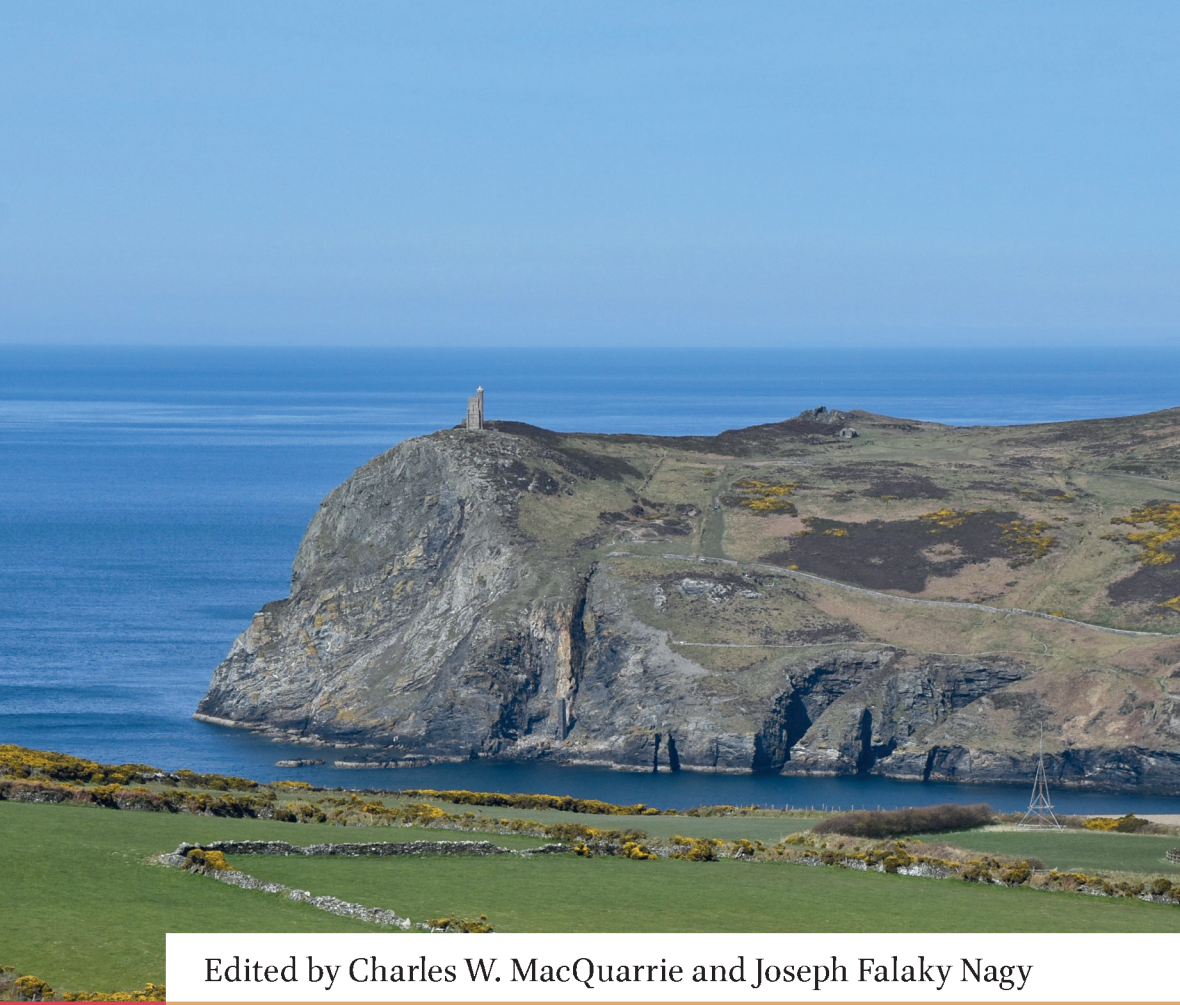


Edited by Charles W. MacQuarrie and Joseph Falaky Nagy

The Medieval Cultures of the Irish Sea and the North Sea

Manannán and his Neighbors

ROUTLEDGE

The Medieval Cultures of the Irish Sea and the North Sea



Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

The Medieval Cultures of the Irish Sea and the North Sea

Manannán and His Neighbors

Edited by
Charles W. MacQuarrie and Joseph Falaky Nagy

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published in 2019 by Amsterdam University Press Ltd.

Published 2025 by Routledge
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© C.W. MacQuarrie and J.F. Nagy / Taylor & Francis Group 2019

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

ISBN: 9789462989399 (hbk)
ISBN: 9781041188483 (pbk)
ISBN: 9781003706953 (ebk)
NUR 684

Cover illustration: Bradda Head, Port Erin Bay, on the southwest coast of the Isle of Man (photo, with permission, by Peter Killey)

Cover design: Coördesign, Leiden

DOI: 10.5117/9789462989399

Every effort has been made to obtain permission to use all copyrighted illustrations reproduced in this book. Nonetheless, whosoever believes to have rights to this material is advised to contact the publisher.

For Product Safety Concerns and Information please contact our EU representative:
GPSR@taylorandfrancis.com
Taylor & Francis Verlag GmbH, Kaufingerstraße 24, 80331 München, Germany

Table of Contents

Preface 9

Introduction 11
Manannán and His Neighbors
Charles W. MacQuarrie

1. Hiberno-Manx Coins in the Irish Sea 17
Helen Davies

2. Hunferth and Incitement in *Beowulf* 37
M. Wendy Hennequin

3. Cú Chulainn Unbound 59
Ron J. Popenhagen

4. Ragnhild Eiríksdóttir 79
Cross-cultural Sovereignty Motifs and Anti-feminist Rhetoric in Chapter 9 of *Orkneyinga saga*
Brian Cook

5. Statius' Dynamic Absence in the Narrative Frame of the Middle Irish *Togail na Tebe* 99
Stephen Kershner

6. The Stanley Family and the Gawain Texts of the Percy Folio 123
Rhonda Knight

7. Ancient Myths for the Modern Nation 143
Seamus Heaney's *Beowulf*
Maria McGarrity

8. Kohlberg Explains Cú Chulainn 159
Developing Moral Judgment from Bully to Boy Wonder to Brave Warrior
Ethel B. Bowden

9. Language Death and Language Revival 183
Contrasting Manx and Texas German
Marc Pierce

Index 207

List of Illustrations

Map of the Irish Sea and Northern Sea Area *c.* 1000–1200 CE 7
Figure 1 Glenfaba hoard 27
Figure 2 Hiberno-Manx coin, reverse 28
Figure 3 Hiberno-Manx coin, obverse 28
Figure 4 Stanley family tree 140

Map of the Irish Sea and Northern Sea Area *c.* 1000–1200 CE





Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

Preface

This book derives from a 2015 Summer Seminar for University Professors, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities of Washington, D.C. The seminar commenced on June 8 in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and ended on July 12, in Glasgow, Scotland, after an extended stay in Douglas on the Isle of Man. The co-editors of this volume, who were also the co-directors of the seminar, are forever indebted to the extraordinary participants, our colleagues and friends, whose research projects, presentations, and contributions to the lively and provocative discussions helped to make the experience so memorable and productive. In addition to the authors of the essays included herein, those participants included Kay J. Blalock, Tracey Cooper, Emily C. Cox, Donna E. Crawford, Sandy Feinstein, Leslie Jacoby, and Jeff A. Rudy. Thank you all!

We are also grateful to the NEH itself, especially Doug Arnold and Rebecca Boggs, as well as to our gracious hosts and invited seminar speakers—Thomas Clancy, Peter Davey, Jennifer Kewley-Draskau, James P. Mallory, Gregory Toner, Sir David Wilson, and M. Joseph Wolf—and to our redoubtable administrative coordinator, Milissa Ackerly. Special thanks to the indispensable Andrea Weikel, who completed the final accounting on the grant. We would also like to acknowledge the Centre for Manx Studies, formerly a research unit of the University of Liverpool; the Manx National Heritage and the Isle of Man Museums, for letting the members of the seminar use their facilities and resources, for providing photographs of items from their remarkable archaeological collection for our publication, and for permitting us to quote extracts from the Manx Folk-Life Survey Archive; the Royal Overseas League in Edinburgh; Strathmillis College in Belfast; and the University of Glasgow. This grateful acknowledgment extends to Peter Killey, who has allowed us to use his beautiful photograph on the cover.

Of course, our heartfelt gratitude goes out in a special way to the Amsterdam University Press, in particular Erin Dailey (who, in addition to all his editorial assistance, so expertly designed a map for us), Lucia Dove, and Chantal Nicolaes. Without the guidance, wisdom, and faith in the project with which they honored us, our book could not have become a reality.

Charles W. MacQuarrie
Joseph Falaky Nagy



Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

Introduction

Manannán and His Neighbors

Charles W. MacQuarrie

Keywords: Manannán, kingship of Man, Anglesey, Lordship of the Isles, *Cronica Regum Manniæ et Insularum*, linguistic microcosm

The Isle of Man occupied a place both central and peripheral in the history of the North Atlantic. Because of its location it was, no doubt, central to the sea trade routes in and around the Irish Sea region already in the prehistorical period, and in the medieval period it played an important role in the politics of Ireland, England, Wales, and Scotland, and was by 1000 CE an important seat of Scandinavian power. Later, in a related development, Somerled Macgilbred, the first Lord of the Isles, seized the Hebrides from the King of Man, and took the title King of the Hebrides and King of Man, although the Lordship of the Isles never actually included the Isle of Man.[1] Before and after its domination by the Norse, Man clearly was a place known to and settled by speakers of Celtic languages, from both sides of the Irish Sea. For example, in an anecdote told in the late Old Irish text known as "Cormac's Glossary" (*Sanas Cormaic*, dated to the late first millennium CE), the island appears as a place of exile for a lost-and-found poetess, as well as a base of mercantile operations, inhabited by Manannán mac Lir, believed by the pagan Irish to have been a god, but who was in fact, according to the author, a successful merchant and seaman.[2] An Irish Sea Shangri-La or Bali Hai of

1 Rosemary Power, "The Isle of Man and the Kings of Norway: Magnús Barelegs and After," in *A New History of the Isle of Man*, vol. 3*: The Medieval Period 1000–1406*, ed. Seán Duffy and Harold Mytum (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), 27–57.

2 Alongside an introduction to the text, the relevant passages are translated and discussed by Paul Russell in "Poets, Power and Possessions in Medieval Ireland: Some Stories from *Sanas Cormaic*," in *Law, Literature and Society*, ed. Joseph F. Eska, CSANA Yearbook 7 (Dublin: Four Courts, 2008), 9–45.

MacQuarrie, Charles W. and Joseph Falaky Nagy (eds), *The Medieval Cultures of the Irish Sea and the North Sea. Manannán and His Neighbors*. Taylor & Francis Group, 2019
DOI: 10.5117/9789462989399/INTRO

sorts, Man seems to have held a significant place in the mythology of the Irish and to have been associated with the supernatural via its connection with the ubiquitous Manannán, who in later folklore is said to protect the island by shrouding it in mist.[3]

Its mysterious protector notwithstanding, Man, as the historian Sir David Wilson has pointed out, did fall prey to the vicissitudes of history, undergoing various economic undulations.[4] While there was a significant amount of commerce involving the island during the Lordship of the Isles—tellingly, a mint was established there already *c.* 1025[5]—and it served as a waypoint for Scandinavian trade from Dublin up through the Irish Sea into the North Sea, after the coming of English rule *c.* 1400 the Isle of Man suffered a significant economic decline, changing from a trade-based to a largely self-sustaining agrarian economy.[6] Over time it alternated between being a thriving place of promise and one of poverty and isolation. Rosemary Power notes that the island was the site of legendary figures, and medieval accounts of deeds from the heroic past seem to represent it, in the Old Norse *Orkneyinga saga* (*c.* 1200) and other sagas, as "the extremity of the known world."[7]

Already mentioned above was the island's centrality at one time to the political hegemony of the Lordship of the Isles in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries CE. It was at the yearly Tynwald (a traditional assembly still held on the island) that the "keys of Man" came together, that is, the representatives of the various groups from Iona to the Shetlands who were voting members of the confederation centered on the Lordship.[8] And yet Man was also viewed in some premodern sources as a distant island, unsettled, and rebarbative, whose few inhabitants were both disturbingly recherché and yet poetically, magically powerful. Even though the "Mona" mentioned by Tacitus as the

3 For a more extensive discussion of this topic see Charles MacQuarrie, "The Isle of Man in Early Irish Literature," *Celtic Culture: A Historical Encyclopedia*, 5 vols, ed. John T. Koch (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2005), 1: 377–79, and "The Isle of Man in Medieval Gaelic Literature," in Duffy and Mytum, *New History*, 281–304.

4 David Wilson, "Introduction—Setting the Scene: Man at the Turn of the Millenium," in Duffy and Mytum, *New History*, 1–8.

5 Wilson, "Introduction," 2 and 5; Benjamin Hudson, "The Isle of Man in a European Context," in Duffy and Mytum, *New History*, 187–209, at 194–96; David Ditchburn and Benjamin Hudson "Economy and Trade in Medieval Man," in Duffy and Mytum, *New History*, 377–410, at 396; Kristin Bornholdt Collins "Coinage," Duffy and Mytum, *New History*, 411–65, at 412, 423, 425, 427–23, 440.

6 Power, "Isle of Man and the Kings of Norway," 49–50.

7 Power, "Isle of Man and the Kings of Norway," 29.

8 Ruth Constain-Russell, "The Reigns of Guthröthr and Rögnvaldr, 1153–1229," in Duffy and Mytum, *New History*, 78–96, at 78.

home base of druids and druidism is presumed by scholars to be Anglesey, as we shall discuss presently Man and Anglesey are closely connected in the Classical imagination. Man, the traditional residence of the figure Manannán mac Lir who in Irish sources is sometimes said to be the king of the supernatural Túatha Dé Danann, has plenty of otherworldly cachet.[9] Writing about the land assessments and divisions of Man and their connections to Welsh, Irish, Scottish, and English models, Gareth Williams points out that one of the most solid transmarine connections in the pre-Norse history of the Isle of Man was its connection with the Welsh dynasty of the kingdom of Gwynedd (northwestern Wales), of which Anglesey was an important part. He further observes that Anglesey and the Isle of Man are thought of as a pair by Bede and other early authors.[10] Man, far more so than Anglesey, is cast in some medieval Irish sources as the sanctuary or place of exile for visionary poets as well as a prison and place of exile (something in between Australia and Alcatraz) for aristocratic political prisoners.[11]

The oxymoronic nature of the island, like that of its most famous resident Manannán himself, is sometimes sweet and at other times sour, or calm and then stormy, a contrast mirrored in the bifurcated realms of the religious and the secular, as important on the Island as they were throughout medieval Europe. One of the few medieval sources thought to have been written on the Isle of Man, the *Cronica Regum Manniæ et Insularum* (*Chronicles of the Kings of Man and the Isles*), which covers the period from *c.* 1000 to 1316 CE, gives us only a few details about the life, language, and culture of the everyday people of the Island in those times. Primarily dealing with matters pertaining to the Viking ruler Magnus, son of Olaf, during whose reign (*c.* 1250–65) the bulk of it was probably recorded, the *Cronica* also gives us details about various

9 The Túatha Dé Danann are one of the mythological populations said to have preceded the Irish on the island in some of our medieval Irish sources. In some (later medieval) texts, such as *Altram Tige Dá Medhar* (The nourishing of the house of the two milk-pails), Manannán mac Lir is described as the king of the Túatha Dé Danann. They were thought to live in an otherworld which is often imagined to be underground, sometimes thought to be under or over the sea, and is putatively connected to the Isle of Man, which is sometimes identified as Emain Abhlach ("the Plain of Apples") and may be connected to magical Avalon from Arthurian tradition. See Charles MacQuarrie, *The Biography of the Irish God of the Sea from the Voyage of Bran* (*c.700 A.D.*) *to Finnegans Wake* (*1939*)*: The Waves of Manannán mac Lir* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2004), 9–11 and 333–35. See also MacQuarrie, "Isle of Man in Early Irish Literature," 377–79.

10 Gareth Williams, "The System of Land Division and Assessment," in Duffy and Mytum, *New History*, 466–83, at 476.

11 Occluded residents of the island include the female poetess mentioned as living there in *Sanas Cormaic* (see above). The Isle of Man is also the place where the legendary lovers of the medieval Irish Ulster cycle, Deirdriu and Noísiu, spend part of their exile—see note 2 and 9 above, MacQuarrie, *Biography*, 223–27.

other kings and monks, with its interest seemingly centered on Rushen Abbey.[12] Indeed, as Peter Davey observes, the monks were perhaps even more interesting to the anonymous chronicler than the monarchs. While eremitically inclined holy men from Ireland, Wales, and Scotland no doubt had used the island as a place of ascetic isolation from the early Middle Ages on, by 1130 a more elaborate monastic system was being established on Man, partly at the behest of the kings of Man, who in their backgrounds reflected the fusion of Gaelic and Norse populations in Ireland and Scotland.[13]

The Manx language, which probably coexisted with and succeeded the British Celtic languages spoken on the island in the early years of the first millennium CE, is grounded in Irish, with lexical borrowing from Latin, Norse, Anglo-Norman, and English. It therefore presents a linguistic microcosm of the multifaceted complexity that characterizes the history of Man as sketched above.[14] The archeological record left on the island is no less complex, and the numismatic evidence bears witness to dramatic political and economic change. Coins from Dublin mints give way to those produced on the island in the later first millennium CE, after which imported coins alternate, in the period 1000 to 1400, with coinage traceable in turn to England, Ireland, and Scotland.[15]

Peripheral and isolated yet at the same time central and cosmopolitan—a palimpsest of multilingual and multicultural hybridity—the Isle of Man both was heavily influenced by and widely influenced its neighbors in the North Atlantic, helping to create and consolidate a maritime culture and economy throughout the area. Yet, while the surviving evidence—literary, archaeological, numismatic—provides valuable clues, there is still much we do not know about Manx history. Perhaps the most compelling witnesses to the past of the island are the standing stones and crosses that often bear traces of the languages that were spoken at this nexus point in the middle of the Irish Sea. Inscriptions in Latin and Irish, Welsh names, and Norse stories (represented pictorially and with runes) on the Manx stones—all these testify to a complexity of origin and influence, inviting reflection and research, and set the tone for the bold and intellectually honest work that characterizes this edited volume of research essays, which were gestated

12 Seán Duffy, "Man and the Irish Sea World in the Eleventh Century," in Duffy and Mytum, *New History*, 9–26, at 16–17, and Bernadette Williams, "The Chronicles of the Kings of Man and the Isles," in Duffy and Mytum, *New History*, 305–28, at 306–28.

13 P.J. Davey, "Medieval Monasticism and the Isle of Man c.1130–1540," in Duffy and Mytum, *New History*, 349–76, at 349.

14 R.L. Thompson, Language in Man: Prehistory to Literacy," in Duffy and Mytum, *New History*, 241–56, at 245–47.

15 Collins "Coinage," 411.

on the Isle of Man and then developed by our contributors in the weeks, months, and years that followed.

Chapter 1. Innovatively tapping into the extensive numismatic evidence, Helen Davies analyzes the complex political and economic dynamic that extended across the Irish Sea, particularly between the Viking kingdom of Dublin and the rulers of the Isle of Man, during the late first and early second millennium CE. This period provides the background to the author's study of the evidence for a more subtle balance of power obtaining in this relationship than what previous studies have proposed.

Chapter 2. Contributed by M. Wendy Hennequin, this essay centers on the figure of (H)unferth in *Beowulf*, offering an innovative view of the oft-debated function of this character in the story the Old English poem tells. Instead of viewing Hunferth's challenge to Beowulf as gratuitously antagonistic, Hennequin analyzes it in terms of stylized forms of incitement, as documented in the early medieval literatures of Ireland, Britain, and Scandinavia.

Chapter 3. A scholar of drama and dance, Ron J. Popenhagen advances our understanding of the somatic basis of the medieval Irish hero Cú Chulainn's heroism—that is, the remarkably exposed and shifting state(s) of his body as evident in saga literature when it describes his performance in battle. "Performance" is indeed the key word, for, as Popenhagen observes, Cú Chulainn like other heroes of the medieval Irish Sea milieu, triumphs by virtue not only of the remarkable feats of which he and/or his body are capable, but also of his theatrical presentation of himself.

Chapter 4. Brian Cook provides a clearheaded overview of the complications of text, transmission, and provenance evidenced in a major medieval Icelandic chronicle of northwest European politics, the *Orkneyinga saga*. Cook focuses on the connivances of the legendary queen Ragnhild and their impact upon North Sea islands and kingdoms. Is she a Norse reflex or importation of the Irish sovereignty figure? And, as deadly as it might be, does sexual association with such a figure endow her lovers with legendary cachet? These are among the questions Cook attempts to answer.

Chapter 5. Classicist Stephen Kershner, using the lens of Statius and the tradition of Roman epic, finds meaningful patterns in what the medieval Irish translator of the *Thebaid* kept and didn't keep of the Roman poet's sensitive framing of the story of the Seven against Thebes. In simultaneously embracing and distancing itself from its Latin source, this Middle Irish text reveals the long-lasting impact of Statius on the literature of early Ireland, Britain, and the Western Middle Ages in general.

Chapter 6. Rhonda Knight intrepidly re-examines the connections between the Stanley family, sometimes known as the "Kings of Man" during the period

of English domination, and what has been called a "farrago" of texts contained in the famous seventeenth-century manuscript known as the Percy Folio. The mysterious and disruptive outsider of medieval romance together with the marcher lord, a major player in the politics of late medieval and early modern Britain, come together in the Percy Folio to provide posterity with a picture, vividly presented in Knight's essay, of a turbulent and changing society.

Chapter 7. Maria McGarrity examines Seamus Heaney's rendering of *Beowulf* in the context of the poet's probings of the interface between the Irish and English languages, and that between the British and Irish registers of English itself. Heaney's choices of vocabulary and phrases, ranging from the subtle to the conspicuous, are shown artfully to recast the Old English masterpiece in a contemporary dialogue, not at all free from tension, among neighboring cultures of the Irish Sea Cultural Province.

Chapter 8. Ethel B. Bowden, a scholar of children's and young people's literature, employs approaches borrowed from her field to take a fresh look at the "heroic biography" model by which the boyhood deeds of the medieval Irish hero Cú Chulainn have been interpreted by earlier scholars. The author concludes by considering the implications and consequences (including the "pluses" and "minuses") of introducing the narrative life and times of such early medieval heroes—given these stories' undeniable surfeit of violence—into the contemporary classroom.

Chapter 9. In the concluding contribution to this collection, Marc Pierce, a specialist in Germanic historical linguistics, presents an insightful juxtaposition of the modern histories of Manx and "Texas German." He focuses his analysis on the question, why and how has Manx been revived in modern times to at least a limited extent, while the German once spoken extensively in Texas has fared far less well.

About the author

Charles W. MacQuarrie is a Professor of English at California State University, Bakersfield. He is the author of two books on Manannán mac Lir, one an academic monograph and the other a collection of translations primarily intended for children. He has also frequently presented and written on, and continues to research, the history, myth, and folklore associated with Celtic tattooing. He is the former editor of the Celtic Studies of North America newsletter, has directed or co-directed four National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminars, and is a long-time Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.

1. Hiberno-Manx Coins in the Irish Sea

Helen Davies

Abstract

Innovatively tapping into the extensive numismatic evidence, Helen Davies analyzes the complex political and economic dynamic that extended across the Irish Sea, particularly between the Viking kingdom of Dublin and the rulers of the Isle of Man, during the late first and early second millennium CE. This period provides the background to the author's study of the evidence for a more subtle balance of power obtaining in this relationship than what previous studies have proposed.

Keywords: Glenfaba hoard, Dublin, Hiberno-Manx coins, Godred Crovan, Viking Age, kingship

The Hiberno-Manx coinage of the late Viking Age provides a window onto the economic and political situation of this period. Limited textual material survives to illuminate the years of the Hiberno-Manx mint, approximately 1020–65.[1] Extant archaeological evidence provides intriguing hints, but these coins greatly increase the surviving material record. The coins, which derive from the Hiberno-Norse Dublin Phase II "Long Cross" type, were first identified by Michael Dolley in 1976. These artifacts support recent arguments about the connection between the Isle of Man and the Hiberno-Norse city-state based in Dublin. The creation of local coinage based on the Dublin model highlights political ties and movement of ideas within this obscure era of Manx history, allowing us to shed new light on Man's role in the politics of the Irish Sea region.

This article treats the numismatic evidence alongside the surviving textual and archaeological record in an effort to further understand the political situation in the Isle of Man shortly *before* the establishment of the kingdom

1 David M. Wilson, *The Vikings in the Isle of Man* (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2008), 115.

MacQuarrie, Charles W. and Joseph Falaky Nagy (eds), *The Medieval Cultures of the Irish Sea and the North Sea. Manannán and His Neighbors*. Taylor & Francis Group, 2019
DOI: 10.5117/9789462989399/CH01

of Man and the Isles.[2] To this end, I will first introduce the documentary and material evidence as a way of examining the current level of understanding about late Viking Age Man, underscoring the gaps in our knowledge about this period that the coin evidence can fill. The second part of this essay provides a detailed description of the numismatic evidence with reference to the recent work on Manx hoarding. Here, I lay out the significance of the valuable data we can glean from the coins and the startling richness of this Manx material, especially when contrasted with comparable physical evidence from the surrounding Irish Sea region. The essay draws to a close with conclusions regarding the political ties and independence of Man.

The early eleventh-century Irish Sea region was a vibrant cultural zone supporting intricate networks of trade and political allegiances. Though often overlooked by historians of the period due to scant textual evidence, the Isle of Man sat at the heart of it all. Man served as an important link between Anglo-Saxon England, the Anglo-Scandinavian kingdom of York, the Norse Gael-Gall (Irish-Viking) political power in the Hebrides and mainland Scotland to its east, and the various Irish political units, including Hiberno-Scandinavian Dublin, to its west. Despite this central location and obvious position of power in controlling access across the Irish Sea, scholars have relatively little evidence for the Viking Age on Man. No written sources native to the island survive from before 1079, when the kingdom of Man and the Isles was established, and archaeological evidence from this period is also limited. This gives Man's Viking Age coins, which survive in remarkable abundance, an important role to play in helping us understand the political situation during this time period.

Textual Sources

The year 1079 was a watershed moment in Manx history. This year marks the invasion of the Isle of Man by Godred Crovan, whose successful conquest was a shift in the power dynamic of the Irish Sea. At that moment the kingdom of Man and the Isles emerged, marking the birth of a new political power. The founding of this kingdom also signified a change in the surviving records. Before this date, no native texts from Man itself survive. Around

2 Unfortunately, Rory Naismith's article "The Isle of Man and 'Irish Sea' Coinage," in *Medieval European Coinage: With a Catalogue of the Coins in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, Britain and Ireland c. 400–1066*, ed. Rory Naismith (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 315–22, was published too late for me to consult it while writing this piece.

1260 the *Cronica Regum Manniæ et Insularum* (hereafter the *Chronicle of Man*) began to record history on Man from a Manx perspective. The text describes events starting in the eleventh century, shortly before Crovan's conquest.[3] Importantly for this essay, it provides the earliest native record of the political structure in Man. The *Chronicle of Man* contains a brief reference to a Godred, son of Syrtric, who was king of Man at the time of the Battle of Hastings. His son Fingall then briefly succeeded him before the invasion of Godred Crovan, who became the first king of Man and the Isles to be documented in native texts.[4]

This seizing of power by Godred Crovan appears to have destabilized the minting authority on Man. No historical or numismatic evidence survives for the continued minting of coins after this date.[5] The inception of this kingdom appears to have resulted in either the cessation of the monetary standard or of the political alliance governing the centralization and creation of coinage. The time disparity between the *Chronicle of Man* and the Hiberno-Manx coins prevents them from corresponding directly to one another. However, scholars can elongate the known timeline in Man by combining these two sources.[6] The *Chronicle of Man*, by and large, does not directly parallel the information contained on the coins regarding Viking Age Man, nor does it reveal further information about the minting of the coins themselves. However, some of the earliest entries when combined with the limited non-Manx material can shed light on the question of which centralized political figure would have had the authority to create a national coinage.

The limited local textual sources have long encouraged scholars to look outside of Man for documentary references to the Island.[7] The Icelandic sagas

3 *The Chronicle of Man and the Sudreys: Chronica Regum Manniæ et Insularum*, 2 vols, ed. and trans by the Rev. Dr. Gross (Douglas, Isle of Man: Manx Historical Society, 1874).

4 Gross, *Chronicle of Man*, years 1047–56, at 1: 50–51. It should be noted that the years vary from currently accepted historical timelines. For example, this document dates the Battle of Hastings to the year 1047, subsequently corrected to 1066.

5 A.M. Cubbon, "The 1972 Kirk Michael Viking Treasure Trove: The Hoard; Its Discovery, Composition and General Historical Implications," *Journal of the Manx Museum* 8, no. 89 (1980), 5–11, at 10. Allison Fox and Kristin Bornholdt Collins, "The 2003 'TT': A Viking-Age Silver Hoard from Glenfaba, Isle of Man," *Viking Heritage Magazine* 1 (2004), 3–5, at 4.

6 Kristin Bornholdt Collins argues that the *Chronicle of Man*, although later than the coins, still has value for this time period as the only native source which draws on local knowledge; Collins, "Viking Age Coins from the Isle of Man: A Study of Coin Production, Circulation, and Concepts of Wealth," PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2003, 45.

7 Collins' dissertation has a thorough survey of textual references that may be referring to the Isle of Man, from the ninth through the twelfth centuries. Seán Duffy, "Irishmen and Islesmen in the Kingdoms of Dublin and Man, 1052–1171," *Ériu* 43 (1992), 93–133, presents an

present complications when looked to as a source for historical knowledge, yet they may contain some historical memory of the time they purport to describe.[8] *Njal's Saga* survives in manuscripts from the end of the thirteenth century, but describes Viking Age events in the Irish Sea.[9] This late text contains a reference to the "King of the Isle of Man" during the Viking Age.[10] While readers cannot rely on this reference as documentary evidence for a Viking Age Manx monarchy, perhaps it can be used to shore up nonsaga evidence.

Many of the non-Manx literary sources regarding the Island create further confusion through vocabulary issues. Several of these sources appear to use remarkably similar words to describe Man and Anglesey. The linguistic entwining of Man and Anglesey (known in Welsh as Môn) may in fact have been purposeful as a way of politically connecting the two entities.[11] Recent studies have favored Man as the intended location of a challenging line in at least one of the very few tenth-century Welsh poems.[12] *Armes Prydein*, a fiery, prophetic political poem urging support for the ousting of the Anglo-Saxons from Britain, references the *Gwydyl Iwerdon Mon a Phrydyn*, "the Irish of Ireland and Anglesey (?) and Scotland."[13] An interpretation of as *Man* would imply a political connection between Man and Ireland by the

in-depth examination of specific characters and dynasties connecting Man and Ireland. This study cannot replicate the work of these scholars but demonstrates the fractured nature of the references to Man.

8 For more information on the composition and historical value of the sagas, see Margaret Clunies Ross, *The Cambridge Introduction to the Old Norse-Icelandic Saga* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 39–41, and Gísli Sigurðsson, *The Medieval Icelandic Saga and Oral Tradition: A Discourse on Method*, trans. Nicholas Jones (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 17–19.

9 Magnus Magnusson and Hermann Pálsson, "Introduction," *Njal's Saga*, trans. Magnusson and Pálsson (New York: Penguin Books, 1960), 9–31, at 9.

10 *Njal's Saga*, 184 (= *konung ór Mön, Íslendinga Sögur*, ed. Guðni Jónsson, Akureyri, Iceland: Odds Björnssonar, 1968, 193).

11 Collins, "Viking Age Coins," 63. For a concise summary of the naming connections between these two islands starting with Bede, see Wilson, *Vikings*, 18–19.

12 Collins, "Viking Age Coins," 48–49; Andrew Breeze, "Armes Prydein, Hywel Dda, and the Reign of Edmund of Wessex," *Études Celtiques* 33 (1997), 209–22, at 209. Thomas Charles-Edwards acknowledges that Môn could be Man, but argues that such a reading represents an unnecessary emendation; *Wales and the Britons 350–1064* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 501. The location referred to in this poetic line remains under debate.

13 *Armes Prydein: The Prophecy of Britain from the Book of Taliesin*, ed. Ifor Williams and trans. Rachel Bromwich (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1972), 2, line 10. The facing-page English translation reads, "the Irish of Ireland and Anglesey (?) and Scotland." While Bromwich proposes Anglesey (with a question mark) in the translation itself, the accompanying note admits the possibility that the phrase could refer to the Isle of Man (*Armes Prydein*, 21).

tenth century. In that case, the eleventh-century rulers of Dublin would not have forged connections in a vacuum, but instead seem to be operating within a preexisting power structure.

Literature from beyond the Island hints at the political situation in Man. In an important study, Seán Duffy argued that the Irish annals show that the Isle of Man was associated with the Hiberno-Scandinavian rule of Dublin, although he acknowledges the dearth of textual references to Man even in the Irish sources. He writes: "There is an almost total silence by Irish writers about the affairs of Man and the other Irish Sea islands for the first two-thirds of the eleventh century."[14] Unfortunately, this coincides with the period under discussion in this chapter. Duffy builds a case for Man's connection to Dublin, starting from at least 1052. When Diarmait mac Máel na mBó forced Echmarcach mac Ragnaill out of Dublin and the kingship there, Echmarcach fled overseas. Duffy argues that Mac Ragnaill fled to Man.[15] The evidence for Man being Echmarcach's refuge lies in an entry from the *Annals of Tigernach*: "Murchad, son of Diarmait son of Mael na mbó, invaded Man and took a tribute out of it, and defeated Ragnall's son."[16] As Duffy points out, if the Mac Ragnall defeated in Man is Echmarcach, then he was likely to have been there since 1052.[17] Furthermore, the type of tribute, *cáin*, exacted from Man is a right of kingship.[18] The taking of this *cáin* by Murchad may indicate that Dublin had sovereign rights to Man, in that they could claim taxes normally associated with kingship.

A further argument revolves around the E recension of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* which lists a "Iehmarc" as one of the subkings who submitted to Cnut.[19] Benjamin Hudson suggests that this Iehmarc is Echmarcach, on grounds of both linguistics and our knowledge of scribal practices.[20]

14 Duffy, "Irishmen and Islesmen," 98.

15 Duffy, "Irishmen and Islesmen," 99. See *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland, by the Four Masters, from the Earliest Period to the Year 1616*, ed. and trans. John O'Donovan (Dublin: *s.n.*, 1849), 862.

16 *Murchadh mac Diarmuda maic Mail na mbó do dhul a Manaind, co tuc cain esti 7 cor' bris for mac Ragnaill*, *Annals of Tigernach*, ed. and trans. Whitley Stokes, *Revue Celtique* 16 (1895), 374–419; 17 (1896), 6–33, 116–263, 337–420; 18 (1897), 9–59, 150–303, at 16: 402.

17 Duffy, "Irishmen and Islesmen," 100. Charles-Edwards takes this to be Echmarcach, *Wales and the Britons*, 573.

18 Duffy, "Irishmen and Islesmen," 100; Francis J. Byrne, "Ireland and her Neighbors, *c.* 1014–1072," in *A New History of Ireland: Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, ed. Dáibhí ó Cróinín (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 862–98, at 879.

19 *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, trans. Michael Swanton (New York: Routledge, 1998), 159. This reference appears under the year 1031 in the E recension.

20 Benjamin T. Hudson, "Cnut and the Scottish Kings," *English Historical Review* 107, no. 423 (1992), 350–60, at 356. Hudson also gives a succinct summary of previous work on this debate.

He states, "Cnut would not waste his time meeting with non-entities."[21] Therefore before Echmarcach became king of Dublin, he must already have ruled an important area of the British Isles.[22] Building on this work, Kristen Bornholdt Collins has suggested that Echmarcach may already have ruled in the Isles by the 1020s.[23] This earlier reign, predating his kingship of Dublin, implies an even deeper connection between the rulers of Dublin and Man. Echmarcach may have expanded from his reign in Man to become King of Dublin, creating precedent for Godred Crovan to repeat this feat thirty-three years later. Already, the documentary sources begin to paint a picture of a political association between Dublin and Man. A deposed king of Dublin fled to a location which, presumably, he felt would be welcoming to him.[24] Ten years later, after the usurper had time to stabilize his new power in Dublin, Murchad invaded Man. The invocation of a right associated with kingship implies a political connection between the two locations.

As the rule of Dublin changed from Munster to Leinster, the new ruling family of Dublin quickly appeared in Man. The Irish records indicate that by 1073 the new ruling family of Dublin was present in Man only a year after assuming control in the Hiberno-Norse city.[25] The rapid move to control Man after the ascension to power in Dublin further indicates a connection between these two political units. By this point, the Irish chroniclers seemed to view the control of Man as connected to the rule of Dublin.

This connection between Man and Dublin did not immediately terminate after the successful invasion of Godred Crovan. However, the power dynamic shifted. The Rí Insi Gall (King of the Hebrides) also tried, and did temporarily, gain control of Dublin from 1091 to 1094 when Godrad Crovan

21 Hudson, "Cnut," 360.

22 It should be noted that while Hudson also agrees that Echmarcach held power in Man, he argues that the meeting with Cnut was likely because of Echmarcach's territory in southwest Scotland—"Cnut," 359.

23 Collins, "Viking Age Coins," 69.

24 K.L. Maund, "The Welsh Alliances of Earl Ælfgar of Mercia and his Family in the Mid-eleventh Century," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 11 (1989), 181–90, at 186, makes the same point about the exiled Mercian earl Ælfgar, who successfully fought to regain his lands, helped by his alliance with the Welsh king Gruffudd ap Llywelyn. Maund notes the unlikelihood that "an exile from England (and a member of a family which had lost at least one member to Gruffudd's aggression), even with mercenaries accompanying him, would have risked an encounter with a powerful and potentially hostile Welsh ruler, on that ruler's own territory, unless he was sure of a moderately amicable reception."

25 *The Annals of Ulster* (*up to A.D. 131*), ed. by Seán Mac Airt and Gearóid Mac Niocaill (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1983), 508–9.

held that title.[26] The *Chronicle of Man* states, "Igitur Godredus subjugavit sibi Dubliniam et magnam partem de Laynestir."[27] Duffy argues that the *magnam partem de Laynestir* indicates the area surrounding Dublin rather than all of Leinster, and this does seem feasible.[28] The power dynamic between Man and Dublin did not work just one way, with Man as merely a subordinate to Dublin, but the ruler of Man may also have been able to conquer Dublin. Man did not fit in neatly as one of Dublin's subordinate possessions. What we find in our surviving sources implies a political connection between the two locations, but the exact nature of this relationship remains vague.

Archaeological Evidence

The archaeology of Viking Age Man offers a varied landscape. The Isle of Man famously contains a rich array of stone carvings. These stones provide a glimpse into the linguistic encounters and population movements on the island. Ogham inscriptions on stone-cross inscriptions date to as early as the fifth or sixth century, but also appear, in bilingual stone inscriptions, alongside Norse runes.[29] Additional inscriptions attest to a Brythonic presence. One stone even offers a bilingual Brythonic and Goidelic inscription while other stones contain Anglian runes.[30] Plenty of stones display Scandinavian art styles and inscriptions.[31] The stones hint at what seems inevitable from the island's geographic location: Man represents a center of cultural exchange with shifting populations.

The abundance of Viking Age coins on Man raises questions about the island's role in the regional economy of the Irish Sea. The archaeological

26 Duffy, "Irishmen and Islesmen," 107.

27 Gross, *Chronicle of Man*, year 1075, at 1: 52: "Therefore Godred subjugated Dublin to himself and the greater part of Leinster." The translation from the Latin is my own.

28 Duffy, "Irishmen and Islesmen," 107.

29 Collins, "Viking Age Coins," 136; Wilson, *Vikings*, 76, contains an image and transcription of Maughold 145: a bilingual runic and ogham stone. For a list of stone inscriptions and introduction to Manx stone crosses see, P.M.C. Kermode, *Manx Crosses or The Inscribed and Sculptured Monuments of the Isle of Man from about the End of the Fifth to the Beginning of the Thirteenth Century* (London: Bemrose & Sons, 1907).

30 An example of a stone with Anglian runes is Maughold 25. For discussion, see Collins, "Viking Age Coins," 135.

31 Regarding the Manx stone crosses and inscriptions see Wilson, *Vikings*, 58–86; P.M.C. Kermode, *Catalogue of the Manks Crosses with the Runic Inscriptions and Various Readings and Renderings Compared*, 2nd ed. (London: Williams and Northgate, 1892), offers an in-depth study.

record has yet to reveal economic centers: no marketplaces or towns have yet been unearthed.[32] Beyond Man, contemporary beach markets are a known phenomenon throughout the Viking world.[33] Fort structures survive near Manx beaches that later became historically attested markets.[34] Some of these beach structures likely functioned in a similar manner during the Viking Age, but nothing concrete endures to establish this as fact.

The Isle of Man lacks archaeological excavations in urban areas to rival the Coppergate site at York or the Fishamble excavations in Dublin.[35] The location and nature of settlements remain vague. While the early Manx Christian chapels known as *keeills* and agricultural evidence helps to establish land usage, the location for a center of government remains unknown.[36] The *þing*, an assembly similar to a parliament, features in the government of many societies throughout the Viking world.[37] The Manx Tynwald site reportedly dates from the Viking Age, and local tradition claims that it predates the more famous Icelandic *þing*. Unfortunately, no evidence survives to prove definitively the early existence of this parliamentary form of government.[38] The archaeological and textual material begins to paint a picture of a centralized government in Man with a likely connection to Dublin. However, the dearth of evidence prevents us from getting a clear picture of the late Viking Age government on the island. Coins, however, do provide a crucial witness to late Viking-era Man, and a vital piece of evidence to consider in conjunction with the documentary attestations and other forms of material culture.

32 Collins suggests that the St. Patrick's Isle and Tynwald Hill may have had an economic function. Additionally, the excavation site at Ronaldsway provided intriguing clues but was later covered over by an airport: Collins, "Viking Age Coins," 92. For a recent work on the intriguing Ronaldsway site, see D.A. Higgins, "Survey and Trial Excavations at the 'Ronaldsway Village' Site, Ronaldsway Airport, Isle of Man," BAR British Series 278 (1999), 139–52.

33 Wilson, *Vikings*, 92–95.

34 Wilson, *Vikings*, 117.

35 For more information on these digs and a comparison of Dublin with other Viking urban centers in the British Isles, see Helen Clarke and Björn Ambrosiani, *Towns in the Viking Age* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 92–106.

36 The main archaeological debate regarding land usage has to do with the dating of the historic land divides in Man known as *sheadings*, *quarterlands*, and *treens*. See Wilson, *Vikings*, 118–19, and Collins, "Viking Age Coins," 82–85.

37 Famously, the Icelandic *þing* is brought to life in many of the sagas, including the previously mentioned *Njal's Saga*, 291–323.

38 It should be noted that, despite scant evidence, scholars are willing cautiously to accept a Viking Age date for this institution: Wilson, *Vikings*, 122–27; Collins, "Viking Age Coins," 85.

Numismatic Evidence

Coinage survives in remarkable quantities from Viking Age Man. At least twenty-one known coin hoards survive from this period on the Isle of Man.[39] In order to put this statistic in perspective, Bornholdt Collins notes that "Man has produced nearly 7% of the recorded Viking-Age hoards from Britain and Ireland, but occupies only 0.2% of the total area."[40] As for these neighboring lands, 83 hoards have been discovered in Ireland, 27 in Scotland, 11 in Wales, 16 in Northwest England (an area under Viking control after the start of the tenth century), and 161 in the rest of England.[41] When the numismatic evidence is broken down to "hoard per 1,000 square miles" for comparison across regions, the Isle of Man is 36.7/1,000 square miles. The density of numismatic material from the Isle of Man far exceeds what is to be found in proximate areas in the Irish Sea. England has the next highest density at 1.39/1,000 square miles, while northwest England viewed on its own has a density of 1.13.[42] Scotland, Wales, and Ireland do not even have a density of 1 hoard per 1,000 square miles.[43] Clearly, the island possesses significant numismatic resources, which can supplement the scant textual material. The physical evidence embodied in these coins can support inferences we might draw from texts but that stand in need of corroborative evidence.

Coin Hoards

These valuable Manx coin hoards consist of mixed currency and contain predominantly foreign currencies.[44] Out of the twenty-one deposits that have been found only three coin hoards contain currency of a single origin. The St. Patrick's Isle deposit found in 1982 is the prime example of this type, containing only Dublin coins. Fox and Bornholdt Collins argue that the limited number of dies used to mint the coins in this particular hoard

39 Collins, "Viking Age Coins," 238. These statistics were all compiled before the 2003 discovery of the Glenfaba hoard on Man.

40 Collins, "Viking Age Coins," 235.

41 Fox and Collins, "2003 'TT,'" 4.

42 Collins, "Viking Age Coins," 236. Again, these statistics were calculated before the 2003 discovery of the Glenfaba hoard.

43 The insularity of Man creates a favorable environment for finding these coin hoards. However, the density of these hoards far outweighs even those of comparable environments such as Anglesey, an indication that something different is happening on Man.

44 Fox and Collins, "2003 'TT,'" 4.

indicate that they had not been circulating in the Manx economy, even before they were deposited in the ground.[45] Therefore this hoard represents something beyond the regular circulation of currency on Man. A more typical Manx hoard has two or three different regions' currencies.[46] These externally minted coins originate from the surrounding kingdoms in the Irish Sea as well as from continental and Islamic sources.[47] Since 2010, fragments of three Islamic dirhams have been found, expanding the regional scope of Manx monetary evidence.[48] The inclusion of multiple currencies in typical hoards indicates that outside coins had value to the local population. Even as the elite of Man developed their own coins, Manx residents still found value in multiple currencies, a fact that may point to Man's function as an international market in this late Viking Age period.[49] The varied coinage supports the previously mentioned archaeological argument for the existence of beach markets, which would suggest that Man may have functioned as an important trading site in the Irish Sea.

Manx hoards, like many Viking Age hoards in the wider picture of the British Isles, contain bullion in the form of "hack silver" or Scottish armbands, the latter of which, made of silver, are associated with the Hebrides (Figure 1). Armbands of a standardized weight of approximately 24 grams appear in units of 1 to 5. This standardization argues for their use as a currency.[50] Gaimster argues that these armbands may have belonged to a separate economic sphere, one not the same as that in which coins circulated.[51] Additionally, these armbands may have had an intrinsic prestige value as part of their economic worth, although the lack of precision in the armband's weight might have militated against their use as currency.[52] The inclusion of these types of silver bullion in addition to coins led Bornholdt Collins to argue that the Isle of Man had a dual economy, with bullion and coins

45 Fox and Collins, "2003 'TT,'" 5.

46 Kristin Bornholdt Collins, Allison Fox, and James Graham-Campbell, "The 2003 Glenfaba Hoard (c. 1030), Isle of Man," *Early Medieval Monetary History: Studies in Memory of Mark Blackburn*, ed. Rory Naismith, Martin Allen, and Elina Screen (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 471–514, at 476.

47 Collins, Fox, and Graham-Campbell, "2003 Glenfaba Hoard," 4.

48 Collins, Fox, and Graham-Campbell, "2003 Glenfaba Hoard," 476; Cubbon, "1972 Kirk Michael Viking Treasure Trove," 6.

49 Collins, "Viking Age Coins," 234, 300, 338.

50 Wilson, *Vikings*, 112.

51 Marit Gaimster, "Viking Economies: Evidence from the Silver Hoards," *Silver Economy in the Viking Age*, ed. James Graham-Campbell and Gareth Williams (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2007), 123–34, at 128.

52 Gaimster, "Viking Economies," 128; Collins, "Viking Age Coins," 201.

Figure 1 Glenfaba hoard ⏎



representing different types of trade.[53] Like the seeming mixed-coin economy mentioned above, this bullion may provide evidence of Man functioning as an Irish Sea market.

53 Collins, "Viking Age Coins," 275.

Figure 2 Hiberno-Manx coin, reverse ⏎



Figure 3 Hiberno-Manx coin, obverse ⏎



One of the most unusual features of these hoards pertains to a recently identified coin type: the Hiberno-Manx coins. These coins were not identified until 1976, when Dolley first noticed that some of the Irish Dublin Phase II "Long Cross" type found on Man were not identical with those minted in Dublin.[54] The murky circumstances surrounding the political

54 Michael Dolley, "A Hiberno-Manx Coinage of the Eleventh Century," *Numismatic Chronicle* (7th ser.) 16, no. 136 (1976), 75–84, at 75, 81.

situation on the Isle of Man, and the lack of a known centralized authority or even towns, caused many scholars to be hesitant about the new coin identification at first.[55]

However, thanks to the recent work of Bornholdt Collins and the 2003 discovery of new hoards, especially the large Glenfaba hoard (Figure 1),[56] we now know that these new Hiberno-Manx coins derive from contemporary Dublin coins. The earliest ones from this series were made from a Dublin coin die which was brought over to the island.[57] This Dublin die was used "intensively, with three states of die degradation discernible, until it deteriorated beyond repair."[58] When a second state of degradation becomes visible in the coin, a drop in the weight of the silver also becomes apparent.[59]

The use of Dublin coinage as a model strengthens our sense of a connection between the Dublin Hiberno-Norse and the Isle of Man. Gareth Williams argues that the first stage of creation for any national currency in the early Middle Ages lies in the imitation of other established coins.[60] Yet it is significant that it is the Viking-Irish model that the Manx copy, and not, say, the Anglo-Saxon model, which the Viking-Irish themselves originally followed. Furthermore, when the original die was worn out and new dies were created, the Manx did not try to copy the contemporary Dublin coins; instead the Manx coins diverged from their Irish original, and formed an independent currency. This currency never developed beyond an initial stage, perhaps on account of disruption due to the creation of the kingdom of Man and the Isles. Evidence for the further development of the coins disappears around 1079. Hence the existing material record implies that the coins pertain to the ruler(s) of the island predating Godred Crovan's invasion.

As can be seen in Figures 2 and 3, the Hiberno-Manx coins have a "portrait obverse and single pellet in each reverse quarter."[61] These single pellets appear between branches of the cross on the reverse side of the

55 Gareth Williams, "Kingship, Christianity and Coinage: Monetary and Political Perspectives on Silver Economy in the Viking Age," in Graham-Campbell and Williams, *Silver Economy*, 177–214, at 205.

56 Collins, Fox, and Graham-Campbell, "2003 Glenfaba Hoard," 476–508; Williams, "Kingship, Christianity and Coinage," 205.

57 Mark Blackburn, "Hiberno-Norse and Irish Sea Imitations of Cnut's Quatrefoil Type," *British Numismatic Journal* 66 (1996), 1–20, at 13.

58 Collins, Fox, and Graham-Campbell, "2003 Glenfaba Hoard," 491.

59 Collins, Fox, and Graham-Campbell, "2003 Glenfaba Hoard," 491.

60 Williams, "Kingship, Christianity and Coinage," 184.

61 Collins, Fox, and Graham-Campbell, "2003 Glenfaba Hoard," 490.

coins (Figure 2). The coins show a stylized portrait of a king on the obverse (Figure 3). Dolley describes the obverse for the Hiberno-Manx series thus: "The initial cross of the obverse legend is composed of four pellets instead of wedges or triangles."[62] Other features include "+" for the *X* in *Rex*, which is made of pellets rather than wedges or triangles, and a series of vertical strokes in the same legend on the obverse, with a *D* and a *C* surrounded by more of these strokes. Groups of pellets appear near the head of the king and next to the letter *D*. A cross always appears near the king's neck (Figure 3).[63] Additionally, next to the king's face, "there occurs a slight crescent or straight line which is sometimes so faint as to be easily missed by the casual eye."[64] Bornholdt Collins argues that this was "originally a crack in the Transfer Die series," which later diemakers incorporated into the design, making it a distinctive feature of later Hiberno-Manx coins.[65]

Bornholdt Collins's work, benefiting from the 2003 discovery of the Glenfaba hoard, has helped to trace the development of this coin type over time, extending to the early eleventh century, and starting with the creation of the initial Transfer Die (TD) series based on the die brought over to Man from Dublin.[66] The discovery of the Glenfaba hoard has allowed the expansion of understanding of Hiberno-Manx (HM) I,the transitionary period between the initial Hiberno-Manx coins and the fully developed later Hiberno-Manx coins. The features of this transitional period include the symptomatic faint line near the king's face that was first noted in Dolley's initial description of the coin (can be seen in Figure 3). It appears that the new die cutters on the Isle of Man created dies for the coins that replicated this feature. The initial sign of wear had become one of the coins' identifying features. Additionally, the inscription at this point started to diverge from the Dublin coins. There was only a minimal attempt to represent the inscription, indicating that the coins were minted in that city by the famous moneyer associated with Dublin, and the majority of the legible letters no longer formed actual names or words.[67]

The HM II group stands out as quite different from the Dublin coins, which served as the prototype for the Hiberno-Manx type. The distinctive eye of the TD and HM I series has clearly become a single pellet; the letters are increasingly retrograde or inverted; the line above the eye of the king

62 Dolley, "Hiberno-Manx Coinage," 75–76.
63 Dolley, "Hiberno-Manx Coinage," 79.
64 Dolley, "Hiberno-Manx Coinage," 79.
65 Collins, Fox, and Graham-Campbell, "2003 Glenfaba Hoard," 490.
66 Dolley, "Hiberno-Manx Coinage," 80.
67 Collins, Fox, and Graham-Campbell, "2003 Glenfaba Hoard," 492–94.

is continued; and the coins have pellets interspersed in the inscriptions.[68] Clearly, the evolving design of the coins created a distinct coinage group on the Isle of Man.

Additionally, the rapid breakdown of the peripheral inscription seems consistent throughout the series, apart from the coins most closely linked to the Dublin Hiberno-Norse coins (Figures 2 and 3).[69] Future coin dies do not attempt to revert to or create a new inscription. Instead, over the course of time the inscription around the periphery stopped resembling legible words and instead settled for maintaining just the appearance of lettering. Therefore, the words themselves stopped conveying an important message, apart from the vague authority of what in effect was no longer a legible inscription. In a society without a large literate population, perhaps the actual words were not significant for the majority of the coins' users. Only a few could have read the abbreviated Latin texts on the coin anyway. Therefore, the majority of those using the coins may have associated the value of the coins with a ruler who utilized the power inherent in a textual culture without the average person needing to know what the inscription actually said. Perhaps there was a lower literacy level on the Isle of Man than there was in Dublin, and therefore the inscriptions' contents were less important. Therefore, the coins' inscription serves as a measure of the complex connections between the relevant political institutions of the highest levels, specifically the Dublin ruling elite and whatever authority in Man was carefully negotiating the expression of power in these coins. The institution minting the coins did not insist that the coins bear an inscription matching that of Dublin or the local ruler's name; instead these coins maintained only a general resemblance to Dublin coins. It is perhaps significant that the local authority with enough power and resources to mint its own coins did not include any name or abstracted portrait on the coins, indicating that, this Manx authority did not want these coins to stray too far away from the authority associated with the Dublin coins. This continued if increasingly fainter harking back to Dublin may indicate an uneasy negotiation of power going on between the ruler on Man and the wielders of Dublin's power and influence.

68 Collins, Fox, and Graham-Campbell, "2003 Glenfaba Hoard," 490 and 494.

69 Dolley, "Hiberno-Manx Coinage,"79.

Conclusions

The minting of a national or territorial coinage requires a centralized authority,[70] wealthy enough to procure the raw material and powerful enough to guarantee the value of the coin. Yet, as Williams has shown, coins are not always desirable for a fully functioning trade economy.[71] Their purpose seems primarily to be to promulgate power, provide legitimization for a ruler, and make claims about status as well as rights to revenue.[72] A political figure possessing central authority needs to have existed during the Viking Age on the Isle of Man, who could have created this type of coinage.

The high density of coin hoards on a relatively small island, containing an unusual quantity of foreign coins, in circulation even after the inception of a national coinage, implies that Man was used as a central market and trading place within the Irish Sea region. Therefore, it is likely that a considerable number of foreigners were present on the island to engage in such trading during this time. As Susan Kruse points out, trade between different groups was tricky: witnesses were required even for normal transactions.[73] The circulating coins and inscriptions indicate that such intergroup trading was going on.[74] A centralized authority would have been needed to oversee the trade between groups and would have been of use, if not indispensable, for the validation of witness arrangements. The existence of these markets is suggested by multinational hoard evidence (lending support to Bornholdt Collins's idea of a dual economy), and by archaeological indicators.

The compiled literary, archaeological, and numismatic evidence indicates the existence of a centralized authority ruling in Man before Godred Crovan's invasion in 1079. As Seán Duffy's painstaking work on the Irish textual sources has indicated, Man had moved into a political sphere centered on Dublin by this time. The Hiberno-Manx coins provide one further piece of evidence that Man was affected by the politics in Dublin, yet at the same time, it seems likely to have retained a form of independent identity. The Hiberno-Manx coins looked to Dublin as a model. The first dies were brought from Dublin, but the Hiberno-Manx coins did not continue to develop

70 Williams, "Kingship, Christianity and Coinage," 184, 206.

71 Williams, "Kingship, Christianity and Coinage," 178.

72 Wilson, *Vikings*, 122.

73 Susan E. Kruse, "Trade and Exchange across Frontiers," in Graham-Campbell and Williams, *Silver Economy*, 163–76, at 171.

74 For an early documented example of insular intergroup exchange and the complexity it entails, see R.I. Page, *Chronicles of the Vikings: Records, Memorials and Myth* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 177.

with the Dublin coins: no new dies were brought to Man from Dublin to replace the worn-out originals. Instead the coins developed in their own form. The inscriptions were allowed to degrade to the point of illegibility, including even the name of Dublin in the section of the inscription indicating where the coins had been minted.[75] While their economic power seemed to stem from the Hiberno-Norse form of the coin, they did not need clearly to proclaim their Dublin origin to hold value. The coins possessed legitimacy independently of Dublin.

The textual evidence that associates Man with Dublin also indicates the individual, even independent identity of Man. This island is consistently presented as a site of possible conquest separate from Dublin. The records do not indicate that Man was an implicit suzerainty of Dublin. In the reign of Godred Crovan, this becomes particularly clear, when the *Chronicle of Man* records his conquest of Man and subsequent invasion of Dublin.[76] The conquest of Man does not automatically entitle him to rule in Dublin, and a military conquest of the latter must be mounted. However, as Seán Duffy points out, the contiguity of these two events does imply an association between the two places.[77] For us, in the period leading up to Godred's conquest, the nature of Dublin and Man's association remains unclear.

An insistence on the separation of the two locations seeps through the documentary evidence. The description of Echmarcach's defeat in Dublin and subsequent flight sheds some light on the Dublin-Man connection. After Diarmait deposes Echmarcach, he flees "over the seas."[78] The Irish annals reserve this phrase to describe someone who has left Ireland. Therefore, Echmarcach's residence on Man did not fit into what we could call the Irish mental geography, because at this point Man existed as an "outside" area. Even if a political association did exist between Man and Dublin, the former was viewed as a foreign region. While the insular nature of Man of course does entail some transmarine distance, the texts imply an ideological separation between Dublin and Man, and not just a physical separation. The nature of island communities frequently creates a sense of cultural identity that can run deeper than even the facts of their geography. This seems to

75 Dolley, "Hiberno-Manx Coinage," 81.

76 *Chronicle of Man*, year 1075, at 1: 50–55.

77 Duffy, "Irishmen and Islesmen," 107.

78 The entry reads (in O'Donovan's translation): "[…] So that the lord of the foreigners, Eachmarcach, son of Raghnall, went over the seas, and the son of Mael-na-mbo assumed the kingship of the foreigners after him" ("co ndeachaid tigsrna Gall Eachmarcach, mac Ragnaill dar muir, 7 ro gab mac Maoil na mbo rige gall dara Eiri"), *Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland*, 860–63.

have been true of the Isle of Man since prehistoric times.[79] Even during the era of Dublin's influence on Man, the island maintained a distinct identity, as seen in the evidence provided by both coins and texts. It may be this unique identity that formed the basis of the kingdom of Man and the Isles.

The coins *c.* 1000 represent a fascinating transference of ideas across the Irish Sea. They are the physical embodiment of the Irish Sea as a contact zone.[80] The coins, and the very idea of minting and using coins, present an archaeologically detectable movement of a concept from one Irish Sea culture to another. The Dublin coins from which stemmed the Hiberno-Manx coinage were themselves derived from Anglo-Saxon coins. The Hiberno-Norse pennies, meanwhile, derived from the Aethelred II "Long Cross" coins.[81] The usage patterns of the Hiberno-Manx coins indicate that they were treated as monetary units representing set values, not like hack silver.

Anglo-Saxon England had a coin-based economy, but this characteristic represented a notable exception in the pre-Viking Irish Sea region. After a recession caused by the Viking raids and subsequent wars and settlements, the full-scale usage of coins re-emerged in eleventh-century England.[82] During this era of reappearance, familiarity with an inherent monetary value in coins as currency spread across the Irish Sea. The cultural acceptance of the advantages of a monetary economy in the region can at least partially be traced back to this English reintroduction of coinage. As Bornholdt Collins points out, the movement of dies between political entities and across borders was in itself not particularly unusual.[83] However, the subsequent development, cultural acceptance of a particular foreign model, and the creation of a new local monetary standard on Man provide us with insights as to how these cultures understood and presented authority.

This essay has attempted to demonstrate that the numismatic evidence from the Isle of Man provides a key understanding of the political and economic forces at play on the island during the Viking Age. I have focused on Manx coin evidence due to its relative richness in comparison to extant

79 See Catherine Frieman, "Islandscapes and 'Islandness': The Prehistoric Isle of Man in the Irish Seascape," *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 27, no. 2 (2008), 135–51, at 136–37.

80 For more on the concept of an Irish Sea zone, see A.P. Smyth, *Scandinavian York and Dublin: The History and Archaeology of Two Related Viking Kingdoms*, 2 vols. (Dublin: Templekieran Press, 1975–79). For a thorough literary review and a revision of the concept, see Colmán Etchingham, "North Wales, Ireland and the Isles: The Insular Viking Zone," *Peritia* 15 (2001), 145–87.

81 Dolley, "Hiberno-Manx Coinage," 79.

82 D.M. Metcalf, "Regions around the North Sea with a Monetised Economy in the Pre-Viking and Viking Ages," in Graham-Campbell and Williams, *Silver Economy*, 1–12, at 6–7.

83 Collins, Fox, and Graham-Campbell, "2003 Glenfaba Hoard," 491.

Irish, English, Scottish, and Welsh coin hoards. No doubt, numismatics will continue to provide dramatic discoveries and perspectives concerning the communities of the Irish Sea, since each unearthed hoard potentially sheds dramatic new light on our knowledge of Irish Sea activities and relations. With the increasing popularity of metal detecting as a pastime, the implementation of the Portable Antiquities Scheme, and improvements in technology, hoards are being discovered all the time. The recent work reclassifying previously known coins deepens and expands our knowledge of mints across the Irish Sea zone, opening up rich and sometimes unexpected avenues of exploration. Future research should search for Manx coins not just on Man but also further afield, in order to add detail to our picture of Man's role as an economic and political center in the maritime world surrounding it. These coins can fill a vital evidentiary hole in an era of Manx history suffering from a lack of texts and other forms of material evidence. As we scholars continue to explore the Isle of Man and its neighbors, these coins and numismatic finds in general need to be put into even more conversation with the other voices that arise from our existing, sometimes scanty evidence concerning the life and times of medieval Man.[84]

About the author

Helen Davies is a PhD Candidate in English and an Andrew W. Mellon Fellow in Digital Humanities at the University of Rochester, where she serves as the Graduate Student Coordinator for the Lazarus Project, a multispectral imaging initiative. Helen's research focuses on the newly recovered Vercelli *Mappa mundi* and on medieval maps as tools of conquest at the intersection of physical and mental geographies. Her dissertation in progress is titled "Conquering Unknown Geographies," and her work is forthcoming in *Digital Medieval*.

84 I am grateful to the National Endowment for the Humanities 2015 Isle of Man Summer Seminar, the Irish Sea Cultural Province, directed by Charles W. MacQuarrie and Joseph Falaky Nagy, for the opportunity to study the Hiberno-Manx coins and related material *in situ*, groundwork without which this research would not have been possible. Additionally, I am grateful to the Department of English at the University of Mississippi for financial support and academic encouragement. I want to thank Dr. Lindy Brady for advice and guidance on this article, and Meghanne Phillips for her editorial eye. My thanks also go to the University of Rochester English Department and Dr. Gregory Heyworth for their continued support. Any errors are entirely my own. Thank you to Manx National Heritage for their academic support and the use of these images.



Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

2. Hunferth and Incitement in *Beowulf*

M. Wendy Hennequin

Abstract

Contributed by M. Wendy Hennequin, this essay centers on the figure of (H)unferth in *Beowulf*, offering an innovative view of the oft-debated function of this character in the story the Old English poem tells. Instead of viewing Hunferth's challenge to Beowulf as gratuitously antagonistic, Hennequin analyzes it in terms of stylized forms of incitement, as documented in the early medieval literatures of Ireland, Britain, and Scandinavia.

Keywords: Unferth, Beowulf, *Njal's Saga*, *Táin*, incitement, flyting

Ever since Carol Clover's 1980 essay, "The Germanic Context of the Unferþ Episode," most critics have accepted that the exchange between Hunferth[1] and Beowulf is a flyting, a ritualized exchange of boasts and insults consisting of a "Claim, Defense, and Counterclaim."[2] Critics generally agree that Beowulf decisively wins the exchange by refuting Hunferth's claim, by calling Hunferth out for his cowardice and fratricide, and ultimately, by defeating Grendel when Hunferth could not.[3] While Clover convincingly

1 I am using the form Hunferth, not the more common editorial emendation, Unferth, because I accept Fulk's and Silber's arguments that the name is changed only to support critical assumptions about characterization and alliteration, and because I am willing to accept that the poet knew what he/she was doing when naming the character and composing the poetry. See R.D. Fulk, "Unferth and his Name," in *Modern Philology* 85 (1987), 113–27, and Patricia Silber, "Unferth: Another Look at the Emendation," *Names: A Journal of Onomastics* 28 (1980), 101–11.

2 Carol Clover, "The Germanic Context of the Unferþ Episode," *Speculum* 55 (1980), 444–68, at 445–46 and 452–53.

3 Clover, "Germanic Context," 461–65; Livia Polanyi, "Lexical Coherence Phenomena in Beowulf's Debate with Unferth," *Rackham Literary Studies* 8 (1977), 25–37, at 25–31; Kazutomo Karasawa, "Hrothgar in the Germanic Context of Beowulf," in *From Beowulf to Caxton: Studies in Medieval Languages and Literature, Texts and Manuscripts*, ed. Tomonori Matsushita, A.V.C. Schmidt, and David Wallace, Studies in Historical Linguistics 7 (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2011), 29–53, at 37–38; Robert S. Gingher, "The Unferth Perplex," *Thoth: Syracuse University Graduate Studies*

MacQuarrie, Charles W. and Joseph Falaky Nagy (eds), *The Medieval Cultures of the Irish Sea and the North Sea. Manannán and His Neighbors*. Taylor & Francis Group, 2019
DOI: 10.5117/9789462989399/CH02

identifies connections between the flyting tradition and the Hunferth interlude, viewing the exchange as flyting, and Beowulf as its winner, is problematic. Most flytings are longer than the conversation between Beowulf and Hunferth.[4] More importantly, Hrothgar becomes joyful afterwards,[5] and, suprisingly, so does the court:[6] "Đær wæs hæleþa hleahtor, hlyn swynsode,/ word wǣron wynsume"[7] ("There was laughter of heroes, the din sounded, words were joyful").[8] Most critics explain this joy, and the fact that Hunferth is not reprimanded, by claiming that Hunferth is merely performing his duty as *þyle*, that his questioning is normal, or that Hunferth is simply not taken seriously.[9] Yet these explanations do not account for the Danes' joyful response to Beowulf's slur against their bravery and competency:[10]

ac hē hafað onfunden, þæt hē þā fæhðe ne þearf,
atole ecgþræce ēower lēode
swīðe onsittan, Sige-Scyldinga;
nymeð nȳdbade, nǣnegum ārað
lēode Deniga, ac hē lust wigeð,

in English 14 (1974), 19–28, at 24–26; Martin Puhvel, *Cause and Effect in Beowulf: Motivation and Driving Forces Behind Words and Deeds* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1993), 18–19; Scott Gwara, *Heroic Identity in the World of Beowulf* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 61; G.C. Britton, "Unferth, Grendel and the Christian Meaning of *Beowulf*," *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 72 (1971), 246–50, at 248–49.

4 William Sayers, "Cei, Unferth, and Access to the Throne," *English Studies* 90 (2009), 127–41, at 137; Judy King, "Transforming the Hero: Beowulf and the Conversion of Hunferth," in *The Hero Recovered: Essays on Medieval Heroism in Honor of George Clark*, ed. Robin Waugh and James Weldon (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute, Western Michigan University, 2010), 47–64, at 51.

5 *Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. Francis Klaeber (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1950), lines 607–10. All subsequent references will refer to lines in this edition.

6 Norman E. Eliason, "The Þyle and Scop in *Beowulf*," *Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies* 38 (1963), 267–84, at 271; Leslie A. Donovan, "Þyle as Fool: Revisiting *Beowulf*'s Hunferth," in *Poetry, Place, and Gender: Studies in Medieval Culture in Honor of Helen Damico*, ed. Catherine E. Karkov and Patrick W. Conner (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute, Western Michigan University, 2009), 75–97, at 92–93; Karasawa, "Hrothgar," 35; Silber, "Unferth: Another Look," 108.

7 *Beowulf*, lines 611–612a.

8 Translations of *Beowulf* are my own unless otherwise noted.

9 Eliason, "Þyle and Scop," 271; Donovan, "Þyle as Fool," 91–93; Karasawa, "Hrothgar,"38; Thalia Phillies Feldman, "The Taunter in Ancient Epic: The *Iliad, Odyssey, Aeneid,* and *Beowulf*," *Papers on Language & Literature* 15 (1979), 3–16, at 8; Michael J. Enright, "The Warband Context of the Unferth Episode," *Speculum* 73 (1998), 297–337, at 310; Puhvel, *Cause and Effect*,16; Britton, "Unferth, Grendel and the Christian Meaning," 248; Ida Masters Hollowell, "Unferð the Þyle in 'Beowulf,'" *Studies in Philology* 3 (1976), 239–65, at 254–55.

10 Gwara, *Heroic Identity*, 98; Donovan, "Þyle as Fool," 85; Eliason, "Þyle and Scop," 269; Puhvel, *Cause and Effect*, 18–19; Edward Burroughs Irving, *Rereading Beowulf* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 40.

swēfað ond snēdeþ, secce ne wēneð
tō Gār-Denum.[11]

But he has discovered that he does not have cause to dread the feud, horrible sword-terror, of your people, the Victory-Scyldings, very much. He takes his toll, he spares none of your people, but he feels pleasure. He puts them to sleep and sends them away. He expects no fighting from the War-Danes.

We could expect these to be fighting words from a foreigner in a hall full of Danes, especially since the accusation is not exactly true: while the "Victory" Danes have not defeated Grendel in twelve years, thirty men died defending Heorot during his first attack, and others have died fighting Grendel since.[12] Some response to the accusation—even if it is merely the counterclaim and insult that would continue the flyting—seems warranted. And while critics go out of their way to explain why Hunferth is not reprimanded, few even note Beowulf's "excessively vicious" attack on Hunferth and the Danes,[13] let alone why Beowulf is not reprimanded for insulting his hosts. Flyting also does not explain why Hunferth is willing later to lend Beowulf the fabulous sword Hrunting. Though flyting does not necessarily result in violence,[14] reconciliation, mutual respect, and the exchange of heirloom swords (even as a gesture of defeat, as Gingher argues[15]) are not the usual outcome. The explanation of the exchange between Beowulf and Hunferth as flyting—or *only* as a flyting—is therefore problematic or at least incomplete.

I propose instead that we examine the exchange between Hunferth and Beowulf through the practice of incitement, a literary tradition found in Old Irish and Old Norse texts,[16] as well as earlier Greek and Roman epics,[17] and elsewhere in *Beowulf* itself. Michael Enright and Thalia Phillies Feldman both see Hunferth and Beowulf's conversation in this tradition,[18] and I will also argue that the exchange between Beowulf and Hunferth constitutes

11 *Beowulf*, lines 595–601a.

12 *Beowulf*, lines 121a–123a and 480–487a.

13 Gwara, *Heroic Identity*, 116.

14 Karasawa, "Hrothgar," 37.

15 Gingher, "Unferth Perplex," 25.

16 Proinsias Mac Cana, "*Laíded*, *Gressacht* 'Formalized Incitement,'" *Ériu* 43 (1992), 69–92, at 74–75; William Sayers, "Women's Work and Words: Setting the Stage for Strife in Medieval Irish and Icelandic Narrative," *Mankind Quarterly* 31 (1990), 59–86, at 67; Enright, "Warband Context," 303–7, 328.

17 Feldman, "Taunter," 15–16.

18 Enright, "Warband Context," 310; Feldman, "Taunter," 15–16.

incitement, and that Hunferth specifically performs the incitement not only because of his position at court but because of his relationship to Beowulf. Viewing the exchange as incitement not only illuminates Beowulf and Hunferth's otherwise strange relationship but solves some other mysteries of the poem, such as the absence of reprimands and of grudges, Hunferth's silence both after Beowulf's answer and after Grendel's death, and the loan of Hrunting and Beowulf's bequest of his own heirloom sword to Hunferth.

The Tradition of Incitement

Proinsias Mac Cana defines incitement in Irish literary texts thus: "a warrior […] is prodded or incited to raise the level of his performance several notches by being ridiculed by someone who is close to him" in order to "aid and fortify" the warrior.[19] This incitement can take the positive forms of encouragement and praise or the negative forms of shame or insult, but in either case, incitement is specifically intended to produce a better heroic performance,[20] and allows those who practice it to "control or affect the outcome of conflict."[21] In medieval Irish texts, negative incitement could only be practiced by professional satirists, women (either by virtue of a personal relationship with the hero or by virtue of their gender), and charioteers and close friends of the hero.[22] Feldman confirms in her study that inciters often have official status in ancient texts as well, and Sayers and Clover also note that incitement is common in Scandinavian texts, where women often perform the incitement.[23] Indeed, Clover reminds us in her discussion that the *hvǫt*, or "formal incitement scene," in Old Norse texts "draws on a common stock of insults and shares certain rhetorical features" with flyting scenes.[24] Given these similarities, that the exchange between Hunferth and Beowulf should be seen as flyting is perfectly natural.

A transnational tradition of incitement seems to have existed in early medieval northern Europe. Instances of negative incitement abound in early Irish texts. I will focus on the *Táin Bó Cúailnge* (*The Cattle Raid of Cooley*) for brevity. In this text, Medb incites both Lóch and Fer Diad to fight Cú

19 Mac Cana, "*Laíded*," 74.

20 Mac Cana, "*Laíded*," 75–76; Enright, "Warband Context," 306.

21 Enright, "Warband Context," 78.

22 Enright, "Warband Context," 87–88.

23 Feldman, "Taunter," 15–16; Sayers, "Women's Work," 67; Clover, "Germanic Context," 446, n. 7.

24 "Germanic Context," 446, n. 7.

Chulainn; in the second case, Medb acts not only as a woman inciting a hero, but as a close friend, since the insult she offers Fer Diad reportedly comes from his foster brother Cú Chulainn.[25] Láeg, Cú Chulainn's charioteer, also taunts him when he is in danger of failing against Fer Diad, and Láeg does so specifically at Cú Chulainn's request: "Then Cú Chulainn asked his charioteer to urge him on when he was overcome and to praise him when he was victorious fighting against his opponent."[26] The *Táin* also gives us examples of incitement by professionals. Medb sends professional satirists to shame Fer Diad into fighting Cú Chulainn.[27] Bricriu taunts Cú Chulainn into fighting more ferociously specifically at the request of Cú Chulainn's friend Fergus, who fears the former's defeat: "'That is indeed a wretched performance in the presence of the enemy!' said Fergus. 'Let one of you taunt the man, my men,' said he to his people, 'lest he fall in vain.'"[28] The *Táin* also shows us that certain conventions must be followed during incitement, depending on who is inciting whom and in what context. When Súaltaim incites King Conchobar to aid Cú Chulainn and repel Medb and Ailill's invasion, he ignores the *geis* decreeing that, in court situations, the druids should speak first, then the king, then the people.[29] Because Súaltaim breaks protocol (and the *geis*), his incitement is "an affront to the king" which the king may avenge violently,[30] and the druids, the Ulstermen, and the king all agree that Súaltaim should die for inciting the king.[31] While the text punishes Súaltaim's improper speech by gruesomely beheading him on his own shield, both text and characters endorse the actual incitement: Súaltaim's severed head continues to incite the king, and Conchobar concedes (in proper order) that Súaltaim is correct and acts on the incitement of the disembodied head.[32] Perhaps the dead may speak anytime they wish.

Old Norse literature, like the Old Irish, also gives us many examples of incitement. Again, here I will focus on one text, *Njal's Saga*, because of its many instances of incitement and for simplicity. In this saga, Bergthora famously taunts her sons into avenging the insults, "Old Beardless" and "Little

25 *Táin Bó Cúalnge Recension 1*, 179–80 and 197, Corpus of Electronic Texts (CELT), trans. Cecile O'Rahilly, www.ucc.ie/celt/published/T301012/text001.html (accessed 3 April 2018).

26 *Táin*, 207.

27 *Táin*, 196.

28 *Táin*, 180.

29 Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, "*Sírrabad Súaltaim* and the Order of Speaking among the Ulaid," in *Coire Sois, the Cauldron of Knowledge: A Companion to Early Irish Saga*, ed. Matthieu Boyd (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2014), 238–48, at 242–44, 248.

30 Ó Cathasaigh, "*Sírrabad Súaltaim*," 248.

31 Ó Cathasaigh, "*Sírrabad Súaltaim*," 217.

32 *Táin*, 217.

Dung-Beards."[33] Friends Thorgeir Starkadarson and Thorgeir Otkelsson taunt each other to inspire better fighting against Gunnar and his party.[34] Rannveig uses a combination of visual and verbal incitement when she hangs up Gunnar's magical halberd in plain sight and states that no one may touch it, unless prepared to avenge Gunnar.[35] Similarly, Hildegunn incites her kinsman Flosi to avenge her husband Hoskuld Hvatiness-Priest both verbally and through the gesture of returning Hoskuld's bloodied cloak.[36] As in the *Táin*, even the dead incite: Gunnar's ghost urges his son Hogni to avenge his death.[37] In *Njal's Saga*, incitement usually takes place outside of combat, unlike the *Táin*, where incitement occurs as often in battle as outside of it. Also, though the saga shows us professional satirists, they do not incite. The inciting characters are generally women or relations of the heroes or both. The exception seems to be the two Thorgeirs, who are friends.

While these examples can show a tradition of incitement in early medieval northern European literature, they do not have precise analogs in *Beowulf*, nor can we show a direct relationship between *Beowulf* and either the *Táin* or *Njal's Saga* in this regard. But we can be sure that the *Beowulf*-poet knew and understood the tradition of incitement because he or she clearly uses it outside of the exchange between Hunferth and Beowulf. When reporting his adventures to King Hygelac, Beowulf mentions the betrothal of Hrothgar's daughter, Freawaru, to Ingeld and predicts that the marriage will end in a renewed feud. In Beowulf's chilling speculation, the feud flares up again specifically as a result of incitement:

> þone cwið æt bēore sē ðe bēah gesyhð,
> eald æscwiga, sē ðe eall gem[an],
> gārcwealm gumena —him bið grim sefa—
> onginneð gēormormod geong[um] cempan
> þurh hreða gehygd higes cunnian,
> wīgbealu weccean, ond þæt word ācwyð:
> "Meaht ðū, mīn wine, mēce gecnāwan,
> þone þīn fæder tō gefeohte bær
> under heregrīman hindeman sīðe,
> dȳre iren, þær hyne Dene slōgon

33 *Njal's Saga*, trans. by Magnus Magnusson and Hermann Pálsson (New York: Penguin, 1983), 115.
34 *Njal's Saga*, 162.
35 *Njal's Saga*, 172.
36 *Njal's Saga*, 239–40.
37 *Njal's Saga*, 173–75.

wēoldon wælstōwe, syððan Widergyld læg,
æfter hæleþa hryre, hwate Scyldungas?
Nū hēr þāra banena byre nāthwylces
frætrum hrēmig on flet gǣð,
morðres gylpeð, on þone maðþum byreð,
þone þe ðū mid rihte rǣdan sceoldest."
Manað swā ond myndgað mæla gehwylce
sārum wordum[…].[38]

Then the old ash-warrior,[39] who sees the ring, who remembers all, men's spear-death—his soul is grim—speaks at beer. Sad-minded, he attempts, through heart's thought, the young champion, to test his thought, to wake war-bale, and speaks these words: "Might you, my friend, know that sword, that dear iron, which your father bore to the fight under the battle-grim one for the last time, where the Danes, the sharp Scyldings, slew him, wielded the slaughter-place, after Wythergyld lay dead, after the downfall of heroes? Now, here goes some one or other of the killers' sons, exulting in treasure, onto the floor. He boasts of the murder, bears the treasure, which you by right ought to possess." So he exhorts and reminds on every occasion with sad words […].

Clearly, this episode meets the criteria of incitement. The old ash-warrior specifically wants *wīgbealu weccean* "to wake war-bale," instigate a fight, which he does not pursue himself, presumably because of his age. Instead, he incites the younger man in ways that recall both the *Táin* and *Njal's Saga.* The old ash-warrior uses shame to urge the young man to fight, both shame of the father's (and people's) defeat and death and also shame of lost property, the same tactic which Súaltaim uses with King Conchobar in the *Táin.*[40] The old ash-warrior incites the young man to revenge not only verbally but by invoking the father's sword, the physical sign of the dead father's "murder," much as Hildegunn uses the bloody cloak and Rannveig uses Gunnar's halberd to incite vengeance in *Njal's Saga.*[41] The very language of the *Beowulf*-poet invokes the traditions of incitement: the old warrior *manað* and *myndgað* "exhorts" and "reminds," both keeping the incident in the younger man's memory and urging him on. The old

38 *Beowulf*, lines 2041–2058b.
39 Spears were made of ashwood.
40 *Táin*, 217.
41 *Njal's Saga*, 172.

warrior's words are *sāre* "sore" or "sorrowful" and relentless, employed *mǣla gehwylce* "on every occasion." Despite this stream of harassment, the inciter, as in the Old Irish sources, seems to be close to the young champion: he calls the younger man *mīn wine* "my friend" and knew the father well enough to recognize the heirloom sword. And, like the many inciters in *Njal's Saga*, the old ash-warrior's purpose is not to shame the young man for shame's sake, but to compel him to avenge his father, which the young man ultimately does: "se fæmnan þegn fore fæder dǣdum/ æfter billes bite blōdfāg swefeð"[42] ("the maiden's thane, for his father's deed, sleeps blood-stained after the blade's bite"). The ash-warrior's incitement succeeds, and, as in *Njal's Saga*, leads not only to enhanced heroic performance but the continuation of a feud.[43] Still, the Freawaru episode shows that the *Beowulf*-poet not only knew incitement traditions well but could use them effectively. We are not assuming that an Old Irish or Old Norse tradition of incitement mysteriously influenced *Beowulf* somehow; *Beowulf* already participates in the tradition.

Hunferth's Incitement of Beowulf

The exchange between Hunferth and Beowulf begins rather abruptly after Hrothgar welcomes Beowulf and his troop, ale is served, and a *scop*, a singer or storyteller, performs. In the midst of this "hæleða drēam" ("joy of heroes"),[44] Hunferth speaks out. Many critics attribute Hunferth's speech to envy,[45] or drunkenness,[46] or trouble-making,[47] often based on their interpretation on an understanding of (H)unferth's name as meaning "un-peace." But the narrative does not tell us that Hunferth is drunk—that assumption comes from Beowulf's remark in line 531a, which may simply

42 *Beowulf*, lines 2059–2060.

43 *Beowulf*, lines 2063–2064a.

44 *Beowulf*, line 497b.

45 Eliason, "Þyle and Scop," 267; Michael S. Nagy, "A Reassessment of Unferð's Fratricide in *Beowulf*," *Proceedings of the Medieval Association of the Midwest* 3 (1995), 15–30, at 16; Karasawa, "Hrothgar," 38.

46 James L. Rosier, "Design for Treachery: The Unferth Intrigue," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 77 (1962), 1–7, at 4; Polanyi, "Lexical Coherence," 32; Irving, *Rereading Beowulf*, 40; Karasawa, "Hrothgar," 38.

47 Gingher, "Unferth Perplex," 22–23; Polanyi, "Lexical Coherence," 30–31; Fulk, "Unferth and his Name," 127; Gwara, *Heroic Identity*, 75.

mean that Hunferth has been drinking,[48] as has everyone else in Heorot.[49] Similarly, the reference often taken to prove Hunferth's envy may also not be as condemnatory as previously thought; Donovan and Gingher, for instance, believe that Hunferth is disturbed by Beowulf's pride.[50] While I accept that point, the poem also says distinctly that Hunferth is worried about *honor*:

> Unferð maþelode, Ecglāfes bearn,
> þē æt fōtum sæt frēan Scyldinga,
> onband beadurūne— wæs him Bēowulfes sīð,
> mōdges merefaran, micel æfþunca,
> forþon hē ne ūþe þæt ænig ōðer man
> æfre mærða þon mā middengeardes
> gehēde under heofenum þonne hē sylfa [...].[51]
>
> Hunferth, son of Ecglaf, who sat at the feet of the lord of the Scyldings, spoke formally, unbound battle-secrets. The errand of Beowulf, the proud sea-farer, was a great insult to him, because he did not wish that any other man on middle-earth cared more for honor than he himself.

True, Hunferth finds Beowulf's coming *micel æfþunca* "a great insult"—but specifically because he is worried about honor. This concern with honor drives incitement, and often, the honor in question is not the inciter's own. Fergus prompts Bricriu to taunt Cú Chulainn and Láeg incites Cú Chulainn not because their own honor is at issue, but because they don't wish Cú Chulainn to lose honor. Similarly, Bergthora, Rannveig, and Hildegunn wish to maintain their families' honor, and the two Thorgeirs use incitement to preserve each other's. Likewise, Hunferth's honor is not at stake here, nor is the Danes'. Though Beowulf may succeed where the Danes (and admittedly, Hunferth) cannot,[52] the Danes who had boasted that they would fight Grendel did so honorably, even though they were unsuccessful and died.[53] The Danes' problem is inability, not dishonor, and neither Hrothgar, in the

48 J.D.A. Ogilvy, "Unferth: Foil to Beowulf?," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 79 (1964), 370–75, at 371–72.

49 Lines 494b–496a say that ale was served in the hall, just before Hunferth speaks.

50 Donovan, "Þyle as Fool," 87; Gingher, "Unferth Perplex," 24.

51 *Beowulf*, lines 503–505.

52 "Unferth Perplex," 27; Britton, "Unferth, Grendel and the Christian Meaning," 249; Peter S. Baker, *Honour, Exchange and Violence in Beowulf*, Anglo-Saxon Studies 20 (Woodbridge, England: Brewer, 2013), 79; Irving, *Rereading Beowulf*, 40.

53 *Beowulf*, lines 480–487a.

report of his thanes' deaths, nor Beowulf in his initial boasts, besmirches the Danes' honor.

Beowulf's honor is at stake now, since Beowulf has just requested in lines 424b–441 to meet Grendel alone and unarmed, and Beowulf must be incited, as Mac Cana says, to increase his strength and prowess.[54] In order to incite Beowulf to fight, Hunferth questions his abilities:

> hē þē æt sunde oferflāt,
> hæfde māre mægen. […]
> . . . . .
> Bēot eal wið þē,
> sunu Bēanstanes soðe gelæste.
> Ðonne wēne ic tō þē wyrsan geþingea,
> ðeah þū heaðorāesa gehwær dohte,
> grimre gūðe, gif þū Grendles dearst
> nihtlongne fyrst nean bidan.[55]
>
> He overcame you at sea. He had the greater strength […]. The son of Beanstan carried out his boast against you completely and truly. Then I expect from you worse results if you dare to await Grendel nearby in [his] night-long domain, though you may have succeeded in battlestorms somewhere.

Although Hunferth does stress Beowulf's recklessness in other parts of his speech,[56] Hunferth's main point here is that Beowulf does not even have Brecca's strength and could not overcome this very human opponent. If Beowulf could not beat Brecca in a stupid swimming contest (Hunferth calls it *dolgilpe* "foolhardiness" or "vainglory" in line 509), how could Beowulf hope to defeat Grendel? Hunferth's tone can be read as dismissive and even disrespectful, and it is intended to be, for such denigration of a hero's ability and strength is a common incitement strategy. Hunferth's taunt echoes Bricriu's both in the doubt each expresses about the hero's strength and its questioning of the hero's ability to do heroic deeds: "'Your strength is exhausted,' said he, 'if a puny opponent overthrows you now that the Ulstermen are on their way to you, recovered from their torpor. It is hard for you to undertake a hero's deed in the presence of the men of Ireland

54 Mac Cana, "*Laíded*," 74.

55 *Beowulf*, lines 517b–518a and 23b–28.

56 Puhvel, *Cause and Effect*, 16; Gwara, *Heroic Identity*, 113–15 and 126.

and to ward off a formidable opponent with your weapons in that way.'"[57] Hunferth incites Beowulf with Brecca's *māre mægen* "greater strength"; Bricriu taunts Cú Chulainn with having lost his own strength. Bricriu posits that Cú Chulainn cannot keep up with a puny opponent, and Thorgeir Otkelsson says that his friend Thorgeir Starkadarson can't even keep up with the former,[58] just as Hunferth argues that Beowulf can't beat a human adversary, let alone Grendel.

Beowulf's response to Hunferth is also consistent with incitement. Certainly, Beowulf's claims—that he either won or drew with Brecca, that neither Hunferth nor Brecca has performed as many brave deeds as he has, that Hunferth has been like a *bana* "killer" to his brothers, and that he and the Danes are incompetent[59]—fall neatly into the flyting categories of defense and counterclaim, as Carol Clover has demonstrated.[60] Beowulf is certainly reacting as if he were being flyted. But elements of flyting that Clover identifies are also elements of incitement. Incitement, too, uses claim, defense, and counterclaim, though scholars of incitement focus less on the defense and counterclaim because the reaction to incitement is often physical—an improved fighting performance—rather than verbal. In the other instance of incitement in *Beowulf*, the Freawaru episode, the poet does not tell us how the young champion reacts initially, but we know that the old ash-warrior's words do not immediately result in martial action, because the young warrior does not seek revenge until the incitement has continued for some time. But *Njal's Saga* provides us with examples of incitement that follow the same defense-counterclaim scheme that Clover

57 *Táin*, 180.

58 *Njal's Saga*, 162.

59 *Beowulf*, lines 530–606. It is interesting to note that many scholars accept Beowulf's version of events, and his insults wholeheartedly, though his story to Hygelac doesn't perfectly match with the facts of the poem as we know them and should bring his reliability as a narrator into question. Beowulf's accusation of fratricide is, in particular, difficult to reconcile; as Eliason points out, a fratricide would not be welcome at court (Eliason, "Þyle and Scop," 272–73), and the Danes tolerate Hunferth and do not react to the accusation (Irving, *Rereading Beowulf*, 42; Nagy, "Reassessment," 23–26; King, "Transforming the Hero," 50). To be fair, fratricidal accusations are common as insults (Clover, "Germanic Context," 453–54), and it is possible that Beowulf is eliding circumstances or details (Gwara, *Heroic Identity*, 127–29; Patricia Silber, "Hunferth and the Paths of Exile," *In Geardagum: Essays on Old and Middle English Language and Literature* 17 (1996), 15–29, at 27–28). One can easily imagine a circumstance where fratricide might be tolerated: Hildeburh's son in the Finnsburg episode is caught in the middle of a feud with kin on both sides (*Beowulf*, lines 1071–1159a), and the thanes in the Cynewulf and Cyneheard episode of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* are caught between loyalty to lord and loyalty to kin (*Manuscript A: The Parker Chronicle*, year 755, http://asc.jebbo.co.uk/a/a-L.html; accessed 11 July 2016).

60 Clover, "Germanic Context," 461–64.

identifies in flyting scenes. For instance, Thorgeir Otkelsson reacts with the defense and counterclaim to his friend's incitement: "'Perhaps I haven't made much progress,' said Thorgeir Otkelsson, 'but you haven't even kept up with me. I'm not going to put up with your taunts.'"[61] Similarly, when Hildegunn charges Flosi to avenge Hoskuld or risk shame, Flosi responds as if it were a flyting: "'Monster!' he cried. 'You want us to take the course which will turn out worst for all of us. "Cold are the counsels of women."'"[62] Here we have Flosi's defense—Hildegunn's advice is bad—and the insults usual to counterclaims, in this case, that Hildegunn is monstrous and her advice is flawed because of her gender. Beowulf's defense and counterclaim responses fit just as neatly with incitement as they do with flyting.

Beowulf reacts rather angrily to Hunferth's allegations, and this anger actually is a typical element of incitement, especially in circumstances where the characters cannot immediately react with martial or heroic action. Puhvel notes this anger in Beowulf's "hypersensitivity toward any challenge to his reputation and his irritable intolerance towards any alleged rival in prowess."[63] Gwara writes that Beowulf's "attack [on Hunferth] seems excessive, and excessively vicious."[64] If this is incitement, a practice intended to help the hero, this anger may seem out of place. But Fer Diad reacts with similar "hypersensitivity" and "irritable intolerance" to Cú Chulainn's supposed claim of superiority: "'It was not right for him to say that for he never found weakness or cowardice in me, day or night. I swear by my people's god that I shall be the first man to come tomorrow morning to the ford of combat.'"[65] Anger at incitement can be expressed nonverbally as well as verbally: Flosi, in addition to the enraged insults noted above, responds with angry gestures and expressions to Hildegunn's incitement: he throws away a ragged towel and the bloody cloak, and he flushes and blanches in turn.[66] Njal's son Skarp-Heðin flushes angrily at his mother's incitement, and Grim chews his lips.[67] In the "Leinster" version of the *Táin*, Cú Chulainn's anger at the incitement of satirists is so great that he kills them.[68] But the anger at incitement is not merely a

61 *Njal's Saga*, 162.
62 *Njal's Saga*, 240.
63 Puhvel, *Cause and Effect*, 18–19.
64 Gwara, *Heroic Identity*, 116.
65 *Táin*, 197.
66 *Njal's Saga*, 239–40.
67 *Njal's Saga*, 115.
68 *Táin Bó Cúalnge from the Book of Leinster*, trans. Cecile O'Rahilly (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1984), 268.

byproduct of incitement; anger is its *purpose*, for the anger produces the enhanced heroic performance. In the Book of Leinster version of the *Táin*, Cú Chulainn tells his charioteer Láeg, "Therefore, if it be I who am defeated this day, you must incite me and revile me and speak evil of me so that my ire and anger shall rise the higher thereby."[69] Beowulf's anger therefore shows that he is reacting to the incitement, he is reacting properly, and Hunferth's incitement is working.

The end of Beowulf's response also signals that Hunferth's incitement has worked. Beowulf ends his long and very defensive defense with a promise to rid the Danes of Grendel. True, Beowulf has earlier promised to fight Grendel:

> ond nū wið Grendel sceal,
> wið þām āglǣcan āna gehēgan
> ðing wið þyrse.
> . . . . .
> ac ic mid grāpe sceal
> fōn wið fēonde ond ymb feorh sacan,
> lāð wið lāðum.[70]
>
> And now I alone shall hold a meeting with Grendel, the fierce fighter, the giant. [...] But I with grip shall grapple the foe and fight for life, hateful against the hated one.

Although Beowulf promises here to fight Grendel, Beowulf mitigates his oaths here in two ways. First, these two promises to fight Grendel occur during the speech in which Beowulf is asking Hrothgar's permission to face Grendel, a request which immediately follows the first promise above (lines 426b–432). Secondly, these earlier boasts are diminished by constant reminders that Beowulf may fail and die: Beowulf says that the battle is in God's hands (lines 440–441) and that Grendel may beat him (lines 442–445a), and then grimly jokes that Grendel will, at least, make sure it's a cheap funeral, and wills his war-corselet to Hygelac (lines 445b–455). Beowulf's boasts here are incomplete: he promises to fight Grendel, but not to *defeat* Grendel. The poet is not showing Beowulf's modesty here but his realism. The Danes have made the same boast earlier, as Hrothgar tells us, with grim results:

69 *Táin Bó Cúalnge from the Book of Leinster*, 227.

70 *Beowulf*, lines 424b–426a and 38b–40a.

hie in bēorsele bīdan wolde
Grendles gūþe mid gryrum ecga.
Đonne wæs þēos medoheal on morgentīd,
drihtsele drēorfāh, þonne dæg līxte,
eal bencþelu blōde bestȳmed. by [...].[71]

They wished to await Grendel's battle with terror of swords in the beerhall. Then, in the morning time, when the day shone, this mead-hall, troop-hall, was blood-stained, all the bench-planks wet with blood.

These predecessors of Beowulf agree to face Grendel, but like Beowulf, do not promise to remove him. Ultimately, they cannot defeat him; they are only ordinary heroes.[72] Beowulf, too, makes the promise of an ordinary hero, but after Hunferth's challenge, Beowulf offers a far more definite guarantee than do his Danish colleagues:

"Ac ic him Gēata sceal
eafoð on ellen ungēara nu,
gūðe gebēodan. Gæþ eft sē þe mōt
tō medo mōdig, siþþan morgenlēoht
ofer ylda bearn ōþres dōgores
sunne sweglwered suþan scīneð!"[73]

But now I shall show him [Grendel] the Geats' strength, courage, and battle soon. He who is able will go back, brave to the mead, after morning-light, the bright-clothed sun, shines from the south on the next day.

Beowulf here promises two things: first, that he will fight Grendel, a reiteration of his earlier vow, and secondly, that Heorot will be clear by morning. Beowulf has not promised to make Heorot safe before, nor does he bring up the possibility of his death here, as he does in his earlier request to Hrothgar and in his later boast to Wealtheow in lines 632–638. Instead, he predicts his victory with imagery that recalls and inverts Hrothgar's description of Heorot after the defeat of the boasting Danes. At sunrise, Hrothgar will not find the bloody leftovers of Grendel's cannibalistic feast, but a cleared hall,

71 *Beowulf*, lines 482–486.
72 Irving, *Rereading Beowulf*, 37.
73 *Beowulf*, lines 601b–606.

where the Danes themselves will be safely feasting*: sē þe mōt* "He who is able" will go back to the hall, *tō medo mōdig* "proud to mead."

A firm promise to do something about the situation is the desired and intended result when someone incites a hero outside of direct combat. We can see similar situations in the *Táin* and *Njal's Saga*, where incitement happens as a precursor to battle and inspires a promise to undertake the fight. For instance, when Medb incites Fer Diad to fight Cú Chulainn, Fer Diad responds not only with anger at the insult but a promise to fight Cú Chulainn.[74] In response to Súaltaim's severed head, Conchobar similarly promises to fight and rescue his people: "'[I swear by] the sea before them, the sky above them, the earth beneath them that I shall restore every cow to its byre and every woman and boy to their own homes after victory in battle.'"[75] The ghostly Gunnar's incitement of his son Hogni and neighbor Skarp-Heðin Njalson immediately first inspires their decision to avenge Gunnar's death and, slighty later, the incitement leads Hogni to arm himself with Gunnar's halberd and assume the duty of vengeance that Rannveig had set upon whoever took the halberd. These actions, which directly result from Gunnar's postmortem incitement, ultimately result in successful revenge.[76]

Hunferth's incitement sets up a chain reaction similar to Gunnar's: Hunferth incites Beowulf; Beowulf promises to defeat Grendel; and, ultimately, this promise leads to Grendel's death: "Gemunde þā se gōda, mǣg Higelāces,/ ǣfensprǣce, uplang āstōd,/ ond him fæste wiðfēng"[77] ("The good kinsman of Hygelac kept his evening speech in mind, stood upright, and seized him [Grendel] fast"). Hunferth's taunt is ultimately successful because Beowulf remembers the boast in his battle, and the boast, in turn, encourages Beowulf to engage and defeat Grendel. In other words, Hunferth's speech results not only in the same promises to take up the heroic cause that Medb's, Súaltaim's, and Gunnar's incitements yield, but Hunferth's incitement also leads to a victory as decisive as those that Bricriu and Láeg's incitements of Cú Chulainn provoke. Because the conversation constitutes incitement, Hunferth does not respond to Beowulf's defense and counterclaim, though Beowulf questions Hunferth's bravery and his loyalty to his kin. Incitement requires no answer. As Donovan and Enright rightly point out, Beowulf's victory in the exchange is not Hunferth's loss.[78] It is Hunferth's victory, too,

74 *Táin*, 197.

75 *Táin*, 217. The girls of Ulster apparently can look after themselves.

76 *Njal's Saga*, 173–75.

77 *Beowulf*, lines 758–760a.

78 Donovan, "Þyle as Fool," 90–91; Enright, "Warband Context," 310.

since he inspires Beowulf to become a better hero and extracts the promise that will later motivate Beowulf to defeat Grendel.

Unraveling Hunferth through Incitement

The interpretation of this scene as incitement explains much about Hunferth's position at the court and his relationship to Beowulf. As Mac Cana notes, incitement can be performed by a professional speaker or satirist,[79] and critics have long attributed the content of Hunferth's challenge to his official position as Hrothgar's *þyle*. The *þyle*'s exact function has been debated, and scholars have proposed everything from a jester[80] to a pagan priest.[81] Scholars now generally agree that Hunferth as *þyle* functions as some sort speaker for the court,[82] much like the *Táin*'s Sencha mac Ailella,[83] the Arthurian Cei,[84] and Drances and Thersites in the *Aeneid* and *Iliad* respectively.[85] Scholars may debate whether we should see a *þyle* positively or negatively, but the office's connotations, good or bad, do not affect its expected duties. Whether we see Hunferth as an evil pagan priest or a jester or a revered and wise speaker—or even as a coward, a fratricide, or an envious man—Hunferth incites Beowulf because it is his job.[86] It is also his *narrative* job: inciters serve as catalysts to the plot by allowing heroes no choice but heroic action,[87] just as Hunferth does in *Beowulf.*

But Hunferth may not be inciting Beowulf only in his official capacity. As Mac Cana points out, people close to the hero also incite him.[88] Examples abound here: Láeg the charioteer incites Cú Chulainn;[89] the two Thorgeirs incite each other; and the ghostly Gunnar incites his son.[90] And *Beowulf*

79 Mac Cana, "*Laíded*," 86.

80 Rosier, "Design for Treachery," 1–2; Eliason, "Þyle and Scop," 269; Donovan, "Þyle as Fool," 77.

81 Enright, "Warband Context," 313; Sara F. Burdorff, "Re-reading Grendel's Mother: *Beowulf* and the Anglo-Saxon Metrical Charms," *Comitatus* 45 (2014), 91–103, at 99–100; Joseph L. Baird, "Unferth the 'Þyle,'" *Medium Aevum* 39 (1970), 1–12, at 5–8.

82 Baker, *Honour*, 78; Eliason, "Þyle and Scop," 268; Donovan, "Þyle as Fool," 81–82; Rosier, "Design for Treachery," 7; Enright, "Warband Context," 302–9; Sayers, "Cei, Unferth, and Access," 137–38; Gwara, *Heroic Identity*, 130.

83 Enright, "Warband Context," 302–4.

84 Sayers, "Cei, Unferth, and Access," 137–39.

85 Feldman, "Taunter," 15–16.

86 Enright, "Warband Context," 310, 328.

87 Enright, "Warband Context," 4.

88 Mac Cana, "*Laíded*," 74.

89 *Táin,* 207.

90 *Njal's Saga*, 162 and 73.

suggests that Hunferth and Beowulf know each other well. Donovan, Silber, and Nagy all observe that Beowulf and Hunferth know a great deal about each other, including each other's names, fathers' names, and histories—all without introduction.[91] Hunferth knows about the contest with Brecca, for instance, and Beowulf knows not only that Hunferth was involved in his brothers' death but alludes to Hunferth's deeds (though they are inferior, Beowulf says, to his own).[92] Beowulf may only have heard of Hunferth's exploits, whatever they were; he refers to Hunferth later as *wīdcūðne man* "the widely known man."[93] But Beowulf also calls Hunferth *wine mīn* "my friend,"[94] perhaps sarcastically, since it introduces Beowulf's defensive response to Hunferth's incitement. Yet it is also the phrase that the old ash-warrior uses for the young champion in the Freawaru episode, and Beowulf may also be speaking the truth when he calls Hunferth his friend. It is even a logical truth, given the facts reported by the poem. We know that Beowulf spent time in the Danish court as a boy because Hrothgar remembers him: "Ic hine cūðe cnihtwesende" ("I knew him as a boy").[95] Hunferth, as part of the Danish court, may have known and befriended Beowulf as well. Silber and Eliason both argue that Hunferth is much older than Beowulf,[96] yet this does not need to be the case. Yes, Hunferth has a responsible position at court as *þyle*, has performed some deeds and earned some fame, and owns a fabulous and mostly invincible sword, Hrunting.[97] But this does not necessarily make Hunferth old. Beowulf, who must be very young indeed to complete a fifty-year reign that begins sometime after his adventures with Grendel and his mother,[98] has a shirt forged by the legendary Weland, has already performed heroic deeds, and shortly will be awarded his own hall and some ruling responsibilities in Geatland.[99] The two men, with similar heroic credentials, could very well be close in age.

Beowulf and Hunferth may even be related. Consider the similarity of their fathers' names, Ecgtheow and Ecglaf. Few critics even note this similarity, and only two, to my knowledge, discuss it. Silber asks, "Is it more than coincidence that the names of the two fathers, Beowulf's and Hunferth's, are

91 Donovan, "Þyle as Fool," 89–90; Silber, "Hunferth," 23–24; Nagy, "Reassessment," 21.
92 *Beowulf*, lines 506–524 and 83a–88a.
93 *Beowulf*, line 1489.
94 *Beowulf*, line 530; Donovan, "Þyle as Fool," 89–90.
95 *Beowulf*, line 372.
96 Silber, "Hunferth," 27; Eliason, "Þyle and Scop," 284–85.
97 *Beowulf*, lines 583b–586a, 1489, and 55–64.
98 *Beowulf*, line 2209.
99 *Beowulf*, lines 455, 2195–2199.

so similar?"[100] but does not offer an answer. Tolkien dismisses the similarity as "purely accidental."[101] But the two names, Ecgtheow and Ecglaf, are surely not a coincidence, or an accident. *Beowulf* normally alliterates the names of men in the same family—fathers with sons, brothers with brothers, uncles with nephews—and Beowulf and Hunferth's fathers' names not only alliterate but share a common first element, just as Hrothgar, Hrothmund, and Hrothulf (father/uncle, son, and nephew, respectively) do. Tolkien posits a sort of "matter of Denmark" tradition of which Hunferth, along with his patronymic, was already an established part,[102] but Beowulf is probably the poet's own creation and he is not included in those sources that mention other semihistorical characters in the poem such as Hrothgar and Ingeld.[103] Even assuming a "matter of Denmark" tradition, for which we have little evidence, Beowulf's name and his father's name are the creation of the poet and therefore could have been anything. Yet Beowulf and Hunferth's fathers have alliterating names based on a matching name element, and, strangely, Hunferth and Beowulf are the two of the very few male characters of the poem whose names do *not* alliterate with their own fathers.[104] Even the two characters' names are similar: Beowulf has long been proposed to mean *bee's wolf* or bear,[105] and Fulk and Silber both suggest that Hunferth's name could mean something like "spirit of the bear cub,"[106] which suggests a family connection, legendary or totemic, to a bear. These facts do not and cannot definitively prove that Beowulf and Hunferth are related, but they are suggestive, and they are not coincidental. At the very least, they raise the question why the poet would give the two fathers, and the two sons, these particular and very similar names, if not to make a point or a connection. And if Ecgtheow and Ecglaf were brothers, father and son, or uncle and nephew, there is even the possibility that Hunferth's presence at the Danish court, like Beowulf's presence there as a child, stems from Ecgtheow's killing;[107]

100 Silber, "Hunferth," 24.

101 J.R.R. Tolkien and Sellic Spell, trans., *Beowulf: A Translation and Commentary* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2014), 254.

102 Tolkien and Spell, *Beowulf*, 252–53.

103 King, "Transforming the Hero," 47.

104 Silber, "Hunferth," 125; King, "Transforming the Hero," 47. Scyld and Beow, and Beow and his son Healfdene, also do not alliterate with each other.

105 Silber, "Unferth: Another Look," 109–11. Andy Orchard also mentions the proposed meaning, though he disputes it: *A Critical Companion to* Beowulf (Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 2003), 121.

106 Fulk, "Unferth and his Name," 125; Silber, "Unferth: Another Look," 109–11.

107 Interestingly, Ecgtheow's victim, Heatholaf, *does* alliterate with Hunferth (*Beowulf*, line 460a). Could Hunferth have been caught between his father's Ecg- kin and his mother's kin, much like Hildeburh's son is caught between Finn's kin and the Danes?

perhaps Ecglaf and Ecgtheow fled to Denmark together, or perhaps Ecgtheow fled to his kinsman Ecglaf already established in the Danish court.

Conclusions

Viewing the exchange between Hunferth and Beowulf as incitement solves many critical puzzles. The first, and most commented on, is why Hrothgar and the Danish court do not object to Hunferth's speech, but actually rejoice afterwards.[108] Most critics conclude, with good reason, that no one rebukes Hunferth because his challenge stems, in one way or another, from his position as *þyle*, whatever interpretation they give that office.[109] While I accept this explanation, they do not explain why Beowulf's speech, with its insinuations of fratricide and cowardice, inspire no rebuke or even a cessation of joy. Incitement, however, would explain both men's remarks and the happiness of the Danish court after the conversation. If the exchange is incitement, both men have behaved properly, Hunferth by inciting the hero to perform better, and Beowulf by vowing to do so. As incitement often inspires anger, Beowulf's insults against Hunferth and the Danes in general can be dismissed, just as Flosi's charges that Hildegunn is "ruthless" and a "Monster" are dropped without comment once Flosi is properly incited in *Njal's Saga*.[110] Since Beowulf has sworn to kill Grendel, the Danes can afford to be generous and joyful.

Incitement also explains Hunferth's silence at seeing Grendel's severed arm in lines 980–984a. Hollowell, for instance, thinks the silence "ironic" for a *þyle* and that it indicates his shame at his own heroic inadequacy.[111] But this silence changes completely in the context of incitement. If the exchange is incitement, why should Hunferth say anything after Grendel's death? Consider the other cases of incitement discussed in this chapter: Láeg and Bricriu's incitements of Cú Chulainn, Bergthora's incitement of her sons, Rannveig and Gunnar's incitements of Hogni, the two Thorgeirs' inciting each other, and Hildegunn's incitement of Flosi. In none of these cases does the inciter comment on the hero's achievement after the incitement has worked. If Hunferth is inciting Beowulf, Grendel's arm proves that the

108 Gingher, "Unferth Perplex," 19–20; Puhvel, *Cause and Effect*, 20–21; Hollowell, "Unferð the Þyle," 254–55; Eliason, "Þyle and Scop," 267 and 71.

109 Ogilvy, "Unferth: Foil to Beowulf?," 34; Karasawa, "Hrothgar," 34–35; Donovan, "Þyle as Fool," 91–92; Enright, "Warband Context," 310; Gingher, "Unferth Perplex," 22–23.

110 *Njal's Saga*, 239–40.

111 Hollowell, "Unferð the Þyle," 244–45 and 56–57.

incitement worked. The silence read as Hunferth's shame and comeuppance may actually be the satisfaction that his incitement has had more than the desired effect.

Similarly, incitement explains the apparent lack of grudge between Hunferth and Beowulf, demonstrated in the loan of Hrunting. Incitement carries no grudge. Cú Chulainn *asks* his charioteer Láeg to incite him, and though Láeg claims that Fer Diad "belabours you as flag-heads(?) [*sic*] are beaten in a pond," there are no hard feelings later.[112] Nor do Njal's sons carry a grudge against their mother for inciting them. It would be inappropriate for Beowulf or Hunferth to be angry about the incitement after the combat with Grendel is finished, and the text does not indicate that Beowulf is angry at Hunferth beyond his initial response. The poem tells us directly that Hunferth does not bear a grudge either:

> Hūru ne gemunde mago Ecglāfes
> eafoþes cræftig, þæt hē ær gespræc
> wīne druncen, þā hē þæs wǣpnes onlah
> sēlran sweordfrecan [...][113]
>
> Indeed, when he lent the weapon to the better sword-warrior, Ecglaf's kinsman, skillful of might, did not bear in mind[114] what he, having drunk wine, spoke earlier.

In cases of incitement, the lack of grudge against the inciter rarely inspires narrative comment; it is worth noting that the poet feels the need to remind us of that here. But it is unclear whether the "he" who spoke is Beowulf or Hunferth, whether Hunferth is not bearing his own speech in mind or is disregarding Beowulf's insults. In either case, Hunferth has no ill will about it, since neither set of insults is truly meant, just as Láeg does not truly mean the insults he offers Cú Chulainn.

Incitement and the possible kinship between Beowulf and Hunferth together explain why Hunferth is willing to lend his sword to Beowulf. This sword, Hrunting, is the most highly described and highly praised

112 *Táin*, 207.

113 *Beowulf*, lines 1465–1468a.

114 Baker and Hollowell both suggest the translation of *gemunde* as "bore in mind" rather than "remember," and that Hunferth was not too drunk to remember the exchange. Baker argues that the loan is meaningless if Hunferth cannot remember the exchange. Baker, *Honour*, 95; Hollowell, "Unferð the Þyle," 258, n.

weapon in *Beowulf*,[115] and it may in fact be the most impressive sword in Denmark, since it has never failed in battle.[116] Several critics believe the loan is Hunferth's apology or peace offering,[117] or a way to gain glory in the fight against Grendel's mother without actually risking his own neck.[118] Considering that Beowulf may well end up being defeated in the mere, and the sword lost forever, such a loan carries an enormous risk if it is intended merely as an apology or a long shot at reflected glory.[119] But the loan makes much more sense in the context of incitement: with no grudge, there is no need for peacemaking, and Hunferth, as inciter, has a close relationship, and is possibly kin, to Beowulf. These facts explain Hunferth's willingness to lend Hrunting: he is trying to preserve his kinsman's life, as well as defeat Grendel's mother. The close relationship implied in incitement also explains Beowulf's countergift: "'Ond þū Unferð lǣt ealde lāfe/ wrǣtlic wǣgsweord widcūðne man/ heardecg habban'" ("And let Hunferth, widely known man, have the old heirloom, splendid hard-edged wave-sword").[120] Beowulf offers another heirloom—and a precious one, at that—to Hunferth. Hill has shown that gifts of swords in *Beowulf* often mark succession.[121] Swords pass between family members as well: Beowulf later receives his grandfather's sword, and the old ash-warrior argues that the young champion ought to own his father's sword.[122] In such a context, an exchange of valuable swords between kinsmen, biological or adopted,[123] makes more sense than such gifts between strangers, even for official or diplomatic purposes.

Viewing the exchange between Hunferth and Beowulf as incitement offers plausible answers to many critical questions in the poem, but it raises several others. The study of incitement in *Beowulf* opens a very troubling problem:

115 Donovan, "Þyle as Fool," 278.

116 *Beowulf*, lines 1460b–1464a.

117 Baker, *Honour*, 101; Irving, *Rereading Beowulf*, 45; Enright, "Warband Context," 310; King, "Transforming the Hero," 59; Fulk, "Unferth and his Name," 127.

118 Baker, *Honour*, 95.

119 Baker, *Honour*, 98.

120 *Beowulf*, lines 1488–1490a.

121 John M. Hill, "Beowulf and the Danish Succession: Gift Giving as an Occasion for Complex Gesture," *Medievalia et Humanistica* 11 (1982), 177–92.

122 *Beowulf*, lines 2190–2194 and 3055–56.

123 Hrothgar gives Beowulf a royal treasure-sword once belonging to his brother Heorogar in lines 1020–1024. Soon afterwards, in lines 1175–1176a, Wealtheow comments that Hrothgar wishes to adopt Beowulf. Hill and Raw take this to mean that Hrothgar is not only adopting Beowulf but placing him in line for the Danish throne: "Beowulf and the Danish Succession," 184–85; Barbara Raw, "Royal Power and Royal Symbols in *Beowulf*," in *The Age of Sutton Hoo: The Seventh Century in North-Western Europe*, ed. M.O.H. Carter (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 1992), 167–74, at 172.

the direct correlation between incitement and the perpetuation of feud, a connection clearly made in the Freawaru episode. Further exploration of this connection could benefit the already active study of the depiction of feuds in the poem. We might also ask why incitement is missing from the dragon episode: Wiglaf's extended shaming of his shoulder companions comes after the battle with the dragon, instead of beforehand, where it might have served as incitement (and done some good). This chapter's focus on Hunferth limits my discussion to negative incitement, incitement through shame and insult, but the role of positive incitement in *Beowulf*, including praise, encouragement, and the promise of reward, also merits discussion. And, most pertinent to our current discussion, why does Beowulf's report to Hygelac omit Hunferth and his incitement completely, and, significantly, narrate instead the speculative Freawaru episode, with its disturbing incitement?[124] Studies of these and related issues will, I hope, lead to a better understanding of the thematic and cultural significances of incitement in *Beowulf*.[125]

About the author

M. Wendy Hennequin is an Associate Professor of English at Tennessee State University, where she teaches everything from early world literature to Gothic novels. She publishes frequently on Old English literature (usually *Beowulf*), on medieval influences on modern literature, and on pedagogy; she is also a published poet.

124 *Beowulf*, lines 2020–2069a. Beowulf also elides the loan of Hrunting from his account of his adventures with Grendel's mother, though he mentions the murdered Æschere by name and alludes to his discovery of the giant-made sword (lines 2017b–2040a).

125 I would like to thank Corrie Bergeron, Sarah Barott, and the leaders and members of the 2015 National Endowment for the Humanities Irish Sea Cultural Province seminar for their support and suggestions.

3. Cú Chulainn Unbound

Ron J. Popenhagen

Abstract

A scholar of drama and dance, Ron J. Popenhagen advances our understanding of the somatic basis of the medieval Irish hero Cú Chulainn's heroism—that is, the remarkably exposed and shifting state(s) of his body as evident in saga literature when it describes his performance in battle. "Performance" is indeed the key word, for, as Popenhagen observes, Cú Chulainn like other heroes of the medieval Irish Sea milieu, triumphs by virtue not only of the remarkable feats of which he and/or his body are capable, but also of his theatrical presentation of himself.

Keywords: Cú Chulainn, warrior, *Táin*, *ríastrad*, theatricality, gesture

In the centuries bracketed by the Roman incursions into Britain and the Viking invasions of Ireland and the Scottish isles, Cú Chulainn is the most noted Irish warrior. His exploits exemplify the heroic Irish warrior of the early medieval era. Cú Chulainn is a fearless fighter of unprecedented agility—a leaping, dodging, lunging competitor capable of calculated, high-speed assault. His kinetic energy and superior weapon-casting style of combat distinguish him from all more conventional warriors of the first millennium CE in Europe. While popular narrative traditions—and often medieval iconography—represent warriors as armored, helmeted bulky figure, Cú Chulainn in the *Táin Bó Cúailnge* (*The Cattle Raid of Cooley*) battles body-unbound. In "Irish warfare before 1100," T.M. Charles-Edwards states that "even nobles went into battle without helmets or mail-shirts."[1]

The employment of metallic gear in early medieval Ireland was atypical. This was likely a culturally based choice rather than an economic or

1 T.M. Charles-Edwards, "Irish Warfare before 1100," in *A Military History of Ireland*, ed. Thomas Bartlett and Keith Jeffery (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 26–51, at 27.

MacQuarrie, Charles W. and Joseph Falaky Nagy (eds), *The Medieval Cultures of the Irish Sea and the North Sea. Manannán and His Neighbors*. Taylor & Francis Group, 2019
DOI: 10.5117/9789462989399/CH03

technological one. As J.P.Mallory concludes in his contribution to *Aspects of the Táin*, the narrative of the *Táin* is consistent with warfare in the centuries prior to the eighth century of the Common Era.[2] Twenty-first-century archeology suggests that by the last centuries of the first millennium, England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales had the technical capacity to encase and hide the warrior body in metal. The Staffordshire hoard[3] and burial-mound digs in Woodbridge, East Anglia,[4] have provided helmet and armor fragments that date from the sixth and seventh centuries. To date, these pieces are the earliest objects that confirm the use of metal armor by residents of Britain.

While metallic armor was particularly ubiquitous from 1300 to 1800 CE—from the Isle of Man to the islands of Japan—Cú Chulainn's notoriety is based upon a style of combat that is in direct opposition to such protection. Full-body armors, intimidating even in museums, evoke limited athletic dynamism in their stillness and their vacant stares from helm-heads. In the Ireland of the *Táin Bó Cúailnge* ambulating body-cases are not in play. The moments of costume armoring and partial hard-material armoring are rare, and when they do appear their intent is either to exhibit dramatic flair or to daunt and bully; their effectiveness as body-shields is negligible. The Irish Gaelic tradition is noted for "applauding the man in arms, the hero who displayed 'reckless bravery' [and] […] the individual warrior fighting alone."[5] In Ireland it appears that the tradition of the unprotected and unencumbered warrior persisted longer than in other insular cultures. Irish fighters who wore full armor in later centuries were likely working elsewhere as professionals. In their overview of Irish military history, Bartlett and Jeffery explain that the impressive bold and brave reputation of these medieval insular fighters meant that "Irish mercenaries were in demand in Europe because of their ferocity and their willingness to put up with hardships."[6]

2 J.P. Mallory, "The World of Cú Chulainn: The Archaeology of *Táin Bó Cúailnge*," in *Aspects of the Táin*, ed. J.P. Mallory (Belfast: December Publications, 1992), 103–59, at 152. Mallory states that "the material culture of the *Táin* is either demonstrably or probably later than the 4th century AD, i.e. the 'pagan' Irish Iron Age."

3 Gareth Williams, "Wealth and Warfare: Interpreting the Contents of the Staffordshire Hoard," Screencast, Society of the Antiquaries of Scotland, http://screencast.com/users/simongilmour/folders/Society%20Lectures/media/67e95639-5806-4f60-98bb-5c3050ae0e60 (accessed 1 September 2016).

4 "AD 700—Sutton Hoo," *Current Archeology* [online journal], uploaded 24 May 2007, www.archaeology.co.uk/specials/the-timeline-of-britain/sutton-hoo.htm (accessed 1 September 2016).

5 Bartlett and Jeffery, "An Irish Military Tradition?," in Bartlett and Jeffery, *Military History*, 1–25, at 10.

6 "Irish Military Tradition?," 13

With iconic warrior Cú Chulainn, gestural skill and full-body mobility—particularly offence—prove superior to defensive measures like armoring. Cú Chulainn's heroism is not built upon excessive posturing, intimidation, or social position; his combat achievements are the basis for his status as an extraordinary fighter—lithe and malleable rather than a dominating mass of pig-headed muscle. Throughout the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, Cú Chulainn demonstrates gestural invention and brilliance. In action his entire being is in focus—all "seven toes on each of his feet; seven fingers on each of his hands."[7] His intense gaze, too, stretches his occupation of the space radiating in all directions around him. The head of Cú Chulainn was at the center of his circle of influence. "In his eyes, the blazing of a huge fire[.]"[8] His body—the target of so many—constantly advancing with the hair of his head spinning and whiplashing back-and-forth—"[a] hundred bright crimson twists red-gold red-flaming about his neck."[9] With unprecedented warrior and weapons skills, Cú Chulainn's unique athleticism, his "festive self-display,"[10] and his alarming physique fueled by "martial energy"[11] startle all who meet him in battle.

In *A Military History,* Bartlett and Jeffery introduce "martial characteristics" of warriors from the early Irish sagas.[12] They suggest that admirable warrior qualities may have included "reckless daring, spectacular ferocity and indomitable courage" (compatible with Cú Chulainn as staged in the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*); Bartlett and Jeffery then suggest three less commendable characteristics of the Irish fighter: "simplemindedness, guilelessness and even witlessness."[13] Cú Chulainn is, in contrast, not lacking intelligence or an informed, wide perspective; he is both sharp and cunning. His fine fighter instincts are not naïve; his concentration and intensity produce results. He is capable of deep, penetrating thought which could be misinterpreted as singlemindedness. Still, he is gesturally impulsive; one can regard his

7 Cecile O'Rahilly, ed. and trans., *Táin Bó Cúailnge: Recension 1* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1976), 205 (henceforth abbreviated *TBC*1). Throughout, I rely on O'Rahilly's translation of this text, the oldest surviving recension of the *Táin*.

8 *TBC*1, 205.

9 Cecile O'Rahilly, ed. and trans., *Táin Bó Cúailnge from the Book of Leinster* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1967), 204 (henceforth abbreviated *TBC*2). Throughout, I rely on O'Rahilly's translation of this text, the second-oldest surviving recension of the *Táin*.

10 Ann Dooley, *Playing the Hero: Reading the Irish Saga Táin Bó Cúailnge* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 131.

11 Joseph Falaky Nagy, "Heroic Destinies in the *Macgnímrada* of Finn and Cú Chulainn," *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 40 (1984), 23–29, at 27.

12 Bartlett and Jeffrey, "Irish Military Tradition?," 1.

13 Bartlett and Jeffrey, "Irish Military Tradition?," 1–2.

erupting distortion incursions as signs of erratic behavior. For Fergus, advisor to Medb and Ailill (and Medb's lover), there is not "a wolf more bloodthirsty nor a hero more fierce."[14] Cú Chulainn separates himself from the pack with his wise, strategic defense acumen; he is an Irishman who possesses the survival instinct of a hunter pursued as prey.

In this essay I will explain how the fictional Cú Chulainn staged (or *mis en scène*) in the *Táin Bó Cúailnge* emerges as an up-front, fully human but troubling Irish warrior who is by no means a two-dimensional figure. In *Flesh and Word*, Sarah Künzler argues that Cú Chulainn's body is "polyvalent" and "polysemous."[15] Certainly we experience a range of faces, physical attitudes, and identities that accumulate in the memory; images layer, angle, and overlap constructing a virtually cubist fighter. Still, within the narrative, Cú Chulainn cuts a distinct figure on the battlefield while remaining complex and unpredictable. He has onstage (in-combat) and offstage (quotidian-interplay) moments: bold/shy, beautiful/grotesque, meek/violent, admirable/deplorable, an actor capable of communicating sublime silence.

Gesture and Masking

After a thorough reading of the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, one imagines Cú Chulainn as the "envisioned hero"[16] of the *Táin*—a *personage* with a finely developed social mask and a highly focused and volatile countermask; the countermask contains and sometimes conceals his "*furor heroicus*."[17] (The mask metaphor is further developed below.) Cú Chulainn's wild side requires—at moments of greatest intensity—strong material restraint. Binding his body in special circumstances assists Cú Chulainn's control of his martial enthusiasm. In "Monsters of the Tribe," Ralph O'Connor elaborates upon Cú Chulainn's "stage-managing" of his own behavior with convincing arguments and excellent detail.[18] (More on this below.) Throughout my discussion of Cú Chulainn's gestural freedom, I remain attentive to the "performative

14 *TBC*2, 157.

15 Sarah Künzler, *Flesh and Word: Reading Bodies in Old Norse-Icelandic and Early Irish Literature* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2016), 73–74.

16 Dooley, *Playing the Hero*, 74.

17 P.L. Henry, "*Furor heroicus*," *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 39 (1982), 235–42, at 242.

18 Ralph O'Connor, "Monsters of the Tribe: Berserk Fury, Shapeshifting and Social Dysfunction in *Táin bó Cúailnge*, *Egils saga* and *Hrólfs saga kraka*," in *Kings and Warriors in Early North-West Europe*, ed. Jan Erik Rekdal and Charles Doherty (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2016), 180–236, at 218.

underpinning of heroic behavior"[19] as particularized by Nagy's analysis of leaping and the "heroic trajectory" in medieval Irish tales.[20]

Because of Cú Chulainn's fighting style and his unique body-form expansion and contraction capabilities, protective armoring is not a major feature in his body image. Limiting the movement of his arms and legs and weighing down or obstructing his head rotation, I suggest, risks suppressing his kinetic talents, partially muting his vocal communication and restricting his facial expressivity. Master of multi-head decapitations, Cú Chulainn meets his adversaries bare-necked and boy-faced (unexpectedly beardless). The rapidity and lightness of Cú Chulainn's gestures contrasts significantly with the slowed-down movements of later medieval knights in cumbersome armor—like those surrounding the legendary King Arthur of Britain. Cú Chulainn—the accomplished soloist—dismembers scores of fine Irish warriors in one-on-one combat and battles of one against many in his efforts to protect the Bull of Cúailnge from Medb and Ailill's army. He is acknowledged as a doer of deeds by Láeg, Cú Chulainn's charioteer and friend, who declares that Cú Chulainn possesses "the gift of form, the gift of build, the gift of swimming, [and] the gift of horsemanship[.]" In addition to his excellence as a sportsman, he stands apart because of "the gift of sight, the gift of speech, [and] the gift of counsel[.]"[21] Cú Chulainn is more than an accomplished body-in-action; he is a committed, motivated driving force with purpose; he is an act-or with obligations and an audience. Even in his seventeenth year, this "strong, fierce Hound," armed with sling, spear, or sword, is unmatched in his abilities to attack, react, and counter.[22] His impressive "List of the Feats" includes performing "[…] the feat with horizontally-held shield, the javelin-feat, the rope-feat […] the cat-feat, the hero's salmon-leap, […] the feat of quickness (?), the hero's war-cry, […] the well-measured blow, the return-stroke, [and] the mounting on a spear and straightening the body on its point[.]"[23]

For Cú Chulainn a protective helmet of any significant height or width would immediately impact his head mobility. And given the extent and style of his physical activity, function-based helmeting is inappropriate; he needs no helm unless it is for a decorative or theatrical purpose. Cú Chulainn's

19 Joseph Falaky Nagy, "Hurtling Búan and the Heroic Trajectory," in *Ulidia 2: Proceedings of the Second International Conference on the Ulster Cycle of Tales*, ed. Brian Ó Catháin and Ruairí Ó hUiginn (Maigh Nuad: An Sagart, 2009), 1–17, at 3.

20 See Nagy, "Hurtling Búan."

21 *TBC*2, 152.

22 *TBC*2, 154.

23 *TBC*1, 173.

movement is of primary importance and it must not be slowed; he cannot risk losing his mobile edginess or delaying his reaction time. As with all masking devices, helmets interrupt peripheral vision, muffle sounds, and warp hearing with vibrating earlids. Even partial-face-covering helmets debilitate when the projected voice shoots up into the skull casing and ricochets in all directions. Therefore certain costumed moments in the *Táin* startle with their counter-to-Cú Chulainn-ness.

"Then he [Cú Chulainn] put on his crested war-helmet of battle and strife and conflict, from which was uttered the shout of a hundred warriors with a long-drawn-out cry from every corner and angle of it."[24] Clearly the power is centered in the voice in this instance; the helmet is but a body accessory and not a vital component of Cú Chulainn's warrior functioning. (The reader must imagine a pitch-and-tone transformation of his substantial, probably baritone voice converted into something utterly bovine in quality—muffled, potentially ineffective, and utterly unwarriorlike.) Donning the decorative crest is more a drama-increasing stage direction than an act of practical preparation. However, Cú Chulainn's vocal power gains in hyperbole with the detail provided here. Such a skull-encircling helm-cymbal would soon earn from Cú Chulainn a formidable toss across the Irish Sea to Skye, place-naming several stones in its aftermath.

As the gifted one, Cú Chulainn has publicly acknowledged proficiencies beyond other champion warriors. His "distortion"-experience phenomena—the *ríastrad* or warp-spasm—separate him from his fellow fighters, friend and foe alike. These "almost supernatural displays of aggression," as characterized by Jeremy Lowe,[25] are magical-mystical solo acts that demonstrate Cú Chulainn's capacity to alter his muscle dimensions, create new body shapes, and execute extraordinary martial gestures and maneuvers. For Lowe, the distortions are "irrational," exhibiting Cú Chulainn as "a terrifying force beyond anything that is recognizably human."[26] Cú Chulainn's extra-pliable flesh and blood do transform and reform into shapes that are almost unidentifiable, perhaps even unnamable. (Cú Chulainn's *ríastrad* adds deeper meaning to Dooley's use of the phrase: "beneath the narrative skin."[27])

24 *TBC*1, 201. This passage comes from the *Breslech Mór Maige Muirthemne* (The great rout of Mag Muirthemne) section of the text, in which we find the most detailed description of how Cú Chulainn and his charioteer prepare and dress for battle.

25 Jeremy Lowe, "Kicking over the Traces: The Instability of Cú Chulainn," *Studia Celtica* 34 (2000), 119–29, at 121.

26 Lowe "Kicking over the Traces," 122.

27 Dooley, *Playing the Hero*, 17.

The *ríastrad* (or *síabrad*, as O'Connor notes[28]) is an "act of contorting"[29] where the musculature has extraordinary mobility; muscles, tendons, organ systems extend, bulge, or shrink into themselves. The skin too has abnormal elasticity which allows reshaping, retexturing, and the added tonal power of color variation. "Cú Chulainn the Distorted One" utilizes this aptitude for changes in appearance during flashes of elevated fury—particularly temperature-rising rage.[30] When fully within the distortion experience, Cú Chulainn is overcome—virtually possessed. If possessed, however, his is a possession by the self—a larger or smaller, less vertical, oblique body identity that, one imagines, breathes and pulses at atypical tempos. In O'Connor's framing of the *ríastrad* as borderline rational, he associates Cú Chulainn's seemingly out-of-control-ness with a modern soldier's potential entry into a "trance-like state of psychic dislocation or adrenaline-rush in which extreme violence becomes possible."[31]

The multiple change options within Cú Chulainn's body form make the addition of fixed-form armor superfluous; with his unique superhuman skin surface, bulky fixity-in-form is an outmoded alternative for safeguarding the body. During the distortion Cú Chulainn's skill set and body memory drive his body forward into action as tactician-designer, choreographer, and exhibition athlete. Fantastic feats of weapons manipulation and bizarre circuslike dives and ascents are performed by Cú Chulainn while in this state of energized displacement. "He swelled and grew big as a bladder does when inflated and became a fearsome, terrible, many-coloured, strange arch, and the valiant hero towered high above."[32] Cú Chulainn's body architecture dissolves and transforms. In this contorted élan of being, warrior Cú Chulainn surpasses the limits of his own once-defined form. The skeletal frame miraculously adjusts to the demands of overresilient muscles and the pulsating skin surface. The *ríastrad* becomes a scenographic event of perceptual skin fluidity—quakes, sinkholes, and eruptions animating the dermascape. But Cú Chulainn feels no pain in his pumped-up state; he is looking ahead with no impulse to recede into self-reflection.

Near the midpoint of the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, with skin ripped and flesh torn, the severely overtaxed and exhausted Cú Chulainn receives medical attention from his father from the otherworld, Lug, who takes his place on

28 O'Connor, "Monsters of the Tribe," 189.

29 From the entry under *ríastrad* in the *Electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language* or *eDIL*, www.dil.ie (accessed 1 September 2016).

30 *TBC*1, 171.

31 O'Connor, "Monsters of the Tribe," 180.

32 *TBC*2, 228.

the battlefield. Following a deep sleep, the wounded warrior reawakens and learns of the casualties that the Ulstermen have suffered during his recovery time away from battle. Cú Chulainn's fury rises, and powerful oscillations commence with the distortion:

> He became horrible, many-shaped, strange, and unrecognisable. His haunches shook about him like a tree against a current or a bulrush against a stream, every limb and every joint, every end and every member of him from head to foot. He performed a wild feat of contortion with his body inside his skin.[33]

With undulating motion the *ríastrad* repackages Cú Chulainn's body form; his skin morphs as he assumes the contours of whatever pushes outward from within or shrinks inward. "His feet and his shins and his knees came to the back; his heels and his calves and his hams came to the front. The sinews of his calves came to the front of his shins and each huge, round knot of them was as big as a warrior's fist."[34] The reader imagines an active interior network of skin layers, nerves, and tendons below Cú Chulainn's shifting skin surface.

> Then his face became a red hollow (?). He sucked one of his eyes into his head so that a wild crane could hardly have reached it to pluck it out from the back of his skull on to the middle of his cheek. The other eye sprang out onto his cheek. His mouth was twisted back fearsomely. He drew the cheek back from the jawbone until his inner gullet was seen. His lungs and his liver fluttered in this mouth and his throat.[35]

The head façade meets the storm within, prompting turmoil from the gullet of the neck to the lower abdomen. The quotidian mask is inhaled and gasped into the torso; the face terrorizes the head as a mutating surface. During this highly theatricalized episode of the *ríastrad*, the skin-mask structurally alters Cú Chulainn's jaw, mouth, and eyes. The new *persona*—a distorted reverse image of the original—is a countermask that is expressively counternatural—an antisocial adaptation. The pre-*ríastrad* Cú Chulainn—so familiar to the reader—lingers in the memory as grotesque *fantasia*-like transformations of his body are projected in its place. Like an invisible body

33 *TBC*2, 201.
34 *TBC*2, 201.
35 *TBC*2, 201–2.

armor —with no material substance—the skin contortions guard the body from some attacks by creating a moving target.

The morphing moments of the *ríastrad* play like temporary identity-disguises that delay Cú Chulainn's forward-moving action. He is not absent from the event; he—his body—is the event. As a masked player in a drama, "the actor simultaneously 'is' and 'isn't' there. The body is present, but changed. The mask, too, may seem to fluctuate according to the body's movements. It may present many faces as light and angle alter its image. The spectators view this mutating phenomenon in a space where 'is' and 'isn't' intersect, an arena that is sometimes here and other times elsewhere."[36] Perceptually, as I argue in "Embodiments of the Mask," the performer "acquires a degree of 'thing-ness' that crystalizes and poeticizes the stage picture as it widens the scope of spectator inclusion."[37] In this sense I find the *ríastrad* (as described in the passages quoted above) to be an immersive reader experience—a cyclonic turn into the eye of the storm.

Cú Chulainn—the fictional human being—is not absent nor has he departed during the distortion process. He-the-man is contained and veiled by a surface that projects hybrid-monster images with avian, bovine, canine, *fauve*-like, fishlike, and reptilian qualities; it is a cinema of the skin. I suggest, then, that Cú Chulainn does not "become" a monster any more than a masked *Nō* actor becomes a demon. The change is an illusory act of "play" and good theatre; it is—in passing—fantastic but impermanent. Poet and theorist Antonin Artaud wrote that the actor—a motivated doer of deeds like Cú Chulainn—requires an "affective musculature" and must be an "athlete of the heart."[38] He or she invents and presents emotionally charged images through gesture, but they are, by nature, ephemeral. The identity-image of Cú Chulainn passes by as a parade of abstracted bodies that are nonetheless connected to his own physicality by extension.

In a provocative essay on "Warrior Time," Morgan Thomas Davies notes that Cú Chulainn "seems to lose himself in a timeless present, subject to the exigencies of appetite or rage."[39] Davies vividly explains that Cú Chulainn demonstrates "absolute absorption in his present actions."[40] His play of

36 Ron J. Popenhagen, "Embodiments of the Mask," PhD diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 1994, 73.

37 Popenhagen, "Embodiments of the Mask," 81.

38 Antonin Artaud, *The Theater and its Double*, trans. Mary Caroline Richards (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 133.

39 Morgan Thomas Davies, "Warrior Time," in Rekdal and Doherty, *Kings and Warriors*, 237–309, at 283.

40 Davies, "Warrior Time," 281.

body-distorting visuality unfolds as if time-tempo has changed. In an "open text" reading of the *Táin Bó Cúailnge* (as investigated by Dooley[41]) the reader can experience this time-warping, which may seemingly speed some transformations and decelerate others into slow motion. The *ríastrad* is rhythmically incompatible with real (daily) time; its realness is contained and viable within the fictive world of the narrative. Cú Chulainn's focus pulls the reader into his personal space and rhythm, into close proximity of his head spins and sword slashes. His dense, over-the-top state of being is spatially and temporally experienced as compression. Davies states that Cú Chulainn's "obliviousness seems to stem from a kind of world-annihilating power of concentration."[42] During these moments of total immersion in the *ríastrad*, his warrior fury loses its direct, frontal engagement; there is a momentary loss of the eye-to-eye, gaze-to-gaze interplay apparent in arm-to-arm combat. As a twenty-first-century reader I perceive the distortion as a "flow experience" or hyperfocus where the boundaries of quotidian displacement and gestural function are surpassed.[43]

The suspended-time, immersive distortion allows Cú Chulainn an elongated moment for tactical reflection and somatic refocusing. After the *ríastrad* time of "absorption" passes,[44] Cú Chulainn shifts back into full-blown frontality—forward-aim and attack—and out of his concentric-force isolation. His unrestricted, highly efficient body shifts into killing-outcome mode and advances with the precise execution of intended actions. The fighter physiognomy returns as an enhanced social mask of confrontation; his warrior head—in full kinetic liberty—is set to confront challengers and allies with an alert, masklike gaze that intrudes and demands attention. This post-*ríastrad* warrior—Cú Chulainn-in-action—aligns with Davies' portrait of the fighter "facing up to mortality and acting in the full knowledge and acceptance of it."[45] In his materially unprotected position—unbound and free—Cú Chulainn is not invincible. He remains vulnerable; he can be mortally wounded.

The degree of out-of-control-ness in the "distorted sprite"[46] during the spasms is an issue of some controversy. Is Cú Chulainn unhinged and just

41 Dooley, *Playing the Hero*, 7.

42 Davies, "Warrior Time," 282.

43 See Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990), and other works by Csikszentmihalyi texts and articles on deep concentration and "being in the zone."

44 Davies, "Warrior Time," 281.

45 Davies, "Warrior Time," 286.

46 *TBC*2, 184.

going with the flow during the *ríastrad*? Is a straightjacket required should the distortion never end? Does the *ríastrad* serve as a sort of pre-Christian "spiritual armour" protector?[47] Jeremy Lowe argues that Cú Chulainn's "warp-spasm is the literalized spectacle of unchecked violence," an exhibition of antisocial behavior.[48] This, Lowe states, subverts Cú Chulainn's reputation as revered and emulated champion warrior of Ireland.[49] He associates Cú Chulainn with the *abject* (something bodily "disgusting or terrifying" in Lowe's words[50]), a concept defined and developed by Julia Kristeva in her theorizing of the Other. It cannot be denied that Cú Chulainn's warrior fury reaches frightening heights of ugly image and rampage. He does suddenly become one on the outside; one who is not the same; one who should be kept apart. His character countermask knows no bounds, it seems. It is unsettling to contemplate a warrior figure of national-hero status who can embody Caliban-ish earthiness, plus Richard III tenacity and Titus Andronicus-like ferocity alongside glorified heroics, all of which come together in the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*. However, as O'Connor argues, we do not need to read Cú Chulainn's transitory-theriomorphic and *berserkr*-like moments as "social dysfunction, madness and monstrosity."[51] (O'Connor draws a distinction between warrior frenzy/battle rage and the "going berserk"—*berserksgangr*—phenomenon in medieval Scandinavian sagas.[52])

In her study *Flesh and Word*, Künzler develops the argument that the *ríastrad* is a complete metamorphosis of Cú Chulainn into an "other"-worldly being-body. She proposes that Cú Chulainn is a "man trying to control his excessive heroic nature;"[53] he is a warrior in flux between two separate bodies. His duality as shape-shifting human-hound-hero and part-godly outsider (with access to magical practices) creates a serious management problem for the warrior.[54] Künzler asserts that in the narrative tradition of the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, "the body is identity, and identity is the body":[55]

47 Marged Haycock employs this term in her discussion of warfare and medieval Welsh poetry, "Living with War: Poets and the Welsh Experience *c.* 600–1300," in Rekdal and Doherty, *Kings and Warriors*, 24–87, at 84.

48 Jeremy Lowe, "Contagious Violence and the Spectacle of Death in *Táin Bó Cúailnge*," in *Language and Tradition in Ireland*, ed. Maria Tymoczko and Colin Ireland (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 84–100, at 95.

49 Lowe, "Contagious Violence," 84–100.

50 Lowe, "Kicking over the Traces," 120.

51 Davies, "Monsters of the Tribe," 188.

52 Davies, "Monsters of the Tribe," 190.

53 Künzler, *Flesh and Word*, 225.

54 Künzler, *Flesh and Word*, 227–236.

55 Künzler, *Flesh and Word*, 63.

from the perspective of a two-bodied Cú Chulainn, the public-relations difficulties quickly come into focus—he has a "shifting and unreliable" identity (a public image with two body forms).[56] Künzler concludes that Cú Chulainn's transgressive, changing nature is indeed threatening to society: out-of-control violence results when "the beautiful face of a hero is turned into that of an ugly destroyer."[57] Is one of the masks of Cú Chulainn the real and true while the other is only a visualized face? The intense moments of distortion are not daily phenomena, and so there is good reason to see their occasional manifestations as dangerous excursions into the unknown. The physical power of the *ríastrad* allows one to imagine Cú Chulainn's body fragmenting or being ripped into small parts. Self-harm seems a real possibility; harm to others is practically assured.

Cú Chulainn's "sanity-shirts," as O'Connor terms them,[58] coat his torso with excessive fabric layers in order to calm and control his rising anger. This onstage costume-change scene—reminiscent of a *Nō* actor's entrance preparation—details the construction of a buffoonish, inhabitable body-mask with animal-hide finish. Worthy of a Bauhaus dancer, the resulting dimensions hinder freedom of movement for the upper body, press firmly on the rib cage, and restrict expansive gestures of breathing. Dressing for the great vengeful rout he is about to inflict on the invaders of his province in Mag Muirthemne, Cú Chulainn puts on:

> [...] The twenty-seven shirts, waxed, board-like, compact, which used to be bound with strings and ropes and thongs next to his fair body that his mind and understanding might not be deranged whenever his rage should come upon him. Outside these he put on his hero's battle-girdle of hard leather, tough and tanned, made from the choicest part of seven yearling ox-hides which covered him from the thin part of his side to the thick part of his armpit.[59]

This gradual Kafkaesque metamorphosis illustrates Cú Chulainn's will for self-containment, rather than a will to armor his body. The Unbound One builds, in a fashion, an amorphous armor for his fury that will not protect him from weapons attacks. (Lowe observes concerning the grievously wounded warrior Cethern's self-armoring that there is "no way to tell where the body

56 Künzler, *Flesh and Word*, 229.
57 Künzler, *Flesh and Word*, 236.
58 O'Connor, "Monsters of the Tribe," 218, 222.
59 *TBC*1, 186

ends and the prosthetics begin."[60] This seems applicable to Cú Chulainn at this precisely staged moment.) O'Connor notes that Cú Chulainn in this scene "is preparing for a frenzy which, if left uncontrolled will make him go mad, so he takes control of it."[61] The extensively wrapped body here adds weight to the fact that Cú Chulainn remains both mentally and physically vulnerable.

Not to be outdone, Fer Diad, Cú Chulainn's supreme opponent, enters the picture later on in horn-skin attire designed to deflect and protect from weapons of assault. The combat features the partially bound Cú Chulainn versus the partially armored Fer Diad. Certainly it would be advantageous to utilize all possible means of protecting the vital warrior body. While Cú Chulainn, padded in twenty-seven layers of cloth in the scene mentioned above, appears to survive quite well without conventional armor, armoring in the *Táin Bó Cúailnge* functions as an image-enhancing device. It is primarily limited to covering or adorning the head or the chest; arm, leg, hand, and feet protectors are not mentioned. (Fer Diad's "breast-piece of the horn-skin [...] [and his] [...] strong, thick apron of smelted iron," stands out in the narrative as perhaps the most menacing, but ineffective, accoutrement.[62] From Lowe's perspective, "the human artifice of armor and splendid decoration mask the brutal reality of war and simultaneously draw attention to it."[63] When push came to shove in their encounter, Cú Chulainn "cast the fine spear from off the palm of his hand over the rim of the shield and over the breast-piece of the horn-skin so that its farther half was visible after it had pierced Fer Diad's heart in his breast." And in the Book of Leinster's telling of the story: "And the *gae bulga* went through the strong, thick apron of smelted iron and broke in three the great stone as big as a millstone and entered Fer Diad's body [...]."[64]

The *gae bulga*, Cú Chulainn's secret weapon that penetrates from below, completely sidesteps the protective breast-piece. Fer Diad's specialized protection proves visually impressive but functionally deficient, "exposing the rigid boundary of the body as a sham," in Lowe's words.[65] All Irish warriors in this text—including Cú Chulainn—are vulnerable to the perfect, strategically placed stab; he too has an Achilles heel. Before he is killed in the combat, "Fer Diad caught Cú Chulainn unguarded and dealt him a blow

60 Lowe, "Contagious Violence," 94.
61 O'Connor, "Monsters of the Tribe," 218.
62 *TBC*2, 229.
63 Lowe, "Contagious Violence," 92.
64 *TBC*2, 229.
65 Lowe, "Contagious Violence," 94.

with his ivory-hilted blade which he plunged into Cú Chulainn's breast."[66] Caught off-guard in a one-off moment, Cú Chulainn falls victim to a warrior as clever as he, albeit suffering only what is apparently a flesh wound.

Objects that get in the way of our heroic, easily irritated protagonist are thrown aside without hesitation. When Cú Chulainn hears of Fergus mac Róig striking the shield Óchain of Conchobor in battle, his wound-protecting straps are eliminated in an instant. "'Loosen quickly the wooden hoops over my wounds, fellow' said Cú Chulainn. Then Cú Chulainn gave a mighty spring and the hoops flew from him to Mag Túaga in Connacht. The binding of his wounds went from him to Bacca in Corco M'ruad."[67] Even in the fatigued and body-devastated state to which Cú Chulainn has been reduced near the end of the *Táin* combats, he throws off the straps that secure his disjointed flesh into one form. Cú Chulainn is not easily yoked or harnessed. "I have come, a wild boar of the herd,"[68] he announces to Fer Diad before their confrontation. At ease and alert in his animal-threatened state, Cú Chulainn's inimitable skin-force camouflages the animal natures within. Only his rhythmic bursts of compressed energy into rapid leaps, sharp turns of direction, and gliding and powering through air and water signal animal imitation.

In the *Táin* Cú Chulainn is pictured in open spaces. In stasis he fully embodies the soldier-as-tree metaphor, which, Haycock notes, is a common "martial metaphor."[69] The reader can imagine Cú Chulainn as a solitary oak-tree-lad on the horizon, braced against wind. In social contexts Cú Chulainn faces others in balanced, head-on conversation/confrontation, whether friend, confidant, or warrior. Prolonged close proximity—with the exception of wrestling—is infrequent. Spatially we the readers remain at a nonintrusive distance much of the time. When it is wounded and suffering we approach his body more closely; the reader can experience moments of sympathy—even empathy—when the subject becomes Cú Chulainn's razed skin and flesh; one can be complicit with his pain, his bleeding, his temperature shifts and exhaustion. (Closest-proximity viewing is highlighted in the immersive *ríastrad* episodes.)

Cú Chulainn's body in motion—walking, riding, fighting—marks the memory like a unique signature; he is mostly seen on his feet, stepping to and fro, targeting this or that. The gesture of sitting is only occasionally portrayed,

66 *TBC*2, 228.
67 *TBC*2, 268.
68 *TBC*2, 219.
69 Haycock, "Living with War," 86.

as is typical for heroic characters in tragic dramas. (The thirteen tragedies of Pierre Racine, for example, note a single instance of a protagonist sitting.) Cú Chulainn's exceptions include sitting while in pain, receiving medical care, or in forced or voluntary cooling-of-his-jets in water or snow.[70] The open-gestured, "boy-man, beautiful but fierce"[71] warrior figure extends and retracts arms and legs in patterned traces like those of a Javanese shadow puppet.

Cú Chulainn's silhouette—and that of each of his challengers—is best recognized by a distant, full-body image against the Irish landscape. "If this is the distorted one, there will be corpses of men because of him [...]. I see the wild one's form."[72] The individual physical architecture, attitude, and tendency—and accompanying garb and gear—create the character signature identity. As layers of armoring increase size, alter shape, and totally dissimulate the body of warriors, far-off identification becomes more difficult. For example, a helmet reshapes the head silhouette, creates a new profile, and partially tames wild-flowing hair. These are not acceptable options for Cú Chulainn's body image.

For the early medieval warrior—and Cú Chulainn in particular—hair is a central contributor to the definition and dimension of the head form. The vertically held heroic head with free-flowing hair propelled into battle has visual power. Cú Chulainn's mane is extraordinary as described. "Fifty tresses of hair he had between one ear and the other, bright yellow like the top of a birch-tree or like bright brooches shining in the sun. He had a high crest of hair, bright, fair, as if a cow had licked it."[73] The galloping-steed image works some of the time, but Cú Chulainn has hair that also color shifts. It stands as its own text with its own emotional sensibility—even its own temperament and temperature (highly incendiary).

> Three kinds of hair he had, dark next to the skin, blood-red in the middle, and *hair like* a crown of red-gold covering them. Fair was the arrangement of that hair with three coils in the hollow at the back of his head, and like fine gold was every fine hair, loose-flowing, golden and excellent, long-tressed, distinguished, and of beautiful colour, as it fell back over his shoulders. A hundred bright crimson twists red-gold red-flaming about his neck.[74]

70 See, for example, *TBC*1, 169 (Cú Chulainn sitting in, and melting, the snow).
71 Lowe, "Contagious Violence," 95.
72 *TBC*2, 205.
73 *TBC*2, 1967, 171.
74 *TBC*2, 204.

The fiery locks further the impression that "[t]his lad of handsome countenance looks in battle like a dragon."[75] As suggested earlier, excessive helmeting would disempower and weaken the hero by de-emphasizing the brash courage implied by the movements of his hair. The unadorned-head image of a weary Cú Chulainn positioned—weapon in hand—alongside corpses stacked "headless neck to headless neck" disturbs.[76] With the head revealed—not concealed—one can fix the gaze upon his face, his hands, and his own bared neck.

Cú Chulainn expresses openness through his absence of ineffective muscular tension; his is an accessible personality—sociable and interactive. Occupationally familiar with death and dying, he nonetheless exudes calm—a polysemous "calm," no doubt—during fighting intermissions when the blood of others flows around his feet. The prophetess Fedelm intimates that Cú Chulainn's face radiates; she imagines the façade of his head as a soft, warm thing well-prepared for public view. "A hero's light is on his brow. His forehead is the meeting-place of many virtues. […] In each of his eyes are the seven jewel-bright pupils of a hero. […] His face is beautiful."[77] Fedelm's vision of peaceful Cú Chulainn assigns quiet, tranquil simplicity—almost emotional neutrality—to his visage. She seems to gaze through the skin of his face; she is pulled into his interior through his eyes, perhaps projecting a reciprocal gaze back at her own face. She searches for the very heart of his character.

Fedelm imagines the clear-faced warrior as he is before—and possibly after—a storm of passion that contorts his skin. She envisages the unbound Cú Chulainn—not the one in the shadows of image-inventing headgear or body-mask. She assumes uninterrupted access to his eyes and brow. I speculate that she would also assume open access to the movements of his mouth and jaw were Cú Chulainn to speak during her reverie. (No dissimulating helmet nosepiece allowed; no fixed-form horn extensions disrupting the flow of his hair. And Fedelm likely acknowledges no "sanity-shirts" on his chest.) Cú Chulainn's temporary state of calm is ghosted by latent alternate façades; it veils a loaded past and future where "the terrible magic shape," in O'Connor's translation, waits in the wings.[78] Vertical-standing Cú Chulainn's still and silent presence, like that of a powerful and refined actor playing Chekhov or Ibsen, is rarely shallow or single-faceted. "For they

75 *TBC*1, 127.
76 *TBC*2, 203.
77 *TBC*1, 127.
78 O'Connor, "Monsters of the Tribe," 233.

wondered at the beautiful, gentle appearance they beheld on him that day compared with the dark buffoon-like shape of him that had been seen on him the night before."[79]

Vulnerability and Conclusion

The head of Cú Chulainn in the *Táin* has importance. Künzler details his head from the hair downward to his eyes/eye and his mouth, noting that its description receives greater attention than the center/core of his body.[80] Her nuanced anatomical analysis sheds light on the need to avoid obscuring the face of Cú Chulainn—a site, from my point of view, of complicated sensitivity and contradiction. I would, however, add the neck (always a supporting actor) to the top-end analysis. In another tale from the Ulster Cycle, *Bricriu's Feast*, armorless Cú Chulainn finds himself on the block in a decapitation test that famously anticipates the beheading-contest scenes in the Middle English poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight.* Armed with his specialized skin, Cú Chulainn, challenges the chopper, activates his neck and brilliantly passes the test. "Cú Chulainn stretched himself, then, until a warrior's foot would fit between each rib, and he stretched his neck until it reached the other side of the block."[81] When the blade approached—dull end down—he held firm and was not injured. The victor was declared: "Of all the warriors in Ulaid and Ériu, whatever their merit, none is your equal for courage and skill and honour. You are the supreme warrior . . . "[82] Cú Chulainn's elasticity matches another neck-skull phenomenon present in insular medieval narrative: the chopped-off head that keeps on talking. Colorfully represented by the ranting bean of the Green Knight, animated dead-heads speak with painfully bloody authority.

"Vital heads" (and their neck sidekicks) are not exclusive to Irish literature; they have been carried, rolled, and floated across Europe from Byzantium to Belfast. And as Nagy has elaborated in "Hierarchy, Heroes, and Heads," images of "vital heads" manifest themselves in numerous Indo-European cultures.[83] The "vital" aspect of such heads is their profound will to speak

79 *TBC*2, 204.

80 Künzler, *Flesh and the Word*, 216.

81 *Early Irish Myths and Sagas*, trans. Jeffrey Gantz (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981), 255.

82 Gantz, *Early Irish Myths*, 255.

83 Joseph Falaky Nagy, "Hierarchy, Heroes, and Heads: Indo-European Structures in Greek Myth," in *Approaches to Greek Myth*, ed. Lowell Edmunds (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 200–38.

and to tie up narrative loose ends. They exhibit a metaphorical contortion of concentric "concentration" which propels them to orate, vibrate, sing, and/or facially gesticulate until the targets of their appeals take action. Nagy illustrates how their force and passion often "proves not only indestructible but even salvific."[84]

In the context of the *Táin Bó Cúailnge* the role of the talking head is played by Sualtaim, earthly father of Cú Chúlainn. He is beheaded when his horse rears and converts his shield into a propelled blade that slices his own neck. The shocking accident transpires just after Sualtaim has made a vehement, imploring oration to the brooding men of Ulster in support of his wounded son's one-man campaign against the invading armies:

> Then [the horse] reared under Sualtaim and came forward opposite Emain, and his own shield turned on Sualtaim and its rim cut off his head. The horse itself turned back again into Emain, with the shield on the horse and the head on the shield. And Sualtaim's head spoke the same words. "Men are slain, women carried off, cattle driven away, O Ulstermen!" said the head of Sualtaim.[85]

The "vital head" rides away on horseback, cradled and protected by the weapon of its own destruction. The head does not remain silent. Sualtaim continues to speak; he forcefully repeats the "Men are slain, women carried off, cattle driven away" text. Impassioned but far from the battlefield Sualtaim's final martial gestures are concentrated in the head of his dismembered body. He fights with words formed by the open face.

The space between the talking head and the bold, forward-driving torso emerges as the cylinder of vulnerability—the nerve center of the warrior body. Wedged between the helmet and armor spaces this patch of skin is elevated to top billing in the final episodes of many early Irish narratives. This danger zone of the unencumbered warrior body—bared and exposed—is highlighted as attention-needy.[86] The unhelmeted Cú Chulainn with hair "red-flaming about his neck"[87] ably protects himself throughout the *Táin Bó Cúailnge.* Fighting unwrapped and unarmored, gesture is the

84 Nagy, "Hierarchy," 220–23.

85 *TBC*2, 247.

86 The *gorget* (metal throat protector) and the *aventail* (chain-mail turtleneck) are later medieval inventions.

87 *TBC*2, 204.

best protector: "All [is] play and sport […] the wave, wild and swelling, like the day of doom."[88]

Cú Chulainn's own long and lingering expiration in battle, narrated in his death-tale,[89] ends with the exhausted and expired warrior supported by a huge stone on the Irish countryside. As a final punctuation his killer ends the tale with the slice of an ax through his neck. Beheaded, unbound Cú Chulainn is speechless. It is not a "vital"-head moment. He has already said it all.

About the author

Ron J. Popenhagen, a specialist in *mise en scène*, coaches and directs actor-singers in Australia, Europe, and across the US, and, while resident of Aix-en-Provence and Paris (California State University), is writing a theoretical manuscript on masquerade and disguise, linking modernist performance with photography and visual arts history. He has published on French and Swiss actors, choreographers, directors, and scenographers.

88 *TBC*2, 234.

89 *The Death of Cú Chulainn: A Critical Edition of the Earliest Version of Brislech Mór Maige Muirthemni*, ed. and trans. Bettina Kimpton (Maynooth: School of Celtic Studies, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 2009).



Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

4. Ragnhild Eiríksdóttir

Cross-cultural Sovereignty Motifs and Anti-feminist Rhetoric in Chapter 9 of *Orkneyinga saga*

Brian Cook

Abstract

Brian Cook provides a clearheaded overview of the complications of text, transmission, and provenance evidenced in a major medieval Icelandic chronicle of northwest European politics, the *Orkneyinga saga*. Cook focuses on the connivances of the legendary queen Ragnhild and their impact upon North Sea islands and kingdoms. Is she a Norse reflex or importation of the Irish sovereignty figure? And, as deadly as it might be, does sexual association with such a figure endow her lovers with legendary cachet? These are among the questions Cook attempts to answer.

Keywords: *Orkneyinga saga*, antifeminism, multicultural medieval Britain, *Flateyjarbók*, sovereignty goddess

In a series of narrative events that William P.L. Thomson suggests read more like folktale than history,[1] the sons of Earl Thorfinn successively take both the Earldom of Orkney and Ragnhild Eiríksdóttir as wife. As I shall argue, the murder plots and serial marriages described in chapter 9 of *Orkneyinga saga* bear a striking resemblance to medieval Irish tales of a sovereignty goddess representing the land. In what follows, my intention is not to claim a genetic relationship between the two—that the sovereignty figure of medieval Irish literature is direct source for Ragnhild—but rather that chapter 9 of *Orkneyinga saga* has a narrative problem to solve concerning the succession of the earldom, and that the solution is reminiscent of the well-known sovereignty goddess motif.

1 William P.L. Thomson, *The New History of Orkney*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 2008), 58. See below for further discussion.

MacQuarrie, Charles W. and Joseph Falaky Nagy (eds), *The Medieval Cultures of the Irish Sea and the North Sea. Manannán and His Neighbors*. Taylor & Francis Group, 2019
DOI: 10.5117/9789462989399/CH04

A number of scholars have argued for the influence of medieval Irish literary culture on that of their insular neighbors, the Anglo-Saxons and the Norse.[2] While degree and channels of influence generally require consideration on a case-by-case basis, William Sayers points out that

> [w]hatever stand one takes on oral-traditional/literary influence from Celtic to Norse, no one disputes the overall historicity of the individual entries in *Landnámabók* (*The Book of Settlements*) that ascribe birth or residence, and ties of kinship, marriage, fosterage or bondage originating in Ireland, the Hebrides and parts of mainland Scotland to about a fourth of the original settlers, and Norwegian origins to the remainder.[3]

It is generally assumed by scholars that the Celtic settlers—however they made their way to Iceland—would have brought with them oral tales that influenced neighboring literary traditions by the time those traditions came to be recorded.[4] Recently, Lindy Brady has suggested this as an avenue for a previously unnoticed Irish sovereignty motif in *Laxdæla saga*: "[t]he Irish material in *Laxdæla saga* may belong to this broad body of Celtic stories that traveled to Iceland orally, long before the sagas were written, and which further developed in a new cultural context."[5] Bo Almqvist has pointed out that the Earldom of Orkney was one of Celtic/Norse hybridity

2 See, for example, John D. Niles, "Bede's Cædmon, 'The Man Who Had No Story' (Irish Tale-Type 2412B)," *Folklore* 117 (2006), 141–55; Rosemary Power, "Norse-Gaelic Contacts: Genres and Transmission," *Journal of the North Atlantic* 4 (2013), 19–25; Charles D. Wright, *The Irish Tradition in Old English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); William Sayers, "Clontarf, and the Irish Destinies of Sigurðr Digri, Earl of Orkney, and Þorsteinn Síðu-Hallsson," *Scandinavian Studies* 63 (1991), 164–86; William Sayers, "Management of the Celtic Fact in *Landnámabók*," *Scandinavian Studies* 66 (1994), 129–53; William Sayers, "Power, Magic and Sex: Queen Gunnhildr and the Icelanders," *Scandinavian-Canadian Studies* 8 (1995), 57–77.

3 Sayers, "Management of the Celtic Fact in *Landnámabók*," 129. For genetic studies confirming the presence of Celtic origins of a substantial percentage of the settlers, see Agnar Helgason, Eileen Hickey, Sara Goodacre, Vidar Bosnes, Kári Stefánsson, Ryk Ward, and Bryan Sykes, "mtDNA and the Islands of the North Atlantic: Estimating the Proportions of Norse and Gaelic Ancestry," *American Journal of Human Genetics* 68 (2001), 723–37; Agnar Helgason, Sigrún Sigurðardóttir, Jayne Nicholson, Bryan Sykes, Emmeline W. Hill, Daniel G. Bradley, Vidar Bosnes, Jeffrey R. Gulcher, Ryk Ward, and Kári Stefánsson, "Estimating Scandinavian and Gaelic Ancestry in the Male Settlers of Iceland," *American Journal of Human Genetics* 67 (2000), 697–717; Agnar Helgason, Sigrún Sigurðardóttir, Jeff Gulcher, Ryk Ward, and Kári Stefánsson, "mtDNA and the Origin of the Icelanders: Deciphering Signals of Recent Population History," *American Journal of Human Genetics* 66 (2000), 999–1016.

4 Power, "Norse-Gaelic Contacts," 19–20.

5 Lindy Brady, "An Irish Sovereignty Motif in *Laxdæla saga*," *Scandinavian Studies* 88 (2016), 60–76, at 62.

where differing traditions could have easily intermingled.[6] The geographic position of the Orkneys puts the islands on the route between Norway and Iceland, and they also served as jumping off point for expeditions further south. During the Viking Age, then, the earldom was a center of activity for the North Sea and the British Isles.

Chapter 9 of *Orkneyinga saga*

Finnbogi Guðmundsson based the *Íslenzk fornrit* edition of *Orkneyinga saga* primarily on the narrative recorded in *Flateyjarbók*, *c.* 1390.[7] Assuming that the dating is correct—and if it is not, the relative chronology likely is—then the version of *Orkneyinga saga* extant in *Flateyjarbók* represents one of the youngest recensions of the saga narrative, written several generations after *Heimskringla*.[8] Four sagas within *Heimskringla*, some versions of which are also extant in *Flateyjarbók*, tell of the events related to Ragnhild and the Thorfinnssons, although the intrigue, murder, and the details of the serial marriages that are recorded in chapter 9 of *Orkneyinga saga* are noticeably absent from these sagas.

In the last chapter of *Haralds saga ins hárfagra*, we are given detailed genealogical information concerning Ragnhild:

> Eiríkr var mikill maðr ok fríðr, sterkr ok hreystimaðr mikill, hermaðr mikill ok sigrsæll, ákafamaðr í skapi, grimmr, óþýðr ok fálátr. Gunnhildr, kona hans, var kvinna fegrst, vitr ok margkunnig, glaðmælt ok undirhyggjumaðr mikill ok in grimmasta. Þau váru bǫrn þeira Eiríks ok Gunnhildar: Gamli var ellstr, Guthormr, Haraldr, Ragnfrøðr, Ragnhildr, Erlingr, Guðrøðr, Sigurðr slefa. Qll váru bǫrn Eiríks fríð og mannvæn.[9]

6 "When we speak of Celtic-Scandinavian folklore contacts in the Earldom of Orkney we are dealing on the one hand with the Orcadians, who were mainly of Norwegian origin, though there were also many Icelanders in Orkney, and on the other with the Celticised Picts and the Scottish and Irish Gaels," Bo Almqvist, "Scandinavian and Celtic Folklore Contacts in the Earldom of Orkney," *Saga-Book* 20 (1978–81), 80–105, at 86.

7 *Orkneyinga saga*, ed. Finnbogi Guðmundsson, Íslenzk Fornrit 34 (Reykjavík: Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag, 1965). The translation, *Orkneyinga Saga* by Hermann Pálsson and Paul Edwards (New York: Penguin, 1978), is based on this edition.

8 There are problems with the dating of the manuscripts. The major manuscripts containing most or all of the *Heimskringla*—*Kringla* (destroyed in a fire in Copenhagen in 1728), *Codex Frisianus*, and *Jǫfraskinna*—are dated to *c.* 1280–1320; see *Heimskringla* I, ed. Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, Íslenzk Fornrit 26 (Reykjavík: Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag, 1941), xxiv.

9 *Haralds saga ins hárfagra*, in Aðalbjarnarson, *Heimskringla* I, 94–149, at 149.

> Eirík was a large and handsome man, strong and of great prowess, a great and victorious warrior, violent of disposition, cruel, gruff, and taciturn. Gunnhild, his wife, was a very beautiful woman, shrewd and skilled in magic, friendly in speech, but full of deceit and cruelty. The following were the children of Eirík and Gunnhild. Gamli was the eldest, then Guthorm, Harald, Ragnfröth, Ragnhild, Erling, Guthröth, Sigurth Slefa. All of Eirík's children were handsome and promising.[10]

Given that saga literature tends to treat descriptors as family traits,[11] from the lineage given here we can assume that Ragnhild has inherited beauty and cruelty from both of her parents. Other traits that will become important as my argument develops are shrewdness, deceitful nature, and possible skill with magic that she inherits from her mother Gunnhild.[12]

Both *Hákonar saga góða* and *Orkneyinga saga* record Eirík's death, along with the deaths of two of the Turf-Einarssons, Arnkel and Erland. The third Turf-Einarsson, Thorfinn Hausakljúf, was Earl of Orkney at the time.[13] Both *Hákonar saga góða* and *Orkneyinga saga* also record that Gunnhild and the Eiríkssons sought refuge in the Orkneys, took over power there, and then that Ragnhild was given in marriage to Arnfinn Thorfinnson upon the departure of her mother and brothers.[14]

10 *Heimskringla: History of the Kings of Norway*, trans. Lee M. Hollander (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964), 59–95, at 95.

11 See, for example, the tension between the two sides of Egil's family in *Egils saga.*

12 See Sayers, "Power, Magic and Sex," for a discussion of women's social agency and the seductive manipulation of men by Gunnhild, especially with the aid of drugs and magic.

13 *Hákon the Good*, trans. Hollander, *Heimskringla*, 96–127, at 99–100; Pálsson and Edwards, *Orkneyinga Saga*, 32–33.

14 Ragnhild's marriage is also mentioned in *Egils saga Skalla-Grímssonar,* ed. Sigurður Nordal, Íslenzk Fornrit 2 (Reykjavík: Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag, 1933), 175–76: "Arinbjǫrn hersir var fóstbróðir Eiríks konungs ok barnfóstri hans; hann var kærstr konungi af ǫllum lendum mǫnnum; hafði konungr sett hann hǫfðingja yfir allt Firðafylki. Arinbjǫrn fór ór landi með konungi; fóru fyrst vestr um haf til Orkneyja; þá gipti hann Ragnhildi, dóttur sína, Arnfinni jarli; síðan fór hann með liði sínu suðr fyrir Skotland ok herjaði þar; þaðan fór hann suðr til Englands ok herjaði þar. Ok er Aðalsteinn konungr spurði þat, safnaði hann liði ok fór í mót Eirík"; *Egil's Saga*, ed. Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir, and trans. Bernard Scudder (New York: Penguin, 1997), 122: "Arinbjorn the Hersir was King Eirik's foster-brother, and foster-father to his children. King Eirik was fondest of him among all his landholders, and had made him the chieftain of all the Fjordane province. Arinbjorn left the country with the king, and they began by crossing over to the Orkneys. There the king gave his daughter Ragnhild in marriage to Earl Arnfinn. Then he travelled south with all his men to Scotland and raided there, and from there he continued southwards to England and raided there as well." In the *Egils saga* version of these events, it should be noted that Eirík Bloodax was still alive and that he was the one who gave Ragnhild to Arnfinn, and that Arnfinn

Hákonar saga góða:

> En er þau Gunnhildr urðu þessa vǫr, at Eiríkr konungr var fallinn ok hann hafði áðr herjat land Englakonungs, þá þykkjast þau vita, at þeim mun þar vera eigi friðvænt [...] Þau halda liði sínu norðr til Orkneyja ok staðfestusk þar um hríð. Þá var þar jarl Þorfiðr hausakljúfr sonr Torf-Einars. Tóku þá synir Eiríks undir sik Orkneyjar ok Hjaltland ok hǫfðu skatta af ok sátu þar um vetrum en fóru í vestrvíking á sumrum, herjuðu um Skotland ok Írland.
>
> . . . . .
>
> En er þetta spurði Gunnhildr ok synir hennar, at ófriðr var millum Danmerkr ok Nóregs, þá byrja þau ferð sína vestan. Þau giptu Ragnhildi, dóttur Eiríks, Arnfinni, syni Þorfinns hausakljúfs. Settisk þá enn Þorfiðr jarl að Orkneyjum, en Eiríkssynir fóru í brott.[15]

> When Gunnhild and her sons learned that King Eirík had fallen after having harried in the land of the English king, they felt certain that they would not be allowed to stay there in peace [...] With their force they sailed north to the Orkneys and made their abode there for a while. At that time Earl Thorfinn Hausakljúf, the son of Turf-Einar ruled there. Then the sons of Eirík took possession of the Orkneys and of the Shetland Islands, laying them under tribute. They resided there in wintertime and made viking expeditions in the summers, harrying Scotland and Ireland.
>
> . . . . .
>
> But when Gunnhild and her sons learned that there was war between Denmark and Norway, they made ready to return to Norway. They gave Ragnhild, Eirík's daughter, in marriage to Arnfinn, the son of Thorfinn Hausakljúf. Earl Thorfinn reestablished himself in the Orkneys, and the sons of Eirík sailed away.[16]

Orkneyinga saga:

> When Gunnhild and her sons heard that King Eirik had been killed plundering in England, they realized there was little chance of peace there, so they got themselves ready for a hasty departure and sailed north

seems to have been earl at the time, not his father Thorfinn. Moreover, there is still no mention of Ragnhild's plotting and serial marriages.

15 *Hákonar saga góða*, in Aðalbjarnarson, *Heimskringla* I, 155, 162.

16 Hollander, *Hákon the Good*, 99–100, 103.

> to Orkney, where Earl Thorfinn Skull-Splitter was ruling at the time. Gunnhild's sons took over power in the islands and used them as their base in winter, spending the summer on viking expeditions.
>
> During their stay in Orkney, Gunnhild and her sons heard there was war between King Harald Gormsson of Denmark and King Hakon, Athelstan's foster-son, and having expectations of help from King Harald they set out to visit him. Before they left Orkney, they gave Ragnhild, daughter of King Eirik and Gunnhild, in marriage to Arnfinn, son of Earl Thorfinn. Earl Thorfinn took control of the islands.[17]

I have quoted extensively from both narratives to illustrate how closely they correspond. While this particular section of the narrative—i.e. the second half of chapter 8—of Pálsson and Edwards' edition of *Orkneyinga saga* is taken from the sixteenth-century Danish version,[18] the narrative core is the same as that recorded in the *Flateyjarbók*, as printed in Sigurður Nordal's edition:

> Arnnkell ok Erlenndr iallar, synir Torfu-Æinars, fellu[19] a Æinglande med Æireki konungi blodǫx, sem fyrr er ritat. Gunnhildr ok synir hennar foru sidan til Orknneyia ok toku þær undir sig, ok dvolduzst þar um hrid. Þadan foru þau til Danmerkr, ok giftu adr Ragnnhilldi, dottur Æireks ok Gunnhilldar, Arnnfinne syne Þorfinnz ialls ok settizst Þorfinnr iall at Eyium; hann var hǫfdingi mikill ok herskáff.[20]
>
> Jarls Arnkel and Erland, sons of Turf-Einar, fell in England with King Eiríck Bloodax, as was earlier written. Gunnhild and her sons went then to Orkney and took to there under sail, and they stayed there through a while. Then they went to Denmark, and first gave Ragnhild, daughter of Eiríck and Gunnhild, to Arnfinn son of Earl Thorfinn and they set Thorfinn Earl of the Islands. He was a great farmer and ruler.

17 Pálsson and Edwards, *Orkneyinga Saga*, 32.

18 Pálsson and Edwards, *Orkneyinga Saga*, 19; see also Guðmundsson, *Orkneyinga saga*, 17–20, and *Orkneyinga saga*, ed. Sigurður Nordal, Samfund til Udgivelse af Gammel Nordisk Litteratur 40 (Copenhagen: Møller, 1913–16), 14–16.

19 According to Nordal's critical apparatus, this passage is taken from *Flateyjarbók*; cf. *Flateyjarbók*, ed. Guðbrand Vigfússon and Carl Rikard Unger (Christiania [Oslo]: P.T. Mallings Forlagsboghandel, 1860), 224–25.

20 Nordal, *Orkneyinga saga*, 15–16. The translation is my own.

Each version tells the same basic narrative: after the other Turf-Einarssons are killed with Eirík Bloodax in England, Gunnhild and the Eiríkssons flee to Orkney where they take control of the islands from Earl Thorfinn. Then, Gunnhild and the Eiríkssons leave for Denmark, reinstalling Thorfinn as earl and marrying Ragnhild to Thorfinn's eldest son Arnfinn. Yet, out of these sources, it is only in the version of *Orkneyinga saga* recorded in *Flateyjarbók* where the narrative of Ragnhild's intrigues is told. To be sure, all of these sagas have different purposes—*Orkneyinga saga* to tell the narrative of the islands, while in writing *Hákon the Good*, for example, Snorri may only have included those parts he felt necessary to the events of that narrative. Indeed, the *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* tells some of the same events, specifically Gunnhild and the Eiríkssons' involvement in the war between Harald and Hákon without mention of Ragnhild at all. The Eiríkssons' previous seizure of the Earldom of Orkney is only hinted at:

> Hákon jarl fór með liði sínu norðr með landi. En er Gunnhildr ok synir hennar spurðu þessi tíðendi, þá samna þau her, ok varð þeim illt til liðs. Tóku þau enn it sama ráð sem fyrr, sigla vestr um haf með þat lið, er þeim vildi fylgja, fara fyrst til Orkneyja ok dvǫlðusk þar um hríð. Þar váru áðr jarlar synir Þorfinns hausakljúfs, Hlǫðvir ok Arnfiðr, Ljótr ok Skúli.[21]

> Earl Hákon sailed north along the land with his fleet. Now when Gunnhild and her sons learned of these happenings they tried to collect a force, but were not successful. They resorted to the same plan as before and sailed west across the sea together with all those who would follow them, going first to the Orkneys, where they remained for a while. Before that time, the sons of Thorfith Hausakljúf, Hlothvir and Arnvith, Ljót and Skúli, had ruled there as earls.[22]

Óláfs saga helga makes the Eiríkssons' seizure of the earldom more explicit. Here, it is specifically told that the Turf-Einarssons swore allegiance Eirík Bloodax. Again, there is no mention of Ragnhild:

> Eptir Torf-Einar réðu fyrir lǫndum synir hans: Arnkell, Erlendur, Þorfinnr hausakljúfr. Á þeira dǫgum kom af Nóregi Eiríkur blóðøx, ok váru þá jarlar honum lýðskyldir. Arnkell ok Erlendur fellu í hernaði en Þorfinnr réð lǫndum ok varð gamall. Synir hans váru Arnfiðr, Hávarðr, Hlǫðvir, Ljótr,

21 *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar*, in Aðalbjarnarson, *Heimskringla* I, 241.
22 *Saga of Óláf Tryggvason*, trans. Hollander, *Heimskringla*, 154–55.

> Skúli. Móðir þeira var Grélǫð, dóttir Dungaðar jarls af Katanesi. Móðir hennar var Gróa, dóttir Þorsteins rauðs. Á dǫgum Þorfinns jarls ofarliga kómu af Nóregi synir Blóðøxar, þá er þeir hǫfðu flýið fyrir Hákoni jarli. Var þá í Orkneyjum mikill yfirgangr þeira. Þorfiðr jarl varð sóttdauðr. Eptir hann réðu lǫndum synir hans ok eru miklar frásagnir frá þeim. Hlǫðvir lifði þeira lengst ok réð þá einn lǫndum. Sonr hans var Sigurðr digri, er jarldóm tók eptir hann.[23]

> After Turf-Einar, his sons Arnkel, Erland, and Thorfinn Skullcleaver ruled the islands. In their days Eirík Bloodyaxe came over from Norway and the earls became his liegemen, Arnkel and Erland died on warlike expeditions, but Thorfinn ruled over the lands and lived to be an old man. His sons were Arnfinn, Hávarth, Hlothvir, Ljót, and Skúli. Their mother was Gréloth, a daughter of Dungath, the earl of Caithness. Her mother was Gróa, a daughter of Thorstein the Red. During the latter days of Earl Thorfinn the sons of Bloodyaxe came over from Norway, fleeing from Earl Hákon, and they harried cruelly in the Orkneys.
> Earl Thorfinn died of a sickness. After him his sons were rulers over his lands, and there are many stories told about them. Hlothvir survived them all and was sole ruler. His son was Sigurth the Stout, who inherited the earldom.[24]

We are left, then, with a question: are the slightly different narratives of each source the result of a large-scale shifting of narrative focus that operates on the level of the sagas themselves rather then simply within the saga,[25] or do the differing narratives represent actual revisions of the narrative? While a definitive answer will likely always elude us, we can make conjectures based on the degree of difference between the narratives.

When compared to the other narratives of the same events, the version recorded in *Flateyjarbók* is far more detailed when it comes to the marriage of Ragnhild. Where the other narratives only state that Ragnhild was given in marriage to Arnfinn Thorfinnson, the *Flateyjarbók* adds an entire chapter full of intrigue, murder, and serial marriage. The *Flateyjarbók*, then, elaborates on an episode in earlier versions of the narrative in a way that seems to have no basis in other versions of the same events. Commenting

23 *Óláfs saga helga*, in *Heimskringla* II, ed. Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson, Íslenzk Fornrit 27 (Reykjavík: Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag, 1945), 159.

24 *Saint Óláf's Saga*, trans. Hollander, *Heimskringla*, 351.

25 See Judith Jesch, "Narrating *Orkneyinga saga*," *Scandinavian Studies* 64 (1992), 336–55.

on the structure of the saga itself, Berman states that the "first half of the saga rushes through nine generations of jarls with the author using paired sets of jarls and kings to date, organize and shape his story. The first jarls are associated with Harald hárfagri. The next major group, Þorfinnr Torf-Einarsson and his sons, is fairly independent of Norway, but Sigurðr Hloðvisson is Óláfr Tryggvason's vassal."[26] The saga author, as suggested by Berman, specifically uses the first nine generations of earls to ground the second half of the saga. If this is the case, then the saga author may have had specific reasons for including the chapter 9 material in the narrative.

Ian Beuermann characterizes the production of *Orkneyinga saga* as happening in three major steps: the *c.* 1200 first collection of stories of the earls and prominent Orcadians recounting the period from prehistory to 1171 (chapters 1–108), the revision in Iceland of the 1230s which brought the timeline up to 1214 (chapters 108–12), and the revision preserved in the *Flateyjarbók*.[27] In commenting on the possible political motivations for including *Orkneyinga saga* in *Flateyjarbók*, Beuermann writes:

> A Saga which underlined Orkney's Norwegian links could thus have been known, and would have been very welcome in at Igni's and Hákon's courts. Yet stressing the greatness of the Norwegian kingdom by underlining the extent of its dominions could also be seen in the context of the later fourteenth century, when the Norwegian crown was in crisis because of the death of King Óláfr Hákonarson, last descendant in the male line of the Norwegian royal dynasty. In 1387, therefore, Margareta of Denmark's rule was looming, an unwelcome prospect for the Icelanders. Would inclusion of *Orkneyinga saga* into *Flateyjarbók* at that time contribute to making this manuscript a work against Danish and female rule?[28]

Although Beuermann does not further discuss the possibility that *Orkneyinga saga* may have been included in *Flateyjarbók* as a critique of female rulers, he does leave us with the suggestion that there could have been

26 Melissa A. Berman, "The Political Sagas," *Scandinavian Studies* 57 (1985), 113–29, at 119.

27 Ian Beuermann, "*Jarla Sogur Orkneyja*: Status and Power of the Earls of Orkney according to their Sagas," in *Ideology and Power in the Viking Middle Ages*, ed.,Gro Steinsland, Jón Viðar Sigurðsson, Jan Erik Rekdal, and Ian Beuermann, (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 109–61, at 110–11. Even though Beuermann writes, 111, that "in the late fourteenth century *Orkneyinga saga* was again revised and copied into the manuscript known as *Flateyjarbók*, giving us the most complete surviving version of the text," he seems to assume that the revisions consisted largely of updating the narrative rather than the alteration of already existing material.

28 Beuermann, "*Jarla Sogur Orkneyja*," 125–26.

motivation for the addition of what appears to be a wicked woman of power to the narrative. While the Ragnhild episode—in chapter 9 and taking place in the late tenth century—falls well within the time frame for the original collection of stories, there is no mention that I could find of Ragnhild's supposedly folktale-style intrigues in *Heimskringla*. Rather, given the historical context suggested by Beuermann, it is possible that the episode could have been crafted specifically for inclusion in *Flateyjarbók*.

The Narrative Purpose of the Ragnhild Episode

Reading Ragnhild Eiríksdóttir as the potential analogue of an Irish sovereignty figure helps us see that Ragnhild serves the narrative by ensuring the line of descent goes through the correct son—in this case Hlodvir Thorfinnsson. Of course, the author of the Ragnhild episode was writing long after the episode supposedly took place, so the author would already have known that the earldom does in fact go through Hlodvir's line. As the *Heimskringla* material clearly states, most (or all, depending on the saga) of the Thorfinnssons ruled the Orkneys.[29] The problem, then, seems to be not a problem at all: the earldom passes through Hlodvir's line in *Orkneyinga saga* because, historically, that is what happened. And yet, in an act of literary overdetermination, the author of chapter 9 ensured this would be the case.

After discussing the mythic founding of the earldom by a "self-made man," Thomson points out how carefully *Orkneyinga saga* establishes the line of descent of the earldom.[30] Beginning with a mythological model of the ideal king, Thomson claims that *Orkneyinga saga* is concerned with the legality of the earldom: "[W]e have seen how, according to the saga, the earldom was established in grand style by King Harald Fairhair who personally arrives in Orkney with his fleet. The same concern for legality is found whenever a new earl is appointed […]. Step by step the saga is careful to tell us that each earl's title derives from King Harald Fairhair."[31]

29 See the previously quoted material from *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* and *Óláfs saga helga*.

30 Thomson, *New History*, 30–31, points out that Turf-Einar's line is that of the rightful earls by two methods: the first is that the earldom was legally established by King Harald Fairhair, and, second, Turf-Einar is depicted as a "self-made man, succeeding by his own efforts, owing nothing to anyone, and in some respects capable of dealing with King Harald Fairhair as an equal."

31 Thomson, *New History*, 31. See also Elizabeth Ashman Rowe, "Origin Legends and Foundation Myths in *Flateyjarbók*," in *Old Norse Myths, Literature and Society*, ed. Geraldine Barnes and Margaret Clunies Ross (Sydney: University of Sydney, 2000), 441–54, especially her discussion of *Fundinn Noregr*.

Thomson further acknowledges that the saga's primary concern with the establishment of the earldom means that other traditions about Orkney were ignored and may have even been "deliberately written out of the saga in order that the establishment of earldom becomes the beginning of the story."[32] The saga author takes every opportunity to stress the continuity of the lineage stretching back to Harald Fairhair.

The author of the *Orkneyinga saga* narrative in *Flateyjarbók*, then, seems to have introduced the Ragnhild episode to ensure that there is clear legal justification for what he already knew happened from *Heimskringla*: the earldom passed from Turf-Einar to his sons Arnkel, Erland, and Thorfinn Skull-Splitter. Arnkel and Erland were killed fighting alongside Eirík Bloodax, leaving Thorfinn sole ruler. After Eirík Bloodax is killed, the Eiríkssons depose Thorfinn. Then, as the Eiríkssons are leaving for Norway, they reinstall Thorfinn as earl and marry their sister Ragnhild to Thorfinn's eldest son, Arnfinn. It is at this point where *Orkneyinga saga* expands on the events recorded in *Heimskringla*.

After plotting the death of her first husband Arnfinn, Ragnhild goes on to marry Earl Thorfinn's second son, Havard the Fecund, who then succeeded to the earldom. Although the exact order of events is unclear, the implication seems to be that Havard became Earl only after marrying Ragnhild:

> Ragnhildr Eiríksdóttir réð Arnfinni, bónda sínum, bana í Myrkkol á Katanesi, en hon giptist Hávarði inum ársæla, bróður hans. Hávarðr tók jarldom ok var góðr hǫfðingi ok arsæll.[33]

> Ragnhild Eirik's-Daughter plotted the death of her husband Arnfinn at Murkle in Caithness, then married his brother Havard the Fecund who succeeded to the earldom. Under his rule the islands enjoyed peace and prosperity.[34]

Notably, Havard's leadership brings prosperity to his people, and his epithet, the Fecund, suggests both his physical virility and the virility of his earldom. Next, Ragnhild seduces Havard's nephew,[35] Einar Buttered-Bread:

32 Thomson, *New History*, 32.

33 Guðmundsson, *Orkneyinga saga*, 20.

34 Pálsson and Edwards, *Orkneyinga Saga*, 33–34.

35 For a possible additional significance of the lusting after a younger member of the kin group, see Ralph O'Connor, "'Stepmother Sagas': An Irish Analogue for *Hjálmþérs saga ok Ölvers*," *Scandinavian Studies* 72 no. 1 (2000), 1–48.

> Kallaði hon slíkan mann vel til hǫfðingja fallinn ok betr hentan jarldóm en Hávarði, frænda hans, ok kallaði þá konu vel gipta, er slíkan mann ætti. Einarr bað hana ekki taka slíkar rœður, kvað hann mann gǫfgastan í Eyjum ok hana fullvel gipta.[36]

> She kept telling him what a fine leader he was and how much better fitted for the earldom than his uncle Havard. Einar pleaded with her not to say such things, a respectable married woman and the wife of the greatest man in Orkney.[37]

Ragnhild is already married to Earl Havard, the leader of his people who is considered to be a great man, and Ragnhild has identified someone she feels will be a better leader.

Ragnhild's response to Einar Buttered-Bread only pushes the matter further:

> Ragnhildr svarar: "Skammar munu verða samfarar okkar Hávarðs heðan frá. Satt er þat, at verða munu menn til [í] Ejyum, þeir er eigi mun allt í augu vaxa, ef þú fyrirmant þér tignarinnar." Við slíkar fortǫlur hennar gekksk Einari hugr til ágirni ok svika við jarl, frænda sinn, ok sǫmðu þat sín á millum, at hann skyldi drepa jarl, en hon skyldi giptask honum.[38]

> "My married life with Havard won't last much longer," she said, "and to tell you the truth, though you may not want the honor for yourself, there are men in Orkney who wouldn't be so high-minded about it." So she prodded him on, and Einar, swayed too by his greed, let her influence him. Eventually, he was persuaded to betray the Earl his uncle. Ragnhild and Einar made a bargain that he was to kill the Earl and then she would marry him.[39]

After killing Havard, however, Einar Buttered-Bread is betrayed by Ragnhild, who eventually goes on to marry another brother of Arnfinn and Havard, Ljot—skipping over Thorfinn's third son Hlodvir. Although we may have expected Ragnhild to marry Einar Buttered-Bread's killer, Einar Hard-Mouth, she instead marries closer to the succession, and not Havard's avenger, as Einar Buttered-Bread predicted:

36 Guðmundsson, *Orkneyinga saga*, 21.
37 Pálsson and Edwards, *Orkneyinga Saga*, 34.
38 Guðmundsson, *Orkneyinga saga*, 21.
39 Pálsson and Edwards, *Orkneyinga Saga*, 34.

> "Þat er mælt, frú," segir hann, "at þér mælið stundum annat en yðr er í skapi, en sá, er þetta verk gerir, mun vilja þat fyrir hafa, at þú haldir þeinn í hendr ríkinu ok þeim hlutum ǫðrum, er eigi mun þykkja minna skipta."[40]

> "Common talk has it, my lady, that you don't always say quite what you're thinking," said Einar [Hard-Mouth]. "Anyone who carries this off [i.e., avenging Earl Havard by killing Einar Buttered-Bread] will want more than the earldom: he'll expect other things from you just as important."[41]

Ranghild, however, betrays Einar Hard-Mouth, and marries a third Thorfinnson, Ljot. After marrying Ragnhild, "Ljótr tók jarldóm ok gerðisk hǫfðingi mikill" ("Ljot took over the earldom and turned out to be an excellent leader").[42] After a rebellion against Ljot by the youngest Thorfinnsson, Skuli, which kills both Ljot and Skuli,[43] the only remaining Thorfinnson is Hlodvir.

The *Flateyjarbók* version of the narrative, then, ensures that the earldom must pass through Hlodvir by culling potential claimants from the kin group, either through their deaths or by their unfitness to rule due to their readiness to betray a member of that kin group, the sitting earl.[44] Thomson writes that "[a]fter the story of Erik [Bloodax] which deals with events which to some extent can be authenticated, the saga reverts to a folk-tale when it tells the story of the evil Ragnhild who plots the death of successive husbands by promising to marry their murderers."[45] While Thomson is correct in his assertion that "[t]here is no real reason to trust any of the details of this bloodthirsty story,"[46] too quickly dismissing Ragnhild as an evil woman misses an opportunity to widen the discussion by looking more closely at how she functions in the narrative. Ragnhild serves the saga author's purpose of ensuring that the earldom passes uncontestably through the correct lineage. By first marrying each earl, then ensuring he is killed when she identifies a better ruler, Ragnhild functions as a force for strengthening and stabilizing the earldom. Thomson's suggestion that "perhaps Ljot was a match" for his wife, as he becomes a "'mighty chief'

40 Guðmundsson, *Orkneyinga saga*, 21–22.

41 Pálsson and Edwards, *Orkneyinga Saga*, 35.

42 Guðmundsson, *Orkneyinga saga*, 22; Pálsson and Edwards, *Orkneyinga Saga*, 35.

43 This is the subject of chapter 10 of the text.

44 Berman, "Political Sagas," 119, points out that in *Orkneyinga saga*, "[w]eak, unjust rulers tend to fare worse than stronger, more reliable ones."

45 Thomson, *New History*, 58.

46 Thomson, *New History*, 58.

and nothing more is heard of Ragnhild,"[47] does not quite explain why no other mention is made of this supposedly evil woman. Rather, it is the case that Ragnhild disappears from the saga for two reasons. The first, which is a historical reason, is that Hlodvir marries Eithne, a daughter of Kjarval, King of Ireland[48]—which both breaks the ties between the Earls of Orkney and Norwegian hegemony that were re-established when Ragnhild was married to Arnfinn, and emphasizes the ties with the Irish world. The second reason—the literary one—is that Ragnhild disappears from the narrative because she is no longer needed to cull potential claimants to the earldom.

Ragnhild: The Sovereignty of Orkney or Anti-feminist Rhetoric?

The final point to be addressed in this essay is the character of Ragnhild herself. I have already suggested that she shares certain similarities with Irish sovereignty figures. In this section of the essay, I will briefly discuss the figure of sovereignty as she is imagined in medieval Irish tales, along with possible reasons why this figure may appear in *Orkneyinga saga*.

In *Echtra Mac n-Echdach Mugmedóin*, the five sons of Eochaid Mugmedón undergo a series of tests to see who will inherit the throne from their father. Niall, the youngest of the five, wins every test. For the final test, the boys are sent hunting with newly forged weapons. Out hunting, the boys become thirsty and one by one leave the camp in search of water, encountering a hag next to a well. The hag asks for a kiss in exchange for the water. Fergus refuses, as do the other brothers until finally it is Niall's turn. Niall passes the test by not only giving the hag what she asks but also by embracing her. At that point, she transforms into a beautiful woman, compares herself to sovereignty, and prophesies the future kings of Ireland.

As with the hag in *Echtra Mac Echach Muigmedoin*, the Thorfinnssons must consort with Ragnhild if they wish to be the Earl of Orkney. Yet, Ragnhild differs from the Sovereignty of Ireland in one crucial aspect—Ragnhild lacks the physical transformation that allegorizes kingship. The allegorical figure of the Sovereignty of Ireland in *Echtra Mac Echach Muigmedoin* begins as a hideous hag guarding a well which each of the five sons of Eochaid Mugmedón—Brian, Ailill, Fiachra, Fergus, and Niall—approach successively to draw water. It is perhaps significant that in both *Echtra Mac n-Echdach*

47 Thomson, *New History*, 58.

48 Pálsson and Edwards, *Orkneyinga Saga*, 36. See Sayers, "Clontarf, and the Irish Destinies," for a discussion of Hlodvir's Irish connections.

Mugmedóin and *Orkneyinga saga* there are five sons who are tested for their fitness to rule. Niall passes the test by not only giving the hag what she asks—a kiss—but also by voluntarily moving to have sex with her. At that point, the hag transforms into a beautiful woman, identifies herself as the Sovereignty of Ireland, names Niall king, and explains the allegory of the sovereignty figure:

> Eirig 7 do saigid do braithrech, or si, feasta, 7 ber usce lat, 7 chena bid lat 7 lad chlaind co brath in rigi 7 in forlamus cenmotha dias do śil Ḟiachrach .i. Dathi 7 Ailill Molt, 7 oenrigh a Mumain .i. Brian Boruma, cen ḟresabra na riga sin uili. Acus amail adcondarcais misi co granna connda aduathmar artús 7 alaind fadeoid, is amlaid sin in flaithius, uair is annam fogabar he cen chatha 7 cen chongala, alaind maisech immorro ria nech e fodeoid.[49]

> "Go now to your brothers," she said, "and take water with you. And you and your descendants will have the kingship forever except for two from the race of Fiachra—Dathí and Ailill Molt—and one king from Munster—Brian Bóroma. All of those kings will be without opposition. And you have seen me at first fearsome, wolfish terrifying, and at last beautiful, thus is the sovereignty: for it is not obtained without battle and conflicts; but at last it is fair and gracious to anyone."[50]

Amy C. Eichhorn-Mulligan suggests that Niall's ability to transform the hag into a beautiful woman likens the proper king to a saint: "they are both figures who serve their people and intervene in times of need, the king through his proper rule bringing peace, safety, fertility, health and other benefits to the land and people within his kingdom as does the saint to those living within his or her religious jurisdiction," concluding that the "linking of king and saint is rhetorically powerful, broadly resonant, and would particularly appeal to those trying to promote the cult of a legendary leader."[51]

While I do not mean to suggest that any of the Thorfinnssons should be considered saintly, the author of *Orkneyinga saga* most certainly was

49 Text from "*Echtra Mac Echach Muigmedoin*: 'The Adventures of the Sons of Eochaid Muigmedón,'" ed. and trans. Whitley Stokes, *Revue Celtique* 24 (1902), 190–203, at 200.

50 From "The Adventures of the Sons of Eochaid Mugmedón," in *The Celtic Heroic Age: Literary Sources for Ancient Celtic Europe and Early Ireland and Wales*, ed. and trans. John T. Koch and John Carey, 4th ed. (Aberystwyth: Celtic Studies Publications, 2003), 203–8, at 207.

51 Amy C. Eichhorn-Mulligan, "The Anatomy of Power and the Miracle of Kingship: The Female Body of Sovereignty in a Medieval Irish Kingship Tale," *Speculum* 81 (2006), 1014–54, at 1052.

interested in connecting the line of earls to several legendary leaders. Beuermann devotes several pages to the mythic status of Turf-Einar, suggesting that Einar meets those criteria for an ideal ruler, as well as pointing out Einar's associations with Odin, thus bringing Odin into the lineage.[52] These connections would serve the political purpose of establishing the "rightful" rulers of Orkney in a manner analogous to the sovereignty goddess of *Echtra Mac n-Echdach Mugmedóin*.[53] There is, however, another side to the sovereignty goddess, and one that more neatly maps onto Ragnhild.

Máire Bhreathnach points out that in some Old Irish tales that describe the death of a king, there is a mysterious woman who "may be compared, if not identified, with the Sovereignty Goddess in accession tales […]. However, her role here seems to be that of a death goddess, in that she provokes the downfall and death of the unjust king when the union between him and his realm has been irreparably damaged by his actions and when, thereby, his reign has ceased to be productive."[54] Bhreathnach goes on to discuss the role of this mysterious woman in both *Togail Bruidne Dá Derga* and *Aided Muirchertaig meic Erca*. While the *Orkneyinga saga* is careful to point out that under Havard, "the islands enjoyed peace and prosperity," and that Ljot "turned out to be an excellent leader,"[55] there is the suggestion, with Havard at least, that Ragnhild thinks she has found a better ruler: Einar Buttered-Bread.

There is a parallel between the characters of Ragnhild and Sín of *Aided Muirchertaig meic Erca*. Bhreathnach calls Sín a "beautiful, but evil, sorceress,"[56] and it should also be noted that it is Sín's body that Muirchertach lusts after:

> Ni cian dia raibe ann co facaid oen-ingen chruthalaind chenn-fhind chnes-soluis, 7 brat uaine impe i suide 'na fhochraib isin fert fódmuigi,

52 Beuermann, "*Jarla Sogur Orkneyja*," 129–36. Beuermann (135) suggests the comparison to Odin on several points—a single eye but most keen sighted of men, the blood-eagle sacrifice, a connection to wolves—leaving the saga with the effect of establishing a break from Norway.

53 James Mackey, "Mythical Past and Political Present: A Case-Study of the Irish Myth of Sovereignty," *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 51 (1999) 66–84, at 79, highlights the use of the sovereignty myth during the Middle Ages to consolidate power in the hands of the ruler: "The Uí Néill dynasts and their well-paid [*filid*?] propagandists of the early eleventh century, therefore, were making quite proper use of myth in accordance with its permanent nature and function; and they were at the same time expressing reality in the only manner in which that reality could be expressed, by means of symbol or myth."

54 Máire Bhreathnach, "The Sovereignty Goddess as Goddess of Death?," *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 39 (1982), 243–60, at 244–45.

55 Pálsson and Edwards, *Orkneyinga Saga*, 34 and 35.

56 Bhreathnach, "Sovereignty Goddess," 245.

> 7 dar leis nocon fhaca don droing banda a com-alaind na a com-chuanna, gura linustar a cholann uile dá grad, 7 a aicned. Uair dar leis re fégad do-berad Ériu uile ara híasacht oen-aidche, mar do char co hadbal hi re faicsin. 7 ro fhersum fáilti fria mar bud aichnid dó hí, 7 ro fhiarfaigh scela di.[57]
>
> He had not been there long when he saw a solitary damsel beautifully formed, fair-headed, bright-skinned, with a green mantle about her, sitting near him on the turfen mound; and it seemed to him that of womankind he had never beheld her equal in beauty and refinement. So that all his body and his nature filled with love for her, for gazing at her it seemed to him that he would give the whole of Ireland for one night's loan of her, so utterly did he love her at sight. And he welcomed her as if she were known to him, and he asked tidings of her.[58]

Indeed, as Mark Williams points out, this would hardly qualify Muirchertach for the title of a proper ruler: "Here for the first time our author takes up one of his favorite themes, the gulf between appearance and reality. Even less reassuring is Muirchertach's internal admission that he would trade the whole of Ireland for one night with this unknown woman: not, surely, a good impulse in a king."[59] Sín uses magic to make Muirchertach believe that he is fighting men, when he is actually attacking the land itself—a passage that requires little interpretation given the context of a king who has failed a test set by an imposter sovereignty goddess.[60] As previously noted, Ragnhild's mother was "skilled in magic," which at least opens the possibility that she is as well.

Máire Herbert suggests that, through the "portrayal of the evil-initiating female," the author of *Aided Muirchertaig meic Erca* "may be regarded as subverting whatever positive image the pre-Christian sovereignty goddess

57 *Aided Muirchertaig meic Erca*, ed. Lil Nic Dhonnchadha, Mediaeval and Modern Irish Series 19 (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1964), 1. The translation is from "The Death of Muirchertach Mac Erca," ed. and trans. Whitley Stokes, *Revue Celtique* 23 (1902), 395–437, at 397, 399.

58 Stokes, "Death," 397, 399.

59 Mark Williams, "Lady Vengeance: A Reading of *Aided Muirchertaig mac Erca*," *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 62 (2011), 1–32, at 6.

60 Williams, "Lady Vengeance," 8: "Whilst Muirchertach is painted as an irresponsible ruler—he gives away his own autonomy and is willing to trade in all of Ireland for a one-night stand—the woman is implicitly supernatural, drawn with some lineaments of the sovereignty goddess."

may have retained,"[61] while Williams comes to the conclusion that the author is deliberately taking advantage of audience expectations:

> Our author is certainly concerned to deceive us about Sín's nature for most of the tale—that, in a way that has not been sufficiently stressed, is the *point*—but I would suggest that there is a further level to this generic misdirection. Does our author intend us to conclude that Sín's own plan, as it were, consciously involved this kind of "authorial" counterfeiting—that, in other words, she *deliberately poses as a sovereignty goddess* in order to destroy a king whom she knows to be violent and ambitious?[62]

While Williams settles on the conclusion that *Aided Muirchertaig meic Erca* is "not just the story of king versus saint, or of king and his myth-inflected marriage to a quasi-goddess, but as a cunning and self-conscious exercise in literary criticism"[63]—a provocative and interesting claim in that it suggests the use of literary tropes to fashion history—my interest lies in his question. Sín could consciously pose as a sovereignty goddess because she is "not only a witch but a superlative actress"[64] specifically intent on destroying an evil king, and this suggests a similar reading of Ragnhild. When Ragnhild tells Einar Buttered-Bread that he is better fitted for the earldom than his uncle Havard,[65] is Ragnhild attempting to have an unfit ruler removed? Certainly, this can be read as a test: Ragnhild attempts to seduce Einar Buttered-Bread, and the fact that Einar Buttered-Bread agrees to the plan means that he is also unfit. The same may be the case with Einar Hard-Mouth—both Einars are seduced into kin-killings by a woman who is, indeed, a sovereignty figure in that she both represents the continued line of Eiríkr Bloodax and Orkney's connection to Norwegian hegemony, and that her husband will become the Earl of Orkney.

We need not locate the narrative of serial marriages exclusively in myth or folklore, however. There are, of course, historical and pseudo-historical analogues. Máire Ní Mhaonaigh compares three characters sharing the name Gormlaith in medieval Irish literature, finding that, while sometimes these characters bleed together and are treated as reflexes of the sovereignty

61 Máire Herbert, "The Death of Muirchertach Mac Erca: A Twelfth-Century Tale," in *Vikings and Celts*, ed. Folke Josephson, Meijerbergs Arkiv fór Svensk Ordforskning 20 (Göteborg: Styrelsen for Meijerbergs Institut vid Göteborgs Universitet, 1997), 27–39, at 31.

62 Williams, "Lady Vengeance," 31, emphasis original.

63 Williams, "Lady Vengeance," 32.

64 Williams, "Lady Vengeance," 32.

65 Pálsson and Edwards, *Orkneyinga Saga*, 34.

goddess, they are still linked with historical consorts. Perhaps most important for my own argument is Ní Mhaonaigh's discussion of Gormlaith, daughter of Murchad mac Finn.[66] If the twelfth-century material is correct, this Gormlaith appears to have had Irish and Norse connections through her consorts: her first husband may have been Norse king of Dublin Amlaíb Cuarán, to be followed by Brian Bóroma and then one of Brian's allies, Máel Sechnaill—although the order and details are disputed.[67] Gormlaith also appears in *Brennu-Njáls saga*, where she is "deliberately portrayed as the antithesis of Brian. Her villainous deeds graphically oppose his heroic ones; she is the evil demon at odds with the saintly king," and is openly associated with paganism.[68] Indeed, the thirteenth-century *Brennu-Njáls saga* not only emphasizes the role Gormlaith plays in the battle of Clontarf, as Ní Mhaonaigh points out, it also turns her into an unambiguously evil character:

> In thirteenth-century Ireland, therefore, Gormlaith was presented as an evil, vengeful queen, whose role as the instigator of the battle of Clontarf was pivotal. And while information about Clontarf, including Gormlaith's part in the battle, must ultimately have emanated from Ireland, the involvement of the Norse Kormløð in events is greater, and her hue somewhat darker, than that of her Irish literary counterpart, Gormlaith. Nor is there evidence that this Scandinavian version influenced later Irish portrayal, although her negative influence is made more explicit in Early Modern Irish narratives.[69]

As literary characters, both Ragnhild and Gormlaith seem to become more stereotypically evil as they move forward in time, as if they are given one very specific role to play in their narratives. As foils for their protagonists in these narratives, Ragnhild, Sín, and Gormlaith are written as women who pervert kingship to their own ends.

While arguing for a genetic connection between Ragnhild and the Irish sovereignty goddess may perhaps be going too far, the author of the narrative preserved in *Flateyjarbók* has crafted Ragnhild Eiríksdóttir as a character that preforms a function similar to one. That this character bears some

66 Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, "Tales of Three Gormlaiths in Medieval Irish Literature," *Ériu* 52 (2002), 1–24, at 18–24.

67 Ní Mhaonaigh, "Tales," 18–19.

68 Ní Mhaonaigh, "Tales," 23.

69 Ní Mhaonaigh, "Tales," 23–24.

resemblance to a mythic character from another tradition may say more about the power of myth consciously recrafted as political propaganda than it does about the history of Orkney. The author of *Flateyjarbók* may have had a problem similar to that of the writers of the Irish sovereignty tales, i.e. to justify the right to rule by the currently ruling party, and solved it in a similar manner: by reaching back into the past to restructure history so that the only possible result is the current state of affairs. The descent of the Earldom of Orkney through Hlodvir, then, has been crafted by the author of *Flateyjarbók* as to be overdetermined, and it is at least possible—given the other, more obvious interactions with the Irish world in this saga[70]—that the author of chapter 9 may have borrowed a well-known Irish motif to ensure that Hlodvir was the only member of the kin group who could have been a proper Earl of Orkney.[71]

About the author

Brian Cook is a Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow at Auburn University. Brian's research interests include Old and Middle English, Old Norse, early Celtic, and Insular Latin literary and cultural interaction, and he has published in *English Studies*, *Neophilologus*, and *The National Library of Wales Journal*.

70 See, for example, Beuermann, "*Jarla Sogur Orkneyja*," 126–29, for the discussion of Máel Brigte's poisoned tooth in chapter 5 of this text.

71 Many thanks to Professor Lindy Brady of the University of Mississippi for commenting on an early version of this essay. Thanks are also due to the seminar organizers and my fellow seminar participants for five weeks of irreplaceable experiences and engaging conversations. Finally, thanks are due to Milissa Ackerley for ensuring that everything stayed on track as we traveled across the United Kingdom.

5. Statius' Dynamic Absence in the Narrative Frame of the Middle Irish *Togail na Tebe*

Stephen Kershner

Abstract
Classicist Stephen Kershner, using the lens of Statius and the tradition of Roman epic, finds meaningful patterns in what the medieval Irish translator of the *Thebaid* kept and didn't keep of the Roman poet's sensitive framing of the story of the Seven against Thebes. In simultaneously embracing and distancing itself from its Latin source, this Middle Irish text reveals the long-lasting impact of Statius on the literature of early Ireland, Britain, and the Western Middle Ages in general.

Keywords: Statius' *Thebaid*, *Togail na Tebe*, medieval reception of Classical literature, translation, narrative frame

> "Harry," said Basil looking him in the face, "every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist, not the sitter. The sitter is merely the accident, the occasion. It is not he who is revealed by the painter; it is rather the painter who, on the coloured canvas, reveals himself. The reason I will not exhibit this picture is that I am afraid that I have shown in it the secret of my soul."
>
> —Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*[1]

For scholars of Statius' *Thebaid*, the Roman retelling of the very old "Seven against Thebes" saga, the *Togail na Tebe* (The destruction of Thebes), a Middle

1 Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 7. The novel was originally published in 1890.

MacQuarrie, Charles W. and Joseph Falaky Nagy (eds), *The Medieval Cultures of the Irish Sea and the North Sea. Manannán and His Neighbors*. Taylor & Francis Group, 2019
DOI: 10.5117/9789462989399/CH05

Irish prose adaptation of *Thebaid*, has long seemed to be a case of eccentric medieval *nachleben*. Classicists, like W.B. Stanford in his *Ireland and the Classical Tradition*,[2] have commonly viewed *Togail na Tebe* and similar works—i.e. *Togail Troí* (The destruction of Troy), *Riss in Mundtuirc* (The tale of the necklace), *In Cath Catharda* (The civil war), *Imtheachta Aeniasa* (The adventures of Aeneas), *Merugud Uilixes mac Leirtis* (The wandering of Ulysses son of Laertes), et al.—as "flights of fancy" or "spates of rhetoric," neither characterization particularly positive when speaking of Classical poetry.[3] Yet the fruits of two recent scholarly movements—one in Classical Studies, the other in Celtic Studies—suggest that a more appreciative and nuanced assessment of the relationship between Statius' *Thebaid* and *Togail na Tebe* is both possible and necessary.[4] From the mid-eighteenth century until the last few decades, Classics scholars assessed Statius as inferior to his poetic peers, a view summed up clearly in H.E. Butler's opinion in 1909 that Statius is a superficial poet of the second rank and J.H. Mozley's comment that Statius' "inequality as a poet is hardly necessary to speak [of]."[5] Recently, however, Statius has received a thorough rehabilitation in

2 W.B. Stanford, *Ireland and the Classical Tradition* (Dublin: Allen Figgis, 1976).

3 Stanford, *Ireland and the Classical Tradition*, 81. Ancient literary critics, such as the rhetorician Quintilian, viewed the infusion of rhetorical principles and devices as a kind of diminishment of art. This worry over rhetorically inclined poetry can be diagnosed as early as Petronius' *Satyrica* 118, in the famous *bellum civile* episode. Frederick Ahl, in his reflection on the goals of translation and the nature of the *Merugud Uilixes mac Leirtis* as a translation states that "the Classicist looking at them might be tempted to dismiss them as simple variants on the original, not translations"; "*Uilix mac Leirtis*: The Classical Hero in Irish Metamorphosis," in *The Art of Translation: Voices from the Field*, ed. Rosanna Warren (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), 173–98, at 175.

4 *Togail na Tebe*, surviving in two fifteenth-century manuscripts (Edinburgh, Advocates' Library, Gaelic MSS 8, Kilbride Collection, 4, and London, British Library, MS Egerton 1781), has been dated as a twelfth-century work from the late Middle Irish language (Ralph O'Connor, "Irish Narrative Literature and the Classical Tradition, 900–1300," in *Classical Literature and Learning in Medieval Irish Narrative*, ed. O'Connor (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2014), 1–22, at 5, n. 20). At present, George Calder's edition and translation is the sole edition—*Togail na Tebe: The Thebaid of Statius* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922)—while Robert Meyer and John R. Harris both offer extensive commentary: R.T. Meyer, "The Middle-Irish Version of Statius' *Thebaid*," *Papers of the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters* 47 (1962), 687–99; John R. Harris, *Adaptations of Roman Epic in Medieval Ireland* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998), 159–99.

5 H.E. Butler, *Post-Augustan Poetry from Seneca to Juvenal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1909); J.H. Mozley, ed. and trans., *Statius*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928), 1: xviii. Mozley's comment is particularly damaging as it is in the introduction to the popular Loeb series edition of the *Silvae* and *Thebaid*. Some of this low opinion derives certainly from Statius' own words. In the prefaces to his five books of *Silvae*, Statius continuously degrades his own talent (e.g. *Silvae* 1, pref., 5–9). This self-deprecation is now generally viewed as a rhetorical

the form of new editions, commentaries, and critical studies. Among many other things, the insights gained from this reassessment now allow us to understand the medieval Irish reception of Statius, seen in *Togail na Tebe*, *Riss in Mundtuirc*,[6] and *Robo maith Aichil mac Péil* (Good was Achilles son of Peleus), the so-called "Irish *Achilleid*,"[7] in more vibrant terms. Likewise, in Celtic Studies, scholars like Brent Miles, Ralph O'Connor, Erich Poppe, and Michael Clarke have led a new exploration of the Middle Irish interest in the Classical Roman epics to great effect. Miles, on the rhetorical learning behind the Irish interest in a "Classical aesthetic" in producing these adaptations, and O'Connor, on thematic and narrative concerns, have especially shown that "even a tale which reads at first glance like a hotchpotch of learned lore, rattling through its Classical matter with more concern for completeness than aesthetic quality can be seen on closer reading to show considerable artistic coherence, purpose and skill."[8] This essay seeks to contribute to these studies by disentangling the anonymous Irish author's de-emphasis from the *Togail na Tebe* of Statius' role as autonomous epic poet, seen clearly in the *Thebaid*'s narrative frame, and the recasting of Statius' role as an ancient historiographical source of true events.[9] With a better understanding of the metageneric and literary historical negotiations in these crucial framing passages in *Togail na Tebe*, through a close comparison with those in the *Thebaid*, we can glimpse something of the rich literary dialogue between

gambit. Yet, Gordon Williams has shown—in *Change and Decline: Roman Literature in the Early Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978)—that there was a definite movement in the Imperial period to downgrade its own literary production in favor of the glorious golden age of the Augustan poets (i.e. Vergil, Horace, Ovid, Propertius, et al.). For a convincing view opposing Williams, see W.J. Dominik, "Change or Decline? Literature in the Early Principate," *Acta Classica* 37 (1993), 105–12.

6 *Riss in Mundtuirc* is a Middle Irish text drawing from Statius' *Thebaid* and book 9 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. For discussion and an edition, see Brent Miles, "*Riss in Mundtuirc*: The Tale of Harmonia's Necklace and the Study of the Theban Cycle in Medieval Ireland," *Ériu* 57 (2007), 67–112.

7 *Robo maith Aichil mac Péil* is a twelfth-century text "listing the boyhood deeds of Achilles from Statius' *Achilleid* preserved in a fourteenth-century manuscript." Edition and translation by Donncha Ó hAodha, "The Irish version of Statius' *Achilleid*," *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 79 C (1979), 83–138.

8 O'Connor, "Irish Narrative Literature," 21. See also Brent Miles, *Heroic Saga and Classical Epic in Medieval Ireland* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2011), 246. The idea that the Irish author was more interested in completeness than poetic quality is expressed best in John Harris' view that the author "lost interest" and focus, becoming careless half way through the *Togail na Tebe* (*Adaptations of Roman Epic*, 159).

9 See Harris, *Adaptations of Roman Epic*, 159–93, for a more complete list of differences in the narratives of the *Togail na Tebe* and the *Thebaid*.

these two works. Perhaps more meaningfully, we may gain insight into the medieval Irish literary tradition's conscious self-fashioning as a descendent and inheritor of Classical cultural artifacts. Specifically, I will argue that the Irish author, with the complex revision of the *Thebaid*'s generic and authorial framing in the *Togail na Tebe*, makes a series of relatively practical gestures directed primarily at his audience, forging a more intimate, even genealogical, relationship between his audience and their literary "forefathers."

The Importance of Beginnings and Endings

The beginning and ending of Statius' *Thebaid* (1.1–45 and 12.810–819), published in the 90s CE in the hazardous literary world of Domitianic Rome, are intensely metapoetical and self-reflexive performances. Here, Statius navigates challenges both rhetorically and poetically: social challenges, as a poet in a literary marketplace; political, as a poet during the tyrannical Domitianic age; and literary-historical, as a poetic successor to the "epic father" Vergil.[10] Yet the medieval Irish author of the *Togail na Tebe*, otherwise a relatively accurate translator of *Thebaid*'s Latin text, excises Statius' narrative frame completely, replaces Statius' introduction with his own amplified version, and cavalierly closes the work and appears disinterested in the complexities presented in Statius' ending to *Thebaid*. This stark difference in what are arguably the most performative, programmatic, and revealing sections of any work, demands that we question the motives of the Middle Irish author. Is he simply editing out material that is irrelevant or potentially uninteresting to his Irish audience, such as Statius' sycophantic promises to the emperor Domitian (1.17–32) or Statius' worries about his own legacy (12.810–819)? Or, is he fashioning a different message, one that repurposes Statius' moral account and reconstitutes the Classical poetical arrangement for a contemporary audience and according to contemporary literary norms? In what follows, I will argue that the Irish author at different levels of the text is doing both.

Making these kinds of choices for the sake of intercultural intelligibility is, of course, the procedural core of translating any text. In the case of *Togail na Tebe*, however, the author reveals himself and his own cultural

10 The bibliography that touches upon Statius' "anxiety of influence" with Vergil is massive. For two easily accessible entrances to this subject, see Philip Hardie, *The Epic Successors of Virgil: A Study in the Dynamics of a Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), and Randall Ganiban, *Statius and Virgil: The Thebaid and the Reinterpretation of the Aeneid* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

context to his audience as much as he reveals Statius through his complete rewriting of *Thebaid*'s narrative frame. The author's choice to exclude Statius' metapoetical discussions (i.e. *Thebaid* 1.1–45 and 12.810–819), essential to the poem's Roman nature and Statius' authorial presence, and the streamlining of book 12 of *Thebaid* suggest a conscious interest in remediating Statius' version of the Seven against Thebes saga for a medieval Irish audience. Several scholars have noted that *Togail na Tebe* is more faithful to the Roman original than other Middle Irish adaptions are to their Roman sources.[11] The author's apparent interest in translational accuracy suggests that *Togail na Tebe* was not intended to be a new version of an old story with *Thebaid* as a sourcebook, like *Imtheachta Aeniasa* (The wandering of Aeneas) vis-à-vis Vergil's *Aeneid*.[12] Rather, by translating most of *Thebaid*'s text carefully, but still excising important Statian features like the narrative frame, the author dislodges *Thebaid*'s narrative from its foundations, both poetical and social. Moreover, he shifts the discourse of his work by calibrating the "orthodox" Statian narrative precisely to the literary and cultural expectations of the Medieval Irish audience.[13] *Togail na Tebe*'s author thus guides his audience to a new reading of these ancient stories by manipulating the proem's basic message,[14] a reading more suitable for the medieval Irish cultural universe and perhaps more in line with relatively native works

11 See, for example, Harris, *Adaptations of Roman Epic*, 159, and Miles, *Heroic Saga*, 76. See Miles, *Heroic Saga*, 57, for an interesting view of the *Scél Alexandair*, using Hildegard Tristram's theory of "aggregate history" (i.e. histories "stitched" together by an author). *Togail na Tebe* is the reasonably faithful reworking of one source, *Thebaid*. It is not aggregate, as the other Irish adaptations seem to be.

12 For insight on the relationship between *Aeneid* and *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, see Erich Poppe, *A New Introduction to Imtheachta Aeniasa: The Irish Aeneid; The Classical Epic from an Irish Perspective*, Irish Texts Society Subsidiary Ser. 3 (London: Irish Texts Society, 1995); Erich Poppe, "*Imtheachta Aeniasa*: Virgil's *Aeneid* in Medieval Ireland," *Classics Ireland* 11 (2004), 74–94; Erich Poppe, "*Imtheachta Aeniasa* and its Place in Medieval Irish Textual History," in O'Connor, *Classical Literature and Learning*, 25–39.

13 Robert Crampton discusses ratios between "orthodox" and "unorthodox" elements as evidence for an author's interest in accuracy in "The Uses of Exaggeration in *Merugud Uilixis Meic Leirtis* and in *Fingal Chlainne Tanntail*," in O'Connor, *Classical Literature and Learning*, 58–82. In *Togail na Tebe*, we see few unorthodox elements, suggesting that the author uses his new proem to calibrate an orthodox version of *Thebaid* to medieval Irish expectations.

14 Niall Slater argues, in an article on Plautus' *Poenulus* ("Plautine Negotiations: The *Poenulus* Prologue Unpacked," in *Beginnings in Classical Literature*, ed. F.M. Dunn and T. Cole (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 131–46, at 133), that a prolog performs a process of "induction" for the audience: "[The prolog] negotiated the conditions of its own reception with its audience. It created the frame through which the audience would view the rest of the performance. Thus, the beginning 'induces' the audience into the action and closes them off from any competing sights and sounds." The proems of *Thebaid* and *Togail na Tebe* seem to perform this same function.

like the *Táin Bó Cúailnge* (*The Cattle Raid of Cooley*) and *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* (*The Destruction of Da Derga's Hostel*).[15] These changes perhaps indicate that the Irish author is able, through these maneuvers, to seize control of the work for himself as an authoritative narrator of historical events, yet simultaneously distance himself from the negative charge of composing *figmenta poetica*, fictional poems which by nature would be morally questionable as "untruths."[16] The goal in this action is to secure some sort of moral credibility for Statius as an ancient poetic source in the eyes of his Irish readership. Ultimately, this strategy also offers the Irish author a unique position from which he is able to make a strong statement about Irish vernacular literature and its connections both to the Classical milieu and to the continental tradition that was also making use of Classical literary artifacts.

This repositioning of Statius in, perhaps, native "historical" terms is important because of the distinctive senses in which these very different cultures meant by "history" or "historical."[17] At this point, let me make a few orienting comments. Ancient readers most likely would have considered the historicity of a work like *Thebaid* with a suspension of disbelief. Ultimately, epic poems, and their heroic material, were thought to be based on "real events," but were viewed from such a distance in time that a highly literary account, like Statius' in *Thebaid* or Vergil's in *Aeneid*,—and indeed there were many variants of myths usually attributable to differing geography and time period—was read without real concern for exactness or accuracy. For ancient readers, the genre of historiography (e.g. the work of, say, Herodotus or Livy), more dependent upon scholarly intrusion into a narrative and careful historical technique, was the source for fact. On the other hand,

15 For strong positions on the interconnections between the Middle Irish adaptations of Classical works and the native vernacular literatures, see Miles, *Heroic Saga*, 13, and Robert R. Edwards, "Medieval Statius: Belatedness and Authority," in *Brill's Companion to Statius*, ed. W.J. Dominik, C.E. Newlands, and K. Gervais (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 497–511, at 501.

16 See Miles, *Heroic Saga*, 1–14, on *figmenta poetica*. As Miles presents, this distaste for "fabling" is shown in an Irish context in the Latin colophon to the *Táin Bó Cúailnge* in the Book of Leinster: "Certain things, however, are *figmenta poetica*, certain things resemble the truth, certain things do not, certain things are for the delectation of fools" ("quaedam autem figmenta poetica, quaedam similia vero, quaedam non, quaedam ad delectationem stultorum").

17 For a discussion of native Irish literary "genres" and their complex relationship with "history," see Proinsias Mac Cana, *The Learned Tales of Medieval Ireland* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1980); Seán Mac Airt, "*Filidecht* and *Coimgne*," *Ériu* 18 (1958), 139–52. For a discussion of contextual concerns in these kinds of Irish translations and adaptations, see Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, "Classical Compositions in Medieval Ireland: The Literary Context," in *Translations from Classical Literatures: Imtheachta Aeniasa and Stair Ercuil ocus a bás*, ed. Kevin Murray, Irish Texts Society Subsidiary Series 17 (London: Irish Texts Society, 2006), 1–19.

work by Máire Ní Mhaonaigh, Proinsias Mac Cana, and Seán Mac Airt has shown that the Irish notion of history in literary works was complicated and the precise differences between traditionally poetic figures (e.g. *filid*) and traditionally historiographical storytellers (e.g. *senchaid* or *scélaige*) could blur.

Performative Openings

The city of Thebes has long been a byword for familial immorality and the degeneracy that accrues when a person struggles against fate, natural law, and the supremacy of the gods. And in Statius' *Thebaid*, this is indeed the downfall we see. In his account of the (un)civil strife over the Theban throne, perpetrated by Oedipus' sons Eteocles and Polynices, Statius offers a lesson about the effects of internecine chaos: even a cause that seems just (i.e. reclaiming a throne that has been usurped) can goad one to commit crimes that are otherwise morally unthinkable. Statius begins his meditation on moral corruption, human frustration, and their consequences in a forty-five-line proem, articulating clearly his status as an innovative and autonomous author, finding himself in tension with imposing literary predecessors (e.g. Vergil and Homer) and real-world authorities (e.g. the emperor Domitian), and constructing a morally didactic message for his audience.

There are three basic sections in *Thebaid*'s proem: 1) the definition of the limits of his epic (lines 1–17), setting up the metapoetic and narrative stage for *Thebaid*; 2) the *recusatio* from and praise of Domitian (17–31), displaying and then demolishing Statius' struggle for both artistic and real-world autonomy; and 3) a condensed program of the epic (32–45), in which Statius introduces the story's heroes and a sense of moral gravity to the narrative.[18] All three sections are moves by Statius to gain control over the epic's trajectory and the audience's induction into his narrative. In order to understand the maneuvers that *Togail na Tebe*'s author executes in his proem, as he reacts to, excises, and thus rejects Statius' approach, let's look closely at what Statius actually says and does here.

Statius' beginning, specifically lines 1–4, strongly asserts his own poetic agency and artistic independence, even if it nods to epic tradition superficially. This epic is *his*, *he* composed it, and he is not merely the conduit

18 D.W.T.C. Vessey, *Statius and the Thebaid* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 60; K. Sara Myers "Statius on Invocation and Inspiration," in *Brill's Companion to Statius*, ed. W.J. Dominik, C.E. Newlands, and K. Gervais (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 30–41.

for its manifestation.[19] The first four lines are a typical epic invocation, the kind we see in most Classical epic poems:

> Fraternal battlelines and alternating reigns,
> struggled over in unholy hate, and guilty Thebes
> a Pierian heat coerces my mind to unveil.
> Where do you command me to go, Goddesses?[20]

He invokes the Muses and a metaphor of their inspirational power ("Pierius [...] calor," line 3), offering up what seems to be the standard "machinery of epic initiation."[21] But this beginning shifts the usual external inspiration from the Muses to one Statius finds internally, making the "Pierian heat" merely a catalyst, far less instrumental for his capacity to produce the poem. Rather, his expressed request of the Muses is for direction; he wants advice on where to begin, not what to say or how to say it.[22] With this maneuver, Statius subtly expresses confidence in his artistic talents and eludes the usual acknowledgement of the gods as the essential source of poetic agency.

Through the use of a *praeteritio*, a rhetorical "setting-aside" that calls attention to a fact or story while appearing to disregard it, Statius shows in lines 4–17 that this narrative is constructed according to his blueprints, the final messages found therein are those of his making. He lays claim to not just composition of the poem, but also the shaping and messaging of the narrative. After asking the Muses for direction ("unde iubetis/ ire, deae?," lines 3–4), Statius limits his story by considering and then rejecting several famous chapters from the long and notorious saga of Thebes. He rejects, for example, the rape of Europa ("Sidonios raptus," line 5), famously sex-trafficked by Zeus-as-bull, Cadmus and his battle against men sown from dragon's teeth (lines 7–9), and Bacchus' anger at a cousin, the king

19 See Myers, "Statius on Invocation," for a new discussion of Statius' manner of invoking the Muses in the proem to *Thebaid*. For a discussion of inspiration in all of Statius' works, see also Gianpiero Rosati "Muse and Power in the Poetry of Statius," in *Cultivating the Muse*, ed. E. Spentzou and D. Fowler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 229–51.

20 All translations of *Thebaid* are my own. *Thebaid* 1.1–4: "Fraternas acies alternaque regna profanis/ decertata odiis sontesque evolvere Thebas/ Pierius menti calor incidit. unde iubetis/ ire, deae?"

21 For more on the usual constellation of metapoetic gestures at the beginning of ancient epic and especially Statius and his models, see Myers, "Statius on Invocation," esp. 32–36.

22 The importance of this distinction becomes clear when the first few lines of *Thebaid* are compared closely with other Classical epic beginnings (e.g. *Aeneid* 1.1–4, *Iliad* 1.1–7, *Odyssey* 1.1–10). Like Statius, Lucan avoids this sort of explicit dialogue with the deities of inspiration in *Bellum civile* 1.1–7.

Pentheus, who rejected both his godhead and his relationship to the royal family of Thebes ("graves irae cognata in moenia Baccho," line 11). All of these similarly compelling stories are set aside to make room for the "Seven against Thebes" episode ("limes mihi carminis esto/ Oedipodae confusa domus," lines 16–17). As Sara Myers puts it, this *praeteritio* "marks the willful entrance of the narrator into the narrative and provides him with a way to define his theme against the tradition."[23]

This use of a *praeteritio* sets Statius apart from his most influential epic predecessors (i.e. Homer, Vergil, Ovid, and Lucan); none of these begin their stories, which also describe single episodes of longer sagas, with a similar maneuver.[24] In addition, Statius is both acknowledging the long tradition of artistic renderings of Theban stories (e.g. Euripides' *Bacchae*, Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, *Antigone*, and *Oedipus at Colonus*) and justifying his own contribution to the tradition.

With the deployment of the rhetorical strategy of *recusatio* in the proem's second section, Statius proceeds to address his complex relationship with the sociopolitical world, represented by the emperor Domitian, and the struggle for control over what he produces.[25] The poet certainly acknowledges his anxiety over receiving Domitian's approval, but the *recusatio* serves as a safeguard against any possible perception of disrespect by the emperor. Indeed, part of the negative reaction to Statius' poetry in recent centuries, noted above, is due to his seemingly sycophantic stance towards a man who terrorized Rome:

> And you, glory added to Latium's fame,
> whom, as you take on your aging parent's business,
> Rome desires to call her own forever.[26]

Recent scholarship has shown, however, that Statius' approach to the most intimidating audience member of all is far more nuanced than mere

23 Myers, "Statius on Invocation," 36.

24 Indeed, Statius' other epic, the tragically unfinished *Achilleid*, does not begin as the *Thebaid* does. In fact, Statius promises to tell Achilles' whole story with clear allusions to the Homeric tradition (*Achilleid* 1.3–5: "quamquam acta viri multum incluta cantu/ Maeonio, sed plura vacant, nos ire per omnem,/ sic amor est, heroa […]").

25 For a thorough discussion of this specific *recusatio*, and *recusatio* in general in Flavian poetry, see Ruurd R. Nauta, "The *Recusatio* in Flavian Poetry," in *Flavian Poetry*, ed. R.R. Nauta, H.-J. van Dam, and J.J.L. Smolenaars (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 21–40.

26 *Thebaid* 1.22–25: "tuque, o Latiae decus addite famae/ quem nova maturi subeuntem exorsa parentis/ aeternum sibi Roma cupit, […]."

sycophancy.[27] Statius simultaneously simulates a kind of submission to Domitian's authority and subtly asserts his own authorial management of *Thebaid* by using figured speech and the rhetorically ingenious twist in his *recusatio*. Immediately before this passage, Statius politely recuses himself from producing an epic poem of some of Domitian's martial victories.[28] He tells the master of his universe that "[he doesn't] yet dare to praise" him ("nondum [...] ausim spirare," lines 18–19), slyly protesting that his talents are unequal to such a task. Domitian must wait, as "there will be a time, when stronger in Pierian frenzy, I will sing your deeds: for now, I but tune my lyre" ("tempus erit, cum Pierio tua fortior oestro/ facta canam; nunc tendo chelyn," lines 32–33). Few who read *Thebaid* in the twenty-first century—or Statius' *Silvae* and the unfinished *Achilleid*, for that matter—will think these the poems of a hack. By asserting his power of choice, even in the face of real-world cultural and political pressure, he is asserting his artistic independence: this is his epic and the choices are his.

At first glance, the final section of the proem seems to refer obliquely to the forthcoming epic's episodes as a plot outline, with which the audience would be entirely familiar.[29] But on closer scrutiny, this emotionally and ethically charged passage effectively establishes Statius' central moral lesson. In lines 32–45, Statius finally presents his narrative's central themes as topics that "suit" his style:

> For now, I but tune my lyre:
> it is enough to recall Aonian arms
> and the scepter fatal to twin tyrants,
> rage lasting past death and flames warring anew
> on the pyre and the ashes of kings lacking graves,
> cities emptied by mutual death,
> when deep-blue Dirce blushed with Lernaean blood,
> Thetis is horrified by Ismenos, accustomed to stay

27 For discussions of the use of "figured speech" and "doublespeak" by poets in the Domitianic era, see Frederick Ahl, "The Art of Safe Criticism in Greece and Rome," *American Journal of Philology* 105 (1984), 174–208; Frederick Ahl, "The Rider and the Horse: Politics and Power in Roman Poetry from Horace to Statius," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Romischen Welt* 2.32.1 (1984), 40–110; Shadi Bartsch, *Actors in the Audience: Theatricality and Doublespeak from Nero to Hadrian* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994).

28 The poem, which Statius puts off beginning (or completing), is purported to detail Domitian's victories over the Chatti tribe of Germania in 82–83 CE. It is not known whether Statius ever actually composed this *laudatio*.

29 Vessey, *Statius and the Thebaid*, 65: "[This passage] epitomizes and foreshadows the fundamental plan of the epic."

> within his banks, floods in a huge heap of dead,
> Clio, which of the heroes do you offer first?
> Is it Tydeus, whose rage is measureless?
> Or, the sudden chasm of the laurelled seer?
> Turbulent Hippomedon urges me on, attacking
> the hostile river with slaughter, and the heartbreaking
> battles of the brazen Arcadian, and Capaneus, who must
> be sung with a different horror.[30]

These words suggest that Statius is projecting moral gravity and a message for his readers: civil war is ultimately senseless, endless, and leads to worse things than war, namely moral illness and social disorder. For example, he mentions here "flames striv[ing] anew within the pyres" ("flammas rebelles/ rogi," line 35), that is, the image of the shared pyre of Eteocles and Polynices on which the flame splits and continues to fight itself, and Tydeus' "measureless rage" ("immodicum irae/ Tydea," line 41), seen in his cannibalistic fury at the moment of his death—these details present visibly negative results of the excessive passions of civil war. Moreover, the adjectives he uses to describe five of the eponymous seven Argive heroes evoke an atmosphere of moral judgment: Tydeus is unrestrained, Amphiaraus is holy ("laurigeri […] vatis," line 42), Hippomedon is chaotic ("turbidus," 44), Parthenopaeus is brazen in his youth ("protervi," 44), and the poet's singing about the atheistic Capaneus triggers a new horror (45). It becomes clear that this poem is not merely another telling of an old, threadbare story; it conveys a moral message, crafted by a talented artist, in the guise of a cultural mainstay.

Statius exhibits a considered stance on his role as poet in this proem: *Thebaid* is a carefully fashioned literary work with a morally didactic purpose, and he is its sole sculptor. As we will see in the Irish author's proem below, this not the case for *Togail na Tebe*. Statius paradoxically both attaches his work to and rebels against the Classical epic tradition of Homer, Vergil, and Lucan. While he submits to the tradition by deploying the necessary epic tropes for beginning the song (i.e. the invocation of the Muses and other references to poetic initiation), he breaks free through subtle poetic maneuvers, such as the request for direction rather than

30 *Thebaid* 1.33–40: "[…] nunc tendo chelyn; satis arma referre/ Aonia et geminis sceptrum exitiale tyrannis/ nec furiis post fata modum flammasque rebelles/ seditione rogi tumulisque carentia regum/ funera et egestas alternis mortibus urbes,/ caerula cum rubuit Lernaeo sanguine Dirce/ et Thetis arentes assuetum stringere ripas/ horruit ingenti venientem Ismenon acervo."

divine agency. These moves also serve to stabilize the generic status of *Thebaid*. It is in no way meant to be a historiographical accounting of an ancient war, as *Togail na Tebe* was meant to be. It is important to remember also that Statius, composing during the turbulent Flavian period, had lived through the civil war of the so-called "year of the four emperors" in 68–69 CE and through the tyrannical reign of Domitian. His poem seems meant to supplement as commentary, not to pursue, a historiographical purpose.[31] His Roman audience, moreover, would have internalized these stories from their childhood; they would not need an expansive recounting of what they would have considered fact.

Togail na Tebe, on the other hand, presents a different literary experience and authorial profile altogether, which becomes clear immediately at its beginning, where the Irish author has discarded Statius' entire proem. While Statius constructed his epic to be a moral message based on mythological events and a sophisticated association to the literary tradition, the Irish author recasts *Thebaid*'s ethical narrative as a historiographical performance, so as to inform his Irish audience about ancient history more than anything else. Michael Clarke has noted that "such works [e.g. *Togail Troí*, *Imtheachta Aeniasa*, *Togail na Tebe*, et al.], to all appearances, present themselves not as the productions of poetic imagination but as a kind of elevated historiography—realistic in a sense that it supposedly derives from the record of those who witnessed it."[32] The premise of the epic as historical truth that this recasting implies is only possible through the replacement of Statius' epic initiation with a gesture more appropriate to a historical account. And, the seven-line précis that begins *Togail na Tebe* offers us this premise.

The complete omission of the second section of Statius' proem, the praise of Domitian as emperor and the *recusatio* of his propagandistic wishes, is also part of this historiographical recasting. It is easily explainable as an effort to cut material that was unfamiliar, potentially confusing, or culturally inaccessible. But as evidence of something deeper than fashioning one's work for the reading comfort of one's audience, the omission is not particularly persuasive. Ralph O'Connor has recently noted that this sort of editing was customary for authors in the medieval Irish world "wherever such an intervention helped them communicate the content more effectively to their

31 One of Statius' most important epic influences, Lucan's *Bellum civile*, successfully performed both goals, resulting in a historiographical epic combined with moral lessons.

32 Michael Clarke, "Demonology, Allegory, and Translation: The Furies and the Morrígan," in O'Connor, *Classical Literature and Learning*, 101–22, at 101.

target audience."[33] The medieval Irish author's maneuvers to historicize the narrative in this proem are more revealing of his more subtle compositional motivations.

O'Connor has called this new sort of historical reframing, found in many medieval Irish works, a "necessary self-defense mechanism," designed to avoid the charge of "fabling."[34] *Togail na Tebe*, as a good example of this anxiety, begins with a stage-setting gesture designed to bring mythological events, perhaps primitive and morally suspect in the eyes of the medieval world as such, into the realm of historical events, something far more acceptable and credible:

> A certain noble, revered, and honourable king had assumed sway and proprietorship over the pleasant and splendid capital city of Thebes in Greece. His name was Laius; and he had a son, Oedipus; and from that Oedipus sprang the two fair distinguished sons, to wit, Polynices and Eteocles. They are those brothers that killed one another in the great war between the Thebans and the Greeks, as they contended on each side for sovereignty of Thebes, the capital city.[35]

The past tense and the matter-of-fact tone in which this précis is delivered immediately indicate to us that the author viewed these events as likely actually to have happened. The diction is prosaic and simple, not elevated and cinematic, as most epics tend to be, and especially Statius' brand of epic. We see further hints at the author's metageneric goal as he begins his narrative at what seems to be the beginning of a distinct episode in the narrative. Classical epics, like *Aeneid*, *Odyssey*, and *Thebaid*, generally begin *in medias res*, allowing a more active and imaginative response from the reader—something perhaps crucial to the experience of epic.[36] Here, the Irish author begins with Laius, Oedipus' birth father and King of Thebes,—after Oedipus' exposure as an infant, he is adopted by King Polybus of Corinth and consequently kills Laius without realizing that he is his birth father—making no assumptions about his reader's knowledge.

33 O'Connor, "Irish Narrative Literature," 17. For similar views, see Michael Cronin, *Translating Ireland: Translation, Languages, Culture* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1996), 21–22, and Erich Poppe, "*Stair Ercuil ocus o Bás*: Rewriting Hercules in Ireland," in Murray, *Translations from Classical Literatures*, 65–68.

34 See O'Connor's "Irish Narrative Literature," 20, for helpful comments on this difference.

35 *Togail na Tebe*, lines 1–7. The edition and translation of the text of *Togail na Tebe* cited and quoted throughout are those of Calder.

36 O'Connor, "Irish Narrative Literature," 20.

Moreover, his introduction of Polynices and Eteocles (i.e. "they are those brothers who [...]," lines 5–7) serves to signify a historical account taking pains to identify precisely the narrative's central players. Thus, the "un-epic" kind of literary performance previewed in these first seven lines of the *Togail na Tebe* enables its author to calibrate the "Seven against Thebes" saga as a history, it likewise allows him to fashion a magisterial presence as mediator—or perhaps better, importer—of these stories from a literary tradition that was distant both in time and place and yet admirable as a specimen of Classical literature.

After the opening lines quoted in the translation above, the author of *Togail na Tebe* actually mentions the poet of *Thebaid*—though mistaking the Roman P. Papinius Statius for the first-century-CE Gaulish rhetorician Statius Ursulus of Toulouse—telling us that "now at that time it came into the mind of Statius, the well-born eminent poet of the Franks to describe the origin of the Thebans [...]."[37] From what we see in Statius' composition, this is a very different literary approach to telling a story. Whereas Statius clears an epicworthy space in which the reader can see that the author is poetically preparing a traditional story to convey new meaning, the medieval Irish author cues a more tangible, real-world reporting of facts and events, based on the account of a specific source. With this reference to Statius, the Irish author seems to be attempting to "demythologize" the material he is about to present by emphasizing that his account derives from one, stable source, free of the inconsistencies in narrative inherent in most mythological traditions.

The medieval Irish author's assertion that Statius desired to recollect—a historiographical action, it would seem—the story of Thebes in *Thebaid* (i.e. "it came into [his] mind [...] to describe [...]," lines 8–9) offers us a telling glance at the author's work in refashioning the frame for his own purposes. Statius did not wish to tell the whole story of Thebes, as the author asserts; indeed, he deployed a *praeteritio* precisely to limit the content of his epic to the struggle between Eteocles and Polynices, thus following the epic convention of beginning *in medias res*. The Irish author, on the other hand, performs nearly the rhetorical inverse—at least in intent—by giving his

37 *Togail na Tebe*, lines 8–9: "Acht cena is andsin tainic ar menmain do Stait don airdfilid Frangeach sochinelach bunadh-indruim na Tiabanta." For a full discussion of the famous mistaken identity, see Edwards, "Medieval Statius," 497, and Miles, *Heroic Saga*, 63. According to Miles, this confusion between Statiuses seems to have been common in the medieval period, as it has been found "in medieval *accessus* to the poet's works." This mistake also appears in the twelfth-century *Togail Troí* (Dublin, Royal Irish Academy Library, MS D iv 2, fol. 27ra4–10), which seems to directly take its assignment of Statius' identity from *Togail na Tebe*, line 4.

readers a concise, but not exactly brief, outline of Theban "history," from the theft of Europa down to the tragic birth of Oedipus. Miles, Poppe, and Harris have all rightly identified this move as *amplificatio*, or expansion, and not at all atypical for medieval authors.[38] Harris further asserts that the author designed aspects of the *Togail na Tebe*, including this "pocket-history" of mythic Thebes, to show off his erudition.[39] While a self-conscious effort to display competence seems a possibility here—if the author was anything like a modern academic—in the light of the complete revision of and the subtle nuances in the introduction, such flaunting would seem secondary to our author's purpose. There are features in this *amplificatio*, moreover, that suggest the purpose of "Gaelicizing" the account of Thebes.[40] This is not to say that the author formulates the story as an Irish one; rather, the author is customizing his narrative to his Irish audience's reading assumptions and interests. For example, the aetiological references to how places central to the story got their names (e.g. Europe and Thebes, lines 16–18 and 40–42 respectively) and how Thebes was built (e.g. by the "quintette [of serpent's teeth men] along with Cadmus, son of Agenor," lines 73–75), demonstrate an effort to appeal to an audience interested in place-name lore or *dindshenchas*, the Irish term for the popular and pervasive literary genre. Further, when the reader is first introduced to Jocasta, Oedipus' mother and wife, she is labeled a *Morrígan*, a designation that conjures the Irish war-goddess featured in *Táin Bó Cúailnge* and other texts containing native narrative material ("Is andsin darala oenda feacht Edip mac Lai do breith don morrigain Iochasta," lines 86–87).[41] Since there is no evidence in Classical sources that Jocasta was possessed of supernatural or in any way magical powers, or more than just a victim of the blunt cruelty of fate, this curious equivocation is clearly meant to speak to an Irish audience. These innovations in *Togail na Tebe*'s adaptation of Statius' proem clearly show that the Irish author had multiple goals in mind for the opening section of his work. It is not simply an erudition dump, as Harris would have it. The

38 For a clear statement on the twelfth-century interest in *amplificatio*, see Miles, *Heroic Saga*, 103–4, and Poppe, "*Imtheachta Aeniasa* and its Place in Medieval Irish Textual History," 25–26, and Harris, *Adaptations of Roman Epic*, 173ff. For a discussion of *compilatio*—similar rhetorically to *amplificatio*—as an important strategy in Irish literary practice, see Abigail Burnyeat, "Wrenching the Club from the Hand of Hercules: Classical Models for Medieval Irish *compilatio*," in O'Connor, *Classical Literature and Learning*, 196–207.

39 Harris, *Adaptations of Roman Epic*, 71.

40 For a discussion of the Gaelicizing impulses in these Classical adaptations, see O'Connor, "Irish Narrative Literature," 11, and Miles, *Heroic Saga*, 11.

41 For a discussion of the interplay and tension between the Classical Furies and the Morrígan in the Classical and Middle Irish works, see Clarke, "Demonology," 101–22.

author simultaneously offers necessary background for his audience, who were not steeped in the Theban saga since birth, and installs cultural access points for his Irish readers. In this way, the author's legitimacy as informed mediator is established.

How Do You End a History When You're Adapting an Epic?

The difference in the way that these two works "end" is even more telling of the different goals that Statius and the Irish author pursued. *Thebaid* takes nearly the entirety of book 12 to conclude, discussing the war's heart-wrenching aftermath and finishing with a self-reflexive and intertextual *sphragis*, or seal, pondering *Thebaid*'s place in Roman literary history (*Thebaid* 12.810–819).[42] The author of *Togail na Tebe*, on the other hand, seems to struggle to come up with a suitable ending to his account, streamlining Statius' extended ending and dashing off a few outwardly superficial lines to conclude his work. What he produced seems too rapid and imprecise to close this adaptation meaningfully, especially in light of his more thoughtful "opening" including the *amplificatio* of Theban "history" and the pointed mediations of Statius' "historical" account. The author's conclusion is certainly the best evidence for those critics who believe that he had lost interest in this project and just wanted to end the work. But if we set *Togail na Tebe*'s brief conclusion alongside Statius' multivalent one, we see that the Irish text reflects metageneric frustration as it comes to a close, a finale necessarily and inextricably complicated by the epic ending of its epic source.

The way that Statius ends his *Thebaid* has received much attention, since it presents the inherent difficulties in winding down a sophisticated Classical epic narrative.[43] Specifically, it leaves readers with questions

42 W.J. Dominik specifically calls this a *sphragis* in "Following in Whose Footsteps? The Epilogue to Statius' *Thebaid*," in *Literature, Art, History: Studies in Classical Antiquity and Tradition; In Honor of W.J. Henderson*, ed. A.F. Basson and W.J. Dominik (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2003), 91–109, at 92. The bibliography on the end of the *Thebaid* is rapidly becoming vast. In particular, see Victoria E. Pagán, "The Mourning after: Statius *Thebaid* 12," *American Journal of Philology* 121, no. 3 (2000), 423–52; Susanna M. Braund, "Ending Epic: Statius, Theseus, and the Merciful Release," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 42 (1996), 1–23; Helen Lovatt, "Competing Endings: Re-reading the End of the *Thebaid* through Lucan," *Ramus* 28 (1999), 126–51; and Jessica S. Dietrich, "*Thebaid*'s Feminine Ending," *Ramus* 28 (1999), 40–53.

43 For a comparative discussion on Latin epic endings, see Philip Hardie, "Closure in Latin Epic," in *Classical Closure: Reading the End in Greek and Latin Literature*, ed. D.H. Roberts, F.M. Dunn, and D. Fowler (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 137–62. For a more general

about what meaning to infer from an ending that does not really end.[44] The epic's central conflict, the battle between the Thebans and the armies of the "Seven," concludes in book 11 with the death of Polynices and Eteocles (11.497–579) and a confrontation between Oedipus and Creon over the cremation of the Argive dead (11.648–706). Book 12, in contrast, presents a narrative that consciously moves forward, even though it passes beyond the bounds of the central events: the search for dead friends (12.1–104), a procession of Argive women to Thebes in order to find and bury their dead menfolk (12.105–539),[45] and Theseus' violent challenge to Creon's impious regulation (12.540–796). *Thebaid*'s narrative finally ends with Theseus killing Creon (12.796). But throughout this extended conclusion, one gets the sense that Statius is not ineptly continuing the narrative beyond its natural end as much as illustrating his message about the devastation of civil war, a timely warning first presented in the proem. For example, at 12.481–539, Statius narrates the meeting concerning Creon's cremation ban between Theseus, King of Athens, and Argia, Polynices' wife, at the Altar of Mercy in Athens ("Urbe fuit media nulli concessa potentum/ ara deum; mitis posuit Clementia sedem," lines 481–482). This symbolic setting of an altar for this negotiation becomes a site for the ominously unresolved tension between the desire for revenge, requested by the Argive women, and the healing touch of mercy at the end of civil strife. These additional scenes, such as the female mourning and the pursuit of revenge which some might view as unnecessary, seem merely to supplement the horrors narrated in the previous eleven books. While this feature of presenting the aftermath makes sense chronologically, as things obviously occur after a war, it wreaks havoc upon the idea of satisfactory closure for the epic poem.

Togail na Tebe's rendition of book 12 takes a noticeably different tack. It presents these events in a streamlined, emotionally sanitized form, focusing on chronological events, not so much the moral toll that the war has taken on both the Thebans and Argives.[46] Harris even calls *Togail*'s ending "extreme

discussion of "closure" in Classical literature, see Don Fowler, "Second Thoughts on Closure," in Roberts, Dunn, and Fowler, *Classical Closure*, 3–22.

44 The idea that the entire last book of the poem is "concerned with the processes of ending and its problems" is most strongly stated in Dietrich, "*Thebaid*'s Feminine Ending," 40, but she is not alone in seeing *Thebaid* 12 as one long conclusion. Pagán, "Mourning after"; Braund, "Ending Epic"; and Dominik, "Following," all discuss *Thebaid*'s closural problems.

45 For enlightening feminist discussions of female grief in this scene, see Pagán, "Mourning after," and Dietrich, "*Thebaid*'s Feminine Ending."

46 For a more technical discussion of "differences" between *Thebaid* 12 and *Togail*'s version, see Harris, *Adaptations of Roman Epic*, 173–90.

compression" and suggests that the author "finds exquisite poignancy of emotion inappropriate here."[47] For example, the "Altar of Mercy" scene (*Togail na Tebe*, lines 4757–4762), with mercy (in Statian terms, *clementia*) noticeably changed here to pity or compassion (*misericordia*), does not focus on the constructiveness and liberality of "mercy," as we see in Statius' version.[48] Instead we find a rather ordinary description of a pagan shrine. It would seem that *Togail na Tebe* has scrubbed much of the pathos and emotion away from Statius' ending because historiography tends to have more credibility when staged in a disinterested manner and outside the realm of moral fables.[49]

We might expect both works, *Thebaid* and *Togail na Tebe*, to "end" with the death of Creon, punishment for prohibiting proper funeral rites for the Argive dead, and the subsequent allowance of the cremation of the dead—these are the very reasons that the Argive women ask Theseus, King of Athens, to intervene in the epic's events. These actions would seem to serve as a kind of reconciliation in the story, in that they end the violence and chaos (*Thebaid* 12.540–796). But, just as we see both authors construct self-reflexive proems, designed to orient the reader's expectations toward the appropriate goal, both authors also provide us with an ending that goes beyond the genre in question as well as the narrative itself, with differing levels of success. Statius ends *Thebaid* with a highly personal coda, one that displays his anxieties about and high hopes for his work as well as subtly placating Roman epic tradition:

> Will you endure for long, my *Thebaid*,
> on whom I spent twelve sleepless years,
> and be read, having outlasted your master?
> Already, it is clear, Fame attends you and has strewn
> a kindly path for you, and has begun to show you to
> those that are yet to come. Already, greathearted Caesar

47 Harris (*Adaptations of Roman Epic*, 179) further asserts that *Thebaid*'s emotion and cinematic morality "[seem] to have been pruned in order to dispel Statius' intended pathos" in *Togail na Tebe* as a whole.

48 *Togail na Tebe*, lines 4761–765: "Is and dobaí altoir alaind idbarta ar lár an baili, arna coisegrad do dee na trocairi Misericordia, $_7$ fidnemad fhoithreamail 'ma thimcheall. Et ní ba dilmain do duine dul chum na haltora sin acht do dainib naisli robid i n-egindail" ("There was a beautiful altar for sacrifice, consecrated to the goddess of mercy, to wit, Misericordia, with a bosky sacred grove around it. And it was not lawful for a person to go to that altar save for noble persons who were in distress and difficulty").

49 Again, see Miles, *Heroic Saga*, 1–14, on the medieval distaste for *figmenta poetica*.

> has deigned to know you. Already, the Italian youth
> learn you and recite you. Live, I pray, and tempt not
> the divine *Aeneid*. Rather, follow her from a little way off
> and always adore her footsteps. Soon, if any envy sets
> clouds before you, it will perish, and your deserved honors
> will be paid after me.[50]

Statius' tone is overly deferential, especially to the literary tradition—there are allusions here to Ovid, Lucan, and Vergil.[51] Yet, by constructing this as a *sphragis*, a personal "seal" intended to memorialize the work's literary achievement, Statius attempts to enact some sort of closure, even if it seems irrelevant, overly self-interested, or contrary to typical endings in Classical epic. Indeed, Philip Hardie argues that this coda actually "drives a wedge between the degree of closure allowed by the subject matter and that imposed by the author."[52] Ending with these comments on his place and the place of his poem in temporal and literary history smacks of an anxiety over his literary belatedness. In actuality, it is a gesture of self-emphasis and self-promotion; something quite in line with the working goals he laid out earlier.[53]

The ending of *Togail na Tebe*, in contrast, seemingly speeds to an end because an end is needed, and invokes, yet again, the prioritization of history found in the proem. The author reappears in the narrative fabric at the very end of his work, having kept the bulk of his adaptation free of authorial intrusion, a rhetorical necessity if his intention is to promote Statius as his source. And he keeps his authorial presence to a mere five lines:

> Now the number that was slain there of kings and common people is past
> reckoning. The writings and wild and varied tales do not commemorate

50 *Thebaid* 12.810–819: "Durabisne procul dominoque legere superstes,/ o mihi bissenos multum vigilata per annos/ Thebai? Iam certe praesens tibi Fama benignum/ stravit iter coepitque novam monstrare futuris./ iam te magnanimous dignatur noscere Caesar,/ Itala iam studio discit memoratque iuventus./ Vive, precor; nec tu divinam Aeneida tempta,/ sed longe sequere et vestigia semper adora./ mox, tibi si quis adhuc praetendit nubila livor,/ occidet, et meriti post me referentur honores."

51 On the intertextual quality of *Thebaid* 12.810–819, see Martha Malamud, "Happy Birthday, Dead Lucan: (P)raising the Dead in *Silvae* 2.7," *Ramus* 24 (1995), 1–30, and John Henderson, "Form Remade/Statius' *Thebaid*," in *Roman Epic*, ed. A.J. Boyle (London: Routledge, 1993), 162–91.

52 Hardie, "Closure," 151.

53 For a discussion of the apotropaic nature of this *sphragis*, see S.M. Kershner, "Statius as Horatian Priest of the Muses in *Silvae* 2.7," *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* 15 (2010), 332–34.

> those that were left alive there. Here it is not attempted. So, that is something of their deeds, tales, and adventures thus far. Selah! Selah! Selah![54]

This ending offers the medieval Irish author a way to continue the historiographical pose while also paying homage, albeit vaguely, to the literary tradition of both ancient epic and Irish cultural traditions. The author seems frustrated about the generic nature of his work and how to end it. Should he make any attempt to conclude as Statius did, with personal comments? He chose not to do so having completely discarded Statius' *sphragis*, just as Statius' proem was jettisoned likely using the same justifications. Statius' assertion of authorial control might have been almost meaningless to an Irish audience with little access to the intricacies of first-century-CE Roman politics and culture. Further, simply translating Statius' *sphragis* into Middle Irish would make this moment specifically about Statius and problematize any goal of establishing a connection between Irish culture and Classical culture. Yet the Irish author also makes a clear attempt to express his own authorial control in his exit from the textual scene, by evoking genres more familiar to his audience.

The first section of the closing passage from *Togail na Tebe* quoted above (i.e. "Now the number [...] is past reckoning," lines 4919–4920) highlights the basic generic differences between epic endings and historiographical endings. What seems at first to be a historian's honesty about his inability to recount all the names of the dead is actually an example of the "inexpressibility topos," which is equivalent to the "hundred voices" topos found in almost every classical genre, thought most commonly in Epic.[55] These lines demonstrate that, contrary to Harris' view, the Irish author was in fact paying close attention to Statius' concluding verses and tried to render them in a historiographical sense. Indeed, this sentence is a close rendering of *Thebaid* 12.797–799, in which Statius uses the same topos, though in a more poetic and more typically Classical way: "Were some god to loosen my

54 *Togail na Tebe*, lines 4919–4923: "Airim thrá ar-marbad andsin do rigaib $_7$ da daescursluagh diairmigthi. Ní chuimnigid na sgribenda $_7$ scela discrirthecha deiligthi ar-fagbad beó and. Ní sud consirther. Conad ní da ngnimaib $_7$ da scelaib $_7$ da n-imteachtaib conuigi sin. Sella. Sella. Sella."

55 For a discussion of the "inexpressibility topos" in the Irish adaptations, see Miles, *Heroic Saga*, 237–38. Miles notes that this topos, something that derives directly from the Latin literary tradition, becomes a fixture in Christian homiletic usage. For a discussion of the "hundred voices" topos and its specific use by Roman epic poets, see Stephen Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 34–51.

breast in a hundred voices I could not in worthy effort do justice to so many pyres of captains and common folk alike—such a chorus of groanings."[56] The Irish author negotiates the generic boundaries quite deftly here. Just as he has done throughout the narrative, he skilfully transforms a highly poetic moment, artfully executed by the Irish author's epicist predecessor, into something more practical and credible by the standards of his own literary world's norms.

In the following section of the closing, the Irish author blames incomplete source material for the apparent insufficiency of his ending: "The writings and wild and varied tales do not commemorate those that were left alive there. Here it is not attempted."[57] Interestingly, this statement suggests that the author, as historian, has investigated other sources—the plural "writings" (*sgríbenda* line 4920) is the key here—besides *Thebaid*, an implication seemingly inconsistent with the fidelity to Statius' text found throughout the work. Moreover, when we compare this statement with the introduction to his *amplificatio* in the proem (i.e. *Togail na Tebe*, lines 8–9), the discrepancy becomes even more glaring. In *Togail na Tebe*, lines 8–9, we should recall that the author implies that his work is a fair translation of Statius' history of Thebes and not an aggregate of multiple sources: "[…] came into the mind of […] Statius […] to describe."

There are two possible explanations for this inconsistency: 1) the author actually used sources other than *Thebaid*, although they remain unacknowledged and imperceptible, or 2) he was frustrated by Statius' strong authorial pose in the *sphragis* and tried to regain his historiographical pose with a strong generic move of his own. The first option seems unlikely, since extra-Statian material is not obvious in the *Togail na Tebe*, apart from a few "footnotes" designed to explain inaccessible ancient comments to his audience. While not a completely satisfactory explanation, the second option seems more plausible. A historiographer's standard operating procedure is, of course, to examine all records and account for the problems with his sources as he attempts to cull historical fact. The author's reference to "writings" (*sgríbenda*) and "tales" (*scéla*) imply this sort of critical sifting, especially if *scéla* here refers to historical tales.

In the final section of his closing, the Irish author appears to foreground Irish literary forms, saying, "So, that is something of the deeds, tales, and

56 *Thebaid* 12.797–799: "Non ego, centena si quis mea pectora laxet/ voce deus, tot busta simul vulgique ducumque,/ tot pariter gemitus dignis conatibus aequem […]."

57 *Togail na Tebe*, lines 4920–4922: "Ní chuimnigid na sgribenda scela discrirthecha deiligthi ar-fagbad beó and. Ní sud consirther."

adventures thus far."[58] On the surface, this statement seems like filler, used simply to tie up the tale in a barely pretty bow. But, the use of these specific words (i.e. *gnímrada*, *scéla*, and *imtheachta*) compels us to ask whether he is framing what he has presented in terms meant to evoke native story genres, not merely a translation or adaptation of some earlier work. If indeed the Irish author is trying to convey an understanding of the material of the *Thebaid* in native narrative terms, his attempt would not undermine his historiographic agenda, since those terms could just as easily refer to historical material as they could to fictional.

The sense of generic and closural frustration that the Irish author displays at the end of *Togail na Tebe* is set in even higher relief with the very final line. After signposting his intention to "end" with "so that is something of their deeds, tales, and adventures thus far," the author writes the enigmatic repetition "sella, sella, sella" (line 4923). A search of the *Electronic Dictionary of the Irish Language* does not provide any suitable identifications for this word in Middle Irish.[59] George Calder, in his 1922 text and translation, seemingly baffled by this word in a context of Middle Irish, transmits it as "selah, selah, selah" (*Togail na Tebe: The Thebaid of Statius*, *ad loc.*) and in a footnote offers "e.g. Finit. Amen." This translation offers an interesting possibility for interpreting the words in the context of a comparison of *Thebaid* and *Togail na Tebe*. "Sella, sella, sella" may indeed be the Irish author's attempt to perform a *sphragis*, sealing up his work, just as Statius did with his personal coda at *Thebaid* 12.810–819.

If Calder is correct in his translation, he is recognizing *selah* as a Hebrew word of uncertain etymological origins from the Psalms (71 times in 39 psalms) and Habbakuk 3.[60] The word *selah* itself is a mystery; it seems that the only agreement among ancient sources (i.e. Jerome's Vulgate, Septuaginta, Symmachus, et al.) and modern scholarship is that the word appears outside grammar constructions and seems to be either liturgico-musical or a comment on how to read a passage. In this context, it perhaps connotes something akin to a pause or a full stop or an exhortation for loudness. In textual attestations, Hebrew and Koine Greek editions and Jerome's

58 *Togail na Tebe*, lines 4922–4923: "Conad ní da ngnimaib $_7$ da scelaib $_7$ da n-imteachtaib conuigi sin."

59 *eDIL*, www.dil.ie/ (accessed 27 January 2017).

60 Emil G. Hirsch, "Selah (Hebrew, סלה)," in *Jewish Encyclopedia.com: The Unedited Full-Text of the 1906* Jewish Encyclopedia, http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/13398-selah, accessed 1/18/2019. I thank Professor Nagy for the reference and an enlightening email conversation on this chestnut. Hirsch's entry for *selah* presents a particularly mysterious life for this word, with great debate as to its meaning even up to today's use in Rabbinical Jewish contexts.

Vulgate suggest that it means something like "forever" or "continuously."[61] But still, there seems to be no definite consensus even within these individual editions. In the context of *Togail na Tebe*, if the author did indeed intend to render *selah* with his "sella, sella, sella," we see an author using his literary knowledge to close off this work with something from biblical contexts. The repetition of the word suggests that indeed this is meant to be an interjection and thus a strong gesture of closure.

Dynamic Absences

In this study, we have closely examined the narrative frames of *Thebaid* and *Togail na Tebe*, taking them seriously in order to tease out the relationship between the Classical epic poet and the medieval Irish translator. As a result, we have found that the author of *Togail na Tebe* carves out an intermediate space for himself and his work, balanced between epic and history, and between the veneration of the Classics and the medieval Irish sense of the past. By acknowledging Statius' presence immediately in his proem[62] and then removing him in effect from the work, the author proceeds to render his source relatively faithfully. The Irishman's authorial maneuvers in the proem and conclusion of *Togail na Tebe* establish him as a reliable psychopomp for the Irish into the ancestral forest of Classical culture. And, I would even argue that *Togail na Tebe* becomes a means of grounding overtly native vernacular works, such as *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, in a "worldwide" cultural milieu, one with preconstructed respect and authority. In the end, the relative absence of the anxious epic poet from the narrative frame of the Irish translation creates the opportunity for the heightened presence of the confident, historiographically savvy Irish author as he constructs his bridge between the past and the present, and between Classical and Irish civilizations.[63]

61 In the *Targum* at *Ps exl.* 5[6], it is rendered as *tedira*, "continually." In Symmachus, it is rendered in Habbakuk 3 as *aei*, *eis telos*, and *eis ton aiona*, "always" and "to the end." In Jerome's Vulgate it is rendered as *semper*, "always." For a full entry on this word and its linguistic variations, see H.B. Hackett and E. Abbot, eds., *Dr. William Smith's Dictionary of the Bible*, 4 vols. (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1872), 4: 2904–6.

62 *Togail na Tebe*, lines 8–9.

63 I am very grateful to Joseph Falaky Nagy, Charles W. MacQuarrie, and the other members of the "Irish Sea Cultural Province" National Endowment for the Humanities seminar for their inspiration and their generous and helpful comments on earlier drafts of this essay.

About the author

Stephen Kershner is an Assistant Professor of Classics at Austin Peay State University. He is a specialist in Roman Imperial poetry, working on the intersections between ancient Roman epic and other intellectual traditions, such as Hellenistic philosophy and the medieval Irish adaptations of ancient poetry. He is also the editor of *Philomathes: An Online Undergraduate Journal for Research in Classics*.

6. The Stanley Family and the Gawain Texts of the Percy Folio

Rhonda Knight

Abstract
Rhonda Knight intrepidly re-examines the connections between the Stanley family, sometimes known as the "Kings of Man" during the period of English domination, and what has been called a "farrago" of texts contained in the famous seventeenth-century manuscript known as the Percy Folio. The mysterious and disruptive outsider of medieval romance together with the marcher lord, a major player in the politics of late medieval and early modern Britain, come together in the Percy Folio to provide posterity with a picture, vividly presented in Knight's essay, of a turbulent and changing society.

Keywords: Gawain, Percy Folio, Stanley earls of Derby, kings of Man, discourse colony

The Percy Folio (British Library, Additional MS 27879) has been an enigma to several generations of literary scholars and historians. The inclusion of "Newarke," a Royalist song referencing the 1644 siege of Newark-on-Trent, sets the manuscript's *terminus a quo*; the manuscript was probably compiled in the decade after that date.[1] However, many of the other 194 separate items contained in the manuscript originated one or even two hundred

1 *Bishop Percy's Folio Manuscript: Ballads and Romances*, ed. J.W. Hales and F.J. Furnivall, 3 vols. (London, 1867), 1: xii–xiii. References are to volume, page, and line (when appropriate) of this edition. The watermarks of the paper are also consistent with the middle of the seventeenth century; see Gillian Rogers, "The Percy Folio Manuscript Revisited," in *Romance in Medieval England*, ed. Maldwyn Mills, Jennifer Fellows, and Carol M. Meale (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1991), 39–64, at 41–42.

MacQuarrie, Charles W. and Joseph Falaky Nagy (eds), *The Medieval Cultures of the Irish Sea and the North Sea. Manannán and His Neighbors*. Taylor & Francis Group, 2019
DOI: 10.5117/9789462989399/CH06

years earlier.[2] The manuscript derives its name from Bishop Thomas Percy, an antiquarian who discovered the manuscript when he was visiting Sir Humphrey Pitt in Shropshire (*c.* 1760). Pitt's maids were using the manuscript to start fires. Percy rescued most of the manuscript from becoming kindling, but the first twenty items in the manuscript are missing a half of each page because of the maids' destruction. Because the texts are written on folio-sized paper instead of vellum, Percy usually referred to it as his "ancient folio manuscript"; thus, Percy's Folio became its de facto title.[3] The Folio, written in a single hand in the Lancashire dialect, has only been printed *in toto* once, edited by John W. Hales and Frederick J. Furnivall in 1867–68.[4] Their prudish attitudes caused them to excise texts they judged lewd and place these in a subsequent volume, subtitled *Loose and Humorous Songs*.[5] The order of the texts in the previous three volumes is otherwise unchanged. Percy called the manuscript "an infinite farrago of ancient Songs, Ballads, Metrical Romances, Legends in verse and poems of the low and popular kind."[6] An early commentator, Joseph Ritson, similarly calls the Percy Folio "a multifarious collection."[7]

Yet the contents of the Percy Folio are not as idiosyncratic as many earlier manuscripts, such as medieval miscellany manuscripts, which generally contain a broader mixture of genres, with legal, religious, or historical texts and commonplace items like recipes, bound together with romances and other narrative forms. The Percy Folio is more uniformly narrative. Its mixed order—with medieval romances adjacent to Cavalier lyrics—has puzzled scholars and thus discouraged the thorough study that such a diverse manuscript deserves. In his study of the Folio, Joseph Donatelli indicates "interesting patterns emerge," when texts are grouped "according to their subject matter, genre, and date of composition." He also notes that "coherent section[s] of texts" can be discovered.[8] Stephen Vartin adds the

2 Joseph Donatelli, "The Percy Folio Manuscript: A Seventeenth-Century Context for Medieval Poetry," *English Manuscript Studies, 1100–1700* 4 (1993), 114–33, at 116.

3 *Percy's Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, ed. Thomas Percy, 2 vols. (London: Dent & Sons, 1910), 1: 3.

4 Hales and Furnivall, *Bishop Percy's Folio*, 1: viii, xiii.

5 Donatelli, "Percy Folio," 115; *Bishop Percy's Folio Manuscript: Loose and Humorous Songs*, ed. F.J. Furnivall (London: n.p., 1868).

6 *The Correspondence of Thomas Percy and David Dalrymple, Lord Hailes*, ed. A.F. Falconer, vol. 4 of *The Percy Letters*, ed. David Nichol Smith and Cleanth Brooks, 9 vols. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1954), 59.

7 Joseph Ritson, ed., *Ancient Songs and Ballads from the Reign of King Henry the Second to the Revolution*, vol. 1 (London: Printed for Payne and Foss, by T. Davison, 1829), xxix.

8 Donatelli, "Percy Folio," 125.

Folio contains "clusters" that address particular themes or audiences.[9] Nick Groom expands Vartin's term more precisely to "thematic cluster,"[10] which I adopt here, using it to denote any nexus of interrelated texts found in the Percy Folio. For example, a thematic cluster of seven Robin Hood ballads occurs in the beginning of the Folio, and a Cavalier cluster appears in the middle.[11] The two examples used here demonstrate my terminology but are otherwise atypical because their items are physically clustered together, whereas most of the Folio's thematic clusters are scattered throughout the manuscript.

For this reason, Michael Hoey's concept of "discourse colonies" offers a productive hermeneutic model for examining the Percy Folio's thematic clusters. Hoey explains how many nonnarrative texts exist as colonies: "*a colony is a discourse whose component parts do not derive their meaning from the sequence in which they are placed*."[12] In recent years, codicologists have begun applying Hoey's model to particular manuscripts that do not fit the usual characteristics of miscellanies.[13] He identifies eight characteristics of a discourse colony. The ones pertinent to the Percy Folio are: the adjacent parts do not produce "continuous prose"; the parts do not have a single author, or the authors are anonymous; one part "may be used without referring to the others"; parts "can be reprinted or reused in subsequent works"; and parts "may be added, removed, or altered."[14] Because the Percy Folio is a discourse colony, readers may dip into the text at any point and skim to find subject matter that interests them. To many who have studied the text, its lack of linear structure appears as disorganization rather than flexibility. The fact that the Percy Folio encourages nonlinear and flexible reading practices indicates that it could have been compiled with multiple audiences in mind.

9 Stephen Vartin, "Thomas Percy's *Reliques*: Its Structure and Organization," PhD diss., New York University, 1972, 74–75, quoted in Nick Groom, *The Making of Percy's "Reliques"* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), 121.

10 Groom, *Making*, 121.

11 Donatelli, "Percy Folio," 125.

12 Michael Hoey, *Textual Interaction: An Introduction to Written Discourse Analysis* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 76.

13 See Ruth Carroll, "Recipes for Laces: An Example of a Middle English Discourse Colony," in *Discourse Perspectives on English: Medieval to Modern*, ed. Janne Skaffari and Risto Hiltenen (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2003), 137–65; Francisco Alonso-Almeida, "Middle English Medical Books as Examples of Discourse Colonies: G.U.L. Hunter 307," in *Bells Chiming from the Past: Cultural and Linguistic Studies on Early English*, ed. Isabel Moskowich-Spiegel and Begoña Crespo-García (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 55–80.

14 Hoey, *Textual Interaction*, 88.

Similarly, the Folio's vast scope, with texts dating from different periods, has discouraged a systematic analysis of it; instead, researchers have generally selected texts for analysis that fit certain time periods or genres. Gillian Rogers has argued convincingly that the Percy Folio should be treated as a single artifact rather than as a warehouse from which scholars pull out individual items for study; yet, for the reasons noted, the task is too big for any individual scholar. She calls for a collaborative effort because "no one person can hope to be an expert in all the fields" required for an in-depth study.[15] Until such collaboration begins, there are productive means of analysis that fall between a comprehensive study and the cherry-picking of single texts. Feasible methods of investigation for an individual scholar include: examining a cluster's connections to other Folio clusters, demonstrating a text's ability to fit into different clusters, or situating a cluster in the complicated milieu of the manuscript's production or reception. This essay undertakes the last-mentioned task by placing a cluster of Gawain texts into the milieu of the prominent Stanley family, who were closely linked to the manuscript's production and reception. (A family tree at the end of this essay distinguishes the Stanleys discussed below.)

One of the most studied thematic clusters of the Percy Folio involves three generations of the Stanleys who lived in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The Folio was probably produced within the family's geographical sphere of influence—Cheshire and Lancashire—by a compiler with Catholic and Royalist interests.[16] Donatelli suggests this provenance based on the inclusion (or more specifically, the lack of *exclusion*) of lines expressing Marian devotion and the presence of Cavalier texts that would have circulated privately at that time.[17] James Stanley, seventh Earl of Derby (*c.* 1606–1651), and his heir Charles (1628–1672) are in the correct time frame as possible patrons, but their circumstances do not make patronage of this manuscript likely. James was indeed a Royalist and a patron of an

15 Rogers, "Percy Folio," 39, 64; See Donatelli, "Percy Folio," 115–16.

16 Studies focusing on the Percy Folio's Stanley connections include: Robert W. Barrett Jr., *Against All England: Regional Identity and Cheshire Writing, 1195–1656* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 171–206; Aisling Byrne and Victoria Flood, "The Romance of the Stanleys: Regional and National Imaginings in the Percy Folio," *Viator* 46, no. 1 (2015), 327–52; Helen Cooper, "Romance after Bosworth," in *The Court and Cultural Diversity*, ed. Evelyn Mullally and John Thompson (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1997), 149–57; David A. Lawton, "'Scottish Field': Alliterative Verse and Stanley Encomium in the Percy Folio," *Leeds Studies in English* 10 (1978), 42–57; Andrew Taylor, *The Songs and Travels of a Tudor Minstrel: Richard Sheale of Tamworth* (York: York Medieval Press, 2012), 46–56.

17 Donatelli, "Percy Folio," 129.

acting troupe in the 1630s, but he was not a Catholic.[18] His wife Charlotte, a French Huguenot, wrote to her sister-in-law, the Duchesse de la Trémoille, sometime after 1649 that James "is as true a Protestant as ever and that he has not the least inclination to become a Catholic."[19] The Stanleys were active Royalists during the Civil War. James fought in several battles, and Charlotte held Latham House against a siege that lasted several months in 1644.[20] After the Battle of Worcester, James was captured and subsequently executed. Charles suffered confiscation of some of his estates as a result of his father's conviction of treason.[21] The family's activities during the war and the earl's execution almost certainly preclude them from being the patrons of the Percy Folio.

There is no direct evidence the seventeenth-century Stanleys patronized the Folio, even though several texts within it are encomia that praise their ancestors. Perhaps earlier Stanleys had patronized certain older texts contained in the Folio. Andrew Taylor suggests that those earlier Stanleys, like their peers, "had a keen sense of their reputation," and they probably "actively encouraged ballad traditions" about their exploits.[22] The Folio texts *The Rose of Englande*, *Bosworth Feilde*, and *Ladye Bessiye* were composed around the turn of the sixteenth century to commemorate the Stanley family's actions during Henry Tudor's usurpation of Richard III. Similarly, *Flodden Feilde* and *Scotish Feilde* (early sixteenth century) narrate the exploits of the family and their Cheshire and Lancashire retainers during the 1513 Battle of Flodden. Again, direct Stanley patronage for these older texts cannot be proven; therefore, Aisling Byrne and Victoria Flood suggest the designation "Stanleyite" for these texts. This broad definition encompasses "works of individuals with an investment in the family" and its region.[23]

18 "Stanley, James (1606/7–1651)," REED: Patrons and Performances, https://reed.library.utoronto.ca/node/315886 (accessed 2 July 2016); Barry Coward, *The Stanleys, Lords Stanley and the Earls of Derby, 1385–1672: The Origins, Wealth and Power of a Landowning Family*, Chetham Society, 3rd ser., 30 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983), 68–79. See John Seacome, *The History of the House of Stanley from the Conquest to the Death of the Right Honourable Edward, Late Earl of Derby in 1776* (London: J. Gleave, 1821), 123–223, for letters and other documents of his activities and those of his wife.

19 Guziot de Witt, *The Lady of Latham Being the Life and Original Letters of Charlotte de la Trémoille, Countess of Derby* (London: Smith, Elder, 1869), 146.

20 Seacombe, *History*, 123–223.

21 Coward, *Stanleys*, 68–79.

22 Taylor, *Songs*, 46.

23 Byrne and Flood, "Romance," 328.

The history of the Stanleys, whose rise to power began in the Northwest Midlands of the fourteenth century, offers Stanleyite writers many noteworthy deeds to celebrate in their poetry. Michael J. Bennett's influential *Community, Class and Careerism: Cheshire and Lancashire Society in the Age of "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight"* uses Sir John Stanley (*c.* 1350–1414) as a "case-study in social advancement."[24] After being declared an outlaw for the murder of Thomas Clotton in 1376, John was pardoned because of his military service in France. His reputation as a soldier secured his marriage to Isabel Latham, the Lancashire heiress of Latham and Knowsley. He held several positions in Ireland, occupying the office of Lord Lieutenant twice. After supporting Henry IV during Percy's Rebellion (1405), the king awarded John the kingship of the Isle of Man, which Henry Percy previously held. A year later, Henry IV awarded the kingship to the Stanley family in perpetuity.[25] John Stanley is just one of a number of the gentry whom Bennett claims "lost their regional identity" through their role in the mechanics of the English empire.[26] Robert W. Barrett Jr., however, offers a more complex view, arguing that regional identity must be viewed as both "oppositional and compliant: protective of the advantages afforded by [the magnates'] marginal position on the [...] border," while they "imagine[d] themselves as central to England's construction as a nation."[27] Taylor further proposes that family encomia, like those in the Percy Folio, reflect the dual roles of these magnates who were "courtiers in the south" and knights in the north.[28]

The Percy Folio contains many texts that reflect the regional pride of families like the Stanleys whose fortunes and identity came through their ancestors' participation in England's imperial agenda, serving as administrators, fighting in wars, and policing borders. Within their own territories, these families made alliances through marriage, served as judges and civil authorities, and feuded over reputations and property.[29] There is no denying that the exploits of the Stanley family were important to the compiler of the Percy Folio, yet some texts concern the fortunes of other border magnate families, the Percys, the Nevilles, and the Howards, particularly. These magnate families wielded great power within their respective territories.

24 Michael J. Bennett, *Community, Class and Careerism: Cheshire and Lancashire Society in the Age of "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 215.

25 Bennett, *Community*, 215–19; Coward, *Stanleys*, 2–6.

26 Bennett, *Community*, 250.

27 In *Against*, Barrett (18) speaks only of the Anglo-Welsh border, but I contend the same attitudes apply to the nobility of the northern border.

28 Taylor, *Songs*, xvi.

29 Lawton, "Scottish," 51.

The Percys and the Nevilles, for example, held wardenships of the Scottish Marches for several generations. These positions brought them wealth, power, and prestige. Particular thematic clusters in the Percy Folio record the ways these border families created and sustained their reputations through their interactions with four significant groups: the Scots and the Welsh, their client families in their own territories, and their allies and rivals among the other magnate families in the border regions. The texts in the Folio's Gawain cluster demonstrate the wider concerns of any border magnate family, such as the families listed above, as their members negotiated their roles in England's periphery, but these Gawain texts become more coherent when read through the lens of Stanley family history.

The Turke and Gowin (*TG*), a Folio poem, and *The Stanley Poem* (*SP*), the only significant Stanley family text not contained in the Percy Folio, indicate that by the late fifteenth century there was already a discernible body of Stanley family lore to which Stanleyite writers could refer. *The Turke and Gowin*, written in the North or Northwest Midlands dialect and generally dated to around 1500, and *SP*, written approximately fifty years later, draw from the same family legends.[30] The nineteenth-century antiquarian Thomas Heywood proposed that *SP* was written by Thomas Stanley, the Bishop of Sodor and Man (d. 1569).[31] However, recently Taylor has argued convincingly that the poem was composed by Richard Sheale (*fl. c.* 1550s), a minstrel in the employ of Edward Stanley, the third Earl of Derby (1509–1572).[32] As Taylor and others have pointed out, *SP* is constructed like a romance, giving the family exotic and fanciful origins.[33]

In *SP* young John Stanley—Bennett's historical example of social advancement—is re-created as a romance hero. Stanley is chosen by the unnamed King of England to fight as his champion against French knights who came to England "to prove their manhood," and "for this acte the king made John Standley knight."[34] John then asks permission to "passe the seas adventures to trye," where he

30 Helaine Newstead, "Arthurian Legends," in *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English, 1050–1500*, ed. J. Burke Severs (New Haven: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1967), 38–79, at 58; Thomas Hahn, ed., *Sir Gawain: Eleven Romances and Tales* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995), 337; Byrne and Flood, "Romance," 331; Barrett, *Against*, 183.

31 Thomas Heywood, *The Earls of Derby and the Verse Writers and Poets of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Manchester, 1853), 16.

32 Taylor, *Songs*, xiii.

33 Taylor, *Songs*, 40; Byrne and Flood, "Romance," 331; Barrett, *Against*, 183.

34 *The Stanley Poem*, in *The Palatine Anthology: A Collection of Songs and Ballads, Relating to Lancashire and Cheshire*, ed. James Orchard Halliwell (London: C. and J. Adlard, 1850), 210. Textual references are to page numbers of this edition because the poems are not lineated.

visited all the countries of Christendom
And to the Turkes courte personallye did come
Still getting great honor, therof did not faile
Against all those that in armes durst him assayle.[35]

The text then concentrates on John's love affair with the Sultan's daughter. He stays in Turkey until he gets her with child, then she begs him to leave to save his life. On his way to England, John joins with another knight Sir Robert Knolles, who is fighting in France, and they return home "with much honor."[36] John has proven his virility at home and abroad, and now he must return to England to start his illustrious lineage. Isabel Latham, the heir to her father's wealth and large estate, hears of the "noble bruite [reputation] of John Standley" and decides to marry him, even though her father warns her that "he is but a younger brother/ Not meete for such an heyre."[37] Her father tries to hide her from John, but Isabel salutes him from her window, and a love match proceeds. *The Stanley Poem* concludes the first fitt (and John's section) by recounting how he is awarded the Isle of Man, an event that connects this romantic history of the family directly to *TG*, as shown below.

The Turke and Gowin is an Arthurian empire-building text that features the inclusion of the Isle of Man in Arthur's realm. This text follows the outlandish-stranger motif, as identified by Raymond H. Thompson, which is found in several Gawain romances of the North and Northwest Midlands.[38] Here the outlandish stranger is a Turk, who "was not hye, but he was broad/ And like a Turke he was made/ Both legg and thye."[39] The poem opens in Arthur's court, where the Turk proposes an exchange of weaponless buffets with one of Arthur's knights. The textual damage caused by Pitt's maids prevents a clear understanding of this exchange.[40] Gowin seems to strike his blow, but the Turk postpones his return blow so that he may take Gowin on a series of adventures, which culminate in the Turk killing the gigantic King of Man. Then, instead of returning Gowin's buffet, the Turk requests that Gowin cut off his head. When Gowin complies, the Turk turns into the knight Sir Gromer. When they return to court, Arthur offers Gowin

35 *SP*, 211.
36 *SP*, 215.
37 *SP*, 318, 319.
38 Raymond H. Thompson, "'Muse on þi Mirrour …': The Challenge of the Outlandish Stranger in the English Arthurian Verse Romances," *Folklore* 87 (1976), 201–8.
39 Hales and Furnivall, *Bishop Percy's Folio*, 1.91.3–4.
40 See Hahn, *Eleven*, 340–51, for conjecture about the action happening in these gaps.

the kingdom of Man. He refuses the honor, suggesting that Gromer have it: "give it him, for he it wan."[41] Sir Gromer figures in several Arthurian legends and romances; in this case his establishment as a new king of Man is significant to Stanley family history, and Gowin's admission that Gromer won the territory figures significantly into border politics explored in other Gawain texts.

The Turke and Gowin's replacement of the Isle of Man's king is not the only piece of circumstantial evidence that connects this romance to John Stanley. David Lawton observes that the text reflects "the cultural memory of Sir John Stanley [...] in three distinct ways: he acquiesced in the overthrow and killing of a king [Richard II], he saw military service with the Grand Turk, and he was himself appointed King of the Isle of Man."[42] *The Turke and Gowin* constructs the overthrow of the King of Man as an unproblematic Christian act given that he is "[a] heathen soldan [sultan]."[43] The romance never portrays the Turk as stereotypically heathen; in fact, before Gowin beheads him, the outsider prays to Mary. Afterwards, he sings the *Te Deum*.[44] By killing the heathen King and resuming his Christian form, Gromer becomes someone worthy to carry on the duty of expanding and maintaining Arthur's empire in its borderlands.

If the overthrow of the King of Man is indeed an oblique reference to the deposition of Richard II, as Lawton claims, then *TG*'s author is much more comfortable alluding to the event than the author of *SP*. As a member of Richard's court, John could not have avoided choosing sides; however, *SP* avoids any discussion of his role in Richard's government, where he held several prestigious positions. The poem never mentions Richard by name. It notes that Stanley and Knolles were welcomed home by "King Edward the Fourth," probably an error for Edward III, whose reign ended in 1377.[45] Joseph C. Bridges conjectures that the text is meant to refer to Henry IV, but Henry's reign, beginning in 1399, is too late for Knolles or Stanley to be fighting in France.[46] Thus, the poem compresses John's significant achieve-

41 Hales and Furnivall, *Bishop Percy's Folio*, 1.102.325.

42 David Lawton, "History and Legend: The Exile and the Turk," in *Postcolonial Moves: Medieval Through Modern*, ed. Patricia Clare Ingham and Michelle R. Warren (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 173–94, at 188.

43 Hales and Furnivall, *Bishop Percy's Folio*, 1.95.130–133.

44 Hales and Furnivall, *Bishop Percy's Folio*, 1.101.284, 292.

45 *SP*, 215. Henry is correctly named on 221, 222.

46 Joseph C. Bridges, "Two Cheshire Soldiers of Fortune of the XIV Century: Sir Hugh Calveley and Sir Robert Knolles," *Journal of the Architectural, Archaeological, and Historic Society for the*

ments under Richard and returns to his political career when the new king Henry IV awards him the Isle of Man.

Lawton characterizes John as acquiescing during Richard's deposition and murder, but the facts addressing John's position before Henry of Bolingbroke's takeover are scant. It seems that John, as controller of the household, was with Richard in Ireland when Bolingbroke returned to England in July 1399. John defected to Bolingbroke in early August: "At this time the duke [Bolingbroke] was also joined here by the dukes of Aumale and Surrey, Lord Thomas Percy earl of Worcester, Lord Lovel and Lord John Stanley, who put themselves at his mercy."[47] During the transition of rule, John negotiated protection for Cheshire men who supported Richard and "paved the way for other local families to come to terms with the new regime."[48] Bennett comments that "the revolution of 1399" caused "only a brief interruption to his [John's] career."[49] John's service during the coup must have been remarkable to his region, yet *SP* is not particularly interested in showing the life of a "careerist," in Bennett's terms, or the choices that such a figure would have had to have made to survive political turmoil.

Instead, *SP* builds on family lore to create a heroic figure who amasses land and honors through his ability to wage war and marry well, facets that would have appealed to its regional audience. In his discussion of sixteenth-century English ballads, Taylor shows that texts like *SP*, written in response to a person's great deeds, need only rehearse the biographical highlights; the rest of the story is supplied by the communal memory of the audience, "who regarded the central episodes not as fanciful stories but as part of their history."[50] *The Stanley Poem* and *TG* witness John Stanley's already existing role as such a renowned figure. *The Turke and Gowin* fluently evokes communal memory, briefly alluding to John's exotic Turkish exploits and creating an adventure that layers Stanley family mythology onto the romance motif of the outlandish stranger.

County and City of Chester and North Wales 14 (1908), 112–231, at 194. If John Stanley did fight with Sir Robert Knolles in France, this probably occurred in the 1370s, which seems to be the main period of Knolles's activity.

47 *Chronicles of the Revolution, 1397–1400: The Reign of Richard II*, ed. and trans. Chris Given-Wilson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 129.

48 Michael Bennett, *Richard II and the Revolution of 1399* (Stroud: Sutton, 1999), 171; Bennett, *Community*, 219.

49 Bennett, *Community*, 216.

50 Taylor, *Songs*, 134.

The Percy Folio contains three additional "outlandish stranger" poems. First, *The Marriage of Sir Gawaine* (*MSG*) is a fifteenth-century ballad version of *The Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Raganelle* (*c.* 1450).[51] Second, *Carle off Carlile* (*CC*) was probably written in Lancashire in the first half of the sixteenth century. It almost certainly shares a common source with the medieval romance *Sir Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle*.[52] Third, *The Grene Knight* (*GK*), from the South Midlands around 1500, is a ballad version of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (*SGGK*).[53] Of these, only *GK* shows a likely link to the Stanley family, within its concluding passage which "establishes" the Knights of Bath, much as its famous predecessor ends with the motto of the Knights of the Garter:[54]

> That is the matter and the case
> Why Knights of the Bathe weare the lace
> Untill they have wonen their shoen [spurs],
> Or else a ladye of hye estate
> From about his necke shall it take,
> For the doughtye deeds that hee hath done.
> it was confirmed by Arthur the K[ing;]
> thorrow Sir Gawaines desiring
> The King granted him his boone.[55]

Furnivall and Hales note that this is an "infant antiquarian effort" that tries *ex post facto* to explain this practice that began in the time of Henry IV.[56] S.G. St. Clair-Kendall, however, observes that the poem is consciously connecting "knighthood in the past with knighthood in the present" and considers the poem "a delicate piece of flattery" written for a Stanley or a member of the Stanley affinity who had become a Knight of Bath.[57] A likely candidate is Thomas Stanley (before 1485–1512). In 1491, he was made a Knight of Bath in honor of young Henry Tudor's investiture as the Duke

51 Newstead, "Arthurian," 65–66.

52 Newstead, "Arthurian," 59–61.

53 Newstead, "Arthurian," 57–58.

54 Hahn, *Eleven*, 335.

55 Hales and Furnivall, *Bishop Percy's Folio*, 2.77.501–506. This description matches the account contained in British Library, Cotton Nero C.ix, in John Anstis, *Observations Introductory to an Historical Essay upon the Knighthood of the Bath* (London, 1725), 105–6.

56 Hales and Furnivall, *Bishop Percy's Folio*, 2.57.

57 S.G. St. Clair-Kendall, "Narrative Form and Mediaeval Continuity in the Percy Folio Manuscript: A Study of Selected Poems," PhD diss., University of Sidney, 1988, 302, 303, http://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/bitstream/2123/6143/1/clair-kendall-thesis-1988.pdf (accessed 8 March 2018).

of York.[58] Whether *GK* is Stanleyite or not, it and the other Gawain texts seem to have thriving border magnates and their households in mind as their audience as they explore knightly rituals and concerns.

Thomas, the first Lord Stanley (1406–1459), and his sons Thomas (*c.* 1433–1504) and William (after 1435–1495), provide a clear example of such an audience. The first Lord Stanley had interests in Ireland as its Lieutenant Governor and Wales as its Chamberlain of North Wales as well as in the Isle of Man, of which he had been declared King. The 1450s saw the Stanleys warring with James II of Scotland over the Isle of Man. The events clearly indicate that neither the Stanleys nor the King of Scotland believed that the treaty between England and Scotland covered the Isle of Man. The Stanleys attacked and counterattacked Scotland on their own authority, without experiencing any repercussions from the English king.[59] In the 1460s, William Stanley, through inheritance and royal grants, built up sizable holdings, appointments, and allegiances in north Wales. Holt in Wrexham became his seat. Michael K. Jones explains that William "soon came to be regarded as an effective force in the marches, where a lord's jurisdiction was largely unchallenged by the royal courts."[60] The careers of the Stanleys indicate not only the wide-ranging interests a marcher lord might have across the regions abutting the north Irish Sea but also the independent authority that he often held in these regions. The poems in the Gawain cluster evoke this status and address such households.

The Turke and Gowin, *GK*, and *CC* begin with oral formulae that suggest they were performance texts.[61] *GK* even marks a divided performance: "Listen, lords! And yee will sitt,/ And ye shall here the second Fitt,/ What adventures Sir Gawaine befell."[62] As Karl Reichl has shown, the widespread use of formulaic diction in popular romances generally makes it difficult to prove or disprove whether any romance in particular originated as an

58 Anstis, *Observations*, 41–45. This Thomas was eventually the second Earl of Derby.

59 Tim Thornton, "Scotland and the Isle of Man, *c.* 1400–1625: Noble Power and Royal Presumption in the Northern Irish Sea Province," *Scottish Historical Review* 77 (1988), 1–30, at 16–18.

60 Michael K. Jones, "William Stanley of Holt: Politics and Family Allegiance in the Late Fifteenth Century," *Welsh History Review* 14 (1988), 1–22, at 11.

61 Andrew Taylor, "Performing the Percy Folio," in *Editing, Performance, Texts: New Practices in Medieval and Early Modern English Drama*, ed. Jacqueline Jenkins and Julie Sanders (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 70–89; Hahn, *Eleven*, 310.

62 Hales and Furnivall, *Bishop Percy's Folio*, 2.67.256–258. Douglas Gray explains that features scholars lament as poor writing in *GK* actually benefit oral performance: "A Note on the Percy Folio *Grene Knight*," in *Arthurian Studies in Honour of P.J.C. Field*, ed. Bonnie Wheeler (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004), 165–71.

orally composed and performed text.[63] Yet, because these texts at least feign delivery to an audience, they suggest to their future audiences that they have been performed before and evoke the scene of the "ancestral hall," as Taylor calls it. He points out that several other ballads and romances in the Percy Folio begin in a similar way, constructing a noble listening audience and suggesting a "social unity by the recitation of the heroic deeds of one's ancestors at appropriate ceremonial occasions."[64] In her structural analysis of *GK*, St. Clair-Kendall concludes that its audience was innately conservative, valuing action and familiarity in its entertainment. However, the audience understood knightly codes of behavior; therefore, she contends, the target audience was probably "the dependents and followers" of a regional magnate.[65] The mode of address combined with the lofty rhetorical style suggests a mixed audience, high and low, and together they evoke a nostalgic, glorious past in Taylor's "ancestral hall."

The Gawain cluster displays the conservative values that developed in the Scottish and Welsh border regions because of their marginality and cultural hybridity.[66] As Cynthia J. Neville has shown, these regions had been governed by their own laws for centuries by the time the texts in the Gawain cluster were written. Trial by combat, for example, continued into the sixteenth century in the Anglo-Scottish march.[67] Neville points out: "The [jousting] lists provided the opportunity for belligerent northern plaintiffs and defendants to engage in carefully regulated warlike encounters with the Scottish enemy without the dangers consequent on unrestrained raids of plunder and retaliation."[68] With such ceremonial violence condoned, it is easy to see how the border lords saw themselves in the characters portrayed in the romances and ballads. These texts function in a similar way to the riding (raiding) ballads composed on the Scottish side of the border in the late 1500s. Anthony Goodman lists the traits of the riding ballad: they "rely heavily on common material; they tend to be

63 Karl Reichl, "Orality and Performance," in Radulescu and Rushton, *Companion to Popular Medieval Romance*, 132–49, at 146.

64 Taylor, "Performing," 77, 78.

65 St. Clair-Kendall, "Narrative," 289.

66 Mark P. Bruce and Katherine H. Terrell, "Introduction: Writing Across the Borders," in *The Anglo-Scottish Border and the Shaping of Identity, 1300–1600*, ed. Mark P. Bruce and Katherine H. Terrell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 1–14, at 3–4.

67 Cynthia J. Neville, *Violence, Custom, and Law: The Anglo-Scottish Border Lands in the Later Middle Ages* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 172–73.

68 Neville, *Violence*, 190.

precisely particularized and highly localized; they have, for the most part, a consistency of archaic form, outlook and subject-matter. They adhere to a code of loyalty to the bonds of kinship and alliance and extol valorous and cunning conduct."[69] In its display of these similar characteristics, the Gawain cluster demonstrates the border lords' "nostalgic idealizations of chivalry"[70] and their overlay of the symbolic geography of Arthur's empire onto their own.

The Gawain cluster emphasizes northern border locations; three of the texts also highlight otherworldly connections. *The Marriage of Sir Gawaine* and *CC* are set in Carlisle in the border area of Cumbria, and in *TG* before traveling to the Isle of Man, the Turk and Gowin ride "northwards 2 dayes and more" from Arthur's unnamed court to a location where they enter a barrow.[71] Because of the lacuna made by the Pitt household, it is unclear whether their sea journey to the Isle of Man originates from within the barrow. If so, this location would only enhance the island's reputation as hidden and inaccessible. This reputation grew from the clouds and mists that often obscure the island from passing vessels. This natural defense is often called Manannan's Cloak; thereby, purporting that the legendary founder of the island protects it from hostile and unwanted visitors.[72] Tarn Wadling in Cumbria's Inglewood Forest, the setting of *MSG* and *CC*, also had legendary "spectral or magical connotations."[73] The Arthurian knights in Tarn Wadling encounter otherworldy beings, such as the gigantic Carl (churl), a loathly lady with misshapen features, and her brother, a churlish baron who carries a giant club. Ralph Hanna argues that the texts' audiences would have already known of Tarn Wadling's legendary reputation.[74] Yet, these otherworldly places and legendary figures present "real world" problems. The Carl represents a local landholder who has been excluded from Arthur's munificence: "For Arthur hath beene ever my foe./ He hath beaten my knights and done them bale [harm]."[75] The churlish baron in *MSG* probably signifies another disgruntled landholder.

69 Anthony Goodman, "Religion and Warfare in the Anglo-Scottish Marches," in *Medieval Frontier Societies*, ed. Robert Bartlett and Angus MacKay (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), 245–66, at 261.

70 Hahn, *Eleven*, 31.

71 Hales and Furnivall, *Bishop Percy's Folio*, 1.92.51.

72 See the Introduction, p. 000.

73 Ralph Hanna III, "*The Awntyrs off Arthure*: An Interpretation," *Modern Language Quarterly* 31 (1970) 275–97, at 281.

74 Hanna, "*Awntyrs*," 281.

75 Hales and Furnivall, *Bishop Percy's Folio*, 3.284.196–197.

His intentions for sending Arthur on a quest are lost to us, on account of the damage to the Folio; however, in the text's analogue the knight, Sir Gromer Somer Joure—possibly the same character in *TG*—explains that Arthur gave his lands to Gawaine, an unjust act that became the cause of Gromer's enmity.[76] (*The Turke and Gowin* seems to present a correction to Sir Gromer's loss.) These texts' audiences would have understood both characteristics of the borderland portrayed here: a site of difference, signaled by the otherworldy characteristics and a site of contest over lands, titles, and honor.

GK is partially set in Stanley territory and minimizes the stranger's outlandishness, possibly in deference to its now lost Stanley family connection. The text begins by revealing how Sir Bredbeedle only pretends to be outlandish. He has been taught to shape-change by his mother-in-law; therefore, he is in control of his appearance, unlike the enchanted beings in the other texts. Bredbeedle travels from the Castle of Flatting in the Forest of Delamore to "Carleile" so that he can challenge Arthur's court.[77] This castle has not been identified, but "Delamore" probably refers to Delamere Forest in Cheshire.[78] When Bredbeedle and Gawaine travel from the Green Chapel to Carlisle, they stop along the way at the Castle of Hutton.[79] Edward Wilson contends that "Hutton" refers to Hooton, the seat of Sir William Stanley (b. before 1350), John's elder brother and the hereditary master forester of the Wirral. Wilson further argues that Hutton was an alternate spelling for Hooton from the mid-fourteenth century through the late sixteenth.[80] He uses these locations to speculate that *GK*'s ultimate source, *SGGK*, already had Stanley family connections.[81]

Even as these texts use specific local geography, they are also very careful to set the limits of Arthur's empire and compare his empire to their own Britain's borders and divisions. The openings of *GK* and *CC*

76 Hahn, *Eleven*, 48, at 55–59.

77 Hales and Furnivall, *Bishop Percy's Folio*, 2.59.39; 2.61.86–87.

78 Hahn, *Eleven*, 331, n. 87.

79 Hales and Furnivall, *Bishop Percy's Folio*, 2.75.493.

80 Edward Wilson, "*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and the Stanley Family of Stanley, Storeton, and Hooton," *Review of English Studies* 30 (1979), 308–16, at 315.

81 Lawton, "Scottish," 43, posits "a continuity of audience and [...] taste" between MS Cotton Nero A.x and the Percy Folio. See Ad Putter, *An Introduction to the "Gawain"-Poet* (London: Longman, 1996), 28–37; Su Fang Ng and Kenneth Hodges, "Saint George, Islam, and Regional Audiences in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*," *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 32 (2010), 277–92; Andrew Breeze, "Sir John Stanley (*c.* 1350–1414) and the 'Gawain'-Poet," *Arthuriana* 14, no. 1 (2004), 15–30—all authors have made connections between the Stanleys and *SGGK*.

posit a unified Britain, ruled by Arthur. *Carle off Carlile* says: "the Ile of Brittaine called is/ England & Scottland I-wis;/ wales is an angle to that Ile."[82] *GK* configures Britain in the same way and adds that Arthur "drive alliance [drove aliens] out of this Ile,/ Soe Arthur lived in peace a while."[83] Yet, even as these lines imply a peaceful, homogeneous world in Arthur's time, the plots themselves demonstrate the necessity for Arthur and his court to transform and incorporate the outsider rather than drive them out. When Gowin beheads the Turk, the outsider is changed into Gromer, a productive member of society, who can rule the Isle of Man on Arthur's behalf. In *MSG* Gawaine marries the loathy lady and then acquiesces to her wishes concerning her cursed appearance. This breaks the magic spell, and she turns into a lady worthy of Arthur's court. In *CC* Gawaine beheads the loutish, gigantic Carl, breaking the spell placed upon him.[84] Like the Turk, one of his first gestures after his delivery from enchantment is to religion. He promises to found a chantry dedicated to the souls of all the people he has killed.[85] Once the Carl's otherness is erased, he can become a part of the ruling elite. This process comes through various rituals of acceptance. First, Gawaine marries the Carl's daughter. After the Carl displays his ability to be a good host, Arthur makes him a knight and grants him the "country of carlile." Arthur then makes him an earl and a knight of the Round Table, and, finally, gives him a name: "Knight, I tell thee,/ CARLILE shall thy name bee."[86] The transformation of the Carl only begins with the seemingly deadly application of Gawaine's sword; the Arthurian society signals its acceptance of him through these ceremonial performances. The conclusion of *GK* does much the same thing, as Bredbeedle is accepted into the community of the Knights of Bath.

The outlandish strangers in the Gawain cluster challenge the rights and rites of the Arthurian hegemony by questioning land tenure and the customs and culture of the court. By the end of each narrative, the outsider has been incorporated by means of some magical rite or courtly ceremony and has become an integral part of the hegemony. These narratives fictionalize the border magnates' experiences as they—sometimes the stranger, sometimes

82 Hales and Furnivall, *Bishop Percy's Folio*, 3.277.9–11.

83 Hales and Furnivall, *Bishop Percy's Folio*, 2.58.7–8.

84 Sean Pollack offers an assessment of the Carl's hybridity, although his analysis concentrates on the earlier version of the text: "Border States: Parody, Sovereignty, and Hybrid Identity in *The Carl of Carlisle*," *Arthuriana* 19, no. 2 (2009), 10–26.

85 Hales and Furnivall, *Bishop Percy's Folio*, 3.291.420–424.

86 Hales and Furnivall, *Bishop Percy's Folio*, 3.293.483–488.

the hegemon—governed the borders and married into border families, Celtic and English. Through the years, scholarship has discounted the texts in the Gawain cluster as debased copies of their more sophisticated medieval analogues.[87] The Gawain cluster's very existence in the Folio demonstrates the ways that these old stories stayed in circulation, especially in the border areas, where they reflected the cultural values and concerns of the great families and their retainers.

The Gawain cluster's link to the Stanleys is just one avenue into northern and northwestern border cultures that the Percy Folio provides. The Stanleys' Bosworth and Flodden clusters could not be covered in this essay. In addition, the Percy Folio offers smaller Neville, Howard, and Percy clusters that situate those families within medieval and early modern border cultures. Rogers' assertion that the Percy Folio needs much more scholarly attention is well-founded; however, Rogers also contends that the Folio's "contents [...] exist in two dimensions, the medieval past and the (seventeenth-century) present."[88] Future studies of the Percy Folio should not discount the cultural work that its texts do between these two historical moments. The Gawain cluster demonstrates that the earlier texts have long-lasting applicability. The Gawain ballads and romances were continually operative texts that helped shape the Stanley family's reputation between the dates of their original compositions and their inclusion in the Percy Folio.[89]

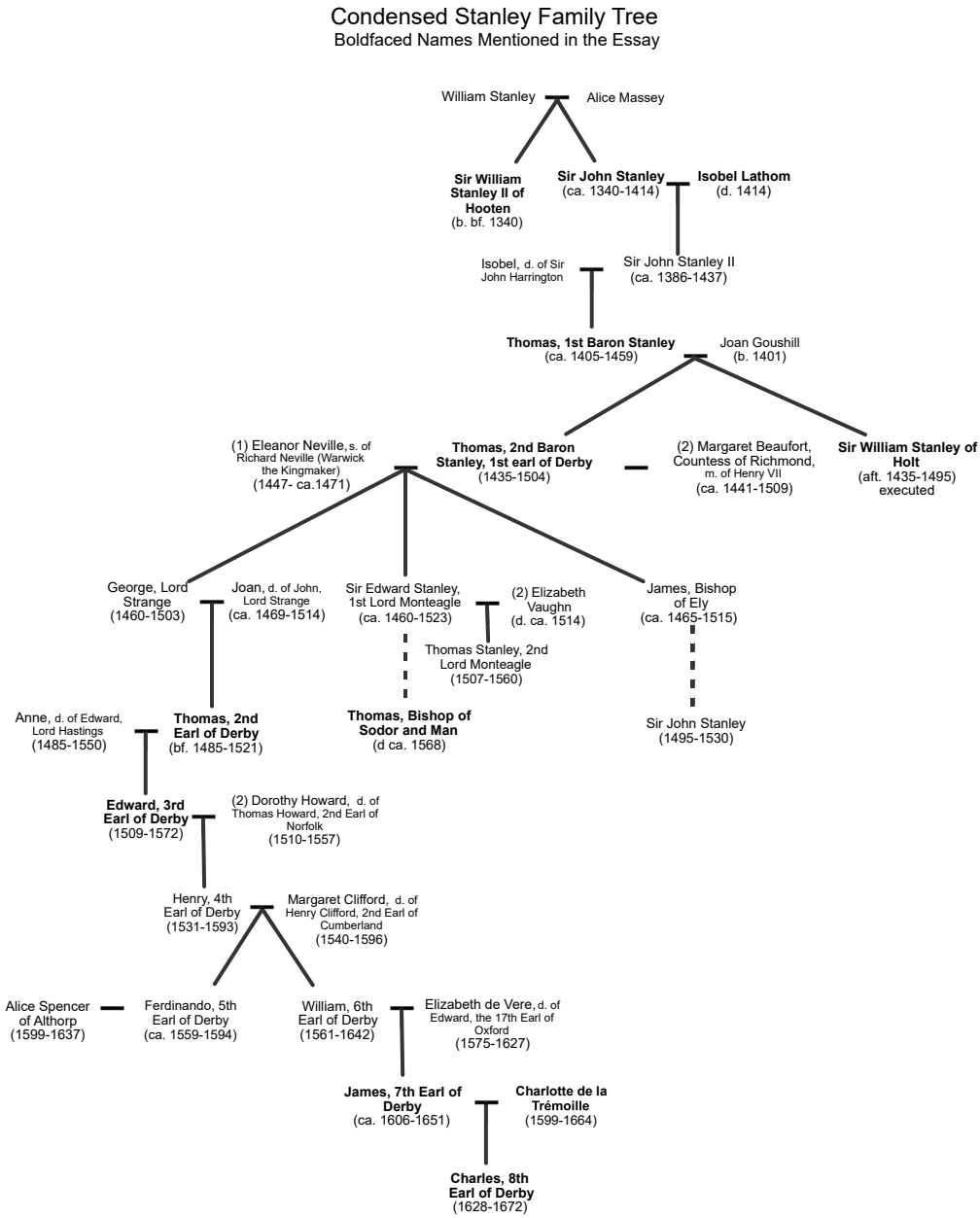
87 Donatelli, "Percy Folio," 115.

88 Maldwyn Mills and Gillian Rogers, "The Manuscripts of Popular Romance," in *A Companion to Medieval Popular Romance*, ed. Raluca L. Radulescu and Cory James Ruston (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2011), 49–66, at 59.

89 The development of this essay occurred through the generous auspices of the National Endowment for the Humanities. I was a member of the 2015 NEH Summer Seminar entitled "The Irish Sea Cultural Province: Crossroads of Medieval Language and Literature." My time on the Isle of Man, where I learned about the Stanleys and their wide-ranging influence, shaped this essay significantly, as did the knowledge, enthusiasm, and encouragement of the seminar's organizers, Charles W. MacQuarrie and Joseph Falaky Nagy.

Appendix: The Stanley Family Tree

Figure 4 Stanley family tree



About the author

Rhonda Knight holds a PhD from Binghamton University and is a Professor of English at Coker College, located in Hartsville, South Carolina. She teaches first-year writing, medieval literature, and early modern literature. As a researcher, she has published articles on a wide variety of subjects from *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* to *Doctor Who*. Her latest publication, *Stage Matters: Props, Bodies and Space in Shakespearean Performance* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2018), is a collection co-edited with Annalisa Castaldo.



Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

7. Ancient Myths for the Modern Nation

Seamus Heaney's *Beowulf*

Maria McGarrity

Abstract
Maria McGarrity examines Seamus Heaney's rendering of *Beowulf* in the context of the poet's probings of the interface between the Irish and English languages, and that between the British and Irish registers of English itself. Heaney's choices of vocabulary and phrases, ranging from the subtle to the conspicuous, are shown artfully to recast the Old English masterpiece in a contemporary dialogue, not at all free from tension, among neighboring cultures of the Irish Sea Cultural Province.

Keywords: Scandinavians/Vikings, Heaney; Grendel, Cú Chulainn, James Joyce, bog, sea

As several of the essays in this collection show, any modern national and/or ethnic identification of cultures that border the Irish Sea are often too limiting or merely projected into the historical past as reflections of contemporary political ideologies. In Ireland, from the latter half of the nineteenth and through the twentieth century, writers continually returned to a striking series of ancient myths drawn from the most-famed narratives of the Irish archipelago, identified these as original manifestations of the indigenous peoples, and deployed these constructs as a means of defining national identity. This interest in ancient Ireland partially results from the dramatic surge in archaeological discoveries that took place in Ireland between 1840 and 1860. The sudden exposure of early material cultures in Ireland from bog and field captured the public imagination and brought Ireland's prehistory, particularly that preceding British incursions from the Norman kings of England descended from William the Conqueror, termed in modern Irish Studies, the Anglo-Norman invasion of 1159 onward, to the

MacQuarrie, Charles W. and Joseph Falaky Nagy (eds), *The Medieval Cultures of the Irish Sea and the North Sea. Manannán and His Neighbors*. Taylor & Francis Group, 2019
DOI: 10.5117/9789462989399/CH07

forefront of public discourse. This striking preoccupation with the indigenous seems to mark Irish writing and serves to separate this national form from other modern configurations. In fact, what I examine in "Ancient Myths for the Modern Nation" is not simply a momentary recognition of Ireland's primitive indigenous history but a striking gesture that serves to define the long emerging Irish nation, through an imagined connection with its ancient lineage(s) and the recognition of a more encompassing Irish past that provocatively emerges in the twentieth century.

In a discussion about the categorization of Manx crosses in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the noted archaeologist, former head of the British Museum, David Wilson notes the increasing cultural interest in designating artifacts as Celtic rather than Scandinavian (what are more popularly considered Viking, though this term more clearly evokes a profession rather than an ethnic group or affiliation). Wilson avers:

> While the Scandinavian element on the carved stones was already recognized in print early in the eighteenth century, practically every carved stone without Scandinavian inscription or ornament was neglected until the late nineteenth century, when they were separated out and designated as "Celtic." […] The growth of a form of Celtic nationalism in the Island in the late nineteenth and, more particularly, in the early twentieth century, caused all the stones (including those of distinctly Norse character, many with Norse inscriptions) to be labeled by the general public, and indeed by some academics, as Celtic. […] It is odd that many in the Island who are only too aware of the current popularity of their Viking heritage persist in labeling the crosses as "Celtic" to the present day—even if they are actually Scandinavian.[1]

The distinctions between the identities of Manx Celts and Vikings/Scandinavians on these artifacts mirror the distinctions of such identities in Ireland in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The currents of the Irish Sea, at the center of which resides the Isle of Man, have circulated for millennia, many centuries before the advent of the modern nation-state and its attendant political, social, and economic structures of hierarchy and colonialism in the British and Irish isles. Rather than framing identities within a binary, however, twentieth-century writers use ancient myths

1 David Wilson, "Conversion and Christian Symbolism in the Isle of Man: Evidence, Origin, and Content," *IOMNHAS Proceedings* 12 (2011–13), 572–95.

associated with the Celts and Vikings to frame their portraits of modern nation(s).

William Butler Yeats, perhaps the most recognized Irish writer during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, was at the forefront of the Celtic revival and the use of ancient myth to demarcate and celebrate an indigenous Irish culture and literary tradition in Ireland. On 27 December 1904, two of his plays premiered at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin: *On Baile's Strand* and *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* (the latter was co-written with Augusta, Lady Gregory). In the public performance of Ireland's prehistory, in *On Baile's Strand* Yeats strategically reimagines his Cuchulain (Yeats's spelling, all other uses will follow the original convention) as a father unaware that his opponent is actually his own progeny. Yeats thus avoids a confrontation with familial violence that was critical to the ancient cycle and perhaps too intimately familiar for the still emerging and fraught national identity.[2] In contrast Thomas Kinsella's 1969 translation of *The Táin Bó Cúailnge*,[3] the Ulster-cycle epic that centers on Cú Chulainn, does not contain this tale of family violence or engage Yeats' dramatic occlusion for the stage. Rather this widely admired translation of *The Táin* incorporates the most disturbing elements of the Ulster cycle as a part of the same volume yet clearly distinct from the text of *The Táin* itself. This distinction is a reflection not of Kinsella's choice as translator but of the manuscript materials for the cycle. Kinsella's choice to include "The Death of Aife's One Son" as material useful for his modern translation of Ireland's ancient epic, the "oldest vernacular epic in Western literature,"[4] into a legitimizing narrative for the now independent, if partitioned, nation within the same volume.

In the last years of the twentieth century, Seamus Heaney's poetic translation of an Old English narrative moves Ireland's ancient boundaries beyond her geographic borders and across the swirling currents of the Irish Sea. Heaney's *Beowulf* is published in 1999[5] on the cusp of the Good Friday Agreement; this albeit imperfect agreement created the political conditions for peace in the North. Heaney's controversial Hiberno-English narrative positions Beowulf, the most famed Anglo-Saxon warrior, as a hero for a

2 Yeats' vision of a fraught national identity calls for the sacrifice of progeny overtly in his *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*, when Cathleen, the incarnation of Ireland as an old woman, becomes transformed into a young girl with a regal bearing after young men rush to her aid and sacrifice themselves for her.

3 Thomas Kinsella, trans., *The Tain* (Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1969). References in this work to the text are to the Oxford University Press edition, published in 1970.

4 Kinsella, *Tain*, vii.

5 Seamus Heaney, trans., *Beowulf* (London: Faber, 1999).

newly (re)united if not yet peaceful Ireland. Heaney imagines an archipelago whose sea boundaries become revealed not as borders but as passageways, though submerged for centuries, that now powerfully ascend from the depths of the Irish Sea's fluid history to form a broader definition of the modern nation. In his reimagination of *Beowulf* Heaney incorporates small and subtle language choices to frame characters in terms from within an Irish cultural tradition and associated with Kinsella's modern translation of *The Táin* for Cú Chulainn, the Hound of Ulster, himself.

The search for connections between the ancient Irish epic and its Anglo-Saxon counterpart has fascinated scholars for many years. As Thomas Hill notes, "the Beowulf-poet is presenting a radical synthesis of pagan and Christian history—which is without parallel in Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Latin literature […]. There are, however, parallels in Old Irish and Old Norse-Icelandic literature."[6] The search for synthesis seems oriented elsewhere according to Hill. As David Dumville warns:

> Sporadic attempts have been made in the past to demonstrate direct connexions [*sic*] between the various Celtic literatures and *Beowulf*; I think it fair to say that the proposed links have always seemed tenuous or imaginary and have not been taken seriously by most students of the Old English poem. A century of desultory comparisons, leading to a negative result, by persons qualified in either Old English or Celtic or neither, does not, however, exhaust the subject or indicate its irrelevance. It seems to me that a determined attack on the subject may indicate desirable approaches and cautions which students of *Beowulf* could consider as they contemplate further work on the poem.[7]

Seamus Heaney's translation gives further evidence of both the interest in the possible connections between the Celtic, *The Táin*, and Old English, *Beowulf*, epics, and the risks associated with such an endeavor. Heaney's work on the poem, however, relies to some degree on what Dumville warns against, "tenuous" and "imaginary" links. Heaney's work is most certainly a poetic interpretation not a scholarly translation. His, as we may term it, is a reimagination that extends rather than limits his geographical and

6 Thomas D. Hill, "The Christian Language and Theme of *Beowulf*," in *Companion to Old English Poetry*, ed. Henk Aertsen and Rolf H. Bremmer Jr. (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1994), 63–77.

7 David N. Dumville, "'*Beowulf*' and the Celtic World: The Uses of Evidence," *Traditio* 37 (1981), 109–60, at 109. In this essay, Dumville specifically critiques the argument of Charles Donohue's early essay: "*Beowulf*, Ireland, and the Natural Good," *Traditio* 7 (1949–51), 263–77.

linguistic imaginary for the work. The modernist scholarly interest (including my own) in his version of *Beowulf* rests in Heaney's poetic artistry, not in its adherence to the original. This essay will examine not the original Old English text but Heaney's incorporation of discernibly modern Irish language, what modernist scholars term Hiberno-English, into the ancient Old English poem through his modern, reimagined translation. Heaney's reimagination is not an historical *Beowulf*; he does not provide new insights into the Old English language or Anglo-Saxon culture. Yet, Heaney's version does offer insight into twentieth-century Ireland.

Seamus Heaney's *Beowulf* is an intervention into the poetic and political currents that circulate amid the Irish Sea and beyond. According to Daniel Donoghue, "the many affinities already existing between his poetry and *Beowulf* enables Heaney to enter the old clinker-built ship as familiarly as an inherited settle bed, so that his interpretation is measured not merely by the changes imposed from the outside but also by shaping and reshaping the tradition from within."[8] Heaney has long claimed a global poetic tradition for the core of his work. He is noted for his translation of the Sophocles play, *Philoctetes*, as his own *The Cure at Troy*.[9] In a poem he dedicates to his friend Derek Walcott that appears in the Caribbean Journal *Callalloo*, he states unequivocally, "I am the archer."[10] Heaney will choose his poetic target and take his aim, in pen if not with the bow of Philoctetes. The dialogue in the poem between Tiresias, the blind seer, and Creon, the figure from the Oedipus tale, evokes continuity with the poetic tradition. The characters are drawn from another sea, the Mediterranean, but he uses them to reflect his own Irish waters. In fact, for a contemporary Irish poet of the twentieth century, using a poetic tradition that was born in his own island chain is much more controversial. The modern distinctions that emerge in the British and Irish isles of contest between peoples and nations (in the modern sense) begin in Ireland with the Anglo-Norman invasion of 1159. The repeated incursion of the Irish islands (from England) reaches a critical juncture in the twentieth century with the Rising of 1916, the Anglo-Irish War, the Civil War, the Irish Free State, and the partition of the North. Into Ireland's and Britain's complex and interwoven modern history Heaney introduces a surprising linguistic ancestry in his introduction to *Beowulf*,

8 Daniel Donoghue, "The Philologer Poet: Seamus Heaney and the Translation of *Beowulf*," *Harvard Review* 19 (2000), 12–21. Donoghue is the editor of the Norton Critical Edition of *Beowulf* in Heaney's translation, published in 2002.

9 *The Cure at Troy* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1991), 1–83.

10 "Enter Tiresias," *Callalloo* 28 (2005), 55–59.

> Without any conscious intent on my part certain lines in the first poem in my first book conformed to the requirements of Anglo-Saxon metrics. These lines were made up of two balancing halves, each half containing two stressed syllables—"the spade sinks into gravelling ground:/ My father, digging. I look down"—and in the case of the second line, there was alliteration linking "digging" and "down" across the caesura. Part of me, in other words, had been writing Anglo-Saxon from the start.[11]

Heaney's claim that his earliest poetic investigations have an Old English meter suggests that for him that Irish verse has an "unconscious" link with its English counterparts, at least in the earliest days of Old English verse. His call to his own past becomes a call to the historical past of the poetic tradition in the archipelago that surrounds the Irish Sea. He is also invoking his own work, namely "The Tollund Man" when he laments the ritual sacrifice in ancient northern Europe that seems strangely at home in modern Ireland. This one of the Bog poems, an informal term for a series of Heaney's poems that include "Punishment," "Bog Queen," and "The Grabaulle Man," serves as a lamentation for the dead in a peculiar recognition of cross-sea connection and boggy corporeal union for the victims of human sacrifice. He explains in an interview, "I see the Bog Poems […] [as] Not quite an equivalent for what was happening [during the Troubles], more an attempt to rhyme the contemporary with the archaic."[12] Heaney writes in "The Tollund Man," "Some day I wish go to Aarhus/ To see his peat-brown head […]." Such sacrifice invests the poet with feelings of being "lost, unhappy and at home" even while he witnesses the raw material evidence of death, long preserved by the earth, brought forth into the contemporary moment.[13] Heaney's connection to the Danes and Denmark may initially seem unusual; yet, in fact, there has been a long period of encounter and intersection between the peoples of Ireland and those of northern Europe, particularly during what is termed Ireland's "Viking period."

The interconnections between Ireland and northern Europe have also been recorded in Old Irish poetry. In her monograph, *The Vikings in Ireland: Settlement, Trade and Urbanization*, Mary Valente explains:

11 Seamus Heaney, introduction to *Beowulf* (New York: Norton, 2002), xxiii.

12 "Seamus Heaney, The Art of Poetry No. 75: Interviewed by Henri Cole," *Paris Review* 144 (1997), 19, www.theparisreview.org/interviews/1217/seamus-heaney-the-art-of-poetry-no-75-seamus-heaney (accessed 1 December 2016).

13 "The Tollund Man," in Seamus Heaney, *Opened Ground: Selected Poems 1966–1996* (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1998), 62–63.

> [Viking] Leaders of Dublin (Olaf, Isle and Ivar) are named in the sources beginning in 853 and described as "three chieftans," and soon after as kings, indicating that Dublin was very successful within a generation of its founding. Olaf married into an Irish royal family, forging a political and military alliance with his marriage. […] an Old Irish poem about a king Olaf of Dublin could well be about this ninth-century Olaf. His royal marriage and family ties would explain why a poem praising a Viking king was written in Irish during the ninth century. The poem focuses on his military prowess and desire for a noble family. "Olaf, chief champion of the eastern ford (Áth) of Ireland of the many territories; good king of Dublin, eager for strong noble patrimony" […].[14]

Valente explains, "While others have argued that the poem is about the tenth-century king of Dublin, Olaf Cuarán, Brian Ó Cuív['s] essay 'Personal Names as an Indicator of Relations between Native Irish and Settlers in the Viking Period' makes a strong case for the earlier association."[15] The study of naming in Ireland indicates the cultural and genetic intermingling of peoples. According to Ó Cuív:

> It would appear that after the initial shock of the Viking incursions and especially after the Vikings had established permanent settlements in Ireland and Scotland, contacts between the native Irish and the foreigners were fairly common and often far from hostile—as is shown by the number of inter-racial marriages as well as by political and military alliances between Irish and Norse [Scandinavian] leaders. The borrowing of personal names […] fits into this picture.[16]

Valente explains the cultural interplay among Irish and Scandinavian communities: "When [Viking] Dublin was sacked by the Irish in 902, the men of Dublin fled, not to Norway, but to Scotland and Wales."[17] The brief expulsion of the Scandinavians from Dublin brought about a period notable in the Irish Sea for cultural and material exchange; these exchanges and travel routes would continue to be navigated by what Valente terms

14 Mary Valente, *The Vikings in Ireland: Settlement, Trade and Urbanization* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2008), 53.

15 Valente, *Vikings*, 53; Brian Ó Cuív, "Personal Names as an Indicator of Relations between Native Irish and Settlers in the Viking Period," in *Settlement and Society in Medieval Ireland*, ed. John Bradley (Kilkenny: Boethius Press, 1988), 79–88, at 87–88.

16 Ó Cuív, "Personal Names," 86.

17 Valente, *Vikings*, 57.

Hiberno-Scandinavians until the Anglo-Norman invasion.[18] What seems striking is that the Irish artifacts that have been discovered in contemporary Britain (Chester and Wirral namely) indicate that this exchange as well as the movement of peoples throughout this period were dynamic. Ireland's main exports at this time, however, were enslaved peoples taken in Viking raids and battle and sold by their captors abroad. As Valente notes, "As with trade to most of Scandinavia, exchange with much of continental Europe was probably indirect, probably through Anglo-Saxon England."[19] Thus the cultural and material interchange, sometimes based on force, of the period intimates that Heaney's gesture of bringing the Anglo-Saxon epic across that sea is not as surprising as critics of contemporary poetry might at first have imagined. An eleventh-century poem, *Moriuht*, details the slave trade and the journey seeking reunion with an enslaved beloved from Ireland, through Northumbria, and finally to northern France.[20] As Tracey-Anne Cooper explains,

> Latin poets, such as Warner of Rouen dedicated his poem about the Irish poet Moriuht to the Archbishop of Rouen and his mother. In the poem Moriuht has been searching through England and Saxony for his wife Glicerium who has been kidnapped by Vikings. At last he finds her employed as a slave in Rouen, here the unnamed Countess (Gunnor) manumits the poet's wife and their daughter. The poem says of Normandy that "rather frequently, it is full to bursting with wealth [supplied] by the Vikings." That wealth, of course, included slaves like Glicerium.[21]

The presence of the Irish across the sea in Anglo-Saxon England and northern Europe was notable enough to merit a description in verse of the period. The present-day location of the bodies addressed in many of Heaney's bog poems, Aarhus, Denmark, is also the former geography of some of the ancient peoples who raided and settled not only in Ireland but also in England who are depicted so effectively in *Beowulf*.

18 Valente, *Vikings*, 118–60.

19 Valente, *Vikings*, 130.

20 Warner of Rouen, *Moriuht: A Norman Latin Poem from the Early Eleventh Century*, ed. and trans. with commentary by Christopher J. McDonough, Studies and Texts 121 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1995); H. Omant, "Satire de Garnier de Rouen contre le poète Moriuht," *Annuaire-Beulletin del la Société de l'Histoire de France* 31 (1894), 193–210.

21 Tracey-Anne Cooper, "Conquesting Binaries and Boundaries: Emma of Normandy and her Families in a Female and Transnational Context," paper presented at the "Conquest: 1016, 1066" conference at Oxford University, 21–24 July 2016; Warner of Rouen, *Moriuht*, 91.

In Heaney's introduction to his very Hibernicized Anglo-Saxon epic, he explains a subtle but striking shift when celebrating an early Irish word that has moved into Hiberno-English usage, retaining its same spelling, in twentieth-century Ireland, *lachtar*, for "a flock of chicks:"[22]

> For a long time, therefore, the little word was—to borrow a simile from Joyce—like a rapier point of consciousness pricking me with an awareness of language-loss and cultural dispossession, and tempting me into binary thinking about language. I tended to conceive of English and Irish as adversarial tongues, as either/or conditions rather than both/ands, and this was an attitude which for a long time hampered the development of a more confident and creative way of dealing with the whole vexed question—the question, that is, of the relationship between nationality, language, history, and literary tradition in Ireland.[23]

Heaney's overt acknowledgement of Joyce's simile is notable. In Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (first published in 1916), the young Stephen Dedalus has a similar if linguistically and culturally opposite experience (an English word that remains in usage in Ireland but has been forgotten in Britain). Joyce writes:

> —That? said Stephen. Is that called a funnel? Is it not a tundish?
> —What is a tundish?
> —That. The … funnel.
> —Is that called a tundish in Ireland? asked the dean. I never heard the word in my life.
> —It is called a tundish in Lower Druncondra, said Stephen laughing, where they speak the best English.[24]

Stephen's knowledge of *tundish*, originally an English word from the Renaissance and the time of Shakespeare, implies that the colonized Irish have historically maintained an intimate knowledge and use of a form of the English language that the contemporary British have lost. The famed simile that Heaney has invoked of the rapier point comes after Stephen ponders whether or not the English dean, a Jesuit in Ireland, is his enemy.

22 Heaney, introduction to *Beowulf*, xxiv; s.v. *lachtar*, *Dictionary of Hiberno-English*, ed. Terence Patrick Dolan, 2nd ed. (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 2006), 135.

23 Heaney, introduction to *Beowulf*, xxiv.

24 *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (New York: Penguin, 1976), 188.

> The little word seemed to have turned a rapier point of his sensitiveness against this courteousness and vigilant foe. He felt with a smart of dejection that the man to whom he was speaking was a countryman of Ben Jonson. He thought:
> —The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words home, Christ, ale, master, on his lips and on mine! I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadow of his language.[25]

The rapier point, the tip of an instrument of battle, between the Irish and the English is as present for Joyce in the early twentieth century as it is for Heaney in the late twentieth century. The repeated point of communal violence that erupts consistently is the moment of Ireland's enduring quest for recognition and belonging as separate from if connected intimately to the ancient English, née Anglo-Saxon, past, in which Heaney places the Irish experience. Heaney's bow of the archer and pen of the poet rest upon Joyce's rapier.

The streams of connection for the Irish and British, or the Irish and Scottish, Manx, and other Celts is celebrated in language. Acknowledging a debt to a former professor, Heaney remembers an early lesson:

> [Professor] Braidwood could not help informing us, for example, that the word "whiskey" is the same word as the Irish and Scots Gaelic word *uisce*, meaning water, and that the River Usk in Britain is therefore to some extent the River Uisce (or Whiskey): and so in my mind the stream was suddenly turned into a kind of linguistic river of rivers issuing from a pristine Celto-British Land of Cockaigne, a rivverun of Finnegans wakespeak [*sic*] pouring out of the cleft rock of some pre-political, prelapsarian, ur-philological Big Rock Candy Mountain—and all of this had a wonderfully sweetening effect upon me.[26]

Heaney points to his literary forefather, Joyce, a writer who in *Finnegans Wake* attempted to write a universal history that surrounds the *omphalos* of the River Liffey, through Anna Livia's *wakespeach* (*sic*), that empties into Dublin Bay and swirls around the Irish Sea into a global stream of the

25 *Portrait*, 189.
26 Heaney, introduction to *Beowulf*, xxiv.

poetic imaginary unconscious. Heaney ventures further towards a precise meaning in his aquatic metaphors of connection. He writes:

> The Irish/English duality, the Celtic/Saxon antithesis were momentarily collapsed, and in the resulting etymological eddy a gleam of recognition flashed through the synapses and I glimpsed an elsewhere of potential which seemed at the same time to be a somewhere being remembered. The place on the language map where Usk and the *uisce* and the whiskey coincided was definitely a place where the spirit might find a loophole, an escape route from what John Montague has called "the partitioned intellect," away into some unpartitioned linguistic country, a region where one's language would not be a simple badge of ethnicity or a matter of cultural preference or official imposition, but an entry into further language. And eventually I came upon the loopholes in *Beowulf* itself.[27]

The poet moves overtly into the prepartitioned past, a bold move for a man born in 1939 and raised in the North of Ireland after the violent national partition and its enduring aftermath in the twentieth century. Yet what also becomes even more striking is that Heaney is imagining linguistic and cultural connection amid the Irish and British archipelago before the British colonial incursion into Ireland. What he suggests is that there is a way in which *Beowulf* belongs in an inclusive vision of a modern Irish nation that is not merely a reinscription of the history of violent conquest but is a history of linguistic and literary syncretism.

The audacity of Heaney's suggestion that modern Ireland, including the partitioned North, is a syncretic, hybrid cultural space, with open forms of identity and ideology that need not be closed-off forms of cultural purity (and in Irish terms religious affiliation) is remarkable. Heaney claims, "my aunt's language was not just a self-enclosed family possession but an historical heritage."[28] Critically, Heaney claims Old English language, from the everyday to the poetic, as part of contemporary Ireland and its newly inclusive poetic tradition. Yet, this poetic tradition is not linear or unidirectional. He explains, "I allowed myself several transgressions" in his meter and alliteration.[29] The transgressions, however, Anglo-Saxon scholars would note, are not merely in those terms. Heaney boldly states, "in those instances when an Ulster word seems either poetically or historically right,

27 Introduction to *Beowulf*, xxv.
28 Introduction to *Beowulf*, xxv.
29 Introduction to *Beowulf*, xxiv.

I felt free to use it."[30] He thus includes words in the contemporary Northern lexicon, due to their etymology. The pointed regard for cultural provenance affirms a savvy understanding of the harsh realities of what comes with the dominance of the progeny of the Anglo-Saxons in the archipelago, the British occupation of Ireland. Heaney writes,

> For reasons of historical suggestiveness, I have in several instances used the word "bawn" to refer to Hrothgar's hall. In Elizabethan English, bawn (from the Irish *bó-dhún*, a fort for cattle) referred specifically to the fortified dwellings which the English planters built in Ireland to keep the dispossessed natives at bay [...]. Every time I read the lovely interlude that tells of the minstrel singing in Heorot just before the first attacks of Grendel, I cannot help thinking of Edmund Spenser in Kilcolman Castle, reading the early Cantos of *The Faerie Queene* to Sir Walter Raleigh, just before the Irish burned the castle and drove Spenser out of Munster back to the Elizabethan court. Putting a bawn into Beowulf seems one way for an Irish poet to come to terms with the complex history of conquest and colony, absorption and resistance, integrity and antagonism, a history which has to be clearly acknowledged by all concerned in order to render it.[31]

Heaney is not asserting that the Anglo-Saxons themselves were present in Ireland. Rather, he suggests their descendants remain in Ireland due to their interrelation with the indigenous Irish and now comprise an aspect of Irish society and of the Irish themselves. This syncretic/hybrid model may seem shocking to contemporary readers of Irish literature; yet it in fact derives from the communities of Northern Ireland, specifically the descendants of the Scottish Protestants whose very progeny identifies with the British Crown and Union Jack rather than the Dáil (the Irish Parliament in Dublin) and the Irish Republic's tricolor flag.

Heaney's translation suggests a more inclusive understanding of the linguistic possibilities in the Old English text. The publication of Heaney's translation corresponds with the culmination of the intense negotiations (under the auspices of the Clinton presidency and the appointment of George Mitchell as special envoy for the conflict) that were afoot in Northern Ireland while Heaney was writing. These negotiations resulted in the Good Friday Agreement in 1999. While the details of the negotiations were private, their

30 Introduction to *Beowulf*, xxx.
31 Introduction to *Beowulf*, xxx.

occurrence reflected the intense challenges of life in Ulster in the mid- to late twentieth century. Heaney's inclusive vision reaches into the deep past history of the archipelago; in his very contemporary movement of syncretic hybridity for his translation, which moves in multiple directions, he is suggesting a way forward for the modern nation. He finds ultimately that understanding the past in a new way makes for a model of inclusive transnational identities that question facile binaries of language and identity.

Heaney uses noticeably Irish language throughout the translation. For example, he writes, "he begins to keen/ and weep for his boy, watching the raven/ gloat where he hangs."[32] The word "keen" is particularly Irish in its verb and noun forms and associated with a literary tradition. As Patricia Lysaght explains, "in Ireland the art of improvised poetic lamentation by women was highly developed and persisted well into the twentieth century. As a poetic and song genre, it is part of the Irish-language tradition and is termed *caoineadh*, the origin of the English word *keen*."[33] The definition is noted in the *OED* "< Irish *caoin-* /ki:n/, stem of *caoin-im* I wail: see keen *n.*"[34] This is in contrast to the adjective and adverb forms which mean "wise, learned" and "fiercely," respectively.[35] In using a word that has a discernibly Irish provenance, Heaney asserts not only the import of the action of the verb but the very possibilities for cultural translation. The specifically Irish word for wailing and lamentation is highlighted further when Heaney notes, "Morning after morning, he wakes to remember."[36] The waking to memory mimics one of the most famous lines in Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, a novel (published in 1939) whose very title is taken from the well-known Irish folk song about the surprise ending of keening at an Irish wake. Joyce includes before the beginning and end of the *wavespeach* (*sic*) that closes the last page of the novel, "mememormee! Till thousandsthee. Lps. The keys to. Given" (*sic*).[37] Joyce's universal history becomes for Heaney a calling forth of mourning and memory, the wake of dawn becomes also a period of lamentation. They are linked not only with memory but with a sense of profound personal loss.

32 Heaney, *Beowulf*, 165.

33 Patricia Lysaght, "*Caoineash os Cionn Coirp*: The Lament for the Dead in Ireland," *Folklore* 108 (1997), 65–82, at 65.

34 *The Oxford English Dictionary,* 2nd ed., ed. John Simpson and Edmund Weiner (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), *s.v.* keen*, v.2*; *caoineadh*, Foclóir.ie, www.focloir.ie/ga/dictionary/ei/caoineadh (accessed 9 January 2017).

35 Simpson and Weiner, *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. *keen* (adj. and adv.).

36 Heaney, *Beowulf*, 165.

37 James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (New York: Penguin, 1999), 628.

Heaney's connection to Irish literature and history is powerfully apparent in the passage that describes Grendel and his mother. Heaney depicts the two in remarkably Irish terms. He writes:

> I have heard it said by my people in hall,
> Counselors who live in the upland country,
> That they have seen two such creatures
> Prowling the moors, huge marauders
> From some other world. One of these things
> As far as anyone ever can discern
> Looks like a woman; the other, warped
> In the shape of a man, moves beyond the pale
> Bigger than any man, an unnatural birth
> Called Grendel by country people
> In former days. They are fatherless creatures,
> And their whole ancestry is hidden in a past
> Of demons and ghosts. They dwell apart [...].[38]

The depiction of Grendel and his mother as otherworldly both in bodily expression and nonhuman form is conventional. Yet what sets Heaney's reimagination notably apart from previous translations is his use of the two phrases, "beyond the pale" and "warped."

The phrase, "beyond the Pale," has unique Irish cultural provenance. The phrase now suggests something that is outside of reasonable behavior or expectation. Yet, "The Pale" itself, according to Joep Leerssen, was a zone surrounding Dublin during the early stages of British colonization "held to be under the effective rule of the King." The "Statutes of Kilkenny" in 1366 drew such a line around "the Pale" within which was the geographic location of "British civilization." Beyond the Pale, beyond British mastery, initially meant the savage and uncivilized Irish landscape and peoples. Before the voyage of Columbus, for the British, Ireland was "the outer limit of the Western world; beyond it lay the emptiness of the world ocean and, quite literally, the end of the world."[39]

38 Heaney, *Beowulf*, 95.

39 Joep Leerssen, "Wildness, Wilderness, and Ireland: Medieval and Early-Modern Patterns in the Demarcation of Civility," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 56 (January 1995), 25–39, at 31–32.

Grendel moves beyond the civilized zone and into the savage landscape. Yet Heaney's striking usage of "the pale" in his translation places Grendel geographically even further afield than scholars might imagine; Heaney evokes in this moment the Irish rather than the British landscape and peoples.

Heaney's description of Grendel's body provides another remarkable moment in the text. The term "warped" also has a distinct Irish significance. He writes, "the other, warped/ In the shape of a man [...]."[40] In fact, the term "warped" is strongly associated with the male heroic form of Cú Chulainn in Kinsella's translation. In Kinsella's *The Tain*, the hero, Cú Chulainn, transforms dramatically in a repeated condition that Kinsella translates as "warp-spasms." Kinsella writes:

> The first warp-spasm seized Cú Chulainn, and made him into a monstrous thing, hideous and shapeless, unheard of. His shanks and joints, every knuckle and angle and organ from head to foot, shook like a tree in the flood or a reed in the stream. His body made a furious twist inside his skin, so that his feet and shins and knees switched to the read and his heels and calves switched to the front. [...] His face and features became a red bowl.[41]

Kinsella's translation of this disturbing transformation in bodily form continues for several pages. The vivid depiction makes it clear that the hero is no longer a mere man but someone apart and other. Though his fine form is noted elsewhere in the text, the distortion of the body of the hero is so pronounced that it is commented upon by another character, who asks, "Is this the Warped One?/ We'll have corpses,/ shrieks in our enclosures,/ tales to tell [...]. His wild shape I see,/ and his heap of plunder—/ nine heads in one hand, and ten more [...]."[42] Cú Chulainn in his transformed state is a sight that provokes fear and portends death.

Heaney's choice to describe Grendel in a term that possibly evokes an ancient Irish hero is a provocative moment in his striking reimagination of the Anglo-Saxon epic. Heaney does not suggest that Grendel literally becomes the monstrous other who lives or moves beyond the pale but rather that he operates as the other within a larger transnational cultural narrative. His "ancestry is hidden in a past of demons and ghosts." Such an intriguing

40 Heaney, *Beowulf*, 95.
41 Kinsella, *Tain*, 150.
42 Kinsella, *Tain*, 159.

ancestry is similar to what preoccupied Yeats and his Revival colleagues early in the twentieth century as they sought out ancient myths for their modern nation. Heaney's hybrid Anglo-Saxon monster seems somehow "lost, unhappy and at home" in the shifting currents of the sea that swirl amid a fusion of the early cultures represented on the Manx crosses.[43] Heaney's figure becomes a kind of twentieth-century syncretic avatar of Irish myth and history, of a haunted past and a "unnatural birth" framed in the warped corpus of an ancient hero who navigates still "over sea-roads" that forever link the islandscapes of the archipelago.[44]

About the author

Maria McGarrity is a Professor of English at Long Island University in Brooklyn. She has published two monographs, *Washed by the Gulf Stream: The Historic and Geographic Relation of Irish and Caribbean Literature* (University of Delaware Press, 2008) and *Allusions in Omeros*: *Notes and a Guide to Derek Walcott's Masterpiece* (University Press of Florida, 2015) as well as two co-edited collections, *Irish Modernism and the Global Primitive* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) and *Caribbean Irish Connections* (University of the West Indies Press, 2015).

43 Heaney, "Tollund Man," 63.

44 Heaney, "Tollund Man," 95 and 161.

8. Kohlberg Explains Cú Chulainn

Developing Moral Judgment from Bully to Boy Wonder to Brave Warrior

Ethel B. Bowden

Abstract
Ethel B. Bowden, a scholar of children's and young people's literature, employs approaches borrowed from her field to take a fresh look at the "heroic biography" model by which the boyhood deeds of the medieval Irish hero Cú Chulainn have been interpreted by earlier scholars. The author concludes by considering the implications and consequences (including the "pluses" and "minuses") of introducing the narrative life and times of such early medieval heroes, given these stories' undeniable surfeit of violence, into the contemporary classroom.

Keywords: Cú Chulainn, boyhood deeds, Lawrence Kohlberg, moral judgment, transition to adulthood, violence

The scholarly study of children's literature traces the evolution of storytelling from ancient, isolated societies to our modern, multicultural world and examines the impact of those tales on young listeners and readers. Talented storytellers, who watch for and listen to the reactions of adults and children, engage in extemporaneous editing and foster interaction while sharing tales. Retelling the adventures of Beowulf and Grendel, or Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, provides listeners with opportunities to vicariously experience difficult situations and challenges. Traditionally, the family unit has held the responsibility of sharing stories that include the consequences of decisions and actions, good and bad. Today, in the absence of a village storyteller and communal gatherings as the venues for teaching social values, the educational system has assumed this role by choosing and sharing stories of heroes. Classrooms serve as the public

MacQuarrie, Charles W. and Joseph Falaky Nagy (eds), *The Medieval Cultures of the Irish Sea and the North Sea. Manannán and His Neighbors*. Taylor & Francis Group, 2019
DOI: 10.5117/9789462989399/CH08

crucibles for examining social values through sharing and retelling of sagas, legends, fairy tales, and folktales.[1] Increasingly, young learners have access to human, print, and electronic resources as they explore the world outside their immediate culture and experience. From the emerging reader to the experienced young adult reader, connecting with stories of heroes and their conflicts creates a space to investigate possibilities and wrestle with dilemmas, leading to opinions formed by close reading and critical thinking. In today's classrooms, educators equipped with various theories of child development continually evaluate ancient stories, now preserved in texts, finding the rationale for and relevance of using these texts as new teaching material.

In suggesting the introduction of an ancient Irish warrior to a contemporary young adult audience, I will briefly discuss the initial purpose of literature for children, how literary narratives have mirrored societal values and how this tradition still influences the evaluation of modern texts for the classroom. Next, I will examine Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of developing moral judgment and apply each stage to Cú Chulainn's boyhood deeds of the *Táin*. Finally, I will compare examples of protagonists from current young adult literature to investigate whether Cú Chulainn offers an alternative protagonist who showcases the moral development of a hero.

Storytellers with their collection of tales played important roles in preserving the history and evolution of culture. Eventually their role was replaced by the invention of the printing press which shifted the communal activity of listening to tales to the solitary activity of reading books. Originally, mass produced books were available only to those who could afford them and often used to teach children how to read, starting with the alphabet and progressing to Bible passages and aphorisms. These early teaching tools were didactic in nature and convenient for reinforcing social values learned at home and at church.[2] The core value reflected in the Bible is the battle between goodness and evil, starting with the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. This conflict has continued to provide the basis for countless creative narratives for generations of authors. Upon receiving a copy of *Morte d'Arthur* by Thomas Malory, John Steinbeck wrote:

1 Virginia Burke Epstein, "Moral Reading: Children's Literature as Moral Education," *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 11, no. 2 (Summer 1986), 68–72, at 68, doi:10.1353/chq.0.0497.

2 Michael O. Tunnell, James S. Jacobs, Terrell A. Young, and Gregory Bryan, *Children's Literature, Briefly*, 6th ed. (Boston: Pearson, 2016), 52.

> The very language dyd me enchante, and vaulted me into an ancient scene. And in that scene were all the voices that ever were—and courage and sadness and frustration, but particularly gallantry [...]. I think my sense of right and wrong, my feeling of noblesse oblige, and any thought I may have against the oppressor and for the oppressed, came from this secret book.[3]

Steinbeck's reaction to the printed word alludes to the notion of social justice and how his book changed him. Literature offers new vistas to individuals and classroom readers who are encouraged to investigate deeply held social values embedded in the texts.

Literary works familiar to adults, including mythology and ancient legends, are part of the canon and rarely banned from classrooms and library shelves. Greek and Roman myths offer numerous examples of encounters between mortals and gods; often, the mortal choices and behavior in these myths have evolved into cultural bias and expectations. For example, Pandora, a mortal, allows her curiosity to overcome the explicit warning not to open a gift from the gods. By choosing to open the box and investigate its contents, she releases the spirits of death and evil, and in her haste to close the box after the damage is done, she nearly overlooks the last tiny spirit, Hope. Her choice and her behavior has serious consequences for mankind. Perhaps the popular myth of Pandora's Box has fostered a cultural expectation that women are curious and unable to control their behavior which leads to calamity. Greek and Roman myths are familiar to many students. However, unfamiliar literature chosen by classroom teachers can be challenged by parents and concerned citizens, and this challenge can sometimes result in books banned as inappropriate material.[4] By the time students reach middle and high school, they are familiar with the canonical narratives, and teachers look for literature with new characters in familiar situations and conflicts. To consider the suitability of a new epic hero for young adults and to examine whether that hero develops a sense moral justice, I suggest an analysis of Cú Chulainn's boyhood deeds found in the medieval Irish saga *Táin Bó Cúailnge* (*The Cattle Raid of Cooley*), utilizing Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development.

Kohlberg (1927–1987) psychologist and educator, studied and expanded psychologist Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development. Piaget's theory

3 Judith Saltman, ed., *The Riverside Anthology of Children's Literature*, 6th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1985), 562.

4 "Banned & Challenged Classics," American Library Association, last modified 26 March 2013, www.ala.org/bbooks/frequentlychallengedbooks/classics (accessed 8 August 2016).

outlines four stages of learning through problem-solving, where children understand their world through increasingly complex "schema" from concrete to abstract, building on prior knowledge and experience.[5] Kohlberg's theory charts a six-stage process of individual moral development, based on judgments made philosophically and psychologically. Kohlberg outlines three levels in the six-stage developmental process. Each level has two stages. The two stages in the preconventional level are obedience-and-punishment orientation followed by individualism and exchange. The conventional level has two more stages: good interpersonal relationships and maintaining the social order. The postconventional level has two stages. The first is social contract and individual rights, and the final stage of universal principles. Kohlberg's theory of child development based on cognition and morality stood apart from a leading psychologist of his day, B.F. Skinner. Skinner is known for his theory of cognitive development through conditioning, where learning is measured and manipulated by observable behaviors.[6]

Kohlberg views the "child and adolescent as natural philosophers concerned with such fundamental categories of experience as the idea of justice."[7] His theory of developing moral judgment is a process that begins with innocent, self-centered children and moves to experienced, altruistic adults. Kohlberg calls these stages parts of an "invariant developmental sequence" that does not "skip steps," and claims that while every individual matures through these stages, not everyone attains the final step in developing moral judgment.[8] The rare adults who have experienced all these stages include "Socrates, Lincoln, Thoreau and Martin Luther King, Jr."[9] These remarkable individuals were moral leaders because they questioned the status quo and made decisions to support justice for everyone. Kohlberg was deeply affected by the civil strife in America during the 1960s and decided that a finely tuned sense of justice was the epitome of moral development for individuals.

Kohlberg's dissertation (1958) was based on his series of interviews with seventy-two lower- and middle-class white boys in Chicago. He devised the now famous scenario titled "the Heinz Dilemma" to elicit opinions from the

5 Howard S. Friedman and Miriam W. Schustack, *Personality: Classic Theories and Modern Research* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1999), 219–20.

6 Friedman and Schustack, *Personality*, 192.

7 Lawrence Kohlberg, *The Philosophy of Moral Development: Moral Stages and the Idea of Justice* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), 2.

8 Kohlberg, *Philosophy*, 20.

9 Kohlberg, *Philosophy*, 27.

boys about right and wrong behavior.[10] After hearing the story, the boys were asked whether Heinz was right or wrong to steal the medicine. He found that as the boys matured, their opinions changed once they could conceptualize different points of view and responsibility to society and others. Kohlberg continued his work to substantiate the validity of his theory by working with fifty-eight of the seventy-two boys over the next twenty-two years. Kohlberg also developed a more formal protocol and conducted forty cross-cultural studies of boys in Western and non-Western countries. The results of his studies allow him to claim the universality of the stages of moral development.[11]

One of his most vocal critics is psychologist and feminist Carol Gilligan, a former student who became a colleague at Harvard. Gilligan criticized Kohlberg's theory on two points. First, Kohlberg's study of all male subjects has an "exclusive focus on justice and individual rights, which she believed represented male oriented morality."[12] Second, Gilligan "by listening to girls and women resolve serious moral dilemmas in their lives [...] traced the development of a morality organized around notions of responsibility and care."[13] Kohlberg responded with two points of his own. He defended justice as a means of giving persons their due, while care is concerned with benevolence and giving people what is good for them. Second, he stated that justice seeks a balance or equality of interests of self and of others; care means to sacrifice oneself for others.[14] With his focus on justice and morality, Kohlberg offers a tool to measure the development of reasoning in

10 The Heinz dilemma poses this situation: "In Europe, a woman was near death from a very bad disease, a special kind of cancer. There was one drug that the doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The drug was expensive to make, but the druggist was charging ten times what the drug cost him to make. He paid $200 for the radium and charged $2000 for a small dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, Heinz, went to everyone he knew to borrow the money, but he could get together only about $1000, which was half of what it cost. He told the druggist that his wife was dying and asked him to sell it cheaper or let him pay later. But the druggist said, 'No, I discovered the drug and I'm going to make money from it.' Heinz got desperate and broke into the man's store to steal the drug for his wife" (Kohlberg, *Philosophy*, 12).

11 Anne Beauchamp, "Kohlberg, Lawrence."

12 F. Clark Power, "Justice Reasoning," in *Moral Education: A Handbook*, ed. F. Clark Power, Ronald J. Nuzzi, Darcia Narvaez, Daniel K. Lapsley, and Thomas C. Hunt, 2 vols. (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008), 1: 243.

13 Mary Field Belenky, Blythe Mcvicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Mattuck Tarule, *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1986), 8.

14 Power, "Justice Reasoning," 243.

males, and analyzing Cú Chulainn's boyhood deeds presents an opportunity to apply his theory to a male, historical, literary character.

The celebrated medieval Irish saga *Táin Bó Cúailnge* (*The Cattle Raid of Cooley*), which as a text developed between the eighth and twelfth centuries CE, recounts the adventures of Cú Chulainn who possesses traits often found in heroes: remarkable physical deeds, awesome transformations, and dedication to his countrymen.[15] While the *Táin* tells the entire tale of the cattle raid and Cú Chulainn's superhuman feats to keep his fellow Ulstermen safe, the flashback to "The Boyhood Deeds" early in the text provides evidence of Cú Chulainn's developing moral judgment. Modern readers meet Cú Chulainn and follow his early encounters with social situations and norms where he makes choices and behaves accordingly. He is a prime candidate when educators encourage young adult readers to study the decision-making process of literary characters to investigate how and why some progress through the stages of moral development. Analyzing motives is crucial because "any judgment of a human action which leaves out of account the ideas which prompted it must be in vain."[16] Kohlberg's theory can be used to examine the stages in Cú Chulainn's moral development from a playground bully at the preconventional level to a brave warrior using universal ethical principles.

Kohlberg theorizes that children between the ages of 4 and 10 operate at the preconventional level where "right [action] is literal obedience to rules and authority, avoiding punishment and not doing physical harm."[17] The focus of the first stage is avoiding punishment by learning obedience, when young children are solely aware of their individual point of view and explore their social and physical world with eagerness and abandon, finding adventure and wonder in every moment. Very young children learn to differentiate between objects and people and how to interact with them. People are pushed, hit, and even bitten when children treat them like objects. Harmful behavior is met with punishment meant to teach obedience. Usually young children are well behaved, but Kohlberg observes, "the capacity of [...] children of this age to engage in cruel behavior when there are holes in the power structure is sometimes noted as tragic."[18] Kohlberg writes that children at the preconventional level, when left to

15 Thomas Kinsella, trans., *The Tain: Translated from the Irish Epic Táin Bó Cuailnge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970). I depend upon this translation throughout this contribution.

16 Constance Rummons, *Ethnic Ideals of the British Isles* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1920), 3.

17 Kohlberg, *Philosophy*, 409.

18 Kohlberg, *Philosophy*, 16.

their own decision-making are hurtful to each other; when these young children break a rule, usually adults punish them for it. In Stage 1, because children are egocentric, they change behavior not due to empathy or regret but simply to avoid punishment.

Cú Chulainn's decisions and behavior in his first boyhood deed fit those of a child in the first stage of preconventional morality. The deed begins when Sétanta (Cú Chulainn's childhood name), at the age of 4, hears of a boy-troop living in Emain. This large group of boys who are always at play is irresistible to this precocious, single child. His mother refuses his initial request to leave, not because he is too young, but because no Ulster warriors are available to escort him. She doesn't say "no," and she means "wait." But waiting is not easy for any child, and once his mother points out the route and explains the difficulties of the journey, Cú Chulainn replies, "I will try it." His mother's reaction is not recorded in the text, and Fergus, recounting the tale, simply says "So he set off […]."[19] By today's standards, Cú Chulainn has broken a rule by disregarding his mother's advice to wait for an escort, but he receives no immediate punishment from her. Therefore, in the absence of clear parental disapproval, he would not know he had made a potentially bad decision; he simply decides to broaden his experience in the world.

However, once Cú Chulainn arrives at Emain Macha, he experiences his first negative interaction with the members of the boy-troop he desperately wants to join. Because he has not grown up around Ulstermen and is not aware of their customs, Cú Chulainn does not know that he is supposed to ask for "a promise of safety" from the boy-troop before he joins their games.[20] Because of Cú Chulainn's disregard for their rules, the boy-troop first shout at him and then throw all their javelins, hurling-balls, and hurling-sticks at him to express their displeasure. This violent reaction is a punishment for Cú Chulainn; he has broken the rules and, in the absence of adult oversight, the boy-troop treat him cruelly because they decide his behavior is unacceptable.

Although Cú Chulainn stops, dodges, and catches the objects thrown at him, he suffers the emotional punishment of rejection and embarrassment. Cú Chulainn does not expect this reaction from the boy-troop, and he cannot understand their point of view. At this moment without the benefit of adult supervision, he makes his own decision about how to react. Cú Chulainn becomes angry enough to experience his unique "Warp-Spasm," a reaction that transforms him physically into a terrifyingly beautiful monster complete

19 Kinsella, *Tain*, 77.
20 Kinsella, *Tain*, 77.

with a "hero-halo."[21] This awesome physical transformation as a reaction to the boy-troop's rejection could be viewed as the nascent stage of a bully; he recognizes that he is being ostracized by the boy-troop, and he wants to retaliate and physically hurt them. In his new physical state and in his anger, he "laid low fifty" and chases nine other boys past Conchobor, his uncle and overseer of the boys' training. Conchobor physically restrains Cú Chulainn who expresses his frustration: "I am in the right [...] I left my home and my mother and father [...] and they treated me roughly."[22] Cú Chulainn is searching for justice based on his personal situation, operating on a self-centered view of the world. Once Conchobor explains the rules and Cú Chulainn understands the situation, he reaches the first developmental goal in Kohlberg's theory by understanding that his initial unacceptable incursion on the playing field led to the physical and cruel punishment by members of the boy-troop. Cú Chulainn has learned to avoid punishment by changing his behavior.

Cú Chulainn's situation quickly moves him to the second stage of pre-conventional morality: individual instrumental purpose and exchange. In this next stage, the child who has learned to avoid punishment is now ready to follow rules and achieve goals that are in his/her own interests. Kohlberg says that in Stage 2, "right [action] is serving one's own or other's needs and making fair deals in terms of concrete exchange."[23] Each new situation brings new opportunities for the child to react and learn strategies to avoid punishment. At Stage 2 the child learns through experience that bad behavior might be corrected without punishment if an acceptable deal can be worked out between the parties. The child learns that decisions to behave badly will lead to consequences, but those consequences may vary in severity with negotiation.

Developmentally ready to enter Kohlberg's Stage 2, Cú Chulainn hears the rules and immediately asks for Conchobor's protection from harm, which is granted. Cú Chulainn now thoroughly understands the idea of protection, because he recognizes that the boy-troop needs to ask for his protection. In his mind, the rule must work both ways for the boy-troop to play with him without fear of harm; this exchange is important. Cú Chulainn's perception of his own physical power, enhanced by his transformative "Warp-Spasm," fuels this inclination to bully the other boys and exploit the situation for his benefit. Conchobor recognizes the need for further intervention and asks for

21 Kinsella, *Tain*, 77.
22 Kinsella, *Tain*, 78.
23 Kohlberg, *Philosophy*, 409.

the promise of protection on behalf of the boy-troop. Cú Chulainn agrees to this deal of mutual protection, which meets the criteria of Kohlberg's Stage 2. Cú Chulainn experiences "individualism and exchange." He recognizes that the authority figure, Concobor, and the boy-troop have different points of view and different reactions, but a fair deal can insure the rules will be followed to meet everyone's needs. Cú Chulainn is no longer a self-centered, independent child; he is now part of the boy-troop. Having moved through the two developmental stages of the preconventional level, Cú Chulainn is ready for the next stages at the conventional level of moral development. Further decision-making opportunities appear soon.

The third boyhood deed serves as a bridge between Kohlberg's stages as well as a literary plot device. Cú Chulainn has difficulty sleeping in Emain and, upon questioning, admits he can only sleep when his head and his feet are level. Conchobor has a bed made specially for the young boy, who then sleeps soundly. Unfortunately, the first time he is awakened unexpectedly, he "struck [the man] on the forehead with his fist and drove the dome of the forehead back into the brain."[24] An act of murder usually justifies serious punishment. However, Cú Chulainn's reaction seems to have been perceived as a mistake or the result of his "Warp-Spasm," a transformation to be avoided at all costs. He is not overtly punished, nor is a deal negotiated by an authority figure. But in the future, letting him sleep and not waking him results in a costly delay in aiding the Ulstermen. Cú Chulainn has yet to develop his moral judgment to include regard for others in the community.

In Stage 3, where "mutual interpersonal expectations, relationships, and conformity" develop, Kohlberg notes that "right [action] is playing a good (nice) role, being concerned about the other people and their feelings, keeping loyalty and trust with partners, and being motivated to follow rules and expectations."[25] Individuals learn that they are valued and appreciated for the role they play in society. The individual recognizes the value of good interpersonal relationships and behaves in a manner to maximize opportunities to stay in the group and receive positive reinforcement. Belonging to the group and abiding by the rules for the sake of harmony makes sense to the maturing child, who is beginning to understand the complex social dynamics of the community.

Cú Chulainn is now a full-fledged member of the boy-troop, even when he behaves like a bully. He is also an accomplished athlete. In the next boyhood deed, Cú Chulainn is "playing ball in the playing-field" where he alone is one

24 Kinsella, *Tain*, 79.

25 Kohlberg, *Philosophy*, 410.

team and the 150 boys are the other team. Cú Chulainn wins every time and every type of game.[26] He knows he is stronger and better than the other boys. Physical competition in games among youngsters can be fierce, and playing with someone who always wins and always is better skilled can be frustrating and annoying.[27] Again in the absence of any supervision, the boy-troop rose and "laid hold of him" before he single-handedly "knocked fifty of them senseless." This could be viewed as self-defense. But by continuing to use his fists to punch the tormentors into submission, Cú Chulainn is still reacting like a playground bully. Fortunately, at this point Cú Chulainn remembers the first attack of the boy-troop, and before completely losing his temper and performing the "Warp-Spasm," he runs away and hides from everyone. He realizes he made a bad choice by attacking the other boys and not offering a deal, both Level-1 behaviors according to Kohlberg. Instead, Cú Chulainn chooses to hide from the authority figure, Conchobor, and what he expects will be a harsh punishment.

However, according to Fergus, "the whole of Ulster gathered against him," and, surrounded by all the warriors, Cú Chulainn must listen to their collective authority. He assesses the situation and in one last defiant act as a bully proving his superiority, he "straightened under the bed and heaved it, bed and thirty clinging warriors, onto the floor of the house." Not only has he failed to understand how the other boys feel about him, but he also underestimates how the community reacts to his behavior. In the end, Fergus says, "we settled matters, and made a peace between the boy-troop and him."[28] Cú Chulainn is forced to negotiate and, in doing so, recognizes that he wants to be part of this community and the community wants to include him.

Cú Chulainn has successfully moved through Kohlberg's Stage 3 of "mutual interpersonal expectations and relationships" in developing his moral judgment. Cú Chulainn recognizes that all the men of Ulster hold the same values: fistfights with your peers is wrong, regardless of provocation. As a group, the Ulstermen hold him responsible for his actions. Cú Chulainn

26 Kinsella, *Tain*, 79.

27 I am reminded of when mythologist Joseph Campbell wrote: "[…] I understood that when you're teaching a bunch of boys you've got to wear them out. They've got to participate in athletics. So you send them out in the fields where they can knock each other around. […] The young male is a compulsively violent piece of biology and you've got to integrate that. […] Remember that old Irish question: 'Is this a private fight or can anybody get into it?' It heightens your experience of being alive, being in a good fight. And that's the advantage of the experience in athletics—there's organized violence and it does everybody good." Joseph Campbell, Phil Cousineau, and Stuart L. Brown, *The Hero's Journey: Joseph Campbell on his Life and Work* (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2003), 21.

28 Kinsella, *Tain*, 79.

is not negotiating with one authority figure this time; he must recognize and respect the moral authority of the group. Kohlberg states, "What is right [action] is living up to what is expected by people close to one [...] maintaining trust, loyalty, respect, and gratitude."[29] Kohlberg uses the Golden Rule of treating others as one wants to be treated in his definition of Stage 3; individuals recognize the expectations and need of others and decide to act accordingly. Since all the boys, including Cú Chulainn, agree to a peace pact, Fergus implies that the adults held all the boys responsible for their actions and facilitated a reconciliation and acceptance of the "shared feelings, agreements, and expectations, which take primacy over individual interests."[30] Cú Chulainn is ready to move to Stage 4. He is developing from a bully into a child who is beginning to conform to society's expectations and, with his unique physical skills, a budding boy wonder.

In Stage 4, "social system and conscience maintenance," Kohlberg states, "The right [action] is doing one's duty in society, upholding the social order, and maintaining the welfare of society or the group."[31] An individual's ability to build on Stage-3 interpersonal relationship skills requires an awareness that relationships fostered by these skills are the fabric of the entire society and the individual must decide what role to play in it. At this important point, individuals recognize the viewpoint of the greater society that is defining the roles and rules. Citizens are expected to live by the rules and laws to protect and maintain the welfare of the entire group.

In the boyhood deed following the incident of the peace pact, Cú Chulainn is tested when the men of Ulster are challenged by enemies, engaged in battle, and soundly defeated.[32] Cú Chulainn is asleep throughout the entire attack, and no one dares awaken him. When the noise of the battle finally awakens Cú Chulainn, he cracks two stone blocks as he stretches his arms. Because he has learned the value of interpersonal relationships, his concern for the well-being of Conchobor prompts him to action. Cú Chulainn ventures forth to discover what is going on, and finds the wounded Fergus, who explains the dire straits of the Ulstermen and that he cannot account for Concobor's well-being. Cú Chulainn, hurling-stick in hand and without hesitation, goes into the field of slaughter. He recognizes the value in "maintaining the welfare of the society or the group"[33] and decides he must save their

29 Kohlberg, *Philosophy*, 410.
30 Kohlberg, *Philosophy*, 410.
31 Kohlberg, *Philosophy*, 410.
32 Kinsella, *Tain*, 80.
33 Kohlberg, *Philosophy*, 410.

leader, Conchobor. He exercises his moral judgment and decides to fulfill his obligation to his family (Conchobor is his uncle/foster-father) and to the community of Ulstermen.

Cú Chulainn will not be distracted from his mission to find Conchobor. Cú Chulainn is knocked down by a mortally wounded man. Upon hearing "it's a poor sort of warrior that lies down at the feet of a ghost!" he retaliates by knocking off the man's head with his hurling-stick and plays ball with it across the battlefield.[34] He finds Conchobor and his wounded son, Cúscraid, provides shelter and food, and brings them home. His understanding of interpersonal relationships and community expectations is clear. For Cú Chulainn, eliminating obstacles like decapitating the ghost-warrior and killing a man to provide food for his family is simply doing the right thing. He is determined to uphold mutual expectations and maintain mutual relationships earned in his last boyhood deed and further develop his moral judgment by deciding to act and maintain Ulster's social order. Cú Chulainn accepts his role in society: he performs his duty to maintain law and order. Cú Chulainn has developed his moral judgment through to the fourth stage of development "maintaining the social system." In saving Conchobor, he has become a proven boy wonder and is no longer the bully of the playground.

Kohlberg theorizes that at the preconventional and conventional levels average individuals have "some reason for regard for law and some reason for regard for rights." Most individuals want to be good, productive, law-abiding citizens for the good of the society. At the level of conventional morality adults have successfully integrated the lessons of living in a complex society where rules are followed to protect most of its members. But remarkable individuals rise above the conventional wisdom that governs the decisions and behavior of the majority. Some individuals will question the universal application of those rules and the injustice that can result from it. The few individuals who progress to the highest levels of moral judgment are those who hold "regard for law [as] a regard for universal moral law and regard for rights [as] a regard for universal human rights."[35] Cú Chulainn reaches this level within a short period of time, and events soon unfold that challenge him to further develop his moral judgment.

At the "post-conventional" and most principled level, the final two stages are identified as concerning "prior rights and social contract or utility" and "universal ethical principles."[36] At this level, individuals are fully aware

34 Kinsella, *Tain*, 80.
35 Kohlberg, *Philosophy*, 40.
36 Kohlberg, *Philosophy*, 411–12.

of laws that govern the good of the majority. This status quo promotes the greatest good for the greatest number of citizens. According to Kohlberg, individuals at Stage 5 believe "the right [action] is upholding the basic rights, values, and legal contracts of a society, even when they conflict with the concrete rules and laws of the group."[37] Here, the individual or small group may be harmed by rules that benefit society at large, but the greater good prevails. However, the individual will begin to question whether the application of those same rules to an individual or smaller groups in unique situations will result in the most just outcome. For example, in the previous boyhood deed, at Stage 4 of moral development Cú Chulainn did not hesitate to kill two individuals while rescuing his family members who were also important to the community. However, an individual operating at the Stage 5 would question whether Cú Chulainn's duty to his family and community outweighed the right of his victims to live. Kohlberg goes on to state, "Some nonrelative values and rights such as life, and liberty, however, must be upheld in any society and regardless of majority opinion."[38] The moral dilemma of the greater good at the expense of the individual becomes problematic, and solutions are not clear-cut. Complex situations are not always easy to resolve to everyone's satisfaction. Questioning whether the rights of the larger society are more important than the rights of a few, presents a moral challenge for individuals at this level.

Cú Chulainn understands how to use his talents for others, and he encounters a situation challenging the concept of "prior rights and social contract or utility" in his next boyhood deed. Fergus recalls an event when the Ulstermen were in their "pangs" and unable to fight. As the *Táin* explains, the "pangs" were the result of an ancient curse known to all, far and wide. "If they did [shed the blood of Ulstermen in this state] the pangs themselves would fall on them, or else decay, or a short life."[39] Fergus continues to impress upon Medb and Ailill that they should not underestimate the strength of young Cú Chulainn. Defying the curse, "[t]wenty-seven marauders came from the islands of Faichi" to attack the Ulstermen.[40] Women are screaming, the men are helpless, and the boy-troop run to investigate the situation. However, they quickly run away when they see the enemies. But 5-year-old Cú Chulainn, who is not from Ulster and therefore immune to the curse, stays and launches a one-man counterattack. In defending his countrymen,

37 Kohlberg, *Philosophy*, 411.
38 Kohlberg, *Philosophy*, 411–12.
39 Kinsella *Tain*, 81.
40 [5] Kinsella, *Tain*, 81.

he kills nine and is wounded in the battle before the rest run away. Clearly, he performs his duty to protect the Ulstermen and his community.

In this deed, Cú Chulainn is faced with a dilemma of fighting and killing others as a warrior or maintaining the values of mutual respect and good behavior of the boy-troop, his closest personal community within the larger Ulster society. He "considers the moral point of view and the legal point of view, recognizes they conflict, and finds it difficult to integrate them."[41] Cú Chulainn has not yet been an active participant in battle. He has accidentally killed an Ulsterman (upon being awakened), completed the decapitation of a dying man (the half-headed soldier/phantom on the battlefield) and killed a man to fulfill his foster-father's need for food, but he has not been a warrior fighting to protect his country. If Cú Chulainn fights, he is not conforming to the behavior of his boy-troop community, but if he does not fight, all the Ulstermen will die. The wily men from Faichi have used the Ulstermen's helplessness to their offensive advantage. Cú Chulainn reacts quickly to the problem with a new sense of justice and purpose: he must behave differently than other members of the boy-troop, and he must protect all the Ulstermen at the expense of enemy lives, which are already lost according to the ancient curse. Cú Chulainn understands society's undeniable need for rules and laws, and the occasional need to break them to achieve a greater good.

Kohlberg's highest level of moral judgment, Stage 6, is when the individual recognizes and employs "universal ethical principles." He explains that, "this stage assumes guidance by universal ethical principles that all humanity should follow."[42] At this level, individuals accept laws that insure harmonious relationships or bind together members of societies. These laws promote safety and continuity, and are based on universal principles. At Stage 6, individuals are aware that "principles are universal principles of justice: the equality of human rights and the respect for the dignity of human beings as individuals […]. These are not merely values that are recognized, but are also principles used to generate particular decisions."[43] This boy wonder, Cú Chulainn, in his last boyhood deed will make a decision that elevates his moral judgment to Kohlberg's final stage of the highest level.

Conall Cernach, in support of Fergus' testimony to Cú Chulainn's remarkable abilities, relates a boyhood deed that starts with Conchobor being invited to feast at a local blacksmith's home. Culann, the blacksmith, requests

41 Kohlberg, *Philosophy*, 412.
42 Kohlberg, *Philosophy*, 412.
43 Kohlberg, *Philosophy*, 412.

that Conchobor bring a reasonable number of guests with him. Conchobor agrees and assembles "fifty chariots-full of the highest and mightiest of his champions."[44] On his way to the feast, Conchobor stops by the playing field to check on the boy-troop. He notices that Cú Chulainn is still the best at all the sports, and all his men agree this will always be so. As a result, Conchobor invites Cú Chulainn to join him in the feast. Cú Chulainn, in this way a typical child, wants to play a little longer and promises to join the party later.

At the feast, Culann asks Conchobor if anyone else is expected to join them. When Conchobor says no, the gates are closed and a massive "savage hound" is set to protect the cattle, the stock, and the enclosure.[45] Conchobor has forgotten about the 6-year-old Cú Chulainn who is walking to the compound still playing with his javelin, hurling-stick and ball. The mighty warriors of Ulster are paralyzed with distress when they witness the young boy innocently approaching the menacing guard dog.

The *Táin* includes two versions of the confrontation between boy and beast, but the ending is the same: in self-defense, Cú Chulainn kills the watchdog that attacks him.[46] Culann is inconsolable and believes his possessions are now worthless since they cannot be protected from harm. Cú Chulainn neither expresses remorse for his actions, nor blames Conchobor for forgetting about him. He is not angry with Culann, whose ferocious watchdog tried to kill him. At this point, after witnessing the consequence of his actions, Cú Chulainn pledges to protect the blacksmith, his family, and his possessions until he raises a replacement guard dog. He uses his moral judgment to recognize the universal ethical principle of justice and takes responsibility for the death of the hound. Cú Chulainn decides to act maturely by offering to protect Culann's property. It is at this moment that Sétanta earns his nickname "Cú Chulainn" meaning "Hound of Culann."[47] Cú Chulainn has reached Kohlberg's final stage of moral development by becoming a responsible citizen and a guardian of his community, while laying the foundation for becoming a hero.

Up to this point in the narrative, Cú Chulainn's character traits have shown development with each remarkable feat. It is odd that in the sixth and final boyhood deed, Cú Chulainn's actions reflect each stage of his moral

44 Kinsella, *Tain*, 82.

45 Kinsella, *Tain*, 83.

46 Kinsella, *Tain*, 83.

47 Name change after a violent rite of passage is also found in contemporary young adult novels. Beatrice Prior of *Divergent* becomes Tris, Katniss Everdeen of *Hunger Games* becomes Mockingjay (see below).

development from preconventional to postconventional, with a continual focus on his need for fame, rather than continuing to showcase his evolving sense of justice. The last deed is a longer narrative that tells how Cú Chulainn acquires Conchobor's personal armor and chariot, and then rides beyond the borders of the province intimidating fellow countrymen and enemies alike. The story ends with the women of Emain Macha ordered to bare their breasts and distract the 7-year-old from attacking his own people.

Yet it is possible to align each of Cú Chulainn's decisions in this last deed with a stage in Kohlberg's theory. Cú Chulainn's questionable method of acquiring armor reflects his thinking on the preconventional level based on self-interest and exchange. Cú Chulainn in return for fame, learns he will live a short life and responds, "That is a fair bargain." On another day, Cú Chulainn overhears the druid Cathbad state, "Whoever mounts his first chariot today [...] his name will live forever in Ireland."[48] This is another bargain that Cú Chulainn cannot resist. Once he acquires the chariot, Cú Chulainn "urged him [the charioteer] to take the road to the boy-troop, to greet them and get their blessing in return."[49] All three decisions are based on making deals with authority figures and serving his own needs.

Cú Chulainn transitions to next stage of moral development at the conventional level, where decisions are made based on conformity, duty, and upholding the welfare of the group as a participant. The young boy and his charioteer travel to meet Conall Cernach who is guarding the boundary of the province.[50] Cú Chulainn urges Conall to return home and let him stand guard, showing his willingness to participate in protecting Emain. When Conall refuses and irritates Cú Chulainn by remarking on his youth, they set off together to patrol the border. Under the guise of testing his skill, Cú Chulainn sabotages Conall's chariot and says, "Now, since it is your Ulster custom not to continue a dangerous journey, go back to Emain, friend Conall, and leave me here on guard."[51] Cú Chulainn relies on Conall's conventional-level decision-making and expects him to conform to Ulster customs, which he does. Cú Chulainn, in his zeal to protect the Ulstermen, ventures beyond the border and finds a dangerous enemy in the three sons of Nechta Scéne. He kills these men and races for home with their heads as trophies, proof that his fighting skills are valuable for protection of the Ulster community. He is a brave warrior.

48 Kinsella, *Tain*, 85.
49 Kinsella, *Tain*, 86.
50 Kinsella, *Tain*, 86.
51 Kinsella, *Tain*, 87.

In the final exploit of this last boyhood deed, Cú Chulainn relies on his charioteer for advice on how to bring home a wild stag and a flock of geese.[52] The charioteer points out that bringing home live animals is more difficult than bringing home slaughtered game. The focus for Cú Chulainn is self-serving when he decides to accomplish the more difficult task. At the same time, however, he seeks advice about societal preferences when he asks, "Which would the men of Ulster like brought in, a dead one or a live one?"[53] He makes conscious decisions to uphold the more rigorous expectation when he captures a wild stag and a flock of swans. He is providing sustenance for his community.

Having demonstrated his concern for duty and community, Cú Chulainn soon creates a situation where he will need to think beyond his duty to the community and consider the principles that insure the welfare of that community. When Cú Chulainn finally arrives at Emain, he challenges his own community of Ulstermen to send a man to fight him. At this point, the women of Emain are sent to show their naked breasts to Cú Chulainn, who hides his face. His reaction might be due to what Kohlberg stated for individuals at the highest stage of moral development: "The [social] perspective is that of any rational individual recognizing the nature of morality or the basic moral premise of respect for other persons as ends, not means."[54] Cú Chulainn pauses when he realizes the women and his community deserve his respect as individuals, and they are not a way for him to gather more fame and glory as a warrior for Ulster. Once he is calmed down by being thrust into vats of cold water, he is honored by the queen and allowed to sit "on Conchobor's knee, and that was his place forever."[55] Cú Chulainn is accepted as a brave warrior with superior physical skills and an elevated level of moral reasoning. He has reached the highest level of Kohlberg's theory of developing moral judgment.

In looking at the text revealing this part of Cú Chulainn's life, Daniel Melia writes, "there is something stylistically odd about the 'Boyhood Deeds' section. It is compact, self-contained, interrupts the flow of the narrative about the advance of the host, is told as a flashback, contains no poetry (unlike much of the rest of the text) and adds nothing to the story of the cattle raid itself except some background on Cú Chulainn's early life."[56] But it is exactly this background that outlines the clear process of

52 Kinsella, *Tain*, 90–91.

53 Kinsella, *Tain*, 90.

54 Kohlberg, *Philosophy*, 412.

55 Kinsella, *Tain*, 92.

56 Daniel F. Melia, "Parallel Versions of 'The Boyhood Deeds of Cúchulainn,'" in *Oral Literature*, ed. Joseph J. Duggan (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 25–40, at 26.

developing moral judgment and provides meaningful context for today's readers. Reintroducing the *Táin Bó Cúailnge* and the story of Cú Chulainn to modern readers will provide a notable addition to the wide range of characters found in literature for young readers. Traditionally, anthologies of literature for young people include stories from medieval Arthurian romance and Aesop's Fables from the early modern period. Like the *Táin*, many tales have survived in parts of medieval texts based on oral traditions. King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table are classified under the genre "traditional tales" which includes fairy tales, folklore, and legends. Adding the *Táin Bó Cúailnge* to the reading list for young readers extends the historical reach beyond King Arthur and Sir Gawain, enticing them to imagine a new but still recognizable world full of wonder and surprise. Cú Chulainn, the Hound of Culann, gives modern readers just what they expect in a proper superhero adventure story—conflict, super strength, powerful mutation, and a finely tuned sense of right and wrong.

Character traits associated with moral behavior including honesty, responsibility, and respect are discussed and evaluated at length in American classrooms every day. One convenient venue for moral education is the mandatory English/Language Arts class, where middle- and high-school students are assigned novels and short stories. Classroom teachers assist students in identifying character traits and discussing how they support the behaviors of characters who have, acquire, or test those traits in the narrative. Ellen Ramp and Susan Ramp Ridout created an annotated bibliography of fifty-one children's books based on seven character traits: Honesty, Respect, Responsibility, Compassion, Self-discipline, Perseverance, and Giving.[57] These character traits were demonstrated in selected texts and were then developed into classroom activities for conveying moral lessons to young readers. Exposing young children to stories featuring protagonists grappling with moral issues begins as early as preschool with popular reading series. By the time these children are teens and young adults, they have been exposed to numerous narratives where the heroes demonstrate preferred moral behavior and the villains suffer the consequences of their poor choices.

At this point it is important to turn our attention to the influence of adults on young readers and their literature. The unique aspect of children's and young adult literature is that every adult author has experienced childhood

57 Ramp and Ridout, "Teaching Values through Children's Literature," paper presented at 1st Combined International Reading Association Regional Conference, Nashville, TN, November 1995, 14 pp., at 1–2, https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED390075 (accessed 23 October 2016).

and adolescence. Therefore, the subject matter and focus of the narratives are deliberately chosen by the adult writer to present an isolated conflict and choices made by the protagonist that highlight character traits and social values leading to a satisfactory solution. The dual intent of children's stories includes the simplicity of the tale for the child to understand and the sophistication of the adult concepts, making the author's task "something less simple." Perry Nodelman explains: "The unconscious of a text of children's literature is the adult consciousness that makes its childlikeness meaningful and comprehendible, so children's literature can be understood as simple literature that communicates by means of reference to a complex repertoire of unspoken but implied adult knowledge."[58] This duality is found in every text written for children, and the child cannot overcome this adult presence.

The intense adult control of children and young adult literature is important to understand. Children and young adults may be unaware of the mechanisms behind their favorite books, but every popular story brought to print or film has been manipulated by adults. From fairy tales to fantasy fiction, adults control the message and its delivery. This influence been described as the "Hidden Adult":

> [...] The field of children's literature—its production and consumption—is so overwhelmingly occupied by adults. In practical and economic terms, the actual audience for texts of children's literature is not children but rather the adult editors, publishers, reviewers, librarians, and parents who produce, market, distribute, recommend, select, and purchase children's books. In terms of picture books intended for younger child readers, it is often an adult who actually does the reading of the text and therefore experiences the book along with a child; and many adult teachers share the experience of texts intended for children in their classrooms.[59]

The importance of the adult roles in children's literature is often invisible but certainly pervasive. Adults are held responsible for choosing appropriate messages and messengers.

To include Cú Chulainn in the pantheon of heroes for young adult readers, the hidden adults must be convinced that his saga and role as a moral leader outweigh his sometimes extremely violent behavior. Today's adults are

58 Nodelman, *The Hidden Adult: Defining Children's Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 206.

59 Nodelman, *Hidden Adult*, 207.

extremely sensitized, on behalf of children, to the violence and brutality in children's literature, perhaps because of the real violence reported every day through all media outlets. Adults worry that children will commit acts of violence and brutality when exposed to this behavior as "entertainment." Some adults advocate editing original texts to exclude violence and include happier endings. But Tolkien, when asked about the possibility of violence in children's literature negatively influencing young readers' behavior, responded that a child is more concerned with the questions, "[…] Was he good? Was he wicked? That is, [the child] is more concerned to get the Right Side and the Wrong Side clear."[60] Tolkien indicates that children do not focus on the violent behaviors, but they are concerned with the moral conflict of the narrative and the "sides" involved in the issue. Literature, written for children or adults, explores the nature of conflict and has a long-standing tradition of including violent acts.

In 1812 the Grimm Brothers published the first volume of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (Nursery and household tales), a collection of German folktales peopled by a vast array of child protagonists who suffer hardships. In the first edition, these stories retained the vernacular of the oral tradition, complete with references to sexuality and violence, perhaps more appropriate for "workrooms or parlors"[61] than the nursery. Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm were motivated to preserve the oral tradition that they feared was disappearing with the advent of "urbanization, industrialization and rising literacy rates."[62] Although they had intended to create a scholarly collection, with each edition "more often, the Grimms made a point of adding or intensifying violent episodes."[63] Additionally, the tales began to clarify the social impact of behavior by emphasizing the reactions of everyday, "workroom" characters. "The second edition not only fills in the details on the crime and its punishment, but also puts the innkeeper's humiliation on clearer display."[64] The inclusion and acceptance of violence in many classic folktales have paved the way for modern acceptance of the violence in the *Táin.* Adding Cú Chulainn's boyhood deeds as examples of conflict and consequent decision-making enriches the reading choices of young adults.

60 J.R.R. Tolkien, *Tree and Leaf* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 38.

61 Maria Tatar, *Off with their Heads! Fairy Tales and the Culture of Childhood* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 30.

62 Maria Tatar, ed., *The Grimm Reader: The Classic Tales of the Brothers Grimm* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010), xxv.

63 Maria Tatar, *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 5.

64 Tatar, *Hard Facts*, 6.

Using Kohlberg's theory of moral development to outline the development of moral judgment, readers can follow Cú Chulainn's behavior and trace his maturing judgment from his boyhood deeds to his teenage decision to defend his country. Like many protagonists, Cú Chulainn could become a role model for young adult readers who are searching for a hero as they begin to navigate the transition to adulthood.

Increasingly, role models in literature for children and young adults find themselves far from the bucolic settings of classic coming-of-age stories like that of Dorothy in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* who wishes to leave her home on the farm and escape the rigidity of adult rules, only to discover there is "no place like home."[65] In popular contemporary young adult novels, home is a basic shelter in a postapocalyptic, often dystopian, world. Young protagonists must survive in harsh conditions with little or no protection by adults. For example, in *The Hunger Games Trilogy*, the thirteen Districts are the result of a civil war and most citizens work in poverty to support the excessive lifestyle of the corrupt society in Panem, the capitol.[66] This series was controversial because, for the first time in children's literature, violence sanctioned by society centered on children murdering other children. Indeed, "[…] the savagery we offer children today is more unforgiving than it once was […]. Instead of stories about children who will not grow up, we have stories about children who struggle to survive."[67] Katniss Everdeen boldly volunteers to fight in the *Hunger Games* as a proxy for her sister, but becomes a reluctant hero after her exposure to deadly violence. In *Divergent*, a futuristic, dystopian Chicago is divided into factions based on five virtues: "Candor (the honest), Abnegation (the selfless), Dauntless (the brave), Amity (the peaceful), and Erudite (the intelligent)," and citizens choose their faction.[68] Beatrice Prior, as a novice Dauntless, must survive physically demanding, potentially fatal tasks as part of her initiation. Compared to these contemporary heroes of a similar age, Cú Chulainn is at home in Ulster with the boy-troop and fostering adult warriors when he decides he must fight and protect them all from a formidable army. Throughout the

65 L. Frank Baum, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, illus. William Wallace Denslow (Chicago: George M. Hill, 1900).

66 Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games* (New York: Scholastic Press, 2008).

67 Maria Tatar, "No More Adventures in Wonderland," *New York Times*, 9 October 2011, Op-Ed, www.nytimes.com/2011/10/10/opinion/no-more-adventures-in-wonderland.html?_r=1#story-continues-1 (accessed 7 October 2015).

68 Veronica Roth, *Divergent*, Divergent Trilogy 1 (New York: Harper Collins, 2014). This concise explanation of the Factions can be found on Roth's website: veronicarothbooks.com/books/divergent/ (accessed 28 January 2019).

Táin Bó Cúailnge, details of Cú Chulainn's feats demonstrate his skill and determination to protect the Ulstermen from the armies of Ailill and Medb. For every day that the Ulstermen suffer from their pangs and cannot fight, he risks his life in individual hand-to-hand combat with the best warriors of the opposing armies. He decides and acts to protect the greater good of his society until the Ulstermen can protect themselves. Cú Chulainn is a prototype for the moral brave warriors found in the violent worlds of contemporary fiction for young adults.

As a teenage warrior, Cú Chulainn's personal combat with the enemy is no more violent than scenes found in the *Divergent* series or the *Legend* trilogy of contemporary young adult novels. In *Divergent*, at the age of 16, each individual must choose to join one of the five factions for life. Although children are raised by a certain faction, they can decide to join another. The main character, Beatrice Prior, has been raised in the Abnegation faction yet chooses to become a member of the Dauntless. She chooses a life of violence and begins her training to become a warrior. Her bravery is tested repeatedly by her peers and her leaders who judge new members by their deadly-force skills demonstrated during the lengthy initiation process. Daniel, of the *Legend* trilogy, is a master of guerilla warfare on the streets who finds his nemesis in June, a trained warrior from the Republic. Both young protagonists fight for survival in their society and pay the physical and emotional costs of civil war. The biological-warfare and medical experiments on poor people, carried out by the government, provide the motivation for citizens to rebel violently while protecting their families and neighbors.[69] They have intact memories of a better world and loving families, but insights into their decision-making and moral development—how they learned to discern right from wrong—are details missing from the narrative. The *Táin*, on the other hand, features a teen warrior fighting in a civil war and provides the added benefit of showing how he developed his moral judgment and skills.

An interesting similarity between Cú Chulainn and contemporary heroes is the name change after a rite of passage. Cú Chulainn receives his nickname, the Hound of Culann, once he kills Culann's guard dog and offers to provide protection. He is no longer Sétanta, a little boy who left his parental home. Cú Chulainn becomes a champion for Ulstermen. After winning the initial Hunger Game, Katniss Everdeen is nicknamed the Mockingjay, and becomes a covert symbol of individuality and freedom for people in all the Districts. She continues to participate in and lead

69 Marie Lu, *Legend*, Legend novel 1 (New York: Penguin Random House, 2011).

violent rebel attacks until the rebels succeed in freeing the poor Districts from exploitation by the wealthy Capitol. The Mockingjay is the people's champion and a proven warrior. In *The Giver*, Jonas is renamed "the Receiver of Memory" and thanked for his childhood. Because of his peculiar traits, he is chosen to succeed the aged Elder "Giver" and receive society's collective memories of violence, atrocities, and pain. When Jonas decides to leave the community, all the memories return to the citizens and they are forced to confront the price of their utopia.[70] Jonas sacrifices himself and bravely delivers freedom and humanity to his community. In the *Divergent* series, Beatrice Prior shortens her name to "Tris" echoing her given name in the Abnegation faction and creating a new persona for her chosen Dauntless faction. She announces her new name during her initiation and is accepted by the faction members. Tris fights for the survival and equal rights of all factions. The protagonist of the *Legend* novels, Daniel "Day" Altan Wing, uses his intellect and his physical skills to survive and protect his brother from biological-warfare experiments practiced on the poor by government. A dystopian, postapocalyptic North America is split into two warring countries: the police state called the Republic of America and the capitalist-based country called the Colonies. Daniel is a hero for the common man in both countries and represents the hope for a new "day" after the war is over. Protagonists' name change has become a familiar literary device for young adult readers.

Adults have the difficult tasks of choosing stories for children, teens, and young adults that encourage them to explore and question the reasons behind a moral code of conduct and help them distinguish between the "Right Side" and the "Wrong Side." Storytelling remains an appealing way to share values with children. William J. Brooke wrote: "The telling of a tale links you with everyone who has told it before. There are no new tales, only new tellers telling in their own way, and if you listen closely you can hear the voice of everyone who ever told the tale."[71] Modern additions to the canon of children's literature feature young protagonists confronting the enemy to protect the community and gain hero status. When the hidden adults manipulating literary choices for today's young adult readers search for a hero with an intact, fully developed sense of moral judgment, they need only look to the *Táin* and find Cú Chulainn.

70 Lois Lowry, *The Giver* (New York: Laurel Leaf, 2002).

71 Tatar, *Grimm Reader*, 313.

About the author

Ethel B. Bowden is the Humanities Department Chairperson at Central Maine Community College in Auburn, ME. Her passion for meaningful education has guided her interdisciplinary approach to classroom pedagogy. Combining literary analysis and developmental psychology is a particular academic interest. She graduated from Colby College in Waterville, ME, and earned her MSEd from the University of Southern Maine.

9. Language Death and Language Revival

Contrasting Manx and Texas German

Marc Pierce

Abstract
In the concluding contribution to this collection, Marc Pierce, a specialist in historical Germanic linguistics, presents an insightful juxtaposition of the modern histories of Manx and "Texas German." He focuses his analysis on the question, why and how has Manx been revived in modern times to at least a limited extent, while the German once spoken extensively in Texas has fared far less well.

Keywords: Manx, Texas German, language shift, language death, language change, language revival

It has generally been reported that the Manx language died on 27 December 1974, with the death of Ned Maddrell, the last native speaker of the language.[1] This view, however, overstates the case somewhat, for two different reasons. First, although Maddrell was the last native speaker of the language, he was not the last speaker, as the "semi-speaker" Ewan Christian lived until January 1985.[2] Second, since Maddrell's death, Manx has been revived to a considerable extent, thanks largely to groups like the Manx

1 It should be noted at the outset that I have relied heavily on George Broderick, *Language Death in the Isle of Man* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1999), in the preparation of this chapter. Although some of Broderick's claims and ideas are controversial, it is the fullest treatment of many of the issues discussed here that I am aware of, which in my view outweighs the issues some scholars have had with his work.

2 Broderick, *Language Death*, 76. The term "semi-speaker" goes back to Nancy Dorian, "Grammatical Change in a Dying Dialect," *Language* 49 (1973), 413–38. In later work—"The Fate of Morphological Complexity in Scottish Gaelic Language Death: Evidence from East Sutherland Gaelic," *Language* 54 (1978), 590–609, at 592—Dorian defines it as "speakers who can make themselves understood" in a language, but whose speech, "in terms of the norms of the older

MacQuarrie, Charles W. and Joseph Falaky Nagy (eds), *The Medieval Cultures of the Irish Sea and the North Sea. Manannán and His Neighbors*. Taylor & Francis Group, 2019
DOI: 10.5117/9789462989399/CH09

Language Society and government support (there are now Manx-language schools and a Manx Language Development Officer, for instance). Thus, Manx can be viewed as one of the few successful examples of language revival in Europe. In this regard, Manx can be profitably contrasted with Texas German,[3] a New World German dialect which is well on its way to extinction with no hope for revival in sight.[4] This chapter therefore attempts to answer the following question: why has Manx been successfully revived to a considerable extent, when Texas German has not been? I first briefly sketch the histories of Manx and Texas German, and review similarities and differences (both linguistic and extralinguistic) in their declines. The conclusion returns to the question just posed, about the success of revival efforts aimed at Manx, as opposed to the failure (or absence of) any real efforts at reviving Texas German.[5]

The History of Manx: A Brief Overview

Manx (sometimes referred to as Manx Gaelic) belongs to the Goidelic branch of the Celtic family of Indo-European languages (along with Irish and Scottish Gaelic). It developed out of the Old Irish spoken by early settlers of and visitors to Manx, e.g. Irish missionaries during the fourth and fifth centuries CE.[6] Relatively little is known about the early history of the language, and various visitors left linguistic traces, e.g. there are a number of

group, is imperfect in many ways." That is, Christian could speak Manx to some extent, but his Manx was different from earlier forms of the language.

3 The term "Texas German" can be difficult to define precisely. Here it is used to refer to a set of standard-near varieties of German currently or formerly spoken in Texas, descended from the varieties of German brought to Texas by German-speaking settlers in the nineteenth century. See Hans C. Boas, *The Life and Death of Texas German* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), for further discussion.

4 Boas, *Life and Death*.

5 As the focus of this chapter is largely comparative, a number of issues that are relevant for a comprehensive study of either the Texas German or Manx situations are left aside here, including the quality of the data sources available for Manx, a contextualization of Manx revival efforts with the revival efforts for other Celtic languages like Welsh and Irish, and a discussion of Fishman's framework of "reversing language shift" as it applies to Texas German and Manx; Joshua Fishman, *Reversing Language Shift* (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 1991). See Brian Stowell, "The Case of Manx Gaelic/Yn Ghailckagh," in *Rebuilding the Celtic Languages: Reversing Language Shift in the Celtic Countries*, ed. D. Ó Néill (Talybont, Ceredigion: Y Lolfa, 2005), 383–416, for discussion.

6 Simon Ager, "A Study of Language Death and Revival with a Particular Focus on Manx Gaelic," MA diss., University of Bangor, Wales, 2009, 15.

Norse place-names and some Manx nautical terminology is borrowed from Scandinavian,[7] but it is clear that Manx must have enjoyed a relatively strong position for several centuries. Broderick notes that Manx was secure enough to have "survived four centuries of Scandinavian presence,"[8] while Ó Cuív suggests that there was a Manx bardic tradition and a Manx-speaking elite on the island until the late thirteenth century.[9] But by 1400 English had become the administrative language of the island, and the shift from Manx to English was beginning.

Over the next few centuries, the shift accelerated due to various political, social, and economic causes (as discussed in more detail below). By the nineteenth century, Manx was definitely on the wane, with Reverend William Gill writing in 1859 that Manx "is now rarely heard in conversation, except among the peasantry. It is a doomed language,—an iceberg floating into southern latitudes";[10] and J.G. Cumming reporting that "[t]he decline of the spoken Manx, within the memory of the present generation, has been marked. The language is no longer heard in our courts of law, either from the bench or the bar; and seldom from the witness-box."[11] In a diary of his visits to Man in 1929, 1930, and 1933,[12] Carl J.S. Marstrander describes his problems with finding Manx informants: there were not many speakers available; almost all of the speakers were out of practice speaking Manx; and were moreover English-dominant, meaning that their English often interfered with their Manx.[13]

Beyond this anecdotal evidence, consider the census figures noted by Broderick.[14] In 1871, the first time when the census reported linguistic data, the population of the island was approximately 54,000, with 13,530 (approx. 25 percent) reporting that they were Manx speakers, with 190 of these

7 See Ager, "Study of Language Death," and Dirk Steinforth, *Die skandinavische Besiedlung auf der Isle of Man* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015).

8 *Language Death*, 13. See also Broderick, *Language Death*, 13–14, on this point.

9 Brian Ó Cuív, "A Poem in Praise of Raghnall, King of Man," *Éigse* 8 (1957), 283–301.

10 Quoted in Stephen Miller, "'Here the Manx Language Lingers, and May Linger Some Time Longer': Manx and English in Cregneash in 1901," *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 55 (2007), 108–21, at 108.

11 *A Guide to the Isle of Man* (London: Edward Stanford, 1861), 90.

12 The Norwegian original of the diary is preserved in the Manx Museum Archive; a transcription of the diary and an English translation were published as an appendix to Broderick, *Language Death*.

13 In contrast to Texas German (on which see below), there seems to have been relatively little written in Manx; the language of the newspapers on the island, for instance, was mainly English (although some Manx was included in things like letters to the editors, etc.). See e.g. Broderick, *Language Death*, 27–30, on this issue.

14 Broderick, *Language Death*, 41–44.

being monolingual Manx speakers. In 1901, a total 4,657 speakers of Manx (about 8.5 percent of the population) were reported, with 59 of them being monolingual; in 1911 those numbers had declined to 2,382 (about 4.6 percent of the population), with 31 monolinguals; and in 1921 to 915 total speakers (about 1.5 percent of the population), with 19 monolinguals. No monolingual speakers of Manx are reported in the censuses taken after 1921, and the numbers continue to decline. The 1971 census reported only 284 speakers of Manx (about 0.5 percent of the population), and the 1981 census did not ask about knowledge of Manx, since by then no native speakers remained alive.[15] Post-1991 censuses, however, have asked respondents about their knowledge of Manx (see below.) No monolingual speakers of Manx are reported in the censuses taken after 1921.

Broderick points out that some of these numbers need to be taken with a grain of salt, for various reasons (e.g. the 1921 census was conducted in June, meaning that the numbers also include visitors to the island, so the total population numbers are higher than they should be, and the percentage of Manx speakers correspondingly slightly lower), but taken as a whole they are instructive.[16] They show that by the turn of the twentieth century Manx was no longer a community language, meaning that it was also not being learned by children, which further accelerated its decline.[17] It did survive in some areas for longer than others,[18] and some remained interested in the language,[19] but it was no longer a viable language, and it therefore continued to decline until its eventual death in 1974.

The History of Texas German: A Brief Overview

Large-scale German immigration[20] to Texas began in the mid-nineteenth century, and the first seventy-five years or so of the history of Texas German

15 Broderick, *Language Death*, 41.

16 Broderick, *Language Death*, 43–44.

17 See Broderick, *Language Death*, and Ager, "Study of Language Death."

18 See Miller, "Here the Manx Language Lingers," on the use of Manx in Cregneash around the turn of the twentieth century, for instance.

19 See Miller, "'Unable to Express Himself in English': The Rev. E.B. Savage and his Search for the Last Monoglots of Manx (1884)," *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 62 (2015), 183–98, on one minister's search for Manx monolinguals.

20 My use of the term "German" here follows that of Boas (*Life and Death*, 298, n. 1), who notes that the term refers "not only to people coming from Germany proper (i.e. its many individual states before 1871) [...]. [but also] to people coming from other German-speaking areas such as Switzerland, Austria, Alsace, and Luxembourg."

are in fact a success story, as the language and the community grew swiftly. There were numerous German-language schools, churches, newspapers, and social organizations (ranging from shooting clubs to choirs), all of which supported both the language and the community. It has been estimated that by 1907 there were approximately 75,000-100,000 Texas Germans.[21] Around this time, however, the situation changed and Texas German began to decline. It remained in a state of language maintenance for a considerable length of time—the number of Texas Germans peaked at around 159,000 in 1940[22]—but the handwriting was on the wall. As the twentieth century progressed, many of the originally Texas German-speaking social organizations folded or abandoned (or at least drastically reduced) their use of German, German-language church services were generally given up in favor of English-language services, and German-language newspapers either switched to publishing in English or stopped publishing altogether.[23] Despite these developments, there were still approximately 70,000 speakers of Texas German in the 1960s,[24] but by 1970 at the very latest Texas German had transitioned from being in a state of language maintenance to being in a state of language shift.

Today these challenges have overwhelmed Texas German. Only about 6,000 speakers of Texas German remain, almost exclusively above the age of 60, and English is their primary language, in all domains, both private and public.[25] Given the advanced age of nearly all speakers of Texas German, as well as the absence of any sign that the ongoing shift to English will be—or can be—stopped, let alone reversed, Texas German is expected to die out within the next two to three decades.[26] In response to this, in 2001 Hans C. Boas founded the Texas German Dialect Project (TGDP; www.tgdp.org).

21 Jürgen Eichhoff, "Die deutsche Sprache in Amerika," in *Amerika und die Deutschen*, ed. Frank Trommler (Opdalen: Westdeutscher, 1986), 235–52.

22 Heinz Kloss, *The American Bilingual Tradition*, with a new introduction by Reynaldo F. Macias and Terrence G. Wiley (Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1998).

23 The *Neu-Braunfelser Zeitung* (*New Braunfels Newspaper*) was the last to switch to English, in 1957, after a number of years of publishing in both English and German. See also Joseph C. Salmons and Felecia Lucht, "Standard German in Texas," in *Studies in Contact Linguistics: Essays in Honor of Glenn G. Gilbert*, ed. Linda L. Thornburg and Janet M. Fuller (New York: Peter Lang, 2006), 167–88, for an overview of the German-language press in Texas.

24 Boas, *Life and Death*.

25 Hans C. Boas, "Texas," in *Handbuch der deutschen Sprachminderheiten in Übersee*, ed. Albrecht Plewnia and Claudia Maria Riehl (Tübingen: Narr, 2018), 171–92.

26 Boas, *Life and Death*. Marcus Nicolini argues that "Interviews mit alten Texanern lassen den Schluss zu, daß die deutsche Sprache am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts lebendiger ist, als es in der germanistischen Forschung gemeinhin gesehen wird" ("Interviews with elderly Texans lead to the conclusion that the German language is much more alive at the end of the twentieth century

The TGDP is not designed as an attempt at reviving Texas German, but is instead aimed at documenting the last remnants of Texas German. In other words, the TGDP is largely a recovery mission, not a rescue mission.

Linguistic Similarities in the Declines of Manx and Texas German

The linguistic literature on language death shows that as languages die, they tend to "melt down" to a considerable extent.[27] In the course of gradual language death, which is the type of language death Manx underwent and Texas German is currently undergoing, speakers gradually abandon one language in favor of another. As a language is used increasingly rarely and in increasingly fewer contexts, speakers' fluency in the language declines, which exacerbates the shift (after all, if speakers feel less confident speaking a language, they are apt to use it less and less). The result is straightforward: "When a dying language declines gradually over a period of generations, it [...] is not used for all the functions and purposes it was previously. Like a limb not used, it atrophies."[28] This atrophy is often reflected in increased variation in all areas of the grammar and lexicon, along with increased interference from surrounding languages, both of which are well attested in the history of both Manx and Texas German.[29] In what follows, I briefly sketch some linguistic aspects of the death of Manx and the impending death of Texas German, relying on Broderick and Ager for Manx[30] and various recent studies for Texas German. I describe one development from each of the linguistic areas of phonology, morphosyntax, and semantics, beginning with phonology.

In Late Manx, Broderick notes a widespread "destabilization of the vowel phonemes," leading to "wild allophonic variation." The phoneme /i/, for instance, has the allophones [i] and [ɪ], "varying freely with /i:/, /e(:)/,

than research on Germanic linguistics generally sees it"); *Deutsch in Texas* (Münster: LIT, 2004), 165. Every indication contradicts this view and I therefore reject his assessment of the situation.

27 Daniel Nettle and Suzanne Romaine, *Vanishing Voices: The Extinction of the World's Languages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Peter Trudgill, *Sociolinguistic Typology: Social Determinants of Linguistic Complexity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

28 Nettle and Romaine, *Vanishing Voices*, 53.

29 Speakers are also often aware of this: Ned Maddrell remarked on his declining fluency in Manx (Broderick, *Language Death*, 6), while some Texas Germans refer to themselves as "Deutschverderber" ("corrupters of German"), as Boas, *Life and Death*, notes.

30 Broderick, *Language Death*, and Ager, "Study of Language Death."

/a/, particularly in stressed monosyllables or initially stressed syllables of polysyllables," which can be seen in words like *greimey* 'gripping,' where the initial vowel can be realized as [ɪ], [iː], or [a]. Broderick concedes that some of this allophony might be illusory, because different sources use different transcription systems, and his efforts at normalization might not have succeeded completely, but it is very unlikely that all of it is illusory. Moreover, as Broderick also indicates, this increased allophony in Late Manx fits well with what commonly occurs during language death.[31]

Similar developments can be found in Texas German. Boas notes, for instance, that front rounded vowels have been largely eliminated in New Braunfels German.[32] During a word-list task, forty-nine of his fifty-two New Braunfels-area informants produced *Tür* 'door' with a front unrounded vowel [i], while only one of these informants produced a front rounded vowel in this word (two of his informants did not provide any answers).[33] However, a number of front rounded vowels can be found in the more open-ended interviews conducted with these informants, e.g. there are nine instances of *Gemüse* 'vegetable' in this data, four of which contain a front rounded vowel (four of the others contain a front unrounded vowel, while the last contains a back rounded vowel). This is unexpected, as informants normally produce more marked linguistic structures in word-list tasks than in open-ended interviews, meaning that Boas' New Braunfels German results are exactly the opposite of what is expected. More recently, Pierce, Boas, and Roesch contend that waning fluency in Texas German has led many speakers "to abandon marked linguistic structures like front rounded vowels in favor of less marked [...] structures," in other words that gradual language death is one of the factors driving this phonological change.[34]

31 Broderick, *Language Death*, 81. By "increased allophony" here I mean that Late Manx exhibits more allophony than earlier stages of the language. It is not an absolute term. See also Lyle Campbell and Martha C. Muntzel, "The Structural Consequences of Language Death," in *Investigating Obsolescence: Studies in Language Death*, ed. Nancy Dorian (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 181–96, for some discussion of the phonological aspects of language death (e.g. in American Finnish, Ocuilteco, and Cuisnahuat Pipil).

32 Boas, *Life and Death*.

33 There is a considerable amount of dialect variation in German regarding these vowels, but they are found in Standard German and are also attested in greater numbers in earlier studies of New Braunfels German, e.g. Fred Eikel Jr., "The New Braunfels German Dialect," PhD diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1954. See Werner König, *DTV-Atlas deutsche Sprache*, 18th ed. (München: DTV, 2015), for a map depicting the presence of these vowels in German dialects.

34 Marc Pierce, Hans C. Boas, and Karen A. Roesch, "The History of Front Rounded Vowels in New Braunfels German," in *Germanic Heritage Languages in North America*, ed. J.B. Johannessen and J.C. Salmons (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2015), 117–31, at 128–29. The ongoing death of Texas German is not the sole cause of this sound change; the authors of the article cited in this

In terms of morphosyntax, both Manx and Texas German have simplified their case systems.[35] Broderick notes that the case system of Classical Manx was simpler than its ancestor language, with the old nominative, accusative, and dative cases merging in the singular, e.g. *carrey* 'friend,' which is an old nominative, or *thie* 'house,' which is an old dative, and the presence of "only one common case in the plural."[36] A few traces of the older system did survive, e.g. there are some feminine genitive singulars, e.g. *muck* 'pig,' *ny muickey* 'pig' (gen. sg.), a few masculine genitive singulars (mostly in fixed phrases), a few surviving datives (both singular and plural), and the vocative appears to have retained its old marking.[37] These traces aside, the bottom line remains: Manx's case system was greatly simplified.

The case system of Texas German has likewise been simplified. Boas compares TGDP data collected between 2001 and 2006 with data from Gilbert's *Linguistic Atlas of Texas German* and shows that dative case marking has declined dramatically in Texas German in the four decades separating his data from Gilbert's.[38] In contexts where the preposition *auf* 'on' (for horizontal flat surfaces) would require the dative case in Standard German, 80 percent of Gilbert's informants used the dative, as compared to only 5 percent of the TGDP informants. Similar, although not quite as dramatic, results were obtained for the pronoun system: between 27 and 79 percent of Gilbert's informants used the dative case in pronouns, while only between 12 and 52 percent of the TGDP informants did so.[39] There are some additional wrinkles to consider, e.g. dative marking has been retained to a greater extent following the preposition *mit* 'with,' and some of these instances of case loss may be illusory, as the Texas German case system was probably always at least slightly different from that of Standard German, but the generalization that the Texas German case system has simplified dramatically over the past fifty years or so stands.

note also link it to markedness, influence from English, and the original donor dialects of Texas German. Language death does, however, play a major role in the change.

35 As Jennifer Kewley Draskau (pers. commun.) reminds me, this is a very common development in cases of language attrition, and it is therefore not in any way surprising that both Manx and Texas German are undergoing it.

36 Broderick, *Language Death*, 107–8.

37 Broderick, *Language Death*, 107–8.

38 Hans C. Boas, "Case Loss in Texas German: The Influence of Semantic and Pragmatic Factors," in *The Role of Semantics and Pragmatics in the Development of Case*, ed. Johanna Barðdal and Shobhana Chelliah (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2009), 347–73; Glenn Gilbert, *The Linguistic Atlas of Texas German* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972).

39 The range is so broad because case loss in Texas German appears to be proceeding on an item-by-item basis (Boas, *Life and Death*).

Finally, in terms of semantics, Broderick notes a number of English loan words in later Manx, e.g. *fihn* 'fine,' replacing the original Manx word *aalin*.[40] Similar developments can be found in Texas German. There are more English loan words in the TGDP data than there are in the Gilbert data, and more English loan words in Gilbert's data than in the data discussed in Eikel.[41] Semantic transfers are also found in Texas German, e.g. *Grad*, which means 'degree' in Standard German, can be used to mean 'grade (in school)' in present-day Texas German, and *Hochschule*, which refers to higher education in Standard German, can be used to mean 'high school' in Texas German.[42]

Extralinguistic Factors in the Declines of Manx and Texas German

A number of factors can drive language death. Campbell, for instance, gives the following (nonexhaustive) list:

> Discrimination, repression, rapid population collapse, lack of economic opportunities, on-going industrialization, rapid economic transformation, work patterns, migrant labor, communication with outside regions, resettlement, dispersion, migration, literacy, compulsory education, official language policies, military service, marriage patterns, acculturation, cultural destruction, war, slavery, famine, epidemics, religious proselytizing, resource depletion and forced changes in subsistence patterns, lack of social cohesion, lack of physical proximity among speakers, symbolism of the dominant language [...], stigmatization, low prestige of the dying variety, absence of institutions that establish norms (schools, academics, texts), particular historical events, etc.[43]

40 Broderick, *Language Death*.

41 Gilbert, *Linguistic Atlas of Texas German*; Eikel, "New Braunfels German Dialect." See Hans C. Boas and Marc Pierce, "Lexical Developments in Texas German," in *Studies on German Language Islands*, ed. Michael Putnam (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2011), 129–50, for a more recent treatment of this topic.

42 Matthias Fingerhuth, "Semantic Transfer in New Braunfels German" (unpublished manuscript, University of Texas at Austin, 2016).

43 Lyle Campbell, "Language Death," in *The Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics*, ed. R.E. Asher and J.M.Y. Simpson, 10 vols. (London: Pergamon Press, 1994), 4: 1963.

While some of these factors were not relevant to the particular cases considered here (e.g. "slavery"), a number of them were, and the extralinguistic similarities in the declines of Manx and Texas German are therefore numerous. It should also be noted at the outset of this section, however, that the sociopolitical and historical contexts for Manx and Texas German differ sharply. Manx is a minority language that was in place for well over a millennium, surviving extensive contact with groups like the Vikings and the English. Texas German, on the other hand, was brought to Texas through massive immigration less than 200 years ago, and formed through the process of New World dialect development.[44] Texas German also enjoyed a high amount of prestige for a number of decades, before collapsing under various sociopolitical and historical developments.

On the death of Manx, O'Rahilly states flatly that:

> From the beginning of its career as a written language English influence played havoc with its syntax, and it could be said without much exaggeration that some of the Manx that has been printed is merely English disguised in a Manx vocabulary. Manx hardly deserved to live. When a language surrenders itself to foreign idiom, and when all its speakers become bilingual, the penalty is death.[45]

This blunt statement oversimplifies the situation considerably, as argued below.

Ager[46] and Broderick[47] cite a number of factors that helped drive Manx to extinction, including the following: 1) systematic efforts to replace Manx with English within the Anglican Church; 2) governmental language policies; 3) increased mobility, manifested in various ways, e.g. increased trade, increased migration of nonspeakers of Manx to the Isle of Man, and tourism; and 4) negative attitudes towards Manx, complemented by positive attitudes towards English. Boas notes a number of similar factors in the decline of Texas German, although the details differ.[48] As these factors seem to have been the most important in the decline of Manx, and among the most important in the decline of Texas German, I limit the following discussion to them and now comment on each of these four factors in turn.

44 Boas, *Life and Death*.
45 Thomas F. O'Rahilly, *Irish Dialects Past and Present* (Dublin: Browne & Nolan, 1932), 121.
46 Ager, "Study of Language Death."
47 Broderick, *Language Death*.
48 Boas, *Life and Death*.

The first systematic effort to replace Manx with English in the Anglican Church began in the late seventeenth century, under Bishop Isaac Barrow, who was Bishop and Governor of the Isle from 1663 to 1671.[49] Although Barrow's goal was the replacement of Manx by English in the church, his motivation was praiseworthy: he apparently "considered that a lack of knowledge of English among the Manx populace was preventing an adequate understanding and appreciation of the scriptures."[50] He therefore took two main steps towards his goal, establishing numerous English-language schools (and requiring clergymen to teach in them) and attempting to establish English as the language of church services. Barrow's plans were ambitious, but the results were apparently not nearly what he had hoped, as Manx continued to be employed in church. This does not seem to have been the result of any lack of trying on his part, but instead of a dearth of English-speaking clergy.[51]

Barrow's successors took varying stances on the use of Manx in the Anglican Church. In some instances, there was a conflict between the idealist stance, i.e. that only English should be used in the Anglican Church, and the realist stance, i.e. that using Manx in the Church would enhance members' understanding of their religion.[52] Thomas Wilson, who became Bishop in 1698, for instance, was pro-English (and was in fact empowered to fine parents who did not send their children to English-language schools),[53] but had some religious texts translated into Manx and initiated the process of translating the Bible into Manx. Mark Hildesley, who succeeded Wilson, continued the work of his predecessor and encouraged the clergy to use Manx whenever possible.[54] But Hildesley's successors largely undid his efforts: in 1757 only three parishes on the island taught children religion in Manx, by 1766 every parish on the island (with one exception) did so, but by 1782 there were only five Manx-language schools on the island.[55] Manx was reintroduced into Sunday Schools during the 1820s, and Manx-language tracts were published until about 1872,[56] but by the 1820s Manx was definitely on shaky ground in the Anglican Church, to the extent that

49 Broderick, *Language Death*, 14; Ager, "Study of Language Death," 15.

50 Broderick, *Language Death*, 15.

51 Ager, "Study of Language Death," 16.

52 Broderick notes "the absurdity of children being taught in a language most of them did not understand" (*Language Death*, 17).

53 Broderick, *Language Death*, 16.

54 Broderick *Language Death*; Stowell, "Case of Manx Gaelic"; Ager, "Study of Language Death."

55 Broderick, *Language Death*, 17.

56 Broderick, *Language Death*, 21.

the then Bishop George Murray could write that "there is no longer any necessity for impressions of the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer in the Manks [*sic*] Tongue."[57]

In contrast to the Manx situation, religion was one of the factors that aided the maintenance of Texas German for many years. Numerous German-language churches were established in Texas in the nineteenth and early twentieth century: by 1909 there were 113 Missouri Synod Lutheran churches in Texas, and German was the sole or main language used in 97 of them.[58] As late as 1960, Joseph Wilson reported that "ministers preach in S[tandard]G[erman] with a very good pronunciation,"[59] and this exposure to Standard German aided the retention of Texas German. Since then, German-language church services have generally been abandoned in favor of English-language services, although some churches continued (and continue) to hold German-language services on special occasions, most commonly Easter and Christmas, and as recently as 2010 at least one church held German-language services on "fifth Sundays."[60]

Governmental language policies also contributed to the downfall of both Manx and Texas German. In the case of Manx, there seems to have been only one such policy, which was linked to education. Specifically, in 1858, the island "came fully within the English education ambit,"[61] and in 1872 the "English Elementary Education Act," originally enacted in 1870 and requiring children between the ages of five and thirteen to attend school, was put into effect on the Isle of Man. This act did not, however, stipulate that English was to be the language of the schools (although some children were apparently punished for speaking Manx in school).[62] The Act is therefore, following Broderick, best interpreted as a relatively minor factor in the downfall of Manx.

As for Texas German, consider the case of New Braunfels: in 1900, a full 100 percent of the 360 students in New Braunfels schools had German

57 Quoted in Broderick, *Language Death*, 18.

58 Salmons and Lucht, "Standard German," 169; see Hans C. Boas, "Linguistic Splits along Religious Lines: The Role of Language Maintenance among Catholics and Lutherans in Texas," in *Linguistic Construction of Ethnic Borders*, ed. Peter Rosenberg, Konstanze Jungbluth, and Dagna Zinkhahn Rhobodes (Frankfurt/New York: Peter Lang, 2015), 167–81, for more extensive discussion of the role of religion in Texas German language maintenance and shift.

59 Joseph B. Wilson, "The Texas German of Lee and Fayette Counties," *Rice University Studies* 47 (1960), 83–98, at 86.

60 Nicolini, *Deutsch in Texas*; Karen A. Roesch, *Language Maintenance and Language Death: The Decline of Texas Alsatian* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2012).

61 Broderick, *Language Death*, 22.

62 Broderick, *Language Death*, 22, n. 16.

instruction.[63] But in 1904 a new school law was enacted, which stated that "nothing in this act shall be so construed as to prevent the teaching of German, Bohemian, Spanish, French, Latin or Greek in any of the public schools as a branch of study, but the teaching of one or more of these languages shall not interfere with the use of the textbooks herein prescribed." A year later, another school law mandated that "all instructions in public schools had to be given in English."[64] Another law, this one enacted in April 1918, approximately a year after the USA had entered World War I, required that "all teachers in public free schools should teach in English only and should use only English textbooks."[65] According to Boas, the 1918 law "effectively ended German instruction in the schools."[66]

The result was "a domino effect": ending German instruction in schools meant that children had considerably less access to Standard German. Since Standard German was the language of reading and writing for Texas Germans at this time, this reduced access to the standard language prevented Texas German children from "achiev[ing] the degree of literacy and oral proficiency in German that they had in English."[67] As such, they were unable to utilize fully the other opportunities they had to use the standard language, e.g. reading and church, meaning that they were even less capable of using German in these contexts, meaning that German therefore had to be abandoned in these contexts in favor of English, which only reinforced the problem and therefore further contributed to language shift from German to English. This all indicates that unlike Manx, Texas German was devastated by these governmental educational policies.

Increased mobility is another commonality between the Manx and Texas German situations. The Isle of Man was largely isolated from the outside world until the mid-eighteenth century, but has become increasingly less isolated ever since. Trade between Man and various English-speaking areas increased considerably; Broderick notes that lower governmental duties on the Isle of Man encouraged smuggling between the island and

63 Kloss, *American Bilingual Tradition*, 228.

64 Kloss, *American Bilingual Tradition*, 227. Boas (*Life and Death*, 55) notes that it is impossible to assess the immediate impact of these two laws on Texas German accurately—after all, many local authorities were Texas Germans, and it is easy to imagine that they were not quick to enforce such laws. Carlos K. Blanton, *The Strange Career of Bilingual Education in Texas, 1836–1981* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), 76, makes a similar point.

65 Kloss, *American Bilingual Tradition*, 228.

66 *Life and Death*, 56. In addition, a statewide English-only law for public schools was passed in 1909: Joseph C. Salmons, "Issues in Texas German Language Maintenance and Shift," *Monatshefte* 75 (1983), 187–96.

67 Boas, *Life and Death*, 75.

various other parts of the United Kingdom, that English was generally the language of smuggling, that smuggling brought additional English speakers to the island, that smuggling often led Manx people to emigrate, and that a British crackdown on smuggling starting in 1765 reinforced the tendency towards emigration.[68] Other mobility-related developments include increased emigration, motivated by factors like a downturn in fishing in the 1830s, a potato famine in the 1840s, and various economic depressions,[69] coupled with increased immigration of English speakers starting in the late eighteenth century, and increased tourism starting in the early to mid-nineteenth century.[70] The tourism case is particularly instructive: Broderick notes that by the 1890s, over 250,000 tourists came annually to the island, which meant both that more English speakers were on the island during an extended period of the year and that more Manx had to learn English to be able to interact with the tourists.[71] All of these factors led to the spread of English at the expense of Manx.

Texas Germans were similarly isolated until about the mid-1950s. In the early days of German emigration to Texas, various social and political factors kept the Texas Germans isolated.[72] Most Texas Germans were abolitionists, for instance, which would certainly have isolated them socially in a slave state like Texas until the end of the Civil War,[73] and Texas Germans also took steps towards self-sufficiency, having their own flour mills, among other things. In addition, the rural nature of most Texas German settlements reinforced this isolation, at least until improvements in transportation made them less rural. It has been contended that the impact of transportation developments on Texas German can be seen as early as 1908, with the development of the Model T Ford. Hawgood, for instance, writes that "a large Mexican inroad has transformed New Braunfels, and the automobile has taken from Fredericksburg the greatest safeguard of its Deutschtum—its

68 Broderick, *Language Death*, 23–24.

69 Broderick, *Language Death*, 24.

70 Jennifer Kewley Draskau (pers. commun.) notes that this development was not the type of "population collapse" mentioned in Campbell, "Language Death," but was certainly a change in the linguistic demographics of the island.

71 Broderick, *Language Death*, 25. The Isle of Man remains a popular tourist destination: Broderick (25,n. 20) observes that approximately 120,000 visitors come to the island each summer, drawn by events like the Manx motorcycle races.

72 Salmons, "Issues"; Boas, *Life and Death*.

73 Some Texas Germans did own slaves. For details, see James C. Kearney, *Nassau Plantation: The Evolution of a Texas German Slave Plantation* (Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 2011).

relative isolation from the world."[74] The biggest impact of transportation on the Texas German communities, however, came with the building of the US interstate highway system in the 1950s. New Braunfels, one of the two most important Texas German communities (the other being Fredericksburg, located about eighty miles west of Austin in the Hill Country), went from being a relatively isolated community to being a suburb of San Antonio, because people could now commute easily between New Braunfels and San Antonio for work or education. This led both to Texas Germans moving out of the traditional German-speaking enclaves and to non-Texas Germans moving into them. Both of these situations generally led to the abandonment of Texas German: Texas Germans who left their traditional enclaves normally stopped speaking Texas German, a tendency reinforced by the growing number of Texas Germans who married non-German-speaking partners (children of such marriages tended to have a very limited command of Texas German at best, as noted by Nicolini[75] and Boas,[76] among others), while non-Texas Germans who moved into the traditional enclaves normally refused to learn German. The result, then, was largely the same as on the Isle of Man, namely the abandonment of the traditional community language in favor of English.

Language attitudes, prestige, and stigmatization also played a major role in the decline of Manx and Texas German, albeit in different ways. In the Manx case, the Manx Folk-Life Survey conducted by the Manx Museum from the 1940s to the 1970s collected a number of comments on the status of Manx, some of which were conveniently assembled by Broderick.[77] Consider the following comments on the lower prestige of Manx:

> "In my young days girls were only scoffing at Manx" (Mrs. Annie Kneale, MFLSA/E, 1949).[78]

> "Among younger people of my own generation, if the old folk would say anything in Manx there would be a lot of giggling and laughing. That

74 John Hawgood, *The Tragedy of German-America: The Germans in the United States of America during the Nineteenth Century—and After* (New York: Putnam, 1940), 199. I thank William Keel (pers. commun.) for reminding me of this at the 2016 Annual Symposium of the Society for German-American Studies.

75 Nicolini, *Deutsch in Texas*.

76 Boas, *Life and Death*.

77 Broderick, *Language Death*, 33–37.

78 "MFLSA" refers to the Manx Folk-Life Survey Archive, an extensive collection of recordings on various aspects of traditional Manx life.

> was the attitude of young people in my experience—they thought it was something to laugh at—a funny sound" (Edward Christian, MFLSA/C/27E, 1962).
>
> "When I was a boy I could speak Manx better than I could English, and I was the only child there [Dalby school] who could. I was hearing a lot of it at home. The other children got interested and used to come to me and ask about Manx, and the master didn't like it. He said I had to stop talking Manx and spoke to my mother about it too" (Henry Clague, MFLSA/C/88, 1965).

Similar comments are also attested for Texas German. One of Boas' New Braunfels-area informants made the following observation about children who were caught speaking languages other than English in school (normally German or Spanish): "Then we had to learn English. And then we were not allowed to speak German—or Spanish—at school. And when the teacher caught us speaking German we had to write 'I must not speak German in school. […] I must not speak Spanish in school. […] I must speak English in school'" (1-27-1-4-a).[79]

While both Manx and Texas German were stigmatized, there were different reasons for this. Texas German was profoundly affected by political developments and the anti-German sentiment, beginning during World War I (especially following American entry into the war in 1917). Some of its manifestations seem ludicrous in hindsight, e.g. the renaming of *sauerkraut* as *Liberty cabbage* (shades of the renaming of *French fries* as *freedom fries* during the Iraq War in 2003). The results of this anti-German sentiment were devastating for German in Texas.[80] The impact on German in the New Braunfels schools has already been noted. In addition, at the University of

79 The combination of numbers following each example is a unique file identification number that allows users of the Texas German Dialect Archive to find the examples in the transcripts, thereby allowing for access to the relevant contexts in which the examples occur—see Hans C. Boas, Marc Pierce, Karen Roesch, Guido Halder, and Hunter Weilbacher, "The Texas German Dialect Archive: A Multimedia Resource for Research, Teaching, and Outreach," *Journal of Germanic Linguistics* 22, no. 3 (2010), 277–96, for details. For space reasons, I have only provided the English translations here; the file identification number will enable readers to find the Texas German originals easily.

80 Here I follow the viewpoint defended by Boas in *Life and Death*. Other scholars, e.g. Joseph P. Salmons and Felecia Lucht ("Standard German") and most recently Salmons ("Verticalization and the Shift from German to English in Texas," paper presented at the Twenty-Third International Conference on Historical Linguistics, 31 July–4 August 2017, San Antonio, Texas) consider some of these factors less important, but I find Boas' interpretation of the situation more plausible.

Texas at Austin, the great Germanic linguist Eduard Prokosch, who had taught there since 1913, was fired in 1919 for his alleged disloyalty to the United States.[81] Later that summer, Governor William Hobby (1917–21) vetoed the state appropriation for UT's German department, essentially firing the entire department (although the legislature overruled his veto). Moreover, a number of Texas Germans report in interviews with the TGDP on negative experiences and the stigmas that they felt as "Germans" during this time period. One of Boas' informants stated, for instance, that "[w]hen I was in school, Germany was America's enemy. People were prejudiced against the Germans. I was careful not to speak German in school."[82]

On the other hand, political factors played at best a very minor role in the stigmatization of Manx. Broderick argues that Oliver Cromwell's supporters on Man were generally Manx speakers, meaning that the "language seems to have been looked upon by [the Earl of] Derby and his supporters as identifiable with 'rebellion' and its speakers viewed with suspicion."[83] This statement must be treated cautiously, however, as Cromwell only ruled for eleven years, meaning that this "suspicion" could not have lasted all that long, and it is also unclear just how many supporters Cromwell had on the island. More recently, during the Third Reich the National Socialists encouraged the study of Celtic languages and linguistics, which was at least partially intended "to fragment English control through support for political and cultural movements in the Celtic countries."[84] However, the impact of this development on Manx was also minimal at best.[85] The bottom line here is that Texas German was stigmatized as the language of the enemy, while Manx was instead stigmatized as a rural language, something used by people too backward to speak English.[86]

81 Leonard Bloomfield, "Eduard Prokosch," *Language* 14 (1938), 310–13; William E. Nicholas, "World War I and Academic Dissent in Texas," *Arizona and the West* 14 (1972), 215–30; Marc Pierce, "Eduard Prokosch and the University of Texas" (unpublished manuscript, University of Texas at Austin, 2018).

82 Quoted from Boas, *Life and Death*, 249.

83 Broderick, *Language Death*, 14–15.

84 Broderick, *Language Death*, 178; see also 19, n. 13.

85 See Joachim Lerchenmüller, *Keltischer Sprengstoff: Eine wissenschaftsgeschichtliche Studie über die Deutsch-Keltologie 1900–1945* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1997), on "keltischer Sprengstoff" ("Celtic explosives") in German scholarship from 1900 to 1945, as well as George Broderick, "Under the 'Three-Legged Swastika': Celtic Studies and Celtic Revival in the Isle of Man in the context of the 'National Socialist Idea,'" *Yearbook of the Centre for Irish-German Studies 2001/2002* (2004), 39–50, on Nazism and Manx.

86 See Stowell, "Case of Manx Gaelic," or Ager, "Study of Language Death," for details and additional discussion. Some Texas German informants do report experiences and feelings similar to those expressed by Manx speakers about the prestige of the language/variety, e.g.

Additionally, the different sociolinguistic situations of the two languages must be considered. Manx is a small minority language, not associated with a foreign power, while in its heyday Texas German had far more speakers, and was closely connected with a foreign power, and moreover a foreign power whom the United States had twice engaged in major conflicts. Texas German was therefore considerably more "dangerous" than Manx from a majority language perspective, meaning that speaking German in Texas had significantly different associations and caused many more potential problems than speaking Manx did. Had Manx been a dialect of German, or French, or Russian, say, instead of a small Celtic language, the situation would presumably have been very different.[87]

This section has reviewed the similarities and differences in the death of Manx and the impending death of Texas German. Factors like increased mobility, tourism, and religion have played a role in both situations. Most important, however, is the difference in the stigmatization of the two languages: Texas German was seen as the language of the enemy, and Manx as a rural language. Once the languages were stigmatized, and their declines began, other factors eventually meant that their declines could not be halted.

Comparing Revival Efforts of Manx and Texas German

Manx revival efforts began before the language's death (and are therefore best described as revitalization efforts). Kenneth George and George Broderick divide them into three phrases; the following discussion is based largely on their article, and global reference is therefore hereby made to it.[88] The first phase, they argue, began in 1899, when the Manx Gaelic Society (Yn Cheshaght Ghailekagh; hereafter YCG; the name was changed to "Manx Language Society" and eventually to the "Manx Society") was founded, with

"Yes, and then when I got older, I wanted my mother to speak a little more English to me when friends came over. And when she said something to me in German, I always responded to her in English" (1-62-1-10-a).

87 One final difference should also be noted here. As argued above, the main impetus towards stigmatization for Texas German came from outside the community itself, due to anti-German stigma beginning around World War I. This was not the case for Manx, as the main impetus towards its stigmatization came from within the community itself, as a result of the development of the view of Manx as a rural, "backwards" language. (I thank Jennifer Kewley Draskau for this observation.)

88 "The Revived Languages—Cornish and Manx," in *The Celtic Languages*, ed. Martin J. Ball and Nicole Müller (London: Routledge, 2009), 753–69.

Arthur W. Moore, Speaker of the House of Keys, presiding.[89] The society's goals are straightforward: 1) "The preservation of Manx as the national language of the Isle of Man," and 2) "The study and publication of existing Gaelic literature and the cultivation of a modern literature in Manx."[90] In some respects, the YCG was successful during this first phase (e.g. it published a journal, *Mannin*, from 1913 to 1917), while in others, it was not (despite the society's efforts to have Manx taught in schools, only one school agreed to do so, and then only for 30 minutes per week, and then abandoned the classes after a very short time).[91] In addition to the YCG's efforts, during this time period there was also an increased interest in "Manx traditional music, songs, and lore,"[92] which would also have contributed to an interest in the language itself.

The second phase began around 1930 and lasted for approximately a decade. It was mainly driven by the efforts of two people, J.J. Kneen, "a producer of mint rock [a type of candy] by profession,"[93] whose research on Manx ranged from place and personal names to aspects of Manx grammar; and Mona Douglas, whose research addressed mainly questions of Manx folklore. Kneen at least had a considerable impact on the scholarly study of Manx; the Norwegian Celticist Carl Marstrander was so impressed by Kneen's work that in late 1929 he "arranged for the Nansen Fund in Norway to grant Kneen £200.00 [about $12,000 US today] to assist him in his place-name work."[94] Douglas's main contribution seems to have been as a popularizer and preserver, e.g. she collected and published a number of Manx folksongs.[95] The outbreak of World War II in 1939 put an end to this phase.[96]

The third phase began around 1950, and was bolstered considerably by the YCG's 1951–53 collection of a considerable corpus of Manx speech from the few remaining speakers. During this period, on 30 September 1951 the YCG "printed an appeal in the *Mona's Herald* to 'Support the Manx Language,'"[97] which appealed to residents of Man to "throw off apathy

89 The YCG apparently still exists, but I have been unable to trace a website for it (the URL I was able to locate is no longer functional).

90 George and Broderick, "Revived Languages," 761.

91 According to George and Broderick, "Revived Languages," 761.

92 George and Broderick, "Revived Languages," 761.

93 George and Broderick, "Revived Languages," 762.

94 Broderick, *Language Death*, 176.

95 For example, in Mona Douglas and Arnold Foster, eds., *Twelve Manx Folksongs: Set 1* (London: Stainer & Bell, 1928).

96 George and Broderick, "Revived Languages," 763.

97 George and Broderick, "Revived Languages," 763.

and disinterestedness and take part in another crusade which can harm no one, but which will strengthen us as individuals and as a nation. We refer to the crusade for maintaining and using the Manx Language. Join an Evening Class, Manxmen, and bring a friend with you."[98] The next several decades saw a boom in matters connected to Manx: starting in the early 1950s, some people made efforts to learn the language directly from the few remaining speakers; the YCG made a concerted effort to aid the publication of numerous works on Manx, both reprints and new studies; between 1983 and 1986 several documentaries in Manx were produced; starting in the early 1970s the YCG arranged for groups to meet once a month to practice speaking Manx; and there are now numerous meetings revolving around Manx music and song.[99]

During the third phase, Manx was also brought into the school system, beginning in the mid-1970s. The then Director of Education, Alun Davies, believed that offering Manx in the schools could be valuable, and those primary-school teachers who knew Manx were "given the opportunity of introducing Manx into the classroom when and where they saw fit," while in the secondary schools, Manx could be offered as an extracurricular activity. The effects were limited, as there were only about a dozen such teachers spread over the thirty-two primary schools on Man, and none in the five secondary schools.[100] In 1982 an O-level (Ordinary Level) examination in Manx was introduced, and then discontinued in 1986; in 1992 a GSCE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) examination in Manx was introduced, and A-level (Advanced Level) classes in Manx have also been available since about that time.[101] As of about 2005, there were also a "Manx-language pre-school group" and the "Manx Medium School," which offered Manx-language immersion programs for primary-school children; Manx is taught in a number of the primary and secondary schools; and there "are also various adult education initiatives."[102]

98 Quoted in George and Broderick, "Revived Languages," 764; the other "crusade" alluded to here is presumably World War II.

99 See George and Broderick, "Revived Languages," 764–65, for discussion of these and other factors.

100 George and Broderick, "Revived Languages," 765.

101 George and Broderick, "Revived Languages," 765.

102 Gary N. Wilson, "The Revitalization of the Manx Language and Culture in an Era of Global Change," in *Refereed Papers from the 3rd International Small Island Cultures Conference Institute of Island Studies, University of PEI, June 29–July 2, 2007*, ed. by Irené Novaczek, SICRI (Small Island Cultures Research Initiative) Network, http://sicri-network.org/ISIC3/o.%20ISIC3P%20Wilson.pdf (accessed 18 July 2016), 77.

The results are solid, if not spectacular. While the census numbers discussed above revealed a steady decline, and the 1981 census did not ask about Manx, as it was assumed to be dead,[103] the 1991 census reported 653 Manx speakers in a population of approximately 70,000, the 2001 census reported 1,689 Manx speakers in a population of approximately 76,000.[104] Most recently, in the 2011 census 2 percent of the population (1,823 in a total population of approximately 85,000) claimed knowledge of Manx.[105] Again, these numbers reflect self-reported abilities in Manx, and should therefore be handled with care, but they do give cause for optimism.

In contrast to Manx, Texas German revival efforts are largely nonexistent. There is no real impetus in the Texas German community to revive the moribund language, and, although the occasional attempt has been made, they have been entirely unsuccessful. Roesch, for instance, reports that one group of Texas Germans, the Texas Alsatians, decided to offer a course on Texas Alsatian, in order to help older speakers regain some fluency and to encourage younger members of the community to learn the language. Unfortunately, the two teachers (two of the most fluent speakers of Texas Alsatian) spoke very different versions of the variety, and could not agree on which version of Texas Alsatian should be taught. The class therefore simply fell apart, and thus serves as a microcosm of Texas German revival efforts.[106]

Conclusion

The final question to be addressed here is straightforward: why has Manx been successfully revived when Texas German has not, especially since the two languages are so similar in their declines? I link this to two main factors: 1) governmental support and 2) the differing circumstances surrounding the waning of the two languages, specifically the different ways in which Manx and Texas German were stigmatized.

To governmental support: It is clear that since the mid-1980s at the very latest the government of the Isle of Man has supported the use of Manx, e.g. by committing funding to support its teaching in the schools.

103 Broderick, *Language Death*.

104 G. Wilson, "Revitalization," 77.

105 Tadhg Ó hlfearnáin, "Sociolinguistic Vitality of Manx after Extreme Language Shift: Authenticity without Traditional Native Speakers," *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 231 (2015), 45–62.

106 Roesch, *Language Maintenance*.

Moreover, in 1985 the Manx parliament approved the "Report of the Select Committee on the Greater Use of Manx Gaelic," which mandated, among other things, that "the preservation and promotion of the Manx Gaelic should be an objective of the Isle of Man government."[107] Such governmental support has been absent in the history of Texas German. German is now taught in numerous schools in Texas, but it is the standard language that is taught, not Texas German. Governmental support is of course not entirely probative, as it has not always helped in language revival (cf. here how much funding the Irish government has provided to support the Irish language, with mostly mixed results to date although things do seem to be on the upswing).[108]

A more important factor is the differing historical and social circumstances of the two languages. As noted above, Manx was stigmatized largely on the grounds of being a rural, backwards language, while Texas German was seen, especially during the two World Wars, as the language of the enemy. Some, however, were more serious. Boas, for instance, quotes an excerpt from the Goliad Advance Guard of 15 September 1918, written by "the chairman of the publicity committee of the Goliad County Council of Defense, who summarizes the views held by the members of that council," and which hints at violent or financial consequences for those who insist on speaking German:

> It would be a gracious act of self-denial and practical demonstration of patriotism for people who had formed this habit of speaking German to cease such a habit. […] If there are any people in Victoria County today that are going to conceive, suddenly or gradually, any sympathy for anything German, language or otherwise, the quicker they are smoked out of their holes the better it will be for the public welfare. […] It is a doubtful psychological question in the writer's mind whether any brain can think good, honest, United States patriotism in German words, but there can be no question that the best vehicle with which to express good, honest United States thoughts is the language of the United States itself. […] It is the German mind, the German heart, and the German tongue, of which we disapprove. […] There are means at hand to amply and promptly punish a citizen who manifests a disloyal attitude. […]

107 Quoted in G. Wilson, "Revitalization," 76.

108 Tina Hickey, "'The Times They Are A-Changin': Heritage Language Acquisition and Universal Bilingualism," a plenary lecture at the International Symposium on Bilingualism 11 (Limerick, 2017), offered some recent relevant commentary.

> Let that statement sink deep in every one. The resident who persists in thinking "Deutschland Über Alles" or "Fatherland" stuff will come to very great sorrow. Public opinion is a very powerful weapon, and it strikes in many forms. And he who willfully persists in speaking the German language when requested by recognized authority to stop doing so places himself in the attitude of giving aid and comfort to the enemy, and the courts might hold him or her answerable to the law for treasonable conduct. […] There is manhood sufficient unto the task remaining in us who stay at home to make a clean-up of Germanism in Goliad County, to the end that our soldier boys when they come back will not find provocations to pitch a few hand grenades in enemy nests in this county. […] We, the Council of Defense of Goliad County call upon all loyal Americans, particularly those of German descent, residing in Goliad County, to abandon and abstain from the use of the German language in private conversations, in business dealings, in sermons and public addresses.[109]

Once a language has been stigmatized in this way, it can be extremely difficult to recover, and Texas German has not.

While Texas German has a bleak future, Manx's outlook is considerably brighter. It is of course impossible to determine these things definitively, but the extent of its recovery to date bodes well for the language's future. The number of speakers has increased steadily, and the sociolinguistic situation has consistently improved. In addition, at least three families are raising their children in Manx, indicating that at least at present there are some new native speakers of Manx.[110] It is probably still too early to add Manx to the very short list of languages that have truly been revived, but if developments continue as they have, that time may well come.[111]

109 Boas, *Life and Death*, 247–48.

110 I thank Jennifer Kewley Draskau (pers. commun.) for pointing this out to me. Here I gloss over a number of issues that would go far beyond the scope of this paper, e.g. the exact definition of "native speaker." These Manx-speaking children, for instance, may not entirely fit with traditional ideas about native speakers. Jennifer Kewley Draskau (pers. commun.) also notes that it is impossible to predict what linguistic choices these children will make in the future. I suspect that they may well wind up as "lapsed native speakers" (i.e. people who learned one language natively but now mostly use a different language, normally with some loss of fluency in the first language learned), but hope that this assessment will prove overly pessimistic.

111 I thank Hans C. Boas, Jennifer Kewley Draskau, Charles W. MacQuarrie, and Joseph Falaky Nagy for their assistance in the preparation of this chapter. Any errors or infelicities are my own.

About the author

Marc Pierce is an Associate Professor in the Department of Germanic Studies and an affiliated faculty member in the Department of French and Italian at the University of Texas at Austin, as well as an affiliate of the Angus McIntosh Centre for Historical Linguistics at the University of Edinburgh and a Research Associate in the Texas German Dialect Project (www.tgdp.org). He has published extensively on Germanic linguistics, the history of linguistics, historical linguistics, and Texas German, and is currently the book review editor of the *Yearbook of German-American Studies*.

Index

Aarhus 148, 150
Abbey Theatre 145
Achilleid 101, 107 n.24, 108
Achilles 101, 107 n.24
Ackerley, Milissa 98 n.71
Adam and Eve 160
Ælfgar of Mercia 24 n.22
Aeneas 100, 103
Aeneid 52, 103–104, 117
Æschere 58 n.124
Aesop's Fables 176
Aethelred II 34
Ager, Simon 188, 192
Ahl, Frederick 100 n.3
Aided Muirchertaig meic Erca (Death of Muircertach mac Erca) 94–96
Ailill mac Máta 62–63, 171, 180
Almqvist, Bo 80
Altram Tige Dá Medhar (*Nourishing of the House of the Two Milk-Pails*) 13 n.9
Amphiaraus 109
amplificatio, (expansion) 113–14, 119
Anglesey 13, 20, 25 n.43
Anglican Church 192–93
Anglo-Saxon Chronicle 21, 47 n.59
Anglo-Saxons 18, 20–21, 29, 34, 80, 145–48, 150–54, 157–58
Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland by the Four Masters 21 n.15, 33
Annals of Tigernach 21
Annals of Ulster 22
Armes Prydein (*Prophecy of Britain*) 20
Argia 115
Artaud, Antonin 67
Arthur (King) 63, 133, 136–38, 176

Bacca in Corco M'ruad 72
Bacchus 106–107
Baker, P.S. 56 n.114
Barrett, R.W. Jr. 128
Barrow, Isaac, Bishop and Governor 193
Bartlett, Thomas, and Keith Jeffery 60–61
Baum, L.F. *see Wonderful Wizard of Oz*
bawn (fortified dwelling) 154
Beanstan 46
Bede 13
Bellum civile (*The Civil War*) *see* Lucan
Bennett, M.J. 128, 132
Beowulf 15–16, 37–58, 145–48, 150, 153–54, 159
Beuermann, Ian 87, 94
Bergthora 41, 45, 55
Berman, M.A. 87
berserkr (Norse warrior) 69
Bhreathnach, Máire 94
Bible 120, 121 n.61,160, 193–94
Boas, H.C. 186 n.20, 187, 189, 195, 197, 198 n.80, 199, 204
Bog Poems 148
Book of Common Prayer 194
Book of Leinster 48–49, 71, 104 n.16
Bosworth Feilde 127, 139
Brady, Lindy 80, 98 n.71
Braidwood, John 152
Brecca 46–47, 53
Bredbeedle, Sir 137
Brennu-Njáls saga (*Burnt Njal's Saga*) 20, 24 n.37, 41–44, 47, 51, 55, 97
Brian Bóroma 93, 97
Bricriu 41, 45–47, 51, 55
Bricriu's Feast (*Fled Bricrenn*) 75
Bridges, J.C. 131
Britain, Britons 14–16, 20, 22, 24 n.35, 25–26, 59–60, 63, 79, 81, 123, 137–38, 143–44, 147, 150–54, 156–57, 196
British Isles 22, 24 n.35, 26, 59, 63, 81, 144, 153
Broderick, George 183 n.1, 185–86, 188–89, 191–92, 193 n.52, 194–97, 199
Bromwich, Rachel 20 n.13
Brooke, W.J. 181
Bull of Cúailnge 63
Butler, H.E. 100
Byrne, Aisling 127

Cadmus 106, 113
Caithness 86, 89
Calder, George 120
Callalloo 147
Campbell, Joseph 168 n.27
Campbell, Lyle 191
caoineadh (lament) 155
Capaneus 109
Carle off Carlile (*CC*) 133–34, 136–38
Carlisle 136–38
Cath Catharda, *In* (*The Civil War*) 100
Cathbad 174
Cathleen Ni Houlihan 145
Cei 52
Cethern mac Fintain 70
Celtic languages 11, 14, 23, 184, 199–200
Charles-Edwards, T.M. 20 n.12, 59
Chatti (Germanic tribe) 108 n.28
Chester 150
Christian, Ewan 183
Clarke, Michael 101, 110
Clontarf, Battle of 97
Clover, Carol 37, 40, 47
Cnut (king) 21–22
Cockaigne, Land of 152
Coinage 17–19, 23–34
Collins, K.B. 19 n.6–7, 22, 24 n.32, 25, 30, 32, 34

Conall Cernach 172, 174
Conchobar/Conchobor 41, 51, 166–67, 169–71, 173–75
Connacht 72
Cooper, Tracey-Anne 150
Coppergate 24
Cormac's Glossary (*Sanas Cormaic*) 11
Crampton, Robert 103 n.13
Creon 115–16, 147
Cromwell, Oliver, 199
Cronica Regum Manniæ et Insularum (Chronicles of the Kings of Man and the Isles) 13, 19, 23, 33
Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly 68 n.43
Cú Chulainn 15–16, 40–41, 45, 47–49, 51–52, 55–56, 59–77, 145–46, 157, 159–81
Culann 172–73, 176, 180
Cumbria 136
Cumming, J.G. 185
Cure at Troy, The 147
Cynewulf and Cyneheard 47 n.59

Dáil (Irish parliament) 154
Danes *see* Denmark, Danes
Davey, Peter 14
Davies, Alun 202
Davies, M.T. 67–68
Death of Aife's One Son (*Aided Óenfir Aife*) 145
Death of Cú Chulainn (*Aided Con Culainn*) 77
Dedalus, Stephen 151
Deirdriu 13 n.11
Delamere Forest 137
Denmark, Danes 39, 43, 45–47, 49–51, 53–55, 57, 83–85, 87, 148
Deutschtum (German-ness) 196
Diarmait mac Máel na mBó 21, 33
Dietrich, J.S. 115 n.44
dindshenchas (place-name lore) 113
dirhams 26
discourse colonies *see* Hoey, Michael
Divergent series 173 n.47, 179–81
Dolley, Michael 17, 28, 30
Dominik, H.J. 114 n.42
Domitian (Roman emperor) 102, 105, 107–108, 110, 116
Donatelli, Joseph 124, 126
Donoghue, Daniel 147
Donovan, L.A. 45, 51, 53
Dooley, Ann 61 n.10, 64
Dorian, Nancy 183 n.2
Douglas, Mona 201
Drances 52
Draskau, J.K. 190 n.35, 196 n.70, 200 n.87, 205 n.110
Dublin 14–15, 18, 21–25, 28–34, 97, 149, 152
Dumville, D.N. 145

Ecglaf 45, 53–56
Ecgtheow 53–54
Echmarcach mac Ragnaill 21–22, 33
Echtra Mac n-Ech(d)ach Mugmedóin (*Adventure of the Sons of Eochaid Mugmedón*) 92–94
Edward III 131
Egils saga (*Egil's Saga*) 82 n.14
Eichorn-Mulligan, A.C. 93
Einar Buttered-Bread 89–91, 94, 96
Einar Hard-Mouth 90–91, 96
Eirík Bloodax (king of Norway) and sons 81–86, 89, 91, 96
Eithne, daughter of Kjarval (Cerball), king of Ireland 92
Eliason, N.E. 47 n.59, 53
Emain Abhlach 13 n.11
Emain Macha 76, 165, 174–75
England, English 11, 14, 18, 24 n.22, 25, 34, 60, 83, 85 128–29, 138–39, 150, 185 n.13, 190 n.34, 192–97
English Elementary Education Act 194
Enright, Michael 39, 51
Eochaid Mugmedón and sons 92–93
Eteocles and Polynices (sons of Oedipus) 105, 109, 111–12, 115
Euripides 107
Europa 106, 113
Europe 60, 113
Everdeen, Katniss 173, 179–80

Faerie Queene, The 154
Fedelm 74
Feldman, T.P. 39–40
Fer Diad 40–41, 48, 51, 56, 71–72
Fergus mac Eochada 92
Fergus mac Róig 41, 45, 62, 72, 165, 168–69, 171, 168–69, 171–72
fili (poet; plural *filid*) 105
Fingall, son of Godred 19
Finnbogi Guðmundsson 81
Finnegans Wake 152, 156
Fishamble 24
Flateyjarbók (manuscript) 81, 84–89, 91, 97–98
Flodden, Battle of 127
Flodden Feilde 127, 139
Flood, Victoria 127
Flosi 42, 48, 55
France, French 129, 131, 132 n.46, 150
Freawaru 42, 44, 47, 53, 58
Fredericksburg 196–97
Fulk, R.D. 37 n.1, 54
furor heroicus (heroic fury) 62

gae bulga (Cú Chulainn's weapon) 71
Gaimster, Marit 26
Gawain(e) 126, 128–39, 176
Geatland 53
geis (taboo) 41
George, Kenneth 200
Gill, William, The Reverend 185
Gilligan, Carol 153

Gingher, R.S. 39, 45
Giver, The 181
Glenfaba hoard 25 n.39, n.42, 27–30
Glicerium 150
Gnímrada (heroic deeds) 120
Godred Crovan 18–19, 29, 32–33
Godred, son of Syrtric 19, 22
Goliad County 204–205
Good Friday Agreement 145, 154
Goodman, Anthony 135
Gormlaith and her husbands 96–97
Gowin *see* Gawain(e)
Gray, Douglas 134 n.62
Greece, Greeks 39, 111, 161
Grendel 37, 39–40, 45–47, 49–53, 55–57, 58 n.124, 154, 156–57, 159
Grene Knight, The (*GK*) 133–34, 137–38
Grim 48
Grimm Brothers 178
Gromer, Sir 130, 137
Gruffudd ap Llywelyn 24 n.22
Gunnar 42–43, 51–52, 55
Gunnhild 81–85
Gwara, Scott 48
Gwydyl Iwerdon Mon a Phrydyn (the Irish of Ireland, Anglesey [?], and Scotland) 20
Gwynedd 13

Habakkuk, Book of 120, 121 n.61
Hákonar saga góða (Saga of Hákon the Good) 82–83, 85
Hales, J.W., and F.J. Furnivall 124, 133
Hanna, Ralph 136
Harald Fairhair (king of Norway) 88–89
Haralds saga ins hárfagra (*Saga of Harald Fairhair*) 81
Hardie, Philip 117
Harris, J.R. 101 n.8, 113, 115–16, 118
Hastings, Battle of 19
Haycock, Marged 69 n.47, 72
Heaney, Seamus 16, 145–58
Heatholaf 54 n.107
Hebrides 11, 18, 22, 26, 80
Heimskringla (*Circle of the World*) 79–89
Heinz Dilemma, The 162–63
Henry IV (Henry of Bolingbroke) 128, 131–32
Henry VII 127, 133–34
Heorogar 57 n.123
Heorot 39, 50, 154
Herbert, Máire 95
Herodotus 104
Heywood, Thomas 129
"Hidden Adult" 177
Hildeburh 47 n.59, 54 n.107
Hildegunn 42–43, 45, 48, 55
Hildesley, Mark, Bishop 193
Hill, J.M. 57
Hill, Thomas 146
Hippomedon 109
Hobby, William, Governor 199
Hoey, Michael 125
Hogni 42, 51, 55
Hollowell, I.M. 55, 56 n.114
Holt 134
Homer 105, 107, 109
Hooton 137
Horace 101 n.5
Hoskuld Hvatiness-Priest 42
House of Keys *see* Tynwald
Howard family 128, 139
Hrothgar 38, 42–43, 45, 49–50, 52–54, 57 n.123, 154
Hrothmund 54
Hrothulf 54
Hrunting 39, 53, 56–57, 58 n.124
Hudson, Benjamin 21–22
Hunferth 15, 37–58
Hunger Games Trilogy, The 173 n.47, 179–80
hvǫt (incitement scene) 40
Hygelac 42, 47 n.59, 49, 51, 58

Iceland, Icelandic 81 n.6, 87, 146
Iehmarc 21
Iliad 52
Imtheachta Aeniasa (*Adventures of Aeneas*) 100, 103, 110
Indo-European languages 184
inexpressibility topos 118
Ingeld 42, 54
Ireland, Irish 11–16, 17–29, 32–35, 37, 39–41, 44, 46, 59–64, 69, 71, 73, 75–77, 79–80, 83, 88, 92–105, 109–114, 118–21, 128, 132, 134, 143–61, 164, 168 n.27, 174, 184, 204
Irish Sea 11, 14–18, 20–21, 23, 25, 32, 34–35, 134, 143–46, 148–49, 152
Islands of Faichi 171–72

Japan 60
Jocasta 113
Jones, M.K. 134
Jonson, Ben 152
Joyce, James 151–53, 156

Keel, William 197
keen (lament) 155 n.74
Kinder- und Hausmärchen (*Nursery and Household Tales*) 178
Kinsella, Thomas 145, 157
Kneen, J.J. 201
Knights of Bath 133, 138
Knights of the Garter 133
Knolles, Sir Robert 132 n.46
Kohlberg 160–75, 179
Kormløð 97
Kristeva, Julia 69
Kruse, Susan 32
Künzler, Sarah 62, 69, 70, 75

lachtar (flock of chicks) 151
Ladye Bessiye 127
Lady Gregory, Augusta 145
Láeg 41, 45, 49, 51–52, 55–56, 63
Laius 111
Landnámabók (*Book of Settlements*) 80
Latham, Isabel 128, 130
Lawton, David 131–32, 137 n.81
Laxdæla saga 80
Leerssen, Joep 156
Legend series 180–81
Leinster 22–23, 48
Liffey, the River 152
Livy 104
Lóch 40
Lordship of the Isles 11–12
Lovel, Lord 132
Lowe, Jeremy 64, 69–71
Lucan 106 n.22, 107, 109, 110 n.31, 117
Lucht, Felecia 198 n.80
Lug 65

Mac Airt, Seán 105
Mac Cana, Proinsias 40, 46, 52 105
Mackey, James 94 n.53
Maddrell, Ned 183, 188 n.29
Mag Muirthemne 64 n.24, 70
Mag Túaga 72
Magnus Olafsson 13
Mallory, J.P. 60
Malory, Sir James 160
Man, Isle of 11–15, 17–35, 60, 128–31, 134, 136, 144–45, 152, 158, 185–86, 192–204
Manannán mac Lir, or Manannan 11–13, 137
Mannin 201
Manx Folk-Life Survey 197–98
Manx Gaelic Society (Yn Cheshaght Ghailekagh [YCG], Manx Language Society, Manx Society) 200–202
Manx language 14, 16, 183–205
Manx Museum 197
Manx Parliament *see* Tynwald
Margareta of Denmark 87
Marriage of Sir Gawaine, The (MSG) 133, 136, 138
Marstrander, C.J.S. 185, 201
Maund, K.L. 24 n.22
Medb, Queen 40–41, 51, 62–63, 171, 180
Merugud Uilixes mac Leirtis (The Wandering of Ulysses son of Laertes) 100
Miles, Brent 101, 103 n.11, 104 n.16, 112 n.37, 113, 118 n.55
Missouri Synod (Lutheran) 194
Mitchell, George 154
Mockingjay 173 n.47, 180
Môn 20
Mona 12
Montague, John 153
Moore, Arthur W. 201
Morrígan 113
Moriuht 150
Morte d'Arthur 160
Mozley, J.H. 100
Muircertach mac Erca 95
Munster 22, 93, 154
Murchad mac Diarmata 21–22
Murray, George, Bishop 194
Muses 106, 109
Myers, Sarah 107

Nagy, J.F. 62–63, 75–76
Nagy, M.S. 53
National Socialists (Nazis) 199
Nechta Scéne 174
Neu-Braunfelser Zeitung (New Braunfels Newspaper) 187 n.23
New Braunfels 187, 194, 196–98
Neville family 128, 139
Neville, C.J. 135
"Newarke" (song) 123
Ní Mhaonaigh, Máire 96–97, 104–105
Nicolini, Marcus 187–88 n.26, 197
Njal 48, 56
Njal's Saga see Brennu-Njáls saga
Nodelman, Perry 177
Noísiu 13 n.11
Normandy, Normans 143, 150
Norse *see* Scandinavian
Norway, Norwegians 80, 83, 87, 92, 96, 149, 185 n.12, 201

O'Connor, Ralph 62, 65, 69–71, 101, 110–11
Ó Cuív, Brian 148, 185
Odin 94
Odyssey 112
Oedipus 105, 107, 111, 113, 115, 147
ogham 23
Olaf Cuarán 149
Óláfs saga helga (St Óláf's Saga) 85
Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar (Saga of Óláf Tryggvason) 85
On Baile's Strand 145
O'Rahilly, T.F. 192
Orchard, Andy 54 n.105
Orkney 79–90, 92, 94, 96, 98
Orkneyinga saga 12, 15, 79, 81–94
Ovid 101 n.5, 107 117

Pale, the 156–57
Pandora 161
Parthenopaeus 109
Pentheus 107
Percy family 139
Percy Folio 16, 123–139
Percy, Lord Thomas 132
Percy's Rebellion 128
Philoctetes 147
Piaget, Jean 161

Picts 81 n.6
Picture of Dorian Gray, The 99
Pierce, Marc 189
Pitt, Humphrey 124, 130
Plautus 103 n.14
Plurabelle, Anna Livia 152
Pollack, Sean 138 n.84
Polybus, King of Corinth 111
Polynices *see* Eteocles and Polynices
Popenhagen, R.J. 67
Poppe, Erich 101, 113
Portable Antiquities Scheme 35
Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, A 151
Power, Rosemary 12
praeteritio (setting aside) 106–107, 112
Prior, Beatrice 173 n.47, 179, 181
Prokosch, Eduard 199
Propertius 101 n.5
Psalms 120, 121 n.61
Puhvel, Martin 48

Racine, Pierre 73
Ragnhild Eiríksdóttir 15, 79–98
Raleigh, Sir Walter 154
Ramp, Ellen, and Susan Ramp Ridout 176
Rannveig 42–43, 45, 51, 55
Raw, Barbara 57 n.123
recusatio (recusal) 105, 107–108, 110
Reichl, Karl 134–35
Rí Insi Gall (King of the Hebrides) 22
ríastrad (warp-spasm) 59, 64–72, 157–58, 165–68
Richard II 131–32
Richard III 127
riding (raiding) ballad 135–36
Riss in Mundtuirc (*Tale of the Necklace*) 100–101
Ritson, Joseph 124
Robo maith Aichil mac Péil (*Good was Achilles son of Peleus*) 101
Roesch, K.A. 189
Rogers, Gillian 126, 139
Rome, Roman 102, 107, 161
Ronaldsway 24
Rose of Englande, The 127
runes 14, 23
Rushen Abbey 14

Salmons, J.P. 198 n.80
Sayers, William 40, 80
Scandinavia, Scandinavian 11–15, 17–18, 20 n.13, 21–23, 29, 31, 33–34, 39–41, 44, 69, 79–80, 81 n.6, 82 n.14, 83, 97, 127, 144, 146, 149–50, 152, 185
scéla (tales) 119–20
scop (singer, storyteller) 44
Scotish Feilde 127
Scotland, Scottish 11, 13–14, 18, 20, 22 n.22, 25–26, 35, 59–60, 80, 83, 127, 129, 134–35, 138, 149, 152, 154, 184
selah (biblical term) 119–21
Sencha mac Ailella 52
senchaid or *scélaige* (storyteller) 105
Septuagint 120
Sétanta 165, 173, 180
Shakespeare, William 151
sheadings, quarterlands, and treens 24 n.36
Sheale, Richard 129
Shetland Islands 12, 83
síabrad see ríastrad
Silber, Patricia 37 n.1, 53–54
Silvae (*Woods*) 107
Sín 94–97
Sir Gawain and the Carl of Carlisle 133
Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (*SGGK*) 75, 128, 133, 137, 159
Skarp-Heðin 48, 51
Skinner, B.F. 162
Slater, Niall 103 n.14
Snorri Sturluson 85
Somerled Macgilbred 11
Sophocles 107
Spenser, Edmund 154
sphragis (seal) 114, 117–20
St. Clair-Kendall, S.G. 133, 135
St. Patrick's Isle 25
Staffordshire hoard 60
Stanford, W.B. 100
Stanley family (earls of Derby) 15–16, 126–40, 199
Stanley Poem, The (*SP*) 129–32
Statius (P. Papinius) 15, 99–121
Statius Ursulus of Toulouse 112
Statutes of Kilkenny 156
Steinbeck, John 160–61
Súaltaim 41, 43, 51, 76
Symmachus 120, 121 n.61

Tacitus 12–13
Táin Bó Cúailnge (*Cattle Raid of Cooley* or *Cúailnge*) 40–43, 48–49, 51–52, 59–77, 104, 113, 121, 145–46, 157, 160–61, 164, 171, 176, 178, 180–81
Tarn Wadling 136
Taylor, Andrew 127–29, 135
Texas, Texans 184 n.3, 186, 192, 196, 199
Texas Alsatian 203
Texas German 16, 183–205
Thebaid 15, 99–121
Thebes 99, 103, 105–107 111–15, 119
Thersites, 52
Theseus, King of Athens, 115–16
Þing, 24
Thompson, R.H. 130
Thomson, W.P.L. 79, 88–89, 91–92
Thorfinn, Earl of Orkney, and sons 79, 82–86, 88–94, 98
Thorgeir Starkadarson and Thorgeir Otkelsson 42, 45, 47–48, 52, 55

Pyle (Hunferth's role) 38, 53, 55
Tiresias 147
Togail na Tebe (*Destruction of Thebes*) 99–121
Togail Bruidne Dá (or *Da*) *Derga* (*Destruction of Dá Derga's Hostel*) 94, 104
Togail Troí (*Destruction of Troy*) 100, 110, 112 n.37
Tolkien, J.R.R. 54, 178
tourism 196
Tristram, Hildegard 103 n.11
Túatha Dé Danann 13
tundish (funnel) 151
Turf-Einar and sons 82–86, 88 n.30, 89, 94
Turke and Gowin, The (*TG*) 129–32, 134, 136–38
Turkey 130
Tydeus 109
Tynwald 12, 24, 201, 204

Uí Néill (Irish dynastic kin-group) 94 n.53
uisce (water) 152
Ulster, Ulstermen 13 n.11, 41, 46, 51 n.75, 66, 75–76, 145–46, 153, 155, 164–65, 167–75, 179–80
Ulysses 100
Unferth *see* Hunferth
United Kingdom 196
Usk, the River 152

Valente, Mary 148–50
Vartin, Stephen 124–25
Vergil 101 n.5, 102–105, 107, 109, 117
Victoria County 204
Vikings 13, 15, 17–20, 23–26, 29, 32, 34, 59, 81, 83–84, 144–45, 148–50, 192
Virgil *see* Vergil
Vulgate 120–21

Walcott, Derek 147
Wales, Welsh 11, 13–14, 20, 22 n.24, 25, 35, 60, 69 n.47, 128 n.27, 129, 134–35, 138, 149, 184 n.5
warp-spasm *see ríastrad*
Warren of Rouen 150
Wealtheow 50, 57 n.123
Wedding of Sir Gawain and Dame Raganelle 133
Weland 53
Wiglaf 58
Wilde, Oscar 99
William I (the Conqueror) 143
Williams, Gareth 13, 29, 32
Williams, Gordon 101 n.5
Williams, Mark 95–96
Wilson, Sir David, 12, 144
Wilson, Edward 137
Wilson, Joseph 194
Wilson, Thomas, Bishop 193
Wing, Daniel "Day" Altan 181
Wirral 137, 150
Wonderful Wizard of Oz, The 79
Woodbridge 60
World War I 195, 198, 200, 204
World War II 201, 202 n.98, 204
Wythergyld 43

YCG *see* Manx Gaelic Society
Yeats, W.B. 145, 158
York 18, 24

Zeus 106