conference addressed Fortunatus’ use of the vocabulary surrounding poetry and song, first turning to Fortunatus and the muses. In other Christian poets, the saints and Holy Spirit replace the muses, but Fortunatus never explicitly rejects them, though by this point a reference to the muses did not necessarily have mythological connotations. Musical instruments are another metonym for poetry and song. Fortunatus also refers to metaphors of metalwork, and in several places uses the metaphor of weaving. When he mentions sacred song, Fortunatus refers to actual vocal performance and may reflect real ceremonies. In places it seems that the poet anticipates performance of his work. Fortunatus uses traditional idioms of poetic self-reflection, such as springs, waters, weaving and seafaring; but he also invents new ones such as metalworking. He transforms the language of music and textiles with his expectations of live performance, to which many of his poems were well-suited. Questions and discussion focused on the poetry as a gift for ascetics; parallels with Sedulius, and whether Fortunatus’ poems were recited in the classical manner. Delegates also explored his references to the muses.
Though each of the papers was presented and discussed individually, connections stood out between them. The presence of such a wide range of specialists meant that discussion almost always included suggestions of parallels with other classical or late antique authors. Some themes of particular interest were:

- Many papers touched on the theme of appropriation and adaptation of classical literary culture by Christian authors. Christian authors might use the classical encyclopaedia for polemical purposes (Cribiore), they would have been educated in it (Williard, Hanaghan), and they would have worried about the compatibility of classical and Christian literary culture (Hanaghan). Some sixth-century authors were less worried about the presence of classical allusions because they were appropriate to the genre and audience of their text (Penella, de Lee). Furthermore, classical diction continued to have ambiguous meaning even within a Christianised context (LaFrance). We see sixth century authors such as Fortunatus continuing to use and reinvent classical metaphors (Roberts).

- Six out of the fifteen papers concerned the poetry of Venantius Fortunatus. The first of these (Williard) put Fortunatus in the context of sixth-century politics. The next two (McGill, Wheaton) were close analyses of particular poems. These suggest a need for an examination of Fortunatus as a theologian (Wheaton) and that the application of thing theory to Fortunatus’ works is useful (McGill). Delegates explored the persistence of classical idioms and their meanings in Fortunatus’ work (LaFrance) and the changes and continuities in Latin literature shown through his work (Facchini, Roberts). Though Fortunatus found a new cultural milieu in Gaul (Facchini), he continued to use classical metaphors and his works contain clues that they may have been performed (Roberts).

- Because several presenters spoke about single texts or authors, reasons for the writing or rewriting of these texts came up several times. The Liber Pontificalis may have been intended as a diplomatic gift (Westfall). Though the Pratum Spirituale was originally composed to please its readers, later editors and copyists inserted and deleted material for their own didactic purposes (de Lee). Fortunatus wrote six poems on the holy cross due to its arrival at the convent in Poitiers (McGill) and composed In laudem sanctae Mariae to promote correct Christian doctrine during his episcopate (Wheaton).

- In questions and discussion after every paper, allusions to other texts were suggested. A few of the papers dwelt on the interconnection of two texts. Maximianus’ fifth elegy shows the influence of medical knowledge, which could have come from a compilation of medical texts.
Writers incorporated citations from previous authors in order to demonstrate knowledge and learning for their audience (Hanaghan) or to address matters of concern to them and their audience, such as sexual ethics (Kiehl). Use of past literature was not just limited to direct quotation, since Agathias uses commentary on the fall of Troy to address the consequences of the sixth-century Byzantine wars (Smith). Furthermore, a broad range of classical learning could be deployed in an appropriate context, such as an oration for the building of church in the sixth-century east (Penella).

The call for papers asked presenters to address the interplay between East and West in the sixth century and this was a recurring theme throughout the conference. Maximianus’ knowledge of Greek medical texts could have come through a western source—a compilation of medical texts, excerpted and translated in North Africa or an eastern source, like a Byzantine doctor or diplomat (Fielding and Das). Venantius Fortunatus’ early life was affected by political and military developments caused by the Byzantine and the Franks (Williard). These political and military developments played out the way they did because of the ideological and geographic distance between east and west; Procopius’ comparison of eastern and western figures suggests ways in which things could have turned out very differently (Pazdernik). However, connections between east and west continued when books were sent as gifts (Westfall).

Participants would like to thank the organisers, and especially Professor Joseph Pucci, for putting together and hosting such an excellent gathering. We look forward to next year’s meeting.
Scholars, especially students, have few resources or tools available to study Caroline minuscule, especially in its regional manifestations, beyond several seminal but increasingly out-of-date and out-of-print works. Dialogue between the historians, art historians, and linguists working with this script is impeded by distance and language barriers. There is currently no means of knowing the current state of research, no specialized forum for the discussion of the script.

Yet it is a propitious time for advancing the study of Caroline minuscule. The third volume of Bernhard Bischoff’s catalogue of ninth-century manuscripts is soon to be published. Digitisation and open-access efforts across the globe have provided new opportunities for research, as scholars no longer need to obtain isolated palaeographical samples from microfilm or rare publications in order to teach and study the script. And the possibilities provided by online publication and networking are considerable.

For this reason, we have formed the new Network for the Study of Caroline Minuscule, aimed at research students and established scholars directly interested in the joint study of Caroline minuscule and in developing new tools and approaches for working with the script. Our website (carolinenetwork.weebly.com) will maintain a free mailing list and current database of scholars.
interested in the topic, as well as their research interests and contact details, to facilitate networking. Those interested in joining the Network may provide their details by visiting the ‘Contact us’ page. The website will soon provide a more permanent base of information regarding new projects coordinated between members, such as *Littera Carolina*: a forthcoming bibliographical guide to the varieties of Caroline minuscule, the most distinctive features of particular Carolingian scriptoria, and a summary catalogue of manuscripts that scholars have associated with these scriptoria. The guide intends to collect information now scattered in dozens of rare publications.

We recognize, however, that online networking and publications cannot replace the rich conversations that develop in person. The *Network for the Study of Caroline Minuscule* thus aims to bring together an international body of scholars to address all aspects of the script. Our multilingual international colloquium will be held for the first time in Cambridge, UK, 23 May 2014, and annually thereafter, acting as a springboard for the more permanent network represented by the website and members list. The full Call for Papers is available on our website, but an abbreviated version follows below.

Our first colloquium marks the imminent publication of the final volume of Bernhard Bischoff’s *‘Katalog der festländischen Handschriften des neunten Jahrhunderts’*. A welcome address at the Cambridge University Library will be given by Rosamond McKitterick, Professor of Medieval History. The colloquium will address the current state of research on Caroline minuscule from the late eighth to the tenth centuries and explore questions related to studying the script today, including but not limited to:

- the emergence and development of Caroline minuscule and its varieties
- peculiar features of script or style in certain manuscripts or groups of manuscripts
- comparisons between different codices, regions, scriptoria or scribes
- proposals for new palaeographical tools, methods or terminology
- the means and challenges of dating and localizing manuscripts written in Caroline minuscule
- opportunities for the palaeography of Caroline minuscule in the digital age
- useful but neglected aspects of Bischoff’s research

Paper proposals are now open. These should be sent to Anna Dorofeeva (ad529@cam.ac.uk) or Zachary Guiliano (zmg20@cam.ac.uk) as PDFs of c. 500 words, together with a brief CV (one A4 page). The deadline is 31 March but early submission is strongly encouraged. Small bursaries may be available for travel and accommodation expenses, and responses from postgraduates and in languages other than English are especially welcome.
More news and details about both the Network and the colloquium will follow during the course of 2014. Please bookmark our website, join our Facebook group, and fill in our contact form to join the members roll and official mailing list. If you own a site, blog, Twitter account, or Facebook page dedicated to the Early Middle Ages, please link to us. Send us your information as well, and we will add it to our website.
Interview with James Palmer

Richard Broome and Tim Barnwell

Dr James Palmer is a Lecturer in Medieval History at the University of St Andrews. He obtained his PhD from the University of Sheffield in 2004 under the supervision of Prof. Sarah Foot, before taking up his first lectureship at the University of Leicester in 2005 and then holding a Leverhulme Early Career Fellowship at the University of Nottingham in 2006-7. He has published articles on a variety of subjects, ranging from the missionaries of the eighth and ninth centuries to the understanding of time in the Early Middle Ages. His first monograph – Anglo-Saxons in a Frankish World, 690-900 – was published by Brepols in 2009, and his second – The Apocalypse in the Early Middle Ages – will be published soon. We decided to talk to him about his research and about his thoughts on academia more generally.

NETWORKS & NEIGHBOURS (N&N): HOW DID YOU COME TO STUDY EARLY MEDIEVAL HISTORY?

James Palmer (JP): By pure accident. I was really interested in the twelfth century and I’d been intending to do a Special Subject on the ‘Anarchy’ of King Stephen’s reign but the convenor went on research leave, and my second choice was Sarah Foot’s ‘The Age of the Vikings’. That got me interested in the ninth century, so I went to Cambridge to study with Rosamond McKitterick for my MA, looking at things that hadn’t been covered in the Special Subject course, especially hagiography, and the Life of Anskar in particular.

N&N: WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE SOURCE?

JP: My current favourite source (because of course it keeps changing) is the Revelation of Pseudo-
Networks and Neighbours

Methodius – a late-seventh century Syriac text which was translated into Greek and then into Latin in the eighth century – just because of its exciting use of apocalyptic prophecy to provide a moralising interpretation of the Arab Conquests designed not to demonise Muslims but to condemn Christians for their lax behaviour. And studying how it spreads around Europe in three very different contexts; it’s amazing. People think in the Early Middle Ages people didn’t really travel very much and peasants had no sense of the horizons outside their own village, so it’s really fascinating to see a truly international text with genuinely interesting things to say.

N&N: DO YOU SEE SUCH A THING AS A DISTINCTLY EARLY MEDIEVAL MISSIONARY IDEAL OR IDEOLOGY?

JP: I’m not sure about a distinctly early medieval ideology, but what you do get in the early Middle Ages is a cluster of ideas about mission which are notably different in quality and quantity to what had come before in the Roman Empire. This is the classic way of describing the situation but it seems to be true. We tend to begin the Middle Ages by looking at Gregory of Tours and saying he wasn’t very interested in mission: well of course he wasn’t. He was living in a former Gallo-Roman province that had been Christian for hundreds of years; there were no pagans to go out and convert – there were some Jews down the road, but you could largely ignore those. What you get by the end of the seventh century is a different kind of religious agitation, partly influenced by interactions with Irish and English monks on the continent who didn’t have the long-established idea about the Roman Empire ending at the Rhine, and so they continued on. This was also supposedly inspired by the classic idea of Germanic kin groups. But essentially what is very interesting is the arrival of social outsiders: you get very few Franks wanting to go out and convert their neighbours, so the arrival of outsiders arriving in the Rhineland and wanting to convert its inhabitants is important: it changes the cultural dynamics. At the same time, that’s an interpretation that relies on not reading any Merovingian hagiography. The Merovingian hagiographical tradition about the conversion of Gaul is built on the idea of people coming from far away and building churches. This is in all the major martyr stories: Saints Crispin and Crispinian of Soissons, Saint Dionysius; these are outsiders who convert people, just like the Irish and English. So the story is universal, and it takes certain social circumstances to activate it, that’s why people are interested in this: it’s watching the universal become localised.

N&N: SO IF THAT’S HOW EARLY MEDIEVAL MISSIONARY IDEOLOGY GOT GOING, DO YOU THINK THERE WAS A POINT WHEN IT CAME TO AN END, OR SHIFTED INTO A DIFFERENT KIND OF IDEOLOGY?

JP: One of the interesting things about Christianity in the second half of the first millennium is that it’s subject to a number of different ways of thinking about things at the same time, and people are looking for role models. An interesting thing that happens in the ninth century with the conversion of Saxony is the competition between the cults of Saint Alexander and Saint Willehad. When Adam
of Bremen was looking back on this [in the eleventh century] he said that Anskar wrote the *Miracles* to defend the reputation of Bremen against the foreign saint, Alexander. So there are clearly people who aren’t really interested in missionary work, but are interested in the Classical tradition, the more ‘urban’ form of religion, and sometimes this has a stronger cultural influence.

There are also practical limits related to money and organisation, and that’s what the diocese of Hamburg-Bremen gets stuck with: they are a long way from anyone who has money and resources, which they need. Although they don’t do too badly in the grand scheme of things, they could hardly control the whole of Scandinavia, which, in their imagination, they would like to. You can already see these practical limitations at the start of the ninth century, when Charlemagne and Louis the Pious decide not to invade Denmark, and instead just try to influence it from outside. It takes too many resources to impose an infrastructure: Saxony had been a difficult region for them to deal with because the Saxons had little in the way of pre-existing civic structures, so they had to almost invent it as they were going along and this becomes harder the further away you get. It’s also a very long process. So, you get this exciting burst of expansion followed by a period of consolidation that tails off during the ninth century. But then you get another burst in the late tenth century and into the eleventh century: what you’re looking at is a kind of pulsing. Whether the ideology had changed is difficult to say, but the tenth- and eleventh-century missionaries were inspired by exactly the same martyrs who inspired the eighth-century missionaries, as well as by those earlier missionaries. So it that sense it really is a continuous movement.

**N&N: HOW SIGNIFICANT WERE THE ANGLO-SAXONS IN CONTINENTAL MISSIONARY WORK?**

**JP:** The most important aspect of the work of the Anglo-Saxon missionaries on the continent was in creating an imagined social group. It has been argued by many scholars that the places the missionaries turned up to were already Christian or being worked in by the Irish: so what did the Anglo-Saxons actually do? Well, they became the figureheads, the names that people remember. Part of this is just because Boniface had such a long career and was so charismatic. The same must have been true for Willibrord, although we have less information about him, but he’s probably one of the biggest land-owning aristocrats in northern Europe by the time he dies, with land that crosses all sorts of political divides: he’s a big political player. Who had a bigger impact, these two institutional men, or the Irish, who built few if any churches, may have converted some people, and probably died in fields while no one was looking? It’s the building of infrastructure and the development of a hagiographical tradition that almost always has to follow the infrastructure that creates the legend, and once you’ve built the legend you want to add more stories. It may take another two centuries before you get a *Life of Burchard* [a disciple of Boniface], but someone eventually wants to write a *Life* of Burchard of Würzburg, and another hundred years later someone wants to write a *Life of Lull* [Boniface’s successor as bishop of Mainz]. People are looking back and writing new *Lives*, or rewriting old ones that don’t make sense anymore. Boniface himself mattered enough that people are continually writing and rewriting *Lives* about him, all the way
through the Middle Ages. This is the real importance of the Anglo-Saxons.

**N&N:** **How do you envisage the Christianisation process? Is it something that’s quite rapid, or is it slow? What social classes and groups are involved? What are these missionaries actually facilitating?**

**JP:** Any given moment of interaction is going to be different because of the political and social circumstances, but the overall process of Christianisation must have been quite similar. Take the *Indiculus superstitionum*, for example, a list of supposed pagan practices apparently to be discussed at a church council, but we have no idea how much this list represents the reality or whether the missionaries had just made things up. And this was written in an area that hadn’t suddenly converted, it had probably had a slow trickle of Christian influence over centuries. Take the conversion of Frisia; this was not a linear process where they started with no Christianity and gradually got more and more: there were times when the Frisians had priests and times when they didn’t. Christianisation is incredibly haphazard. So many of the sources we have are from after the event. Canon law collections and sermons may be helpful, but we have no way of knowing what was preached during the conversion process or how much of the legislation was paranoid fantasy or based on older texts compared to what the missionaries were actually experiencing.

**N&N:** **Where do missionaries fit into the overall Christianisation/conversion process(es) in Early Medieval Europe? How important were they?**

**JP:** Sometimes it can be difficult to identify whether an individual was a missionary or not, and Ian Wood touched on this in *The Missionary Life* when he said that it’s often difficult to identify missionary hagiography: the two problems are related. You get people like Anskar who are identified as ‘missionary bishops’. What this really means is they spent most of their time actually performing the day-to-day activities associated with being a bishop, especially preaching and baptism, but sometimes they directed this at pagans rather than Christians. Being a missionary was not always clearly defined in the early medieval period, compared to modern missions associated with evangelical movements, where there is a more definite sense of ‘being on a mission’. Tim Reuter made a very interesting point about Boniface as a missionary and Boniface as a reformer, that it’s really all part of the same process; Boniface is just making sure that the people around him are being good Christians, and that’s his primary objective, that’s how he sees what he does.

**N&N:** **What were the connections between missionary work and missionary literature and apocalyptic and eschatological ideas (in the Early Middle Ages, but also in your work and thought)?**

**JP:** The reason I got from looking at hagiography to looking at apocalyptic literature is I was thinking about models of time in the Early Middle Ages, and especially the work that had been done on calendars and the veneration of saints in the Carolingian period. But in job interviews people
asked how I would teach this to students and I answered that I would teach a course on ‘the end of the world’, which seemed to make sense at the time. One of the interesting texts in this area is Bede’s *On the Reckoning of Time*, which begins with a description of how time works, and different cultures and ways of keeping time: there’s Nature’s Law, Salvation History, stuff like the Olympics, but by the end Bede is talking about how the only two sure ways of recognising the end of the world are the conversion of the Jews and the coming of Antichrist. He’s clearly been having arguments with other monks in the monastery about whether you can predict the end of the world or not and which chronological traditions to follow, and some of them had accused him of being a heretic. Anyone who looks at early medieval missionary work uses Bede, and once you start looking through his other works a sort of natural progression leads you to the *Reckoning of Time*. That’s how I got from A to B, but how did they [in the Early Middle Ages] get from A to B? Well the Gospel says preach unto the ends of the earth and then the consummation of the world will come, so mission is an apocalyptic movement from the word go. The Carolingian author Paschasius Radbertus pointed out in exegesis that the building of churches in Scandinavia is fulfilment of that, and then goes on to say that we don’t have to convert all peoples, we just have to preach to them, to do the structural stuff in preparation for the end. You can always find apocalyptic ideas on the peripheries of missionary movements: even Columbanus had talked about the need to be prepared and to be proactive in Christianity because the end of the world is coming. When Pope Gregory the Great wrote to Aethelbert of Kent, he mentioned the coming of the end of the world, but also the idea that part of being a good leader was inspiring terror in one’s subjects, and the end of the world was one of the ways of doing this: it was part of Gregory’s preaching strategy. It’s quite clear that the important thing about eschatological ideas in the Early Middle Ages isn’t that people were acting like the cults in barns in the modern USA. Christ said the end of the world is coming, so it’s not crazy for them to believe that, but what they don’t do is predict when it’s coming; instead they prepare themselves for it. The only way to complete Church reform was for the world to end, and missionary work was part of this, so missionaries were tied up in eschatology from the beginning: Columbanus and Gregory were both eschatological thinkers in their own ways, and the missionaries in Scandinavia were not unaware of this either, as we can see from the ambiguous language in Rimbert’s *Life of Anskar*. It’s not that they thought they were bringing about the end of the world, but they are preparing as many people as possible for Judgement, because that’s the end goal of being Christian, to be judged on Judgement Day, then you can ‘go home’ to Jerusalem.

**N&N: HOW PREVALENT WERE ESCHATOLOGICAL IDEAS IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES?**

**JP:** In terms of eschatology, in terms of believing there will be an end, it’s absolutely prevalent: it’s front and centre of Christ’s message. There are so many texts about it, so many people are talking about it and it’s a common motivating strategy that a lot of authors use. It’s very convenient to think cynically about all those kings and emperors who do things to ensure succession or memory like founding monasteries for their own benefit, but really they’re thinking about their own
mortality. They’re terrified they might be going to hell, and the best thing they can do is pour their money into churches because they’re going to be judged. So much of Christianity is eschatological because it’s predicated on the idea of being judged eventually; everyone must have been thinking about it. The idea of being judged keeps coming up, from Augustine of Hippo and Caesarius of Arles right through the Middle Ages. There are also visions of the afterlife, particularly prevalent in the ninth century, and while Paul Dutton is right to say a lot of this is displaced political commentary, it all comes back to apocalyptic thought. Unfortunately there is little debate about this among modern scholars; everyone either thinks medieval people believed the end of the world was about to happen and predicted it, or they didn’t believe in it at all. There is a famous example of Wolfram Brandes having an article refused by *Deutsches Archiv* (I think) because the editor didn’t think that Charlemagne would have had anything to do with eschatological thought. Clearly Charlemagne wasn’t predicting the end of the world, but that doesn’t mean he wasn’t aware of eschatology. People weren’t predicting the end of the world, they were just preparing for it. At the end of the *Reckoning of Time*, Bede says (based on Augustine) don’t think the end of the world is going to happen soon because you will be disappointed if it doesn’t, just be prepared that it is going to come eventually. That’s the defining apocalyptic thought in the period.

**N&N:** You’ve written about pagans and paganism as the ‘Other’ in the Christian regions of early medieval Europe. To what extent do you think that an early medieval author would be willing, or even able, to distinguish between different groups of ‘Others’ (for instance, between pagans in Saxony and Muslims in Spain, or between different groups in Scandinavia)?

**JP:** This distinction can be seen clearly in the *Continuations of the Chronicle of Fredegar*, where the continuator clearly distinguishes between the pagan Saxons, who are ferocious and badly behaved – as normal – and the Muslims, who he says are called Saracens through a corruption of the term Ishmaelites. With the latter, he’s not sure whether they’re heretics, and by calling them Saracens he implies they might be a political group even though they’re not, and they’re not pagans, but they have a different theology and way of viewing the universe to Christians. Christian authors don’t really understand Islam, but they do understand that it’s not paganism, nor is it Christianity or Judaism either, and they make a contrast. Just by calling them Saracens and Ishmaelites shows that these authors knew what they were talking about. But why were there no missions to Spain? It must be because this was a relatively harmonious environment where Christianity and belief in Christ were accepted, although this changes in the ninth century with the veneration of the martyrs of Córdoba and the idea that good Christians are those who disrupt the harmony between religions. But at the time it was the local bishop, Reccafred, who had the martyrs arrested, so there was clearly collaboration between the episcopate and the caliphate to stop the disruptive elements. There was an understanding, and clearly Islam represents a very different kind of ‘Other’ to paganism. And Jews are different again. The way they are treated in conciliar legislation and polemic is much closer...
to the way one would treat heretics. But pagans and Muslims share a related space, even if the latter are dark, mysterious, and northern while the former are strangely cultured, whereas the Jews are sinister but unarmed, and that’s a crucial difference. There was an idea that the Christian Church was surrounded on all four sides by pagans, Muslims, Jews and false Christians so there was a clear typology, and a repertoire of language that went with each of these groups. Pagans are from the north and likely to invade, Muslims might invade but no one is really sure, but Jews and heretics represent more a cultural threat through social infiltration than a political threat. Pseudo-Methodius says the Muslims will invade but will be beaten back by the Christians, but this will awaken the peoples of the north, so they are clearly different groups. It’s not just ‘Us and Them’. There will also be different regional responses: Spain is more concerned with Jews, because they actually have them; people in northern Germany aren’t particularly concerned about Muslims, because there aren’t any; people in Italy aren’t particularly concerned about pagans, because there aren’t any. People on the Mediterranean who have a long Roman-Christian tradition would have a different response to the ‘most pagan’ Saxons than would a Thuringian who encounters Saxon traders on a regular basis.

N&N: IN THINKING ABOUT THE ‘OTHER’ YOU’RE DEALING A VOCABULARY AND APPROACH WHICH HAS ITS ORIGINS OUTSIDE THE DISCIPLINE OF HISTORY IN PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY, AND WHICH HAS NOW BEEN TAKEN UP ACROSS THE ARTS AND HUMANITIES AS WELL AS PARTS OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES. TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU FEEL THAT HISTORIANS OUGHT TO BE ENGAGING WITH THEORIES AND METHODOLOGIES ORIGINATING OUTSIDE OF THEIR OWN DISCIPLINE?

JP: What you should never expect is that reading some philosophy or anthropology will give you ‘the answers’, but it might give you nice questions. What I think has been useful in thinking about Otherness, and in thinking about identity – these ideas go together – is that everyone is interested in identity and identity formation; there is no ‘in-group’ without an ‘out-group’. So looking at different ways of conceptualising Otherness allows us to shape different ways of thinking about the issue. It is important, and we need to have discussions with other disciplines. For example, Fenella Cannell’s Anthropology of Christianity recommends reading Peter Brown and Averil Cameron to allow anthropologists to think about new ways of approaching their discipline. By talking to people in other disciplines we can find new questions that we are not yet asking, which opens up whole new ways of studying our own discipline.

N&N: WHAT IS YOUR APPROACH TO TEACHING/PEDAGOGY?

JP: I have always tried to engage the students; certainly in small-scale classes teaching has to be more of a conversation. It’s about finding ways of encouraging people to talk; a lot of teaching is about making people feel more relaxed about taking on ideas, and there are lots of different ways to do this, whether it be breaking the class down into smaller groups, or asking everyone to prepare
some answers to questions on a set text for the following week. But it becomes easier as you get older: teaching becomes more like having a chat and less like having a check-list of ‘facts’ you have to impart to the group. It can be useful to just see where a conversation goes: students feel more empowered if they have the freedom to raise points you haven’t addressed. This allows them to feel their tutorial was unique, but it also helps them to prepare for things like research because it helps them get better at framing questions and breaking down arguments. There also has to be some emphasis on the transferable skills: presentations for example, encouraging them to think about different ways of presenting information and developing strategies of how to talk about anything – it doesn’t have to be medieval history – strategies they can take elsewhere.

**N&N: WHAT DO YOU FEEL THE STUDY OF THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES ADDS TO A FACULTY, UNIVERSITY OR, INDEED, HIGHER EDUCATION AS A WHOLE?**

**JP:** I think all history is equally valid as a subject, but what is unique about early medieval history that provides interesting challenges is the fragmentary nature of much of the evidence, which calls for people to make coherent judgements. That’s a different kind of skill to what you need when studying the twentieth century, where you have all this documentation and people writing voluminous biographies. We just don’t have that. But actually people are surprised by how much we do have. Even just working on the ninth century, for example: that’s a lot of material right there. So there is a distinctive challenge to studying the Early Middle Ages within the discipline of history. And a slightly more political way of looking at it is that people like to know about origins, and that’s what we’re dealing with in a way. It’s the period of history where Europe stops looking like the Roman Empire and starts to look more like a Europe with countries rather than just a line down the Rhine and the Danube. We have Christianity spreading everywhere, but also the breakdown of a literate Latin society and the emergence of vernacular languages: that’s a huge cultural shift in Europe’s history. This all happens within a couple of hundred years, in the period in which we’re interested. It’s important for students to learn about that, and it’s good for them to learn about that, especially in Scotland at the moment with debates about ‘what is Scotland?’.

**N&N: WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF OPEN ACCESS AND ITS ROLE IN THE FUTURE OF PUBLISHING AND ACADEMIA?**

**JP:** I think Open Access is potentially quite liberating in many respects for the way that research and publication and the dissemination of ideas can work. Just thinking in terms of blogs and similar types of websites; if I’ve written something, I can get it up online and get feedback instantly, and that’s great. It would be nice to have more peer-reviewing, but on the other hand, intellectual exchange still happens, historians respond to each other’s blogs. I think when we start to have a problem is when OA has to fit onto existing publishing models. That’s an issue, because it’s taking a twenty-first-century idea and saying we’re going to shackle it to sixteenth-century technology. Publishers charge scholars to have their work published and then charge the universities to get
access to it, so it becomes more expensive for the taxpayer to get something they should be getting for free. The business model that’s being proposed for OA is terrible, especially with the idea of shackling it to REF in the future, the idea that only research that has been paid for is quality research: that’s nonsense. We’re being asked to think creatively, but really people don’t want us to think creatively when there’s still a profit margin. But this just isn’t a sustainable model in the long term, and it has to change. So, OA: potentially very liberating, but currently handled very poorly.
Reading beyond borders is, in theory, a methodology admired by early medieval scholars and considered when performing research, but to what extent, we ask, is comparative history a reality in early medieval scholarship? Furthermore, should we pursue this line of thinking, reading, writing and teaching? What are the potential benefits structurally? What new historical representations will emerge from a sustained, earnest attempt at comparing the physical artifacts, mental archaeology and socio-/geo-graphical landscapes of early medieval minds, places, connections and/or neighbourhoods? This issue engages these questions and provides important reflective sites and positions for further research in this direction, as we continue to explore how immediate and near realities performed in the functioning of wider topographies...and in fact if they ever really did, or if we’ve taken on too much of the cheese and the worms.