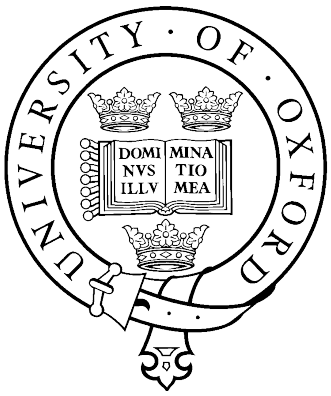
Pre-Literary Classical Influences on Two Early Germanic Heroic Legends



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Abstract

This thesis argues for the influence of Graeco-Roman mythological ideas on two Germanic legendary traditions in the context of interactions between the Germanic-speaking peoples and the Roman Empire in Late Antiquity. Documentary and archaeological evidence testifies to diverse contacts between the Roman world and the Germanic-speaking peoples, intensifying from the third century CE. There are numerous indications of Roman cultural influence on the Germanic-speaking peoples during this period. Material evidence illustrates the conscious emulation of *Romanitas* amongst Germanic elites, and in particular evidence of the adaptation of Roman ritual and religious influences corroborates the case for the diffusion of mythological material. Legends concerning the revenge of the master smith Wayland and the destruction of the Burgundian kingdom by the Huns developed amongst Germanic-speaking groups during this period, and are preserved in variant forms in medieval texts from Scandinavia, Germany and England. A synthesis of these three branches of literary sources with iconographic material and the evidence of Latin historiography shows several features in both legends that were incorporated into the earliest strata of their pre-literary development. The elements in question are closely paralleled in the classical myths of Daedalus and Medea, and the wide circulation of these myths in the Roman world in Late Antiquity provides a plausible impetus for their accretion into nascent Germanic legendary traditions. The correspondences between the classical and Old Norse texts are additionally studied from an analogical perspective, considering the ways in which they can highlight underlying similarities and differences in the gender dynamics of the cultures that gave rise to the different literary corpora.

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Abbreviations

ANF	*Arkiv för nordisk filologi*
ANQ	*American Notes and Queries*
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
CQ	*Classical Quarterly*
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
ÍF	Íslenzk Fornrit
JEGP	*Journal of English and Germanic Philology*
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica
- AA.	Auctores Antiquissimi
- LL. Nat. Germ.	Leges Nationum Germanicarum
- SS.	Scriptores (in folio)
- SS. rer. Germ.	Scriptores rerum Germanicarum
- SS. rer. Lang.	Scriptores rerum Langobardicorum et Italicarum
- SS. rer. Merov.	Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum
MHG	Middle High German
OE	Old English
OHG	Old High German
ON	Old Norse
OSax.	Old Saxon
PGmc.	Proto-Germanic
PMLA	*Proceedings of the Modern Language Association*
TAJA	*The Australian Journal of Anthropology*
TAPA	*Transactions of the American Philological Association*
VSNR	Viking Society for Northern Research

INTRODUCTION

In 1881, the Norwegian philologist Sophus Bugge published the first volume of his magnum opus, *Studier over de nordiske Gude- og Heltesagns Oprindelse*, in which he expounded his belief that the majority of the myths and legends preserved in Old Norse-Icelandic literature were derived from classical and Christian models by Scandinavian poets in England during the late Viking Age. In addition to the volumes of this series, Bugge would continue to advocate this systematic theory in a series of journal articles on specific narratives in Old Norse sources. His theory was widely criticised by contemporary commentators, and has achieved little traction in subsequent scholarship. Contemporary critics rightly highlighted the problems both with his conception of the date and mechanisms of transmission and with his attempt to find classical models for the whole corpus of Norse myth and legend.

In the early twentieth century, comparative mythology was dominated by ritualist and psychoanalytic approaches, which favoured universalising over genetic explanations for mythic parallels. Later in the twentieth century, comparative approaches to the study of myth and religion went out of favour due to postmodernist challenges to the underpinnings of the comparative enterprise.[1] However, Ursula Dronke called in 1969 for a re-evaluation of classical derivations in Old Norse myth,[2] and this thesis offers a partial response to this call. It begins from the basic premise that Bugge, in spite of his work's methodological shortcomings, was justified in seeking parallels for some Old Norse materials in Graeco-Roman sources, and in explaining these as the result of diffusion from the classical tradition.

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[1] For surveys of and responses to the postmodernist trend, see e.g. the essays collected in Kimberly C. Patton & Benjamin Kay (eds.), *A Magic Still Dwells: Comparative Religion in the Postmodern Age* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000); Robert A. Segal, 'In Defense of the Comparative Method', *Numen* 48:3 (2001), pp. 339–73.

[2] Ursula Dronke, 'Classical Influence on Early Norse Literature', in R.R. Bolgar (ed.), *Classical Influences on European Culture A.D. 500–1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 143–9, at p. 145 & n. 1.

Rejecting Bugge's systematising approach, I focus specifically on classical analogues for two particularly well-attested legends: the revenge of the master smith Wayland and the destruction of the Burgundian kingdom by Attila the Hun.[3] In addition to being preserved in Viking-Age and medieval literature and iconography in Iceland and Scandinavia, literary, iconographic and onomastic evidence testifies to the currency of these two legends in Germany and England in the early middle ages; they cannot therefore have arisen through encounters with classical literature in Viking-Age Scandinavia. However, careful comparison of the variant versions preserved in the extant branches of the Germanic tradition enables the reconstruction of earlier forms of these legends as they circulated amongst Germanic-speaking peoples in close contact with the Roman world in the late imperial period.

More recently, Jens Peter Schjødt has advocated the rehabilitation of comparative perspectives in the study of myth and religion.[4] Schjødt distinguishes between 'genetic' and 'typological' comparative perspectives – the former describing comparisons between traditions that are historically related whether by common descent or horizontal diffusion, and the latter describing parallels between unrelated traditions, due to correspondences in underlying factors, whether psychological or external.[5] Both perspectives, he argues, should be recognised as

[3] It is often difficult to maintain a clear-cut distinction between myth and legend, and the two are often blended in literary sources; for the purposes of this thesis, 'legend' refers to narratives which deal with human rather than divine exploits, and which have some discernible connection (however tenuous) to historical events or figures: cf. Jan de Vries, *Heroic Song and Heroic Legend*, transl. by B.J. Timmer (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 194–209; George T. Gillespie, *A Catalogue of Persons Named in German Heroic Literature (700–1600) Including Named Animals and Objects and Ethnic Names* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), p. xiii; Joseph Harris, 'Older Germanic Poetry, with a Note on the Icelandic Sagas', in Karl Reichl (ed.), *Medieval Oral Literature* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), p. 253–272, at p. 267.

[4] Jens Peter Schjødt, 'Pre-Christian Religions of the North and the Need for Comparativism: Reflections on Why, How, and with What We Can Compare', in Pernille Hermann, Stephen A. Mitchell & Jens Peter Schjødt (eds.), *Old Norse Mythology – Comparative Perspectives* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), pp. 3–28; 'The Reintroduction of Comparative Studies as a Tool for Reconstructing Old Norse Religion', in Stefan Brink & Lisa Collinson (eds.), *Theorizing Old Norse Myth* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), pp. 61–81.

[5] Schjødt, 'Pre-Christian Religions', in Hermann, Mitchell & Schjødt (eds.), *Old Norse Mythology* (2017), p. 4.

important tools for the study of Old Norse myth.[6] This thesis finds the same to be true of heroic legends, showing that typological perspectives on the same comparative materials offer valuable insight into the materials on both sides of a given comparison. In addition, as Schjødt notes, comparanda drawn from more recent and better-documented traditions formed under comparable cultural conditions can provide important corroboration of theoretical readings of ancient and medieval texts.[7] Such an approach is exemplified in chapter 3, which finds a nexus of connections between craft, gender and political power in both classical and Norse traditions paralleled in metallurgical rituals documented in recent central Africa.

This introduction situates Bugge's theories in the context of comparative approaches to mythology, and offers a more plausible model for transmission by analogy with the study of cultural exchange between pre-Classical Greece and the ancient Near East. In chapter 1, I will survey the history of interactions between the Germanic-speaking people and the Roman Empire, and highlight the diverse evidence for Roman cultural influences on the inhabitants of northern Europe. This evidence provides a plausible context for the incorporation of classical elements into Germanic legendary traditions.

The remainder of the thesis falls naturally into two parts, each treating one of the Germanic legends with its classical analogues. Chapter 2 considers afresh within this historical context the relationship between the captivity and escape of Wayland and that of the Graeco-Roman Daedalus, concluding that the motif of the flight on mechanical wings was incorporated into the Wayland legend from classical tradition. In chapter 3, I apply a typological approach

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[6] For a stimulating recent analogical-comparative study of Norse and Greek (and other) wisdom literatures see Lilah Grace Canevaro, 'Hesiod and *Hávamál*: Transitions and the Transmissions of Wisdom', *Oral Tradition* 29:1 (2014), pp. 99-126; for a recognition of the ways in which analogical and genetic connections between separate traditions can dovetail, see Michael Clarke, 'Achilles, Byrhtnoth, and Cú Chulainn: Continuity and Analogy from Homer to the Medieval North', in M.J. Clarke, B.G.F. Currie & R.O.A.M. Lyne (eds.), *Epic Interactions: Perspectives on Homer, Virgil and the Epic Tradition Presented to Jasper Griffin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 243-271.

[7] Schjødt, 'Pre-Christian Religions', in Hermann, Mitchell & Schjødt (eds.), *Old Norse Mythology* (2017), pp. 16-23.

to the parallel between Wayland and Daedalus in two specific textual sources, the Old Norse eddic poem *Vǫlundarkviða* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, showing that despite differing emphases regarding the nature of the threat posed by technology, both cohere in presenting patriarchal cultural hegemony as necessary for societal stability. A similar nexus of ideological connections is additionally noted in anthropological data from recent central Africa.

The final two chapters consider the legend of Attila the Hun and the Burgundians. Chapter 4 traces the genesis and early development of the legend from a kernel of historical fact. I show that several ahistorical features present in later literary records must have been incorporated into the tradition at an early stage, but are not derived from the historical root. A likely model for these elements is identified in the classical myth of Medea, which circulated widely in the Roman world at the time of the Attila legend's genesis. In chapter 5, I highlight the different ways in which sacrificial imagery is consistently deployed in accounts of the infanticides of both Medea and the Old Norse Guðrún, and suggest that this is reflective of a broader discrepancy in the reception of each heroine by contemporary audiences.

Comparativism and Germanic Myth

In the loosest sense, comparative approaches to mythology are as old as the contacts between separate traditions. As early as the fifth century BCE, the Greek historian Herodotus voiced a belief that "σκεδὸν δὲ καὶ πάντων τὰ οὐνόματα τῶν θεῶν ἐξ Αἰγύπτου ἐλήλυθε ἐς τὴν Ἑλλάδα" (the names of almost all of the gods have come to Greece from Egypt).[8] He noted parallels in the iconography of Egyptian Isis and Greek Io, and stated that contemporary Egyptians identified their Osiris with the Greek Dionysus, and that they called Zeus 'Amun'.[9] In the same

[8] Herodotus, *Historiae* II. 50. 1: *Herodoti Historiae*, ed. by C. Hude, 3rd edition, 2 volumes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927), i. 150. Translations are my own throughout, unless otherwise stated.

[9] Herodotus, *Historiae* II. 41. 2–42. 5, i. 143–5.

way, as we shall discuss in chapter 1, comparisons between Graeco-Roman and Germanic traditions were prompted by the Roman Empire's early encounters with the Germanic-speaking peoples on the northern frontier. Julius Caesar stated that Mercury was the most important cult god among the Germani, followed by Apollo, Mars, Jupiter and Minerva;[10] a century and a half later, Tacitus also named Mercury as the chief god of the Germani, and further reported the worship of Hercules, Mars, and the Dioscuri.[11] It is widely agreed that Mercury denoted *Wodanaz/Óðinn, whilst Hercules was identified with *Þunraz/Þórr and Mars with *Tiwaz/Týr.[12] Numerous votive inscriptions in Germania combining Roman theonyms with Germanic epithets (e.g. *Hercules Magusanus*; *Mars Thingsus*) provide further evidence of such identifications in the late Roman period.[13] Early medieval texts including Jonas Bobiensis' *Vita Sancti Columbani* and Paulus Diaconus' *Historia Langobardorum* also associate Wodan with Mercury in the sixth and seventh centuries.[14]

In a different way, the sophisticated typological schemes found in stone carvings from Viking-Age northern England demonstrate an engagement with the similarities and contrasts between pagan myths and the Christian tradition. On the Gosforth Cross, carved in tenth-century Cumbria, scenes from the Old Norse Ragnarǫk myth are juxtaposed with a depiction of Christ's crucifixion;[15] the same sculptor probably also produced the Gosforth Fishing Stone,

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[10] Julius Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* VI. 17. 1–3: *C. Iuli Caesaris Commentariorum I: Libri VII De Bello Gallico*, ed. by Rene L. A. Du Pontet (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1900), p. 130.
[11] Tacitus, *Germania* IX. 1: *Cornelii Taciti Opera Minora*, ed. by M. Winterbottom & R.M. Ogilvie (Oxford, 1975), p. 42.
[12] Rudolf Simek, *Dictionary of Northern Mythology*, transl. by Angela Hall (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1993), pp. 174–5.
[13] D.H. Green, *Language and History in the Early Germanic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 247; Simek, *Dictionary* (1993), pp. 140–2 & 202–3.
[14] *Vita Columbani* I. 27: *Ionae Vitae Sanctorum Columbani, Vedastis, Iohannis*, ed. by Bruno Krusch, MGH SS. rer. Germ. 37 (Hannover & Leipzig: Impensis Bibliopoli Hahniani, 1905), p. 213; *Pauli Historia Langobardum* I. 9: *Scriptores Rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum Saec. VI–IX*, ed. by L. Bethmann & G. Waitz, MGH SS. rer. Lang. (Hannover: Impensis Bibliopoli Hahniani, 1878), pp. 52–3.
[15] Richard N. Bailey, *Viking Age Sculpture in Northern England* (London: Collins, 1980), pp.125–31; Lilla Kopár, *Gods and Settlers: The Iconography of Norse Mythology in Anglo-Scandinavian Sculpture* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), pp. 90–101, 167–79.

which depicts Þórr fishing for the Miðgarðsormr alongside Christian imagery.[16] The two monuments suggest a local patron "not only interested in pagan mythology but ... also deeply concerned about its relationship to Christian teaching".[17] Legendary material was likewise interpreted through a Christian lens; iconography associated with the Norse heroes Sigurðr and Gunnarr was typologically linked to Christian ideas in Anglo-Scandinavian England,[18] and as early as the eighth century the carver of the Northumbrian Franks Casket depicted Weland's revenge alongside a scene from the Nativity.[19]

In the thirteenth century, the Icelandic mythographer Snorri Sturluson in the prologue to his *Edda* euhemerised the Norse gods as descendants of the Trojan War hero Memnon. Their collective name *Æsir* is explained as referring to their origin in Asia; they followed Óðinn on a migration from Turkey to northern Europe, and due to their heroic grandeur they were mistaken for gods in the lands through which they passed.[20] In the epilogue to *Gylfaginning*, the first part of the *Edda*, Snorri further explains the pagan myths as deliberately misleading distortions of events from the Trojan War – the name Ǫku-Þórr ("Chariot-Þórr", i.e. Þórr) is connected with Hector ([H]ek-tor), and tales of Loki with his deceitful nature are said to derive from the Trojans' hostile accounts of the cunning Ulysses.[21] The early eighteenth-century Norwegian writer Jonas Ramus looked to the Trojan War myth in a different way in his imaginative identification of Óðinn with Odysseus.[22]

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[16] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers* (2012), pp. 65–8.
[17] Bailey, *Viking Age Sculpture* (1980), pp. 131–2.
[18] Bailey, *Viking Age Sculpture* (1980), pp. 124–5; Kopár, *Gods and Settlers* (2012), pp. 52–6.
[19] Richard Abels, 'What Has Weland to Do with Christ? The Franks Casket and the Acculturation of Christianity in Early Anglo-Saxon England', *Speculum* 84:3 (2009), pp. 549–81; Barbara Yorke, 'Ingeld, Weland and Christ', *Quaestio Insularis* 14 (2015), pp. 1–14.
[20] Snorri Sturluson, *Prologue* 9–11: *Edda: Prologue and Gylfaginning*, ed. by Anthony Faulkes (London: VSNR, 2005), pp. 4–6.
[21] Snorri Sturluson, *Gylfaginning* 53, pp. 54–5.
[22] Jonas Wellendorf, 'Odin of Many Devices: Jonas Ramus (d. 1718) on the Identity of Odin and Odysseus', in T.R. Tangherlini (ed.), *Nordic Mythologies: Interpretations, Intersections, and Institutions* (Berkeley: North Pinehurst Press, 2014), pp. 115-132.

Once coincidence is ruled out, the identification of a parallel motif or concept between separate mythic traditions can be accounted for in one of four ways: (1) the motif in question may reflect the derivation of the extant traditions from a common ancestor; (2) the motif may have been introduced into a given tradition through contact with another; (3) the motif may be the result of independent development in unrelated societies which nonetheless have environmental circumstances in common; (4) the motif may reflect something universal to the human experience. Following Schjødt's scheme discussed above, we can categorise the first two of these as 'genetic' and the latter two as 'typological' or 'analogical' perspectives.[23] Naturally, there is overlap between these different models: horizontal transmission is more likely, for instance, between traditions that already have something in common due to shared heritage; the universalising perspective, meanwhile, could be seen as ultimately a genetic perspective, on the basis that "all humans, and thus all human cultures, are fundamentally related."[24]

Each of these four explanatory frameworks has demonstrable merits in the appropriate circumstances, and the prominence of each as a dominant model has fluctuated over the course of the history of comparative research. Each, too, has the potential to be pursued *ad absurdum*, particularly if applied as an all-encompassing 'key to mythology'. Early theorists of Indo-European comparative mythology were preoccupied with explaining the extant myths as allegories for natural phenomena, an approach exemplified by Friedrich Max Müller, who interpreted virtually all extant myths as distorted relics of solar mythology. The flaws of Max

[23] See above, p. 2, n. 3. I prefer 'analogical' over 'typological' simply to avoid undue association with biblical typology, a common mode of early and medieval Christian exegesis in which New Testament events are seen as having been prefigured by Old Testament ones: see e.g. Kopár, *Gods and Settlers* (2012), pp. 168–71.

[24] Schjødt, 'Pre-Christian Religions', in Hermann, Mitchell & Schjødt (eds.), *Old Norse Mythology* (2017), p. 4 & n. 1.

Müller's approach have been well documented and were criticised from an early stage.[25] His methodology was most memorably vitiated by the clergyman Richard Littledale, who in 1870 used it to prove that Max Müller was himself a solar myth.[26] The ritualist and psychoanalytic approaches, the dominant trends in comparative mythology and religion in the early twentieth century, were also pushed to excess.[27]

Bugge's derivations likewise represented an overreach of the diffusionist-genetic comparative perspective. His theory was not without precedent – Anton Christian Bang had argued in 1879 for the influence of the Sibylline Oracles on *Vǫluspá*, and Guðbrandur Vígfússon had earlier proposed the origin of the eddic poems in the British Isles.[28] Classical analogues had also been frequently adduced by Jacob Grimm in his *Deutsche Mythologie*, though here the purpose was often more rhetorical than genealogical, implicitly ascribing an equal antiquity to the Germanic traditions he was discussing. Bugge's thesis differed from his predecessors in its systematic derivation of the majority of Old Norse myths and legends from putative classical and Christian sources. The first volume of Bugge's *Studier* presented a detailed examination of the Baldr myth; the Icelandic tradition of Baldr's death, he argued, was borrowed substantially from English stories about Christ, whilst the Danish tradition (recorded by Saxo Grammaticus) concerning the conflict between Balderus and Hotherus reworked Alexandrian and Latin versions of the killing of Achilles by Paris. He additionally perceived a Christian background to the myth of Óðinn on the gallows and the cosmological function of Yggdrasill. Bugge's thesis met with mostly negative reception; particularly vociferous rebukes

[25] Jaan Puhvel, *Comparative Mythology* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), pp. 14–5; Richard M. Dorson, 'The Eclipse of Solar Mythology', *Journal of American Folklore* 68:270 (1955), pp. 393–416.
[26] The piece is reproduced as: R.F. Littledale, 'The Oxford Solar Myth: A Contribution to Comparative Mythology', *European Journal of Sociology* 26:2 (1985), pp. 282–9.
[27] Puhvel, *Comparative Mythology* (1987), pp. 15–8.
[28] Joseph Harris, 'Traditions of Eddic Scholarship', in C. Larrington, J. Quinn & B. Schorn (eds.), *A Handbook to Eddic Poetry: Myths and Legends of Early Scandinavia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 33–57, at p. 46.

came from the German scholar Karl Müllenhoff,[29] with more balanced criticism following over the subsequent decade. Though Bugge's discussion of the full range of mythological material is strictly beyond the scope of the current inquiry, this first volume merits attention, since it provides a detailed explication of his methodological approach, which is applied also to the heroic material.[30]

A relatively uncontroversial foundational aspect of Bugge's thesis was his demonstration that none of the eddic poems could have been composed in its current form prior to *c*. 800 CE, based on the evidence of linguistic change in Scandinavia around this time.[31] Of course, this proved nothing about the contents of the poetry; Bugge therefore noted that many of the mythological figures in the eddic poems and in Snorri's *Edda* are unknown in German tradition, and thus attributed their invention to foreign influence. Yet their peculiarity to Scandinavian myth does not prove the derivation of such figures from classical or Christian tradition, and the former supposition is in any case contentious given the paucity of evidence for pre-Christian German myth. In a similar vein, in a discussion of a reading of Bugge's paper on *Vǫlundarkviða* to the Viking Society on 21 April 1899, it was observed that Bugge "always regarded what we actually have as all that ever existed, and made no allowance for what must have perished in the lapse of time".[32]

Another cornerstone of Bugge's theory was his belief that virtually all of the eddic poems were composed in the British Isles, in support of which he posited examples of words

[29] Karl Müllenhoff, *Deutsche Altertumskunde*, 5 volumes (Berlin: Weidmann, 1870–1899), v.

[30] A more concise but useful summary of Bugge's method with many examples is provided by his long introduction to the translation of the second volume of *Studier*: *The Home of the Eddic Poems with Especial Reference to the Helgi-Lays*, trans. by William Henry Schofield (London: David Nutt, 1899), pp. xiii–lxxix.

[31] Sophus Bugge, *Studier over de nordiske Gude- og Heltesagns Oprindelse*, 2 volumes (Christiania: A. Cammermeyer, 1881–89), i. 3–4; cf. Harris, 'Traditions of Eddic Scholarship', in Larrington, Quinn & Schorn (eds.), *Handbook* (2016), pp. 40–1, 47.

[32] 'Reports of the Proceedings at the Meetings of the Club [1895–1899]', *Saga-Book of the Viking Society* XXIII (1990–1993), pp. 365–74, at p. 370.

and poetic expressions borrowed from Old English and Irish.[33] As Joseph Harris has noted, this involved him in a problematic insistence on the *literary* composition of the eddic poems in the British Isles in the Viking Age, from where they were subsequently transported to Iceland in written form.[34] The supposition of such a process was necessitated by Bugge's explanations of specific poetic expressions in Old Norse as deriving from misunderstood or corrupted Old English manuscript forms, but there is no trace of any such manuscripts in Iceland. Subsequent works illustrate Bugge's adherence to this "conception of what would have to have been a phase of *oral* literary history … entirely in terms of manuscript culture".[35]

Bugge proceeded in a similar way to explain Old Norse mythological names as garbled reproductions of names from classical myth, filtered through English or Irish transmission. The etymologies have been recognised as frequently implausible and fanciful.[36] A particularly elaborate example is the derivation of Bous, the killer of Hotherus and avenger of Balderus in Saxo's *Gesta Danorum*, from Ajax, the killer of Paris in the Trojan War myth.[37] As Bugge argues, Norsemen heard the name *Ajax* as Irish *aithech* (farmer), which they rendered as *Búi*, latinised as *Bous*; moreover, the name of Bous' mother, Rinda (Rindr in the Icelandic texts), is explained as deriving from Rhene, the mother of the Oilean Ajax in Hyginus' *Fabulae*; it is assumed that the version of the classical myth relayed to the Norsemen failed to distinguish between Oilean Ajax and Telamonian Ajax, the latter being represented in some texts as Paris'

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[33] Bugge, *Studier* (1881–1889), i. 4–7.

[34] J. Harris, 'Eddic Poetry', in Carol J. Clover & John Lindow (eds.) *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature: A Critical Guide* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985, 2nd printing 2005), pp. 68–156, at p. 113.

[35] Harris 'Traditions of Eddic Scholarship', in Larrington, Quinn & Schorn (eds.), *Handbook* (2016), p. 42.

[36] George Stephens, *Prof. S. Bugge's Studies on Northern Mythology Shortly Examined* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1883, p. 28; W.A. Craigie, 'Review: *The Home of the Eddic Poems, with especial reference to the Helgi Lays* translated by Sophus Bugge and William Henry Schofield', *English Historical Review* 14:55 (1899), pp. 545–6; P. Groth, 'Review: *Studier über die Entstehung der nordischen Götter- und Heltesagen* by Sophus Bugge', *Modern Language Notes* 5:1 (1899), pp. 15–17.

[37] Bugge, *Studier* (1881–1889), i. 127–31.

killer. The Icelandic sources reflect the same confusion in naming Baldr's avenger as Váli or Áli, which is traced via a chain of mutations to *Oileus*, the epithet of Oilean Ajax.[38] A similar instance is the proposed connection between Lichas, whom Hercules in classical tradition hurls into the ocean, and the dwarf Litr, who runs in front of Þórr's feet and is kicked onto Baldr's funeral pyre.[39] The mutation of the intervocalic *-c-* to *-t-* is attributed to a scribal error in the manuscript from which a Norseman heard this story, whilst the substitution of fire for water is explained as a conflation of the Lichas episode with the death of Priam's son Lycaon in the *Iliad*: Achilles kills Lycaon and throws his body into the river, but the bodies are later cast onto the land and set on fire.[40] The Lycaon episode furthermore explains Snorri's statement that Litr "fyrir fótum honum ran" (ran in front of his feet),[41] since Lycaon is said to have been killed after throwing himself in vain at Achilles' feet in supplication.

The convoluted series of misunderstandings and the cherry-picking approach to multiple specific source texts make for a highly spurious process of derivation in both instances. Bugge's work on the Vǫlundr legend shows a similar patchwork approach supplemented by questionable etymologies: he suggested that *Vǫlundarkviða* has incorporated features from Latin myths about Vulcan, Daedalus and Theseus,[42] and elsewhere explained Níðuðr's epithet "Njára dróttin" (lord of the Njárs) as being modelled on an Old English poetic source in which Niðhad conquered *Neoðran* ("the lower ones"), which stemmed ultimately from Niðhad's purported model in Minos, who is said to have been judge among "those below"

[38] Bugge, *Studier* (1881–1889), i. 206–12.
[39] Bugge, *Studier* (1881–1889), i. 225–7.
[40] *Iliad* XXI. 34–135, 324–81: *Homeri Opera*, ed. by David B. Monro & Thomas W. Allen, 5 volumes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1912–1920), ii. 188–91, 198–200.
[41] Snorri Sturluson, *Gylfaginning* 49, p. 46.
[42] Cf. also Sophus Bugge, 'Det oldnorske Kvad om Völund (Völundarkviða) og dets Forhold til engelske Sagn', *ANF* 26 (1910), pp. 33–77, in which it is suggested that *Vǫlundarkviða* has incorporated features from Latin myths about Vulcan, Daedalus and Theseus. The paper is translated into English as 'The Norse Lay of Wayland ("Völundarkviða") and its Relation to English Tradition', *Saga-Book of the Viking Society* II (1897–1900), pp. 271–312.

(*inferiores*).[43] The implausibility of cases such as these is a serious weakness of Bugge's overall argument, since the purported correspondence of names forms the bulk of the hard data supporting the speculative narrative parallels he adduces.

In addition to these objections to Bugge's methodology, several critics have raised the difficulties attendant on his restriction of classical influences to the Viking Age. P. Groth found merit in some of Bugge's specific connections and in the basic premise "that myths are subject to the same wanderings as human ideas generally"; however, he questioned whether the Viking-Age insular context allowed a sufficient interval for such influences to have taken pervasive hold.[44] George Stephens pointed out that the Germanic peoples could readily have acquired familiarity with classical traditions through their contacts in the Roman imperial period.[45] (He even suggested that borrowings from classical myths could in principle have occurred through Germanic contacts with Greek colonies in Scythia from the seventh century BCE,[46] though this line of attack brings countless problems of its own). As we shall see in the following chapter, linguistic and archaeological evidence supports the hypothesis of earlier, non-literary Roman influences on aspects of Germanic religion and myth.

Despite the mostly negative reception of Bugge's theories by contemporary scholarship, even his critics acknowledged the ingenuity of the connections he drew.[47] The early hostility towards Bugge's ideas, exemplified by the polemicism of Müllenhoff, was at least partially driven by ideological concerns as a consequence of the contemporary political

[43] Bugge, *The Home of the Eddic* (1899), pp. xxi–xxii.
[44] Groth, 'Review' (1899), p. 16.
[45] Stephens, *Prof. Bugge's Studies* (1883), p. 12.
[46] Stephens, *Prof. Bugge's Studies* (1883), pp. 10–11.
[47] Craigie, 'Review' (1899), pp. 545–6; F.N. Robinson, 'Review: *The Home of the Eddic Poems, with Especial Reference to the Helgi Lays*, by Sophus Bugge and William Henry Schofield', *Journal of American Folklore* 12:47 (1899), pp. 301–3; F. York Powell, 'Review: *The Home of the Eddic Poems, with Special Reference to the Helgi-Lays*, by Sophus Bugge and William Henry Schofield', *Folklore* 10:4 (1899), pp. 450–6, at p. 452.

climate.[48] German nationalists in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries placed much emphasis on Tacitus' claim that the German peoples were "indigenas ... minimeque aliarum gentium adventibus et hospitiis mixtos" (autochthonous, and barely affected by immigration and interaction with other races), and "propriam et sinceram et tantum sui similem gentem" (a distinct and pure race, and like none but themselves).[49] The burgeoning pan-Germanist ideology of nineteenth-century Germany, resulting in war with Denmark over the territory of Schleswig-Holstein, gave rise to anti-German Scandinavianist voices;[50] where German philologists following Jacob Grimm encouraged the appropriation of Old Norse literature on the basis of linguistic kinship, Scandinavian scholars viewed the Germans as pretenders to Nordic culture. Even Bugge himself, despite his internationalist leanings, displayed occasional tendencies to romantic nationalism, for instance in his attribution of almost all of the eddic poems to Norwegian poets, often on very spurious grounds.[51] The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries also witnessed the rise of the Icelandic movement for independence from Denmark, achieved partially in 1918 and fully with the founding of the Republic of Iceland in 1944. Icelandic scholars began to lay claim to Old Norse literature as an exclusively Icelandic heritage. Emphasis fell naturally on the family sagas in this regard,[52] but one may also detect in eddic scholarship of the early twentieth century what one scholar called a "romantic bias"

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[48] Harris, 'Traditions of Eddic Scholarship', in Larrington, Quinn & Schorn (eds.), *Handbook* (2016), p. 46; Julia Zernack, 'Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and German Culture', in Sumarliði R. Ísleifsson & Daniel Chartier (eds.), *Iceland and Images of the North* (Quebec: University of Quebec Press, 2011), pp. 157–86, at pp. 170–1.

[49] Tacitus, *Germania* II. 1, IV. 1: *Opera Minora*, pp. 37, 39; see e.g. Klaus von See, *Deutsche Germanen-Ideologie: Vom Humanismus bis zur Gegenwart* (Frankfurt: Athenäum, 1970).

[50] J.P.T. Bury, 'Nationalities and Nationalism', in Bury (ed.), *The New Cambridge Modern History, Volume X: The Zenith of European Power 1830–70* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 213–45, at p. 220. See also J. Laurence Hare, *Excavating Nations: Archaeology, Museums, and the German-Danish Borderlands* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015) for a survey of pan-Germanist and Scandinavianist ideologies operative in 19th-century archaeology in Schleswig-Holstein.

[51] Cf. John McKinnell, '*Vǫlundarkviða*: Origins and Interpretation', in Donata Kick & John D. Schafer (eds.), *Essays on Eddic Poetry* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), pp. 221–48, at pp. 229–31.

[52] Jesse L. Byock, 'History and the sagas: the effect of nationalism' in Gísli Pálsson (ed.), *From Sagas to Society: Comparative Approaches to Early Iceland* (Enflield Lock: Hisarlik Press, 1992), p. 52.

that "continues to isolate [the eddic poems] from the world of literature ... of which they are a small part".[53] Joseph Harris has suggested that Bugge's propositions were sometimes calculatedly provocative;[54] at any rate they certainly provoked, as is demonstrated for instance by the reception of his paper on *Vǫlundarkviða* in the minutes of the Viking Society meeting previously discussed. The German scholar Karl Blind, who chaired the meeting, expressed clear frustration at Bugge's "always trying to prove the Scandinavian mythology to be a mixture of classical myths and Christian lore",[55] and was palpably relieved to be able to conclude that "Professor Bugge's attack on the origin of the noble Scandinavian mythology had failed".[56] As these comments make clear, many scholars of the time considered the value of Old Norse literature to be compromised by any indications of foreign influence.

The ideological prejudices of Bugge's detractors do not in themselves vitiate their criticisms of his methodology. As we have acknowledged, Bugge's approach was flawed in a number of ways, from his narrowly delimited context for diffusion to his conception of the means of diffusion, which was found to be unnecessarily and implausibly complex, involving the patchworking of multiple specific recensions of separate classical stories into a single Norse myth. Additionally, Bugge's systematic aim to trace almost everything in the Norse texts to classical and Christian models meant that genuinely striking correspondences and unremarkably vague or widespread parallels were afforded equal weight.

A Way Forward

The problems with Bugge's theory can be surmounted through a more targeted treatment of individual narratives with classical comparanda, with a more plausible conception of the

[53] A. Le Roy Andrews, 'The Criteria for Dating the Eddic Poems', *Proceedings of the Modern Language Aassociation* 42:4 (1927), pp. 1044–54, at pp. 1050–1.
[54] Harris, 'Traditions of Eddic Scholarship', in Larrington, Quinn & Schorn (eds.), *Handbook* (2016), p. 47.
[55] 'Proceedings [1895–1899]', *Saga-Book* XXIII (1990–1993), p. 371.
[56] 'Proceedings [1895–1899]', *Saga-Book* XXIII (1990–1993), p. 372.

process of transmission. Models of literary interaction based on the identification of specific sources and moments of transmission are unsuitable in the context of a genetic perspective on the Graeco-Roman and Germanic legendary traditions.[57] A more plausible model may be sought in the study of the interface between the pre-Classical Greek world and the ancient Near East. Few classical scholars today would deny a relationship of some sort between Archaic Greek epic and the literatures of the Ancient Near East, though considerable debate remains concerning the appropriate explanatory framework(s) for the correspondences that have been widely identified.[58]

The Orientalising approach to early Greek poetry has been spearheaded by Walter Burkert in *The Orientalizing Revolution*, and M.L. West in his *East Face of Helicon*. Burkert, much like Bugge, may be criticised for his insistence on the restriction of Near Eastern influences on Greek religion and literature to the period between 750–650 BCE.[59] West has been commended for the comprehensiveness of his coverage in cataloguing parallels between Greek and Near Eastern narrative traditions,[60] but he gave little consideration to questions of methodology. Indeed, one wonders, in view of his assertion that the correspondences identified would "speak for themselves",[61] whether certain examples were included simply for a rhetorical strategy of inundation. West noted, for instance, the shared image of the 'clouds of death' in Greek and Akkadian battle narrative, as well as the metaphor of reaping for the slaughter of warriors in Greek, Sumerian, and Hebrew;[62] yet both of these could quite easily occur independently to poets in any culture familiar with agriculture and weather. Erik van

[57] Cf. Harris, 'Traditions of Eddic Scholarship', in Larrington, Quinn & Schorn (eds.), *Handbook* (2016), p. 48.
[58] Adrian Kelly, 'The Babylonian Captivity of Homer: The Case of the Διος Απατη', *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 151 (2008), pp. 259–304, at p. 260.
[59] Martin Bernal, 'Burkert's Orientalizing Revolution', *Arion*, 3rd series 4:2 (1996), pp. 137–47, at p. 146.
[60] Ken Dowden, 'Review Article: West on the East: Martin West's *East Face of Helicon* and its forerunners', *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 121 (2001), pp. 167–175.
[61] West, *East Face of Helicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. viii.
[62] West, *East Face* (1997) pp. 228–9.

Dongen has noted that the West's failure to consider fully *how* Greek poets could have assimilated Near Eastern material meant that the specific Near Eastern connections he drew do not always tally with a detailed consideration of the archaeological evidence for interactions with the relevant regions.[63] Additionally, as Ian Rutherford has pointed out, West's thesis is further problematised by the fact that in his subsequent *Indo-European Poetry and Myth* he identified as Indo-European survivals motifs that he had previously claimed as Near Eastern borrowings.[64] West anticipated this criticism, pre-emptively countering: "my object is to identify whatever is Indo-European, not just what is distinctively or exclusively Indo-European."[65] Clearly, however, a Greek text containing a motif previously identified as a Near Eastern import cannot also be used as evidence that the same motif was present in an Indo-European myth.

The flaws of a quasi-literary or source-based model of transmission in the preliterary context of Archaic Greece are illustrated by the frequent exaggeration both of the similarity between the use of a motif in a Greek text and in its purported model, and of the unsuitability of the motif in its Greek context. Thus, for instance, Burkert found Hera's deception of Zeus in *Iliad* XIV incongruous, and argued for its derivation from the Akkadian *Atrahasis*; Adrian Kelly has shown, however, that the episode can be fully accounted for with reference to the wider tradition of Archaic Greek poetry.[66] Similarly, Sarah Morris has suggested that another episode in the *Iliad*, in which the Greek hero Diomedes trades armour with the Trojan ally Glaucus in recognition of ancestral ties,[67] is derived from the episode in 1 Samuel 18:1–4, in

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[63] Erik van Dongen, 'Contacts between Pre-Classical Greece and the Near East in the Context of Cultural Influences: An Overview', in Robert Rollinger, Andreas Luther & Josef Weisehöfer (eds.), *Getrennte Wege? Kommunikation, Raum und Wahrnehmung in der alten Welt* (Frankfurt: Verlag Antike, 2007), pp. 13–49, at p. 13.

[64] Ian Rutherford, 'Hesiod and the Literary Traditions of the Near East', in Franco Montanari, Antonio Rengakos & Christos Tsagalis (eds.), *Brill's Companion to Hesiod* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 9–35, at p. 20

[65] West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 20.

[66] Kelly, 'Babylonian Captivity' (2008), pp. 259–304.

[67] *Iliad* VI. 230–6: *Homeri Opera* i. 127.

which Jonathan offers arms and clothing to David. According to Morris, the Homeric incident "baffles the poet but boasts a Biblical pedigree".[68] However, it is not the act of exchanging gifts *per se* that the *Iliad* poet finds remarkable; rather, Glaucus is deemed foolish for relinquishing armour of far greater value than that which he receives in turn.[69] Moreover, the Biblical parallel is not all that close after all: Jonathan's gift to David consists of virtually everything *except* protective armour – David, in fact, had earlier declined Saul's offer of armour for his combat against Goliath (1 Samuel 17:38–39).

This comparison by Morris also raises a further issue common in orientalising arguments, namely the relative dating of texts. Rutherford has warned that the available written evidence "creates the impression that Near Eastern and Egyptian literature have priority in all cases, but this may be an illusion".[70] In Morris' case, this premise is particularly glaring, since the Deuteronomistic History, including the Books of Samuel as we know them, was compiled between the late seventh and mid-sixth centuries:[71] later, therefore, than the composition of the Homeric poems, even if one accepts West's controversial late dating of them.[72]

A more plausible model has been advocated by scholars including Ian Rutherford and Adrian Kelly, who have postulated a more tradition-oriented rather than a source-based process of transmission. Without dismissing the significance of mythic parallels between Greek and Near Eastern texts as evidence of a historical relationship, they question the validity of attempts

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[68] Sarah P. Morris, 'Homer and the Near East', in Ian Morris & Barry Powell (eds.), *A New Companion to Homer* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), pp. 599–623, at p. 620.
[69] *Iliad* VI. 234–6: *Homeri Opera* i. 127.
[70] Rutherford, 'Hesiod and … the Near East', in Montanari, Rengakos & Tsagalis (eds.), *Brill's Companion* (2009), p. 20.
[71] Douglas A. Knight, 'Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomists', in James Luther Mays, David L. Petersen & Kent Harold Richards (eds.), *Old Testament Interpretation Past, Present and Future: Essays in Honour of Gene M. Tucker* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), pp. 61–79, at pp. 62–6. As detailed by Gwilym H. Jones, '1 and 2 Samuel', in John Barton and John Muddiman (eds.), *The Oxford Bible Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 196–232, at pp. 197–201, the compilers of the Deuteronomistic History drew on older traditions – but so did the Homeric poems.
[72] M.L. West, 'The Homeric Question Today', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 155:4 (2011), pp. 383–93, at pp. 391–3.

to identify the composers of the texts that happen to be extant as the vectors of external influences, and the precise moments at which crossovers took place. Kelly sees the interactive dynamic as "a process, with several points of contact, beginning in the Late Bronze Age but continuing down into the Early Iron Age."[73] Rutherford similarly examines the relationships between the song cultures of Bronze-Age Anatolia and Greece, concluding that the process of diffusion "is not a simple one between two cultures, but a more complex one involving multiple cultures and a much longer time period."[74] Elsewhere, Rutherford has observed that even in the case of a relatively certain instance of Near Eastern borrowing in early Greek poetry, the Divine Succession Myth in Hesiod's *Theogony*, it is difficult to isolate one route of diffusion, or to establish where Hesiod himself fits into the picture.[75]

The applicability of this model of transmission to the contacts between the Roman and Germanic worlds is clear. As we shall discuss in detail in chapter 1, in this latter case too we are dealing with interactions of diverse kinds over a protracted period, with evidence for contemporaneous influences in other cultural spheres including visual arts. We additionally have the advantage of being able to circumvent some of the interpretative difficulties outlined above, through our focus on two specific legendary traditions. In terms of the direction of transmission, the relative dating of the source and target traditions is more certain. Not only are the classical myths securely attested in writing at a far earlier stage, but additionally, as we shall see, there are good grounds for supposing that the Germanic traditions with which we are concerned first developed in Late Antiquity. The texts in which the legendary traditions of the Migration Period are preserved date from centuries after this period of proposed interaction

[73] Adrian Kelly, 'Sexing and Gendering the Succession Myth in Hesiod and the Ancient Near East', in Adrian Kelly & Chris Metcalf (eds.), *Gods and Mortals in Early Greek and Near Eastern Mythology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021 [in press]). I am extremely grateful to Adrian for allowing me to read his chapter in advance of publication.

[74] Ian Rutherford, 'The Song of the Zintuhis: Chorus and Ritual in Anatolia and Greece', in Billie Jean Collins, Mary R. Bachvarova & Ian C. Rutherford (eds.) *Anatolian Interfaces: Hittites, Greeks and their Neighbours* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2007), pp. 73–84, at p. 83

[75] Rutherford, 'Hesiod and … the Near East' (2009), pp. 31–5.

with classical culture; however, careful comparison of the evidence from the extant branches of the Germanic tradition, alongside evidence from Latin historiography, can facilitate the reconstruction of earlier forms of legends common to all three.

This long-term perspective on the possible incorporation of classical elements into Germanic legendary traditions entails that we are not searching for echoes of specific classical sources. Whilst it is not out of the question that Germanic-speakers through contacts with Roman merchants or military colleagues could have encountered classical texts, there is no positive evidence of interactions of this nature. Moreover, the temporal separation, with attendant linguistic change, between the period of any such encounters and the composition of the extant literary sources for the Germanic legends would render it extremely improbable that putative textual borrowings would be discernible. If striking correspondences of poetic expression were to present themselves, this might in principle provide valuable support for a given comparison, but only under certain conditions. In order for such a correspondence to be pertinent to the current investigation, it would have to be established that 1) the classical text in question was certainly read by Romans in direct contact with Germanic-speakers in Late Antiquity; and 2) that the Germanic text in question reproduces a particular phrase that has been faithfully preserved from the Migration Period. Neither of these requisites is likely to be satisfied on the basis of the available evidence.

Instead, we should reckon with the circulation of narratives independent of any specific literary treatment. The classical sources should be used instead as a guide in establishing what myths were current in different periods, and in what forms. This approach entails a very broad and diachronic perspective on the classical corpus, considering not only conventionally literary texts of diverse genres but also treatises on philosophical and scientific topics, as well as trends in the iconography of different periods. Our interest is not limited to sources which offer detailed narrative accounts of the classical myths; casual mentions of the central figures are of

equal or perhaps even greater significance in indicating what stories were likely to be prominent within the frame of reference of Romans in different periods.

Finally, it bears emphasising that we are not seeking to account for every element of the Germanic legends with recourse to classical models. If the Germanic legends did not develop in isolation from the cultural influences of the Roman world, neither did they originate as wholesale imitations of classical myths. Whilst an understanding of the origins of any given cultural artefact is valuable in itself, the identification of sources and models opens up further avenues for considering why certain external influences have an impact where others may not, and for identifying how a foreign element has been transformed in the process of its incorporation into a new context.

A Note on Names

A more mundane methodological challenge presents itself in the attempt to synthesise the evidence of different literary traditions which know the same characters by different names. In what follows, I hope to minimise both confusion and inaccuracy through the following policy: for the Germanic material, when discussing a character as she or he appears in a particular text, I use the nominative form of the name as it appears in the text in question (thus, *Weland*/*Vǫlundr*/*Velent*; *Guðrún*/*Kriemhilt*/*Grímhildr*; *Gunnarr*/*Gunther*; *Atli*/*Ætla*/*Etzel*, and so on). When discussing characters independent of any specific textual manifestation, I have tried to employ forms without attachment to any one tradition or text; in some instances, a generic anglicisation is available (e.g. *Wayland*), whilst in others the name of a historical prototype suggests itself (e.g. *Gundahar*; *Attila*). Attila's wife presents a specific problem in that her name in German tradition is unrelated to that in Norse tradition. In this instance, I have had either to pair the two (*Guðrún/Kriemhilt*) or to refer to her simply as *Attila's wife*.

In the case of classical material, selectively leaving certain names in transliterated form whilst anglicising others seems unsatisfactorily arbitrary, but it equally seems perverse to discuss *Hómēros* and *Ovidius* rather than *Homer* and *Ovid*. I have therefore opted for common anglicisations of the names of both authors and characters. I have additionally deemed it an unnecessary complication to distinguish between Greek and Latin forms of the same name (e.g. *Daidalos* versus *Daedalus*), since our primary interest is in the details of the Germanic traditions. An exception to this has been made when discussing aspects of Greek cosmology and theogony; the majority of the pre-Olympian deities were identified in Roman religion and literature with native deities (e.g. Kronos with Saturn), so that straightforward transliteration of the Greek names, rather than latinisation or anglicisation thereof, seems the most natural way to represent their appearances in Greek texts.

CHAPTER 1: ROMANI AND GERMANI

This chapter surveys the history of contacts between the Germanic peoples and the Roman Empire. Beginning with a terminological discussion acknowledging the controversies surrounding the application of the label 'Germanic', I then offer an overview of the various forms of interaction from the initial encounters in the first century BCE to the dissolution of the western Empire into multiple Germanic successor states in the fifth century CE, before turning to consider documentary and archaeological evidence for the wide-ranging cultural influence of the Roman world on the Germanic-speaking peoples.

The traditional understanding of fall of the western Roman Empire is that it was brought about by the invasion of hordes of mainly Germanic-speaking barbarians, who had hitherto been a peripheral feature in the Roman worldview. The reasons behind this perception are various, including a long-standing bias towards the classical world as being simultaneously the origin and the pinnacle of civilisation; and reliance on contemporary Roman literary sources, which give frequently exaggerated reports of the savagery of the barbarian incursions, and the primitive nature of the barbarians themselves. Additionally, the important archaeological revelations discussed below, which offer a far more complex picture of interactions between the Roman and Germanic worlds, came at a time when the conventional narrative was already firmly rooted in popular understanding. This orthodoxy has been challenged from many angles in more recent decades, resulting in a more nuanced conception of the transition from Empire into multiple successor kingdoms, a process which occurred in the context of varied Romano-German interactions over a protracted period. Whilst the revisionist trend may at times have been carried too far, it is no longer possible to maintain a one-dimensional view of sudden appearance and violent invasion.[1] Both the depth and breadth of contacts and the specific

[1] Bryan Ward-Perkins, *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 1–10, gives an excellent and concise overview of the development of scholarly

evidence for Germanic imitation of Graeco-Roman forms of cultural expression point to a plausible historical context for the process of assimilation of classical mythological ideas into Germanic traditions during these centuries.

'Germanic' and Germani

It is important to bear in mind when studying the early Germanic world that the designation 'Germanic' is (like 'Celtic', 'Slavic' or 'Italic') a linguistic, not an ethnic or geographical one. The parent language, an Indo-European dialect, developed into a separate language or language complex, Proto-Germanic, some time before 500 BCE,[2] the generally accepted period of the First Germanic Sound Shift (Grimm's Law). Some have argued that a distinct Proto-Germanic should be dated considerably earlier than this *terminus ad quem*, into the second or even third millenium BCE.[3] Whatever the case may be, the earliest known attestation of a Germanic language appears on a helmet found at Negova, Slovenia (formerly Negau), in an inscription probably made in the second or first century BCE. Evidently, great caution must attend the application of a linguistic label in a period prior to the advent of linguistic evidence.

Archaeologically, the Jastorf culture in north Germany and southern Denmark and the Harpstedt culture of northwest Germany and Holland have been plausibly associated with the ancestors of the Germanic peoples.[4] However, we cannot know whether the Jastorf bearers themselves spoke a Germanic or Proto-Germanic language,[5] nor does material culture equate to ethnic identity – as Peter Heather has pointed out, the distinct Germanic tribes listed by

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opinion, whilst warning against excess sanitisation of violent elements. Edward James, *Europe's Barbarians, AD 200–600* (Harlow: Pearson/Longman, 2009), maintains a good balance throughout in recognising the diversity of interactions between the Roman and Germanic worlds in the late imperial period.

[2] J.P. Mallory, *In Search of the Indo-Europeans: Language, Archaeology and Myth* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1989), pp. 86–7.

[3] Malcolm Todd, *The Early Germans* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 11–12; M.L. West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 10.

[4] Mallory, *In Search of the Indo-Europeans* (1989), pp. 86–7.

[5] Todd, *The Early Germans* (1992), p. 10.

Tacitus, Pliny and Ptolemy are vastly more numerous than the distinct archaeological cultures of Germania in this period.[6]

The ancient label *Germani*, bestowed by classical authors from the first century BCE upon the inhabitants of the region of Europe to the north and east of Gallic territory,[7] was by contrast used to describe particular groups of people on the basis of perceived ethnic affiliation or similar social norms. Yet caveats apply here too. The word *Germani* itself, along with some of the Germanic tribal names cited in Roman sources, is possibly of Celtic derivation.[8] Moreover, one of the foremost tribes of the Germani in the early historical record was the Suebi, whom Caesar reports as having crossed the Rhine into Gaul. According to Caesar, they did so under the leadership of one Ariovistus, whose name (as probably many of his followers) is Celtic, not Germanic.[9] Elsewhere, Caesar suggests that the martial superiority of the Belgae over the other Gallic tribes is due to their being in fact mostly Germanic migrants from east of the Rhine.[10] However we account for these observations, they go to show that (perhaps unsurprisingly) the divisions between neighbouring Germanic and Celtic groups in this period were not as clear-cut as the terminology of ancient and modern historians is liable to suggest.

No designation, then, is without its problems. 'Germanic-speaking peoples' is the most accurate, but also the most cumbersome; 'Germanic peoples' is slightly less so, but carries political baggage; 'Germani' is concise, but may have meant different things at different stages

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[6] Peter Heather, *The Goths* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), pp. 14–7.

[7] The Syrian polymath Poseidonios, around the turn of the first century BCE, made the first known use of the term, though his work only survives as fragments quoted by later authors. The name *Germani* was also attached as an epithet to an unrelated barbarian people, the Oretani, who settled in southern Iberia in the fourth century BCE, but this does not help to dispel our uncertainty over the origin and meaning of the Latin term: see Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia* III. 25: *Pliny Natural History*, ed. & transl. by H. Rackham, W.H.S. Jones & D.E. Eichholz, LCL 330, 352–3, 370–1, 392–4, 418–9 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1938–1962), ii. 22.

[8] James, *Europe's Barbarians* (2009), p. 23.

[9] Malcolm Todd, *The Northern Barbarians 100 BC – AD 300*, revised edition (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), p. 11.

[10] Julius Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* II. 4. 1–4, pp. 36–7; James, *Europe's Barbarians* (2009), p. 22.

of Roman history and historiography.[11] All are labels imposed from the outside, and share the unfortunate consequence of implying a level of cohesion that was probably alien to the experience of the peoples in question: as is frequently highlighted in scholarship on the topic, there is little evidence to suggest that the peoples whom we call Germanic thought of themselves as in any way connected.[12] Walter Goffart has even called for the erasure of "[t]he G-word" and related terms from all discourse save the strictly philological.[13] On the one hand, Goffart's position is undoubtedly a justified reaction against the uncritical (or overtly political) nationalism of earlier scholarship, which assumed concrete links between the ancient and modern inhabitants of 'Germanic' territories. On the other hand, certain markers suggest that, contemporary self-perceptions notwithstanding, we may reasonably speak of a degree of cultural continuity amongst some of the ancient speakers of Germanic languages. Peter Jackson has warned against the impulse "to treat the factuality of a Germanic language family as a circumstance devoid of sweeping cultural implications".[14] As noted by Todd,[15] the Germani of the North Sea coast are unlikely to have been able to understand Goths, or vice versa; however, mutual intelligibility is indeed likely to have helped to foster some sense of shared identity between peoples inhabiting neighbouring territories. Moreover, the evidence of the corpus of early runic inscriptions suggests greater linguistic affinities between different Germanic dialects in the early centuries of the first millennium in comparison with the clearly distinct languages found at a later stage. It is also worth noting that despite the earlier separation of

[11] James, *Europe's Barbarians* (2009), p. 49.
[12] Todd, *The Northern Barbarians* (1987), p. 7; James, *Europe's Barbarians* (2009), p. 7; Roberta Frank, 'Germanic legend in Old English literature', in Malcolm Godden & Michael Lapidge (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 82–100, at pp. 86–9.
[13] Walter Goffart, *Barbarian Tides: The Migration Age and the Later Roman Empire* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), esp. pp. x, 4, 20, 25, 55, 221.
[14] Peter Jackson, 'The Merits and Limits of Comparative Philology', in Catharina Raudvere & Jens Peter Schjødt (eds.), *More than Mythology: Narratives, Ritual Practices and Regional Distribution in Pre-Christian Scandinavian Religions* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2012), pp. 47–64, at p. 49.
[15] Todd, *The Early Germans* (1992), p. 13.

East Germanic from Proto-Germanic, Burgundian (an East Germanic language) was still recognised as Germanic by at least one contemporary observer, the fifth-century Gallo-Roman diplomat Sidonius Apollinaris.

Other markers, too, indicate a degree of cultural continuity across Germanic-speaking Europe. D.H. Green has shown how the retention throughout Germania of pre-Christian religious terms descended from PGmc. **gudą*[16] to denote the Christian God points to an underlying structural continuity in Germanic religion (localised variation norwithstanding), such that this was the only word in vernacular religious lexica amenable to being repurposed in a Christian context.[17] The Elder Futhark runes, precursors to the runic scripts used in medieval England and Scandinavia, are widely attested in inscriptions in Germanic languages throughout northern Europe. The distribution of these inscriptions is concentrated in the west, since the Goths had adopted the Latin alphabet along with Christianity at an early stage; however, several Gothic or East Germanic runic inscriptions are also extant.[18] Distinctive art styles were likewise developed in common over wide areas of Germania – in the west, the animal ornament analysed by Bernhard Salin,[19] and in the east the polychrome style associated with the Goths.[20] It is notable that both the runic script and the artistic developments were stimulated at least in part by contact with the Roman and Mediterranean world.[21]

Provided we remain alert to the drawbacks outlined above, therefore, they need not derail the discussion of the Germanic world. In what follows the above terms will be used

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[16] ON *guð*, *goð*; OE *god*; OHG *got*; Gothic *guþ*, etc.
[17] Green, *Language and History* (1998), pp. 14–6.
[18] See e.g. Tineke Looijenga, *Texts and Contexts of the Oldest Runic Incsriptions* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 171–6.
[19] Bernhard Salin, *Die altgermanische Thierornamentik: Typologische Studier über germanische Metallgegenstände aus dem IV. Bis IX. Jahrhundert* (Stockholm: K.L. Beckman, 1904).
[20] Kevin Greene, 'Gothic Material Culture', in Ian Hodder (ed.), *Archaeology as Long-Term History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 117–31.
[21] Todd, *The Early Germans* (1992), pp. 137–44; Anders Andrén, 'Behind *Heathendom*: Archaeological Studies of Old Norse Religion', *Scottish Archaeological Journal* 27:2 (2005), pp. 105–38, at p. 127; Greene, 'Gothic Material Culture' (1987), pp. 120, 123.

interchangeably, and ‘Germanic’ should be understood simply as shorthand for ‘Germanic-speaking’, with no additional ethnic or racial significance.

Romano-Germanic Interactions

The Germani first entered the historical record of the Mediterranean world in 179 BCE when the Bastarnae crossed the Danube as military allies of Philip V of Macedon. Towards the end of the second century the Romans encountered the Germani for the first time, when a confederation known as the Cimbri defeated a consular army in Noricum, then a client-kingdom of Rome, before moving westwards into Gaul. Alongside another Germanic group, the Teutones, they pushed southwards through Gaul and eastwards towards Italy itself, achieving further victories against Roman forces, before they were finally defeated and dispersed in 101 BCE.

The period of sustained contact between the Roman and Germanic worlds began in earnest in the mid-first century BCE, when a contingent of the Suebi under Ariovistus crossed the Rhine into Gaul at the invitation of the Gallic Sequani. Julius Caesar exploited the memory of the incursion of the Cimbri and Teutones,[22] using the new Suebic threat as a pretext for his conquest of Gaul.[23] Caesar’s account of the Gallic Wars consistently emphasises the Rhine as a natural division between the civilisable Gauls and the intractably barbarian Germani. This is a rhetorical device, and one which was clearly of little significance to the Germani themselves; nevertheless, the natural barrier formed by the courses of the Rhine and of the Danube was an important factor in establishing the imperial frontiers in the west. The brevity of Caesar’s excursions over the river indicates that he had no long-term intention of expanding Roman territory eastwards. Campaigns into Germania were conducted by Augustus from 16 BCE, and

[22] Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* I. 33. 4, p. 20.
[23] Todd, *The Early Germans* (1992), pp. 3–4; James, *Europe’s Barbarians* (2009), p. 23.

attempts to organise territory between the Rhine and Elbe as an imperial province are suggested by excavations at Waldgirmes Forum on the Lahn River in Hesse, Germany, which indicate a briefly active Romano-German market town established *c*. 4 BCE. A province was established in 6 CE; the second-century historian Cassius Dio reports on the peaceful coexistence of Romans and natives in Germania: "ἔς τε τὸν κόσμον σφῶν οἱ βάρβαροι μετερρυθμίζοντο καὶ ἀγορὰς ἐνόμιζον συνόδους τε εἰρηνικὰς ἐποιοῦντο" (And the barbarians were adapting themselves to the new order, and were becoming accustomed to hold markets, and were conducting peaceful assemblies).[24] Roman expansionist ambitions were curtailed, however, by the disaster of Teutoburg Forest. in 9 CE, Publius Quinctilius Varus, the governor of Germania, led his forces to quash a local revolt, following a tip-off from Arminius, a chieftain of the Cherusci who had served in the imperial army, obtained Roman citizenship, and was now a trusted companion of Varus.[25] In fact, Arminius' intelligence was fabricated. He had forged an alliance between various Germanic tribes, and had laid an ambush against Varus and his troops. Arminius' father-in-law Segestes, a Roman loyalist, warned Varus of Arminius' treachery but was ignored.[26] Varus, it seems, was complacent, thinking this a routine local rebellion.[27] Arminius had learned well from his military education in Rome, and he and his followers knew the terrain and had the element of surprise. The three legions entrusted to Varus to supervise the province were annihilated, the survivors enslaved or (allegedly) sacrificed,[28] and Varus took his own life.

[24] Cassius Dio, *Historia Romana* LVI. 18. 2: *Dio Cassius Roman History*, ed. & transl. by Earnest Cary, 9 volumes, LCL 32, 37, 53, 66, 82–3, 175–7 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914-1927), vii. 38.
[25] Cassius Dio, *Historia Romana* LVI. 19. 2, vii. 40.
[26] Tacitus, *Annales* I. 55: *Cornelii Taciti Annalium Ab Excessu Divi Augusti Libri*, ed. by C.D. Fisher (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1906). p. 32.
[27] Cf. Cassius Dio, *Historia Romana* LVI. 19. 3–4, vii. 40–2.
[28] Tacitus, *Annales* I. 61, p. 36.

The catastrophe is said to have haunted Augustus for months afterwards, and its anniversary was observed as a national day of mourning years later.[29] Perhaps unsurprisingly, it appears to have catalysed a major change in Roman frontier policy. There is no indication that Augustus had any grand long-term strategy for the conquest of Germania, beyond a piecemeal opportunism based on a Roman ideology of world hegemony.[30] The Varian Disaster illustrated the difficulty in controlling an area so vast and intractable, and Augustus undertook no further campaigns in Germania before his death, and advised his successor Tiberius in writing not to attempt further expansion.[31] Tiberius' own military experience in the region no doubt prompted the same conclusion independently; Tiberius' nephew and heir Germanicus led punitive attacks deep into Germania between 14–16 CE, but no attempt was made to annex territory permanently. The renewed attempt by Emperor Gaius (Caligula) was apparently no more than a whim,[32] and in 47 CE Emperor Claudius withdrew Roman legions from east of the Rhine.[33] An artificial *limes* (frontier) was constructed toward the end of the first century by Domitian, to protect the vulnerable gap in the natural river barrier between the upper Danube and the westward bend of the Rhine at Mogontiacum (now Mainz). This frontier was reorganised and consolidated in the second century CE by Hadrian and Antoninus Pius, but would ultimately be overrun around 260, and the Agri Decumates (the land enclosed by the *limes* and the rivers) occupied by Alemanni.

Diplomacy thus became the dominant facet of Roman imperial policy in Germania in the aftermath of the Teutoburg disaster. This was not a novel weapon in the Roman arsenal; the practice of subsidising foreign peoples in return for military levies (*foederati*) had its origins

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[29] Suetonius, *De Vita Caesarum* II (Divus Augustus) 23. 2: *C. Suetoni Tranquilli De Vita Caesarum Libros VIII Et De Grammaticis Et Rhetoribus Librum*, ed. by R.A. Kaster (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 82.
[30] Cf. Todd, *The Early Germans* (1992), p. 50 & n. 4.
[31] Tacitus, *Annales* I. 11, p. 9. The insinuation that Augustus may have made this recommendation "per invidiam" (out of jealousy) is typically Tacitean, and need not be taken especially seriously.
[32] Suetonius, *De Vita Caesarum* IV (Nero) 43–6, pp. 231–3.
[33] Tacitus, *Annales* XI. 19, p. 221.

in the Republican Period, and Germani could be found in service to Rome from an early date. Julius Caesar reports deploying Germanic cavalry in his campaigns in Gaul,[34] and he and the Julio-Claudian Emperors kept a bodyguard of Batavian warriors.[35] We have seen that Arminius had served as an officer in the imperial army before his defection, and his father-in-law Segestes along with other kinsmen remained steadfast Roman loyalists. Barbarian attacks on the Empire tended to be motivated by a desire for the land and resources of the imperial territories; by offering these in exchange for services rendered, the Empire could divert the barbarian threat and acquire mercenary troops simultaneously. Incoming groups could be settled in depopulated or peripheral territories, investing them in the defense of the frontiers and providing a buffer between external threats and imperial heartlands.

From this point onwards, interactions between the Roman Empire and its Germanic neighbours settled for several centuries into a pattern of diplomatic relations and military alliances (with Rome as a clearly dominant partner), punctuated by opportunistic raiding and occasional larger scale conflicts. Early diplomatic ties are also indicated by Caesar's purported aims in his initial campaigns against the Germanic invaders of Gaul, which were "ut Germanis metum iniceret, ut Sugambros ulcisceretur, ut Ubios obsidione liberaret" (to strike fear into the Germani, to take revenge against the Sugambri, and to free the Ubii from siege).[36] One may detect the ring of a protection racket under the fanfare of Caesar's magnanimity, but even so the assertion testifies to an at least ostensibly reciprocal agreement between Rome and the Ubii.

Needless to say, this did not mean an end to hostile interactions. The Rhine-Danube frontier was rarely quiet; opportunistic raids on peripheral imperial territories were a fairly

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[34] Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* VII.13.1, p. 151.

[35] Suetonius, *De Vita Caesarum* IV (Nero) 58, p. 242. Nero's usurper Galba disbanded the *cohors Germanicus* in 68 CE, due to its loyalty to the dynasty he had overthrown: Suetonius, *De Vita Caesarum* VII (Galba) 12. 2, p. 340.

[36] Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* IV. 19, p. 78. The Sugambri or Sicambri had given asylum to survivors of Caesar's war against the Germani in Gaul, and refused to surrender them to Roman justice; whilst the Ubii were Germanic allies of Rome, who were under attack by the Suebi: Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* IV. 16. 5, p. 76.

consistent feature of the Roman-Germanic interface. These grew in intensity at times when the imperial defences were stretched; from 161, for instance, Marcus Aurelius was occupied by war with the Parthian Empire in Mesopotamia, and transferred three legions from the Rhine-Danube frontier to deal with the threat. The depletion of the western defences was compounded by the Antonine Plague, carried by the troops returning from the east in 166. The consequent barbarian raids of the 160s culminated in the Marcomannic Wars of the following decade, which saw the Marcomannic king Ballomar, formerly a client of Rome, lead incursions into Pannonia, Noricum and northern Italy. Similarly, the rise of the Persian Sassanid Empire in the first half of the third century again forced Roman military resources eastwards. Germanic raids across the full length of the Rhine-Danube frontier increased dramatically, with Alemanni invading the province of Germania Superior and Goths invading the Balkan provinces of Moesia and Dacia. The Goths and other East Germanic groups would later launch seaborne raids across the Black Sea on the Balkans, Attica, the Aegean islands and Asia Minor.

Additional factors beyond the stretching of Roman defences may be adduced for the growing intensity of barbarian raids. The Marcomannic Wars hailed the advent of a new phase in terms of the scale and impact of frontier conflicts, and the archaeological material corroborates the problematic documentary evidence of considerable upheaval and large-scale population movement.[37] The generations following the Marcomannic Wars had seen the first appearances in the documentary sources of many of the major Germanic confederations of Late Antiquity, including the Franks, Alemanni, and Goths.[38] The creation of these new identities by amalgamation and recombination of earlier groups is indicative of growing ambition and unity of purpose in the Germanic world, and the events of the third century made it clear that

[37] Todd, *The Early Germans* (1992), pp. 55–7; Heather, *Empires and Barbarians: Migration, Development and the Birth of Europe* (London: Macmillan, 2009), pp. 96–107.
[38] James, *Europe's Barbarians* (2005), p. 32.

Roman military dominance was no longer incontestable.[39] All three of these confederations mentioned occupied Constantine I in major campaigns in the early decades of the fourth century, and we have noted above that already by the end of the third sustained pressure on the Rhine-Danube *limes* had resulted in the Roman abandonment and Alemannic occupation of the land behind.

Constantine's reign in the first part of the fourth century saw other important developments in the nature of Roman-Germanic interactions. As we have noted, Rome had a long history of employing Germanic warriors, and the imperial army was increasingly reliant on barbarian troops from the late third century.[40] From the fourth century, we additionally see the distinction between Roman troops and foreign auxiliaries breaking down.[41] Under Constantine, large numbers of Germanic soldiers were recruited directly into the imperial army, which he had reorganised into mobile units with which he was able to control both halves of the Empire.[42] Once again, this did not mean an end to Romano-Germanic hostilities; Constantine waged major campaigns against Alemanni in 306–308, Franks in the same period and again in 313–314, and Goths in the 330s. The Germanic-speaking contingent of his army contained forced levies from defeated groups as well as volunteers, and the move away from discrete barbarian units may have been effected partially in view of this, with the aim of guarding against the formation of barbarian factions in the army.[43] Nevertheless, the changes provided opportunities for more direct contact between Roman and barbarian warriors, including Germani. Germanic soldiers are also increasingly to be found amongst senior military officers in the fourth century.[44]

[39] Todd, *The Early Germans* (1992), p. 57.
[40] Todd, *The Early Germans* (1992), p. 59.
[41] Heather, *Empires and Barbarians* (2009), pp. 74–5.
[42] Todd, *The Early Germans* (1992), p. 59; James, *Europe's Barbarians* (2009), p. 161.
[43] James, *Europe's Barbarians* (2009), pp. 162–3.
[44] Todd, *The Early Germans* (1992), pp. 59–61.

This period also saw further upheaval beyond the frontiers, and an increase in the volume of barbarians seeking formal admission into imperial territory. In 376, large groups including Tervingian and Greuthungian Goths began gathering on the lower Danube, seeking asylum from the Huns. The emperor Valens was at this time engaged in a major eastern campaign, and perceived the Gothic refugees as a fruitful source of additional troops. He had previously had dealings with Fritigern, a king of the Tervingi, and allowed him and his followers to cross the river with the promise of food and land on which to settle, whilst barring the rest. The mismanagement of the settlement by Roman officials prompted revolt, with Fritigern's Tervingi joining forces with the Greuthungi, who had forced a crossing of the river, as well as Asiatic barbarian groups and Roman deserters. Valens himself was killed in battle in Turkey in 378, and the Gothic forces laid siege to both Adrianopolis and Constantinople. A peace treaty was eventually concluded in 382 with the bulk of the Goths being granted land in the Balkan provinces, but though the Goths agreed to the usual requirements of military service, the terms otherwise broke with standard Roman practice, leaving the Goths undispersed within imperial territory and allowing them to maintain their own laws.[45] Though imperial propaganda asserted a Roman victory,[46] the settlement is thus illustrative of the developing capacity for resistance to Roman hegemony amongst some barbarian groups.

This impression is corroborated by the fact that the Goths were led in revolt by Alaric in 395, in dissatisfaction at the terms of the treaty of the previous decade.[47] Amongst Alaric's demands were official recognition of his leadership, increased economic backing of the Goths from the Empire, and a more desirable settlement area.[48] Alaric's Goths forced concessions from the eastern Empire in 398 after pillaging numerous cities of Greece, but these were soon

[45] Heather, *The Goths* (1996), p. 137.
[46] Peter Heather, *The Fall of the Roman Empire: A New History of Rome and the Barbarians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 184–6.
[47] See Heather, *Empires and Barbarians* (2009), pp. 191–7, for compelling arguments that Alaric's force was drawn from the core of the Goths of the 382 treaty.
[48] Heather, *Empires and Barbarians* (2009), p. 195.

withdrawn when the imperial officials involved were ousted in 400. Alaric therefore launched an invasion of Italy, forcing protracted negotiations with the western Empire, the stalling of which culminated in his famous sack of Rome in 410.[49] Following the capture of the city, Alaric gathered ships for a planned invasion of Africa, which provided crucial grain supplies to the western Empire. However, he died of a sudden illness in 410, to be succeeded by his brother-in-law Athaulf, who favoured integration with the Roman Empire.[50] After Athaulf's assassination by his own followers in 415, his people were settled as Roman *foederati* in Aquitaine. Subsequent kings expanded Visigothic territory to encompass most of the Iberian Peninsula.

The remainder of the fifth century saw the establishment of further Germanic kingdoms within the territory of the western Empire. Some seized new territory by force. The Vandals, who had been part of a mass-crossing of the Rhine in 406, travelled gradually south through Spain, settling in Andalusia around 420. In 428, led by Gaiseric, they crossed by sea to Africa, easily overwhelming the provincial garrisons. The Angles, Saxons, Jutes and others who migrated to Britain from the early fifth century likewise exploited the withdrawal of Roman troops from the island, though cohorts of Germanic warriors had been stationed and settled in Britain long before.[51] In other cases, as with the Visigoths in Spain, barbarian populations were accommodated within the existing imperial structures, which were often retained in some form in the post-Roman period. Salian Franks had been settled as *foederati* in parts of northern Gaul from the end of the third century; the fifth-century situation in Frankish Gaul initially comprised a series of petty kingdoms vying for supremacy.[52] The grave goods of Childeric,

[49] Whilst Rome had not been the administrative capital of the Empire for over a century, it still held immense symbolic importance, and its sacking sent shockwaves through the Empire – the significance of the event is demonstrated for instance by Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, composed as a rebuttal of contemporary suggestions that Rome's destruction was punishment for the abandonment of traditional Roman religion.
[50] Todd, *The Early Germans* (1992), pp. 159–60.
[51] J.N.L. Myres, *The English Settlements* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 74–101.
[52] Todd, *The Early Germans* (1992), pp. 194–5.

king of Frankish Tournai and founder of the Merovingian dynasty, demonstrate both his wealth and his self-presentation as a Roman imperial official.[53] Childeric's son Clovis I, who succeeded him in 482, established a united Frankish kingdom, converting to Catholicism and ruling over a mixed population of Germanic and Gallo-Roman subjects.[54] The Alemanni had occupied the abandoned Agri Decumates around by around 300, and are found regularly in military service to Rome in the documentary sources for the fourth and fifth centuries. The most overtly Roman of the successor kingdoms to the Empire was that of Ostrogoths in Italy under Theodoric.[55] Having spent his youth as a hostage in Constantinople, where he received a Roman education, Theodoric established himself as the ruler of Italy in the 490s. He consciously modelled his image on that of a Roman Emperor, and the administration of the kingdom remained to a large extent in the hands of native Romans such as Cassiodorus.

It is clear from the foregoing survey that from Caesar's time onwards, there was sustained contact between the Romans and the Germani. If the literary evidence gives the impression that this interaction was for the most part of a hostile character, the reasons for this are not difficult to discern. The authors of our documentary sources tended naturally to occupy themselves more often with periods of major conflict than with the minutiae of trade relations with foreigners they perceived as culturally inferior. Moreover, the distorting lens of Roman imperial ideology, with its fixation on world conquest, could often blur the distinction between alliance with and victory over non-Romans in the minds of contemporary writers. Even so, we have seen that the literary evidence occasionally affords glimpses of a more multifaceted Romano-Germanic interface; in every period of conflict between Rome and Germanic groups, other Germanic forces may be found acting in service to Rome. The more varied picture can

[53] Todd, *The Early Germans* (1992), pp. 198–9.
[54] James, *Europe's Barbarians* (2009), p. 81.
[55] James, *Europe's Barbarians* (2009), pp. 83–4.

be further filled out by other categories of sources – in particular loanword traffic, and the rich archaeological record pertaining to the Germanic world in Late Antiquity.

Roman Cultural Influences on the Germani

A synthesis of the available evidence illustrates, unsurprisingly, that contact with Rome influenced the development of the Germanic world in many respects, from political and economic organisation to agricultural techniques.[56] Trade routes between northern Europe and the Mediterranean basin had immense pedigree, as evinced by the discovery of Baltic amber jewellery in (amongst other sites) the shaft graves at Mycenae and in the tomb of Tutankhamun.[57] Further trade opportunities were evidently being exploited by the time of Caesar's campaigns across the Rhine, since Caesar cites merchants for much of what he says about the Germani and their country.[58] Already by the first century CE some of the Germani immediately beyond the frontier were reportedly accustomed to the use of Roman currency.[59] The large quantities of Roman coins excavated beyond the frontiers would seem to corroborate this claim, and analysis of the composition and distribution of coin finds in Germania suggest that they functioned as more than just bullion.[60] Other than amber, most of the commodities the Germani could offer the Romans – timber; animal products; slaves – have left little

[56] See Heather, *Empires and Barbarians* (2009), pp. 36–93.

[57] Curt W. Beck, Gretchen C. Southard & Audrey B. Adams, 'Analysis and Provenience of Minoan and Mycenaean Amber, IV. Mycenae', *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 13:4 (1972), pp. 359–385; S. Hood, 'Amber in Egypt', in C.W. Beck & J. Bouzek (eds.), *Amber in Archaeology* (Prague: Czech Academy of Sciences, 1993), pp. 219–229. The high value of amber is illustrated in tablet VI of the Mesopotamian *Epic of Gilgamesh*, transl. by Andrew George (London: Folio, 2010 [London: Penguin, 1999]), p. 49, when the goddess Ishtar propositions Gilgamesh and offers him a chariot of gold, lapis lazuli and amber. Similarly, in the *Odyssey* XVIII. 296: *Homeri Opera* iv. 106, a golden necklace "*ἠλέκτροισιν ἐερμένον*" (strung with amber beads) is among the gifts Penelope receives from her suitors; at *Odyssey* XV. 459–465: *Homeri Opera* iv. 53, another such necklace is deployed as a distraction by a Phoenician trader, giving him the opportunity to kidnap the young prince Eumaeus, who is ultimately sold to Odysseus' father Laertes.

[58] Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* I. 39. 1; IV. 2. 1–6; IV. 3. 3, pp. 23, 70; Olwen Brogan, 'Trade between the Roman Empire and the Free Germans', *Journal of Roman Studies* 26:2 (1936), pp. 195–222, at p. 195 & n. 2.

[59] Tacitus, *Germania* V. 3: *Opera Minora*, p. 40.

[60] Todd, *The Early Germans* (1992), pp. 100–3.

impression in the material record,[61] though some are indicated in literary sources and loanwords from Germanic into Latin.[62] Roman artefacts, on the other hand, have been unearthed in considerable quantities throughout Germania, even as far north as Denmark and the Scandinavian peninsula.

These cannot all be the spoils of cross-border raids, and more detailed analysis of the distribution of everyday versus luxury items indicates the practice of reciprocal gift-giving between Roman and North Germanic elites, as well as extensive trade.[63] As a further indication of the scale of the impact Roman trade relations had on Germanic societies, it is telling that the PGmc. **kaupijaną* 'to buy, trade' (whence Gothic *kaupōn*; OE *cīepan*; ON *kaupa*; OSax. *kôpian*; OHG *koufen*; and their modern descendants) is derived from Latin *caupo* 'tradesman, shopkeeper'.[64] On the other side of the coin, the Romans evidently valued their German market; this is rather charmingly illustrated, for example, by the manufacture of glass drinking horns in Cologne workshops in the third century, which appear to have been designed to appeal particularly to Germanic taste.[65]

Amongst the most remarkable archaeological finds of Late Antique and early medieval Europe are wetland deposits of weaponry and other equipment in North Germany and Scandinavia, concentrated in present-day Denmark. More than thirty such sites have been excavated, most of which date to the Roman Iron Age of Scandinavian prehistory (first–fifth centuries CE),[66] though deposits of a non-military character had been made in the same lakes or bogs in earlier centuries. When the first of these sites were excavated in the nineteenth

[61] Todd, *The Early Germans* (1992), p. 97.
[62] Green, *Language and History* (1998), pp. 186–8.
[63] Jørgen Jensen, *The Prehistory of Denmark* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 238–247.
[64] For further Latin (and Greek) loanword evidence illustrating Roman influence on the Germanic peoples in military, commercial and other spheres, see Green, *Language and History* (1998), pp. 201–74.
[65] Brogan, 'Trade' (1936), pp. 217–8; Todd, *The Early Germans* (1992), p. 92.
[66] Ulla Lund Hansen, 'Barbarians in the North – The Greatest Concentrations of Roman Weaponry in Europe', in Thomas Grane (ed.), *Beyond the Roman Frontier: Roman Influences on the Northern Barbaricum* (Rome: Quasar, 2007), pp. 105–30, at pp. 112–5.

century, the finds were initially thought to represent the remains of ancient battlefields,[67] but this hypothesis was quickly abandoned in view of the observation that the material often exhibited signs of deliberate damage beyond what could be expected from use in combat, and in many instances had been carefully sorted prior to deposition.[68] It is now generally agreed that the finds represent the repeated deposition over several centuries of the military equipment of defeated enemy armies.[69] The defeated armies carried weaponry of both Roman and Germanic manufacture, and the native armament increasingly reflected the influence of Roman styles as the Iron Age wore on.[70] Though large-scale wetland finds are for topographical reasons confined to the northern part of Germania,[71] Roman arms and other equipment also occur frequently in burials further south.[72]

Roman laws in the later Imperial Period prohibited the trade of weapons into Germanic territory,[73] though in practice this proscription would have been difficult to enforce, and many no doubt reached Germanic buyers illegally.[74] Equally, however, many of the Roman weapons excavated in Germania would have travelled northwards in the hands of Germanic warriors returning from employment in the Roman army.[75] As we have seen, such employment was a routine aspect of Roman-Germanic interaction from an early period, and became more prevalent from the third century. Certainly by the Late Roman Iron Age, there were enough

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[67] J. J. A. Worsaae 'Om jernalderen i Danmark. I Anledning af Oldsager i en Mose ved Brarup i Angel', *Oversigt over det Kongelige danske Videnskabernes selskabs Forhandlinger* (1857).
[68] Ulla Lund Hansen, '150 years of weapon offering finds – research and interpretations', in Lars Jørgensen, Birger Storgaard & Lone Gebauer Thomsen (eds.), *The Spoils of Victory – the North in the shadow of the Roman Empire* (Copenhagen: Nationalmuseet, 2003), pp. 84–9, at pp. 84–5.
[69] Jørgen Ilkjær & Jørn Lønstrup, 'Interpretation of the Great Votive Deposits of Iron Age Weapons', *Journal of Danish Archaeology* 1:1 (1982), pp. 95–103, at p. 101.
[70] Todd, *The Northern Barbarians* (1987), pp. 143, 155–7.
[71] Heather, *Empires and Barbarians* (2009), p. 80.
[72] Todd, *The Early Germans* (1992), p. 96.
[73] E.A. Thompson, *Romans and Barbarians: The Decline of the Western Empire* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), pp. 10–12.
[74] Todd, *The Early Germans* (1992), pp. 39, 42.
[75] Jørgen Ilkjær, *Illerup Ådal – Archaeology as a Magic Mirror* (Aarhus: Moesgård Museum, 2002), p. 77.

Germanic warriors in the Roman army for the characteristic Germanic trousers, such as the famous fourth-century pair from Thorsbjerg in Schleswig-Holstein, to have become standard Roman military attire.[76] Edward James has noted edicts from the fourth and fifth centuries prohibiting the wearing of military gear and Germanic-style dress within Rome,[77] which further indicates that Germanic attire had become closely associated with the Roman military.

In an analysis of the bog deposits in Denmark Jørgen Ilkjær has demonstrated, based on the provenance of different raw materials used for pieces of personal equipment contained in deposits from different dates, that the defeated armies in the second to the fifth centuries originated in many instances from the Scandinavian peninsula and outlying islands, with some also hailing from northern Germany.[78] Ilkjær's further conclusion, that the repeated deposition of military material in the same places is demonstrative of recurrent aggression against Denmark, is open to challenge on the grounds of his assumption that the site of deposition was close to where the fighting took place, and his narrow focus on the Danish finds, which problematises his reconstruction of consistent patterns of invasion.[79] Despite these criticisms, however, his findings are significant for our current purposes, since they indicate that regardless of where they finally perished, some even of the most northerly Germanic peoples in this period had served in the Roman military alongside Continental Germanic warriors, and acquired Roman weaponry.

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[76] One of the Latin terms for trousers, *bracae* – Tacitus, *Historiae* II. 20: *Cornelii Taciti Historiarum Libri*, ed. by C.D. Fisher (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 68; Suetonius *De Vita Caesarum* I (Divus Julius), 80. 2, p. 56; *Codex Theodosianus* XIV. 10. 2, ed. by T. Mommsen & P.M. Mayer, 2 volumes (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1954), ii – appears to be a loanword from a Celtic term, itself borrowed from Germanic language: cf. OE *brók*, OE *brēc*, Present Day English *breeches*, Dutch *broek*, Danish *brog*, German *Bruch* – all from PGmc. **brōk-, *brōkiz*. Another Latin term derived from Germanic *hosa* was likely borrowed directly from West Germanic: see Green, *Language and History* (1998), pp, 146–8 & 190.

[77] James, *Europe's Barbarians* (2005), pp. 169–70.

[78] Jørgen Ilkjær, *Illerup Ådal. Mosefundenes kronologi og proveniens* (Højbjerg: Jysk Arkæologisk Selskab, 1994).

[79] Anders Andrén, 'A World of Stone: Warrior Culture and Old Norse Cosmology', in Andrén, *Tracing Old Norse Cosmology: The World Tree, Middle Earth, and the Sun in Archaeological Perspectives* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2014), pp. 69–116, at pp. 93–5.

Additional testimony to a considerable Germanic-speaking contingent serving alongside Romans in the imperial army is provided by loanwords from Germanic whose character indicates introduction into Latin via the military. A small number of such loanwords are directly attested in Latin, such as *framea* (spear, sword – cited by Tacitus as a Germanic term, and probably deriving from a hypothesised **framja*).[80] In other instances, cognate terms are sufficiently widespread in Romance languages to point to an unattested Latin root: thus, for example, Germanic *helm* (helmet), with descendants in Old French, Old Provençal, Old and present day Spanish, and present day Portuguese.[81] Two Latin terms for a military colleague – *companio* (comrade, literally 'one with whom bread is shared'); and *concibo* (table companion, literally 'one with whom food is shared') – are calques on semantically equivalent Germanic terms, which are preserved respectively in Gothic *gahláiba* and OHG *gileibo* (< PGmc. **gahlaibô*), and in OHG *gimazzo* and OE *gemetta* (< PGmc. **gamatjô*).[82]

As Ursula Dronke has so aptly put it, "[w]here there is trade, there is talk, and often friendly entertainment."[83] By the same token, Germanic recruits in the army must have discussed more than just meals and armament with their Roman comrades. This history of intensive and varied contact between the Romans and Germani provides an ample context in which the latter could have been exposed to the influence of classical mythological and legendary traditions. Is it possible to go any further than simply recognising this as a theoretical possibility?

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[80] Tacitus, *Germania* VI. 1: *Opera Minora* p. 40; Green, *Language and History* (1998), pp. 185–6.
[81] Green, *Language and History* (1998), p. 190.
[82] Green, *Language and History* (1998), p. 194. *Concibo* appears in an inscription on a Roman grave in Africa, whilst *companio* is attested only in the *Lex Salica* and thus may be a post-Roman loan in the Frankish army. However, as Green argues, the linguistic similarity of the two terms points to their introduction into military Latin at approximately the same time, and given the early attestation of *concibo*, we may see the adoption of both terms as a consequence of the 'Germanisation' of the Roman army in the later Imperial Period.
[83] Ursula Dronke, 'Preface', in *Myth and Fiction in Early Norse Lands* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996), p. ix.

Germanic Reception of Classical Myth?

Early and explicit evidence for the introduction of classical mythological material into northern Germania is provided by two silver cups from a grave at Hoby, on the Danish island of Lolland, illustrated in relief with scenes from the Trojan War – the rescue of the abandoned warrior Philoctetes from Lemnos, and the supplication of Achilles by Priam for the body of his son Hector (figure 1). The vessels are inscribed with the name *Silius*, probably to be identified as the senator Gaius Silius, who served as a legate in Germania under Germanicus from 14–21 CE. It is likely that the vessels were given by him to a Germanic chieftain (not necessarily the man buried with them) as a diplomatic gift.[84] Naturally, their presence does not prove that the heroic myths depicted were understood by the recipient, though it is quite conceivable that they would have been explained by the Roman giver. The cups are thought to have been commissioned after the peace negotiated with the Parthian Empire in 20 BCE, and the scenes depicted, exemplifying the themes of clemency and reconciliation, have been argued to be ideologically pertinent to this settlement, expressing the reciprocal obligations of both conqueror and conquered.[85] In a similar way, they could well have seemed equally appropriate as a diplomatic gift from a Roman official to a Germanic elite in the aftermath of Teutoburg Forest and the subsequent punitive campaigns of Germanicus. More generally, the treatment of artefacts of Roman manufacture as prestige goods in Germanic contexts may be seen as a conscious attempt by barbarian elites to project *Romanitas* to their followers,[86] much as the rulers of the successor kingdoms to the western Roman Empire would style themselves as Roman imperial officials centuries later.

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[84] Todd, *The Early Germans* (1992), pp. 92–3; Anders Winroth, *The Conversion of Scandinavia: Vikings, Merchants and Missionaries in the Remaking of Northern Europe* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), pp. 130–1.

[85] Melissa Barden Dowling, *Clemency & Cruelty in the Roman World* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2006), pp. 144–5.

[86] Cf. Thomas Green, 'Trade, Gift-giving and *Romanitas*: A Comparison of the Use of Roman Imports in Western Britain and Southern Scandinavia', *The Heroic Age: A Journal of Early Medieval Northwestern Europe* 10 (2007).

Another suggestive point of contact between Germanic myth and Roman ideology in the archaeological record comes in the form of bracteates, gold medallions found from the fifth century onwards, mostly in southern Scandinavian contexts but also on the continent and in England. These developed initially as imitations of Late Antique medallions depicting Roman emperors,[87] but many depict mythological images and figures, which in some cases can be linked with the literary sources of medieval Iceland, including probable depictions of the death of Baldr by a sprig of mistletoe (figure 2), and Týr losing his hand to the wolf Fenrir (figure 3).[88] It is striking that in these earliest known visual representations of figures known from later Norse sources, not only the medium but also the compositions and iconographic style reflect the influence of Roman models, reinterpreted in the light of local styles of representation.[89]

Whilst it would be impossible to recover the details of conversations between traders or military colleagues, a closer examination of some of the linguistic and archaeological material can yield a great deal of indirect evidence to suggest that Germanic tribesmen not only encountered but actively engaged with Roman religious and ritual practices in the course of their interactions with the Empire. As noted briefly in the introduction, such engagement is illustrated by the *interpretatio germanica*, the name given to the process through which

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[87] Lotte Hedeager, *Iron Age Myth and Materiality: An Archaeology of Scandinvia AD 400–1000* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 206.

[88] Mythological readings of the bracteate imagery have been consistently advanced by Karl Hauck, e.g. 'Götterglaube im Spiegel der goldenen Brakteaten', in Claus Ahrens (ed.), *Sachsen und Angelsachsen: Ausstellung des Helms-Museums, Hamburgisches Museum für Vor- und Frühgeschichte, 18 November 1978 bis 28 Februar 1979* (Hamburg: Helms-Museum, 1978), pp. 185–218; 'Methodenfragen der Brakteatendeutung', in Helmut Roth (ed.), *Zum Problem der Deutung frühmittelalterlicher Bildinhalte* (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1986), pp. 273–96; 'Der religions- und sozialgeschichtliche Quellenwert der völkerwanderungszeitlichen Goldbrakteaten', in Heinrich Beck, Detlev Ellmers & Kurt Schier (eds.), *Germanische Religionsgeschichte: Quellen und Quellenprobleme* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1992), pp. 229–69. Though some of his identifications are over-reliant on much later literary and iconographic analogues, others are widely accepted: see e.g. Anders Andrén, 'Whirls, Horses, and Ships: Solar Aspects of Old Norse Religion, in *Tracing Old Norse Cosmology* (2014), pp. 117–68, at pp. 142–5.

[89] Andrén, 'Behind *Heathendom*' (2005), pp. 128–9; Andrén, 'Whirls, Horses, and Ships', in *Tracing Old Norse Cosmology* (2014), pp. 142–5; Simek, *Northern Mythology* (1993), pp. 43–4; Nancy L. Wicker, 'The Reception of Figurative Art Beyond the Frontier: Scandinavian Encounters with Roman Numismatics', in Daniëlle Slootjes & Michael Peachin (eds.), *Rome and the World Beyond its Frontiers* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 243–56.

Germanic peoples identified members of the Roman pantheon with native deities. The corresponding *interpretatio romana*, whereby Romans equated Germanic deities with their own, is employed repeatedly by Tacitus in the first century,[90] and by Caesar over a century earlier. The *interpretatio germanica* may well have been initiated around the same time,[91] though the best evidence for it is probably somewhat later. This comes in the familiar form of the names for the days of the week, the Germanic versions of which were calqued on the Latin. Thus the day of Mars (*dies Martis*, cf. French *mardi*) became the day of Tiw, preserved in English Tuesday; the day of Mercury (*dies Mercurii*, cf. French *mercredi*) produced Wodan's day (Wednesday); the day of Jupiter (*dies Iovis*, cf. French *jeudi*) gave us the day of Donar/Thor (Thursday); and Frigg's day (Friday) derives from the day of Venus (*dies Veneris*, cf. French *vendredi*).

The process of identification was, of course, hardly a rigorously scientific one, as is demonstrated by the fact that Tacitus identifies Thor with Hercules, whilst the Germani identified him with Jupiter. Nowadays scholars are therefore rightly cautious of using inferred correspondences with Roman gods as a means of illuminating the character and cultic functions of any Germanic counterpart.[92] Nevertheless, the adoption of these names by Germanic-speakers remains significant as testimony to their active attempts to make sense of a foreign religion by expressing it in familiar terms. In particular, as Simek and Lindow have highlighted, the alignment of superficial similarities in divine attributes and actions indicates the specific role of mythic narratives in prompting the identifications:[93] Mercury's function as a psychopomp and his role in the invention of music may be compared to Wodan's associations with poetry and the dead; Jupiter's wielding of thunderbolts suggested the comparison with

[90] Tacitus, *Germania* IX. 1–2, XLIII. 3: *Opera Minora* pp. 42, 59.
[91] Cf. Simek, *Northern Mythology*, (1993), p. 174.
[92] Simek, *Northern Mythology* (1993), p. 174.
[93] Simek, *Northern Mythology* (1993), pp. 140–1, 174–5, 211–12; John Lindow, *Norse Mythology: A Guide to the Gods, Heroes, Rituals, and Beliefs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 202–4.

Donar; a similar shared resumé of giant and monster encounters may have encouraged the Roman identification of Donar as Hercules.

We do not know precisely when this system was introduced in the Germanic world, though it must for linguistic reasons have been after the second century. Jacob Grimm posited an upper limit of the fourth or fifth century,[94] and Hilda Ellis Davidson has argued for the third century, placing its adoption in the context of the spread of the Mithraic mystery religion into Germanic territory by the Roman army.[95] This diffusion of Mithraism is worth dwelling upon, as it provides a striking instance of Roman religious practice taking a hold in the Germanic world.

The cult of Mithras achieved immense popularity in the Roman Empire, and is viewed by some as having been an early rival to the eventual dominance of Christianity.[96] The nature and extent of the continuity between the Mithraic mysteries and the worship of the Persian god Mithra remain contested, though some original connection is generally accepted.[97] Firm archaeological evidence for the existence of a mystery cult proper in the Roman Empire appears from the late first century CE,[98] though some scholars have placed its origins a century earlier.[99] The epigraphic record pertaining to the cult of Mithras indicates that initiands were exclusively men, and that the cult had a particularly strong following in the military.

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[94] Jacob Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, transl. by J.S. Stallybrass, 3 volumes (London: George Bell, 1882), i. 127–8.

[95] Hilda R. Ellis Davidson, 'Mithras and Wodan', *Études Mithriaques. Actes du 2e Congrès International, Téhéran, du 1er au 8 Septembre 1975* (Tehran: Bibliothèque Pahlavi, 1978), pp. 99–110, at pp. 108–109.

[96] David Ulansey, *The Origins of the Mithraic Mysteries: Cosmology and Salvation in the Ancient World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 3–4; Lewis M. Hopfe, 'Archaeological Indications of the Origins of Roman Mithraism', in Hopfe (ed.), *Uncovering Ancient Stones: Essays in Memory of H. Neil Richardson* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1994), pp. 147–58, at p. 147.

[97] Per Beskow, 'The Routes of Early Mithraism', *Études Mithriaques* (1978), pp. 7–18, at p. 7.

[98] Roger Beck, 'The Mysteries of Mithras: A New Account of Their Genesis', *Journal of Roman Studies* 88 (1998), pp. 115–28, at p. 117.

[99] Ulansey, *Origins* (1991), pp. 40–1.

Ellis Davidson highlights the considerable number of Mithraic temples found in Germania, where the cult was probably introduced by the Roman army.[100] As she goes on to observe, the iconography of the Mithras cult has much in common with that associated with Wodan/Óðinn, as shown by images both on Migration-Period gold bracteates and on Viking-Age Scandinavian monuments. Ellis Davidson rightly abstains from claiming that the cult of Wodan developed from that of Mithras, but rather suggests that the pre-existing similarities between the two were "sufficiently strong to account for the enthusiasm with which the Germans received Mithras", and that certain features already present in the mythology of Wodan may have become more prominent as a result of the resemblance.[101] This in itself, however, once again indicates that the Germani were not merely passive recipients of the imported cult, but made an effort to understand and reinterpret it on their own terms.

Evidence of Roman influence on Germanic ritual practices may be discerned through developments in burial customs. Mads Dyhrfjeld-Johnsen has observed a marked drop in Danish graves containing weapons in the Late Roman Iron Age compared to the Early Roman Iron Age, particularly wealthy graves. He posits that this decline may be the result of imitation of Roman burial practice by Germanic elites.[102] This is certainly plausible, though the evidence is insufficient to rule out alternative explanations. A more striking development is the possible emulation of the Roman custom of placing a coin in the mouth of the deceased, as payment for Charon, the ferryman of Hades. Dyhrfjeld-Johnsen notes numerous graves in Denmark in which this appears to have been done, and the case for Roman influence is strengthened in instances in which only a single coin is found in the grave. As Dyhrfjeld-Johnsen acknowledges, we cannot be sure that this custom would have held precisely the same

[100] Ellis Davidson, 'Mithras and Wodan' (1978), p. 101.
[101] Ellis Davidson, 'Mithras and Wodan' (1978), p. 109.
[102] Mads Drevs Dyhrfjeld-Johnsen, 'Roman Ideological Influences', in Grane (ed.), *Beyond the Roman Frontier* (2007), pp. 67–82, at p. 70.

significance for a Germanic observer as for a Roman,[103] but it is reasonable to assume that Germani who had occasion to witness this rite may also have received some sort of explanation.

To return now to the Scandinavian votive deposits discussed above, the act of ritual deposition itself has also been interpreted as bearing the hallmarks of Roman influence. Germanic warriors in the Roman army are highly likely to have witnessed the Roman Triumph ceremony on occasion,[104] and several scholars have highlighted various points of commonality between the Roman and Germanic practices.[105] Of particular note in this regard is a remarkable gilded bronze gryphon's head found at Vimose on the Danish island of Fyn. To judge from traces of brazing on its back and from comparable finds elsewhere, the figure was probably originally an ornament on a Roman helmet; however, it was found mounted on a wooden pole, which disintegrated on extraction from the bog. It has been plausibly suggested that this arrangement was an imitation of Roman battle standards, which were prominently displayed during the Triumph ceremony.[106]

The contention that the ritual was borrowed wholesale from the Romans is of course highly problematic, not least because the earliest Scandinavian weapon deposits occurred centuries before the period of sustained contact with the Roman Empire.[107] Nevertheless, it is

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[103] Dyhrfjeld-Johnsen, 'Roman Ideological Influences', in Grane (ed.), *Beyond the Roman Frontier* (2007), pp. 71–2.

[104] Lars Jørgensen, 'The "Warriors, Soldiers and Conscripts" of the Anthropology in Late Roman and Migration Period Archaeology', in Birger Storgaard (ed.), *Military Aspects of the Aristocracy in Barbaricum in the Roman and Early Migration Periods* (Copenhagen: Nationalmuseet, 2001), pp. 9–20, at pp. 14–5.

[105] Birger Storgaard, 'Himlingøje – Barbarian empire or Roman implantation?', in Storgaard (ed.), *Military Aspects* (2001), pp. 95–112, at p. 97; Lars Jørgensen, 'The Spoils of Victory – the North in the shadow of the Roman Empire', in Jørgensen, Storgaard & Thomsen (eds.), *The Spoils of Victory* (2003), p. 14; Hansen, 'Barbarians in the North', in Grane (ed.), *Beyond the Roman Frontier* (2007), p. 117.

[106] Xenia Pauli Jensen, 'Preliminary Remarks on Roman Military Equipment from the War Booty Sacrifice of Vimose, Denmark', in Grane (ed.), *Beyond the Roman Frontier* (2007), pp. 131–6, at p. 132.

[107] The earliest known deposition, at Hjortspring on the island of Als, is dated to around 350 BCE, with another find from Krogsbølle on Fyn also from the middle of the fourth century BCE; further deposits from North Germany to Sweden were made later in the Pre-Roman Iron Age: see Fleming Kaul, 'The Hjortspring find – The oldest of the large Nordic war booty sacrifices', in Jørgensen, Storgaard & Thomsen (eds). *The Spoils of Victory* (2003), pp. 212–23.

evident that certain elements of the deposition ceremonies in our period reflect Roman influence on a pre-existing ritual, though once again not in a straightforwardly emulative fashion. The Germanic communities continued, for instance, to use the same sacred lakes as previous generations, illustrating, on the most fundamental level, a continuity in native practice alongside the integration of foreign components.

The incorporation and adaptation of Roman elements into a traditional ceremony is thus suggestive of a more reflective process of reinterpretation, entailing some understanding of and conscious engagement with the religious framework of the Roman practice. In a similar vein, Anders Andrén has noted the way in which the Roman custom of cosmologically symbolic fortification was adopted in the architecture of Iron Age Scandinavian forts, and modified to fit with Scandinavian cosmology.[108] Roman frontier forts were traditionally constructed as reflections of the Roman cosmic order: a square or rectangular plan would be divided into four parts by two crossing streets, reflecting the fourfold division of the cosmos in classical mythology. Construction was initiated by the digging of a pit at the centre of the site, which represented both the centre of the world and an opening to the underworld, and was filled in and covered by the headquarters building.

In the case of Scandinavian forts, exemplified by Ismantorp on the Swedish island of Öland, we find a ring with nine gates, representing the nine worlds of Old Norse cosmology. One gate, opening onto a building within the ring, possibly represented the entrance to the realm of the dead. A central pit was also dug, but remained open, and Andrén connects this with the well of fate. A wooden post and a small semicircular building beside the central pit at Ismantorp may have symbolised respectively the World Tree and the dwelling of the Norns. Through Andrén's interpretation, we can see how certain elements of the Roman practice have been consciously selected and reinterpreted – the central pit remains, for instance, but with a

[108] Andrén, 'A World of Stone', in *Tracing Old Norse Cosmology* (2014), pp. 105–14.

different significance, whilst the gateway to the realm of the dead has been moved elsewhere. Once again, the way in which the Roman model was reconfigured for its new Scandinavian context required comprehension of the symbolism of the Roman architecture.

The literary sources occasionally provide indications of this same comprehension. A glimpse of Germanic familiarity with classical religious culture is afforded, for example, by the fourth-century Alemannic king Mederic, who gave his son the byname Serapio in honour of the Hellenised Egyptian god Serapis, to whom a massive temple existed on Rome's Quirinal Hill from the second century until the closure of pagan sites in the late fourth century. Amongst the *Variae Epistolae* of Cassiodorus, a sixth-century Roman administrative official serving under Theodoric the Great, we find a letter from Theodoric to Thrasamund, king of the Warni. The letter thanks Thrasamund for gifts he has sent including pattern-welded swords, which owing to their great beauty the letter attributes to Vulcan, the Roman counterpart to the divine smith Hephaestus in Greek myth. Hilda Ellis Davidson has drawn a connection between this comment and "the traditional Germanic attribution of fine weapons to a supernatural smith" such as Wayland. She suggests that Cassiodorus was consciously invoking traditions about Wayland in order to gratify a Germanic chieftain, and consequently posits the letter as evidence for the currency of the Wayland legend amongst the Germans in the sixth century.[109]

As we shall see in due course, there are indeed good grounds on which to suppose that legends about Wayland were in circulation amongst continental Germanic-speakers by this time, but we should be cautious in taking this letter as further corroboration. Cassiodorus was, after all, a Roman by birth, serving at the Romanised court of Theodoric. That he took an interest in the Germanic conquerors of Italy is indicated by his decision to undertake the writing of a history of the Goths (now lost, but an important source for the surviving *Getica* of

[109] Hilda Ellis Davidson, *The Sword in Anglo-Saxon England: Its Archaeology and Literature* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1998), pp. 107–8; cf. Ellis Davidson, 'Weland the Smith', *Folklore* 69:3 (1958), pp. 145–59, at p. 158.

Jordanes). He may well, therefore, have had some knowledge of Germanic legendary traditions. Yet Vulcan/Hephaestus was famed as a weapon smith in classical myth, and there is no reason to suppose that in mentioning him Cassiodorus was thinking beyond the remit of his own cultural heritage. The letter does show, however, that Cassiodorus could cite classical tradition in confidence that the reference would be comprehensible to a Germanic correspondent. The fact that Thrasamund could be assumed to recognise the name and significance of the Roman Vulcan and therefore appreciate the compliment is in itself significant, regardless of whether he might have perceived it as a reference to Wayland, or whether Cassiodorus so intended it.

To recap, we have seen several instances in which Germani in the late Imperial Period actively engaged with and reinterpreted aspects of Roman culture. In particular, the communication of religious information is illustrated by the popularity of the Mithras cult in Germania; by the naming of the days of the week according to the Roman planetary system; by developments in the treatment of the dead; by the incorporation of Roman elements into the ritual deposition of weaponry; and by the cosmological symbolism of Scandinavian ringforts, adapted from Roman models.

The relationship between myth and ritual is far from straightforward, and influence in one sphere cannot necessarily to be taken to reflect influence in the other.[110] It is beyond the scope of this discussion to offer a solution to the theoretical questions concerning the relationship between the two phenomena. It is notable, however, that Roman authors were extremely fond of providing mythic aetiologies for contemporary religious institutions and rituals, following the model of the *Aitia* of the Hellenistic poet Callimachus. Ovid and Virgil,

[110] See Robert A. Segal, 'Introduction', in Segal (ed.), *The Myth and Ritual Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), pp. 1–13, for an overview of discussions.

two of the most popular and influential classical authors in Late Antiquity,[111] well exemplify this preoccupation: Ovid's *Fasti*, on which he was working in the years before his death, would have provided aetiological explanations for the majority of the festivals in the Roman calendar, though only six books have come down to us; aetiological myths are also an oft-overlooked feature of the *Metamorphoses*.[112] In Book VIII of Virgil's *Aeneid*, Evander, the king of Pallantium on the future site of Rome, takes Aeneas on a tour of his city, providing mythic aetiologies for several of the readers' contemporary institutions.[113] Other examples from the poem include the establishment of the *lusus Troiae*, and the origins of the Gates of War on the temple of Janus.[114] The overall narrative arc of the poem functions on one level as an aetiology for the veneration of Juno in Roman religion, when her Greek counterpart Hera had been implacably hostile to the Trojans. Other Roman writers who display an interest in ritual aetiology include Propertius,[115] Statius, Lucan, and Silius Atticus.[116]

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[111] A. Zielinski Kinney, 'Late Antique Literature', in R.F. Thomas & J.M. Ziolkowski (eds.), *The Virgil Encyclopedia* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), pp. 724–8; Frances J. Foster, 'Teaching Language through Virgil in Late Antiquity', *CQ* 67:1 (2017), pp. 1–14; Franca Ela Consolino (ed.), *Ovid in Late Antiquity* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018); Ian Fielding, *Transformations of Ovid in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

[112] See e.g. K. Sara Myers, *Ovid's Causes: Cosmogony and Aetiology in the* Metamorphoses, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1994), esp. chapter 2; Christopher Francese, 'Daphne, Honor, and Aetiological Action in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*', *The Classical World* 97:2 (2004), pp. 153–7.

[113] See e.g. Virgil, *Aeneid* VIII. 102–6, 172–307, 328–32, 337–58, 597–605: *P. Vergili Maronis Opera*, ed. by R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 285, 287–91, 292, 292–3, 301.

[114] Virgil, *Aeneid* V. 596–602, VII. 601–17: *Opera* pp. 218, 275; see further Nicholas Horsfall, 'Virgil and the Poetry of Explanations', *Greece & Rome* 38:2 (1991), pp. 203–11, at p. 206, nn. 24–25.

[115] Kerill O'Niell, 'Propertius 4.4: Tarpeia and the Burden of Aetiology', *Hermathena* 158 (1995), pp. 53–60.

[116] Anke Walter, 'Aetiology and Genealogy in Ancient Epic', in Christiane Reitz & Simone Finkmann, *Structures of Epic Poetry, Volume I: Foundations* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2019), pp. 609–52, at pp. 622–45. Cultic aetiologies also feature prominently in Greek tragedy, but particularly in the plays of Euripides, who was amongst the most popular and influential of Classical Greek writers in the Roman period: see Justina Gregory, 'Euripidean Tragedy', in Justina Gregory (ed.), *A Companion to Greek Tragedy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), pp. 251–70, at pp. 259–60; Isabelle Torrence, 'Writing and Self-Conscious Mythopoiēsis in Euripides', *The Cambridge Classical Journal* 56 (2010), pp. 213–58, at p. 213, n. 1; Francis M. Dunn, 'Euripidean Aetiologies', *The Classical Bulletin* 76:1 (2000), pp. 3–27; Scott Scullion, 'Tradition and Invention in Euripidean Aitiology', *Illinois Classical Studies* 24–5 (1999–2000), pp. 217–33; Richard Seaford, 'Aitiologies of Cult in Euripides: A Response to Scott Scullion', in J.R.C. Cousland & James R. Hume (eds.),

Whether or not literary aetiologies such as these offer historically 'correct' accounts of the origins of given institutions and cults, and whether aetiological myths played any role in cultic practice, is beside the point. The prevalence of the aetiological trope in literature indicates that the phenomena of myth and ritual were closely and consistently linked in the minds of many Romans. It is therefore unlikely that the transmission of religious and ritual ideas and practices we have seen above occurred in a vacuum. It is highly probable that Roman influence in these spheres was accompanied by the sharing of mythological and legendary narratives which were expressions of the same cosmological worldview.

Conclusion

The history of interactions between the Roman Empire and the Germanic peoples offers multiple avenues by which classical ideas could plausibly have been assimilated into Germanic mythic and legendary traditions over a span of several centuries. The reconfiguration of barbarian groups into new confederations from the third century may well have encouraged the development of new cultural affinities, influenced by the traditions of neighbouring groups. The latter stages of this period provide the most likely context for such transmission in view of the increasingly close links of many Germanic groups to imperial administration, and this tallies also with the archaeological evidence. Equally, the importance of early contacts should not be overlooked. As Malcolm Todd notes, the major migrations in the later centuries of this period were rarely leaps into the unknown;[117] at the very least, the early encounters were the foundations on which the later receptivity of Germanic groups to Roman culture was built; far-reaching diplomatic and mercantile activities already around the turn of the first millennium

The Play of Texts and Fragments: Essays in Honour of Martin Cropp (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 221–34. For ancient reception of Euripides, see H. Funke, 'Euripides', *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 8–9 (1965–1966), pp. 233–79.

[117] Malcolm Todd, *Migrants & Invaders: The Movement of Peoples in the Ancient World* (Stroud: Tempus, 2001), p. 151.

demonstrated even to peripheral groups what the Roman Empire had to offer, encouraging the pursuit of the trappings of *Romanitas* even amongst groups whose relations with Rome were frequently hostile. In addition to the general evidence of Roman cultural influences on the Germani, there are strong indications, particularly from the archaeological evidence, of specific ideological stimuli that are likely to have affected developments in Germanic myth and legend.

CHAPTER 2: DAEDALUS AND THE WAYLAND LEGEND

The previous chapter sought to establish a plausible socio-historical context in which Graeco-Roman mythical and legendary ideas could have diffused into Germanic traditions. The following pages will examine the well-known narrative comparison between the myth of Daedalus, who escaped from captivity on Crete by crafting wings, and that of the legendary Germanic smith Wayland. The specificity of the parallel between the two is greater than can be accounted for by coincidence, whilst the lack of further Indo-European analogues makes a common heritage implausible. The evidence for the early stages of the development of the Wayland legend indicates its circulation amongst Germanic peoples in close proximity to and sustained contact with the Roman Empire, supporting the hypothesis of a connection with the Graeco-Roman myth.

Sources for the Wayland Legend

Wayland the smith (ON Vǫlundr/Velent; OE Weland/Welund; OHG Wielant) was a highly popular figure in legendary tradition throughout the Germanic world. Knowledge of him is attested in medieval literature and iconography from England, Germany and Scandinavia, as well as in English, German and Danish place-names, and possibly in runic inscriptions from Migration-Period Germany. He is chiefly associated with a particular narrative episode, which may be recounted in its most basic form as follows: Wayland, a master smith, was captured by King Nidhad, who lamed and imprisoned him and forced him to fashion precious artefacts for him. Wayland avenged himself for his torment firstly by murdering Nidhad's sons and making ornaments from their body parts, and secondly by raping and impregnating Nidhad's daughter Beadohild. He then escaped from his captivity by constructing a flying apparatus from bird feathers collected by his brother Egill, who appears elsewhere in legend as a renowned archer. The son borne to Wayland by Beadohild was the legendary hero Widia.

The revenge legend is extant in two narrative sources: the eddic poem *Vǫlundarkviða*, and the *Velents þáttr* section of *Þiðreks saga af Bern*, a Norwegian translation of German legends. Wider knowledge of the legend in Viking-Age Scandinavia is indicated by three kennings (poetic periphrases) used by skaldic poets in the tenth century: two refer to Egill's skill at archery,[1] whilst another uses the compound "grjót-Níðaðr" (rock-Níðuðr) to denote one of the *jǫtnar*, the enemies of the Æsir, suggesting familiarity with Níðuðr's role as a villainous figure.[2]

Vǫlundarkviða is the tenth poem in the Codex Regius manuscript of the *Poetic Edda* (GKS 2365 4º), written *c*. 1270 in Iceland, but it likely antedates the compilation of the *Poetic Edda* by some time. A number of lexical and metrical features point to Old English and (to a lesser extent) Old Saxon influence on the poem, and John McKinnell has made a good case for its composition in the tenth or early eleventh century in a Norse-speaking area of northern England – possibly Yorkshire, where Norse was certainly spoken,[3] and where the legend was a popular subject for iconographic representation.[4] It should be noted, however, that lexical and metrical influence does not entail influence on the form of the legend. As we shall see below, various features of the poem's treatment of the story, and correspondences with Scandinavian iconographic sources, indicate that it reflects a Norse version of the legend: for instance, the narrative of the poem is firmly localised in north Scandinavia, and Vǫlundr's unaided flight contrasts with the English iconographic tradition as exemplified by the Franks Casket and the carved cross shafts from Anglo-Scandinavian Yorkshire (discussed below),

[1] Eyvindr Finnsson, *Lausavísa* 14/8, ed. by Russell Poole, in Diana Whaley (ed.), *Poetry from the Kings' Sagas I: From Mythical Times to c. 1035*. Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages I (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), p. 234; Hallfreðr Ottarsson, *Hákonardrápa* 2/4, ed. by Kate Heslop, in Kari Ellen Gade & Edith Marold (eds.), *Poetry from Treatises on Poetics.* Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages III (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017), p. 216.

[2] Þjóðólfr of Hvinir, *Haustlǫng* 9/8, ed. by Margaret Clunies Ross, in Gade & Marold (eds.), *Poetry from Treatises on Poetics* (2017), p. 444; *The Poetic Edda, Volume II: The Mythological Poems*, ed. & transl. by Ursula Dronke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 272.

[3] Matthew Townend, *Viking Age Yorkshire* (Pickering: Blackthorn, 2014), p. 118.

[4] McKinnell, '*Vǫlundarkviða*' (2014), pp. 221–48, at pp. 221–33.

with their clear evidence of mechanical flying contraptions, but coheres with the depiction of a magical transformation on several Gotlandic picture stones.

Though the narrative of *Vǫlundarkviða* seems to belong more to the realm of heroic legend (a supposition supported by its analogues in other Germanic traditions), the poem's placement in the Codex Regius manuscript associates it with the mythological poems.[5] Since *Vǫlundarkviða* is preceded by a poem dealing with giants (*Þrymskviða*) and followed by one featuring a dwarf (*Alvíssmál*), and since it features swan-maidens and three times designates Vǫlundr himself as an elf, it is possible that the positioning of these poems in the manuscript reflects their shared focus on mythological beings other than the Æsir.[6] Stefán Einarsson has alternatively posited that *Vǫlundarkviða* was intended to introduce the heroic portion of the collection, but the compiler/scribe realised that he had missed out *Alvíssmál*,[7] but this does not account for the prominent red initial at the start of the first heroic poem, *Helgakviða Hundingsbana I*,[8] which emphasises the point of division.[9]

The poem is prefaced by a prose passage, likely closer in date to the compilation of Codex Regius than to the composition of the poem, which tells how Vǫlundr and his brothers, Egill and Slagfiðr, the sons of a Lappish or Sámi king, establish a dwelling in the wild on the shores of *Úlfsjár* (Wolf Lake), and recounts their marriage to three swan maidens, Hlaðguðr,

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[5] Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Extreme Emotional Life of Vǫlundr the Elf', *Scandinavian Studies* 78 (2006), pp. 227–54, at p. 227; Margaret Clunies Ross, 'The Transmission and Preservation of Eddic Poetry', in Carolyne Larrington, Judy Quinn & Brittany Schorn (eds.), *A Handbook to Eddic Poetry: Myths and Legends of Early Scandinavia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 12–32, at. p. 24; Christopher Abram, *Myths of the Pagan North: The Gods of the Norsemen* (London: Continuum: 2011), p. 18.

[6] Joseph Harris, 'Eddic Poetry', in Clover & Lindow (eds.), *Critical Guide* (1985), p. 77; Andy Orchard, *Cassell's Dictionary of Norse Myth and Legend* (London: Cassell, 1997), p. 180; Lindow, *Norse Mythology* (2001), pp. 13–4.

[7] Stefán Einarsson, *A History of Icelandic Literature* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1957), p. 16.

[8] *Helgakviða Hundingsbana I* 1/1: *Eddukvæði*, ed. by Jónas Kristjánsson & Vésteinn Ólason, 2 volumes (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 2014), ii. 247, with facing photograph of the manuscript page.

[9] Brittany Erin Schorn, *Speaker and Authority in Old Norse Wisdom Poetry* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017), p. 21.

Hervǫr and Ǫlrún, whom the prose author also identifies as valkyries. After nine years their brides abandon them; whilst his brothers leave in search of their wives, Vǫlundr remains behind.

The poem proper recapitulates in its opening stanzas, though with some significant differences from the prose: the poem itself does not call the brides valkyries, and they take the initiative with Vǫlundr and his brothers, where the prose sees them taken as wives. This might reflect a difference between Icelandic tradition and a more southerly Scandinavian one that could have informed the original poet, though it should also be remembered that the poem and its prose prologue could be separated temporally by up to three centuries. We additionally learn that with his brothers gone Vǫlundr spends his time forging rings in anticipation of his wife's return (str. 1–5).

A provincial Swedish king, Niðuðr, hears of his solitude and sends armed men to abduct him and seize his treasure (str. 6–15). Niðuðr claims Vǫlundr's sword for himself, whilst his daughter Bǫðvildr is given one of the gold rings Vǫlundr had forged for his swan bride. Niðuðr's wife, referred to only as "kunnig kván Niðaðar" (Niðuðr's cunning queen), perceives Vǫlundr's anger as he notices his stolen possessions, and therefore advises Niðuðr to lame him and imprison him in an island smithy where he is set to work fashioning precious objects for the king (str. 16–18).

When Niðuðr's young sons visit the forge, Vǫlundr exploits their greed for treasure to lure them back; then he murders them, and makes goblets from their skulls and jewellery from their eyes and teeth (str. 19–24). When Bǫðvildr's ring is broken, she visits Vǫlundr in secret to ask him to mend it. Vǫlundr makes her drunk and rapes her, impregnating her with a son (str. 25–27). He then escapes his island prison by flying away in apparently unaided fashion (str. 28). Niðuðr belatedly rejects the counsels of his wife as he grieves for his lost sons (str. 29–31). Vǫlundr pauses to reveal the full extent of his twofold vengeance to Niðuðr, after

extracting from him an oath ensuring the safety of his unborn child (str. 28–37). Niðuðr confronts Bǫðvildr over Vǫlundr's allegations, and she confesses to their sexual encounter (str. 38–40).

The second of our extant narrative accounts of the legend is preserved in *Þiðreks saga af Bern*. Classified amongst the *Riddarasǫgur* (chivalric sagas), this text comprises a collection of translated German legends nominally centred on the figure of Dietrich of Bern, a legendary reflex of Theoderic the Great, the Ostrogothic king of the fifth–sixth centuries. The saga was compiled *c*. 1260, probably at Bergen, and the earliest manuscript dates from the end of the thirteenth century. The Wayland legend is recounted in a standalone section of the saga called *Velents þáttr smiðs*. Velent is introduced as the son of the giant Vaði, himself the son of King Vilkinus by a mermaid. Vaði apprentices his son first to the smith Mímir, and subsequently to two dwarf smiths in a mountain called Kallava. The dwarves agree to instruct Velent for twelve months, but warn that they will kill him if Vaði fails to return on the agreed day. When Vaði dies in an avalanche, Velent preemptively kills his dwarf masters. He sails to Jutland in a hollowed tree trunk, and comes to the court of King Niðungr.

Velent attracts Niðungr's attention after forging a knife superior to those made by the court smith Amilias. Amilias, publicly humiliated, challenges Velent to a duel to test their skills: Amilias forges armour, whilst Velent is to forge a sword. Velent's smithing tools are stolen, and not knowing the name of the thief he makes a sculpture so realistic that Niðungr recognises the culprit immediately. Velent forges the sword Mimmungr and another inferior sword. Wielding Mimmungr, he easily wins the duel; Niðungr demands the sword for himself, but Velent substitutes the lesser weapon. Velent is established as Niðungr's court smith.

Later, on the eve of a battle, Niðungr finds he has left his victory-stone behind, and offers half his kingdom and the hand of his daughter to the man who fetches it before sunrise. Velent does so, but one of Niðungr's stewards tries to buy the stone off him and thus claim the

reward. Velent refuses and kills the steward in the ensuing fight. Niðungr consequently outlaws him. Velent attempts to poison Niðungr and his daughter, but is discovered, hamstrung, and set to work in the smithy. When Niðungr's two younger sons ask Velent to make arrowheads for them, he murders them, conceals their corpses beneath the forge, and fashions a full set of tableware from their bones. The princess breaks her favourite ring and is afraid to tell her parents; her maidservant asks Velent to mend it, but he will do so only if the princess asks him in person. When she does, he seduces or rapes her.

Velent also manages to get word of his incarceration to his brother Egill, a renowned archer, who arrives at Niðungr's court. Niðungr, wishing to test the newcomer's skill, takes Egill's son and commands him to shoot an apple off his head. Velent meets with the princess and they pledge themselves to each other. Velent then sends Egill to collect bird feathers, which he uses to make a winged suit. He sends Egill for a test flight; to prevent Egill from flying away himself, Velent falsely instructs him to take off into wind and land with the wind, causing him to crash. Anticipating that Niðungr will attempt to prevent his escape, Velent fills a bladder with the blood of the king's sons, which he ties under his left arm; he tells Egill to aim for this if ordered to shoot him down. Velent flies away, revealing his twofold vengeance to Niðungr as he departs. Niðungr orders Egill to shoot his brother; he pierces the blood-filled bladder, deceiving the king into thinking Velent is dead. Niðungr soon sickens and dies, and is succeeded by his remaining son Otvin. The princess gives birth to Velent's son, who is named Viðga. Velent returns, makes a peace settlement with Otvin, and marries the princess.

As noted, *Þiðreks saga* was compiled in Norway, and moreover clearly exhibits influence from high medieval romance. Nonetheless, we may be confident in its testimony to an early medieval German Wayland tradition. Two forms of Wayland's name occur, distinguished by the vowel in the root syllable; the form *Velent* corresponds to the German

Wielant, with Germanic *ē*, as opposed to the Norse *Vǫlundr*, with Germanic *a*.[10] Maria Elena Ruggerini notes several features of the passage describing Egill's hunt and the creation of the wings, which suggest an underlying Low German poetic source.[11] Moreover, the narrative presented in *Velents þáttr* exhibits several points of correspondence with the English tradition, itself derived from north Germany – notably the roles of Egill and of Beadohild's maidservant, both paralleled in Anglo-Saxon iconography (see below, p. 71).

Aside from the combination of the revenge legend with a version of the Swan Maiden folktale, which was likely a feature of the poet's received tradition,[12] the presentation of the legend in *Vǫlundarkviða* diverges from the wider tradition in several particulars. Most notably for our purposes, Vǫlundr's escape flight is not achieved by means of a mechanical device – Egill is sidelined from the action early on and does not appear as his brother's accomplice, and in making his escape Vǫlundr appears to undergo some sort of metamorphosis.[13] It has conversely been argued that the lack of detail concerning the construction of the wings simply reflects a combination of the story's familiarity and the terse, allusive style of eddic poetry.[14] However, this is difficult to reconcile with the overt marginalising of Egill's role in the poem, as well as with details of the iconography: as we shall see, the metamorphic impression is corroborated by several of the iconographic depictions from Scandinavia, suggesting that a variant of the legend came into circulation in Viking-Age Scandinavia.

Vǫlundr's flight as depicted in *Vǫlundarkviða* can be related to the native concept of *hamr*; semantically, this term denotes an animal skin, but in narrative contexts it commonly

[10] Gillespie, *Catalogue* (1973), p. 143.
[11] Maria Elena Ruggerini, 'Tales of Flight in Old Norse and Medieval English Texts', *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 2 (2006), pp. 201–38, at pp. 218–9.
[12] McKinnell, '*Vǫlundarkviða*' (2014), p. 234, with analogues for the amalgamation in German sources. See also the discussion below (pp. 66–7) of the picture stone from Alskog, Gotland, which is highly unlikely to be directly dependent on *Vǫlundarkviða*.
[13] Cf. Kaaren Grimstad, 'The Revenge of *Vǫlundr*', in Robert J. Glendinning and Haraldur Bessason (eds.), *Edda: A Collection of Essays* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1983), pp. 187–209, at p. 192.
[14] Ruggerini, 'Tales of Flight' (2006), p. 217.

describes a means of shapeshifting.[15] In some instances, *hamr* is a physical garment; for example, the prose preface to *Vǫlundarkviða* refers to the *álptarhamir* (swan-garments) borne by the women encountered by Vǫlundr and his brothers, whilst both Freyja and Frigg are said to possess a *valshamr* (falcon-garment), which Loki borrows on several occasions.[16] That the *hamr* affects more than outward appearance is illustrated by *Vǫlsunga saga*, in which the donning of *úlfahamir* (wolf-skins) causes Sigmundr and Sinfjǫtli to act like wolves.[17] In other instances, *hamr* signifies an innate metamorphic attribute – in *Skáldskaparmál* the giant Þjazi approaches the Æsir "í arnarham" (in eagle form),[18] whilst again in *Vǫlsunga saga*, Siggeir's mother is said to be able to take the form of a wolf "fyrir tröllskapar sakir ok fjöllkynngi" (by means of witchcraft and sorcery).[19]

The flexibility of the term is perhaps a contributing factor in the ambiguity over the precise means by which Vǫlundr takes flight in *Vǫlundarkviða*. For our purposes, it is additionally instructive to note that shape-shifting in Old Norse texts is frequently associated with Lapps, Sámi and other non-Germanic-speaking inhabitants of the far north of Scandinavia,[20] with whom Germanic Scandinvians had a long history of extensive contact and cultural interchange;[21] *Vǫlundarkviða* is no exception – the prose preface to *Vǫlundarkviða* introduces Vǫlundr and his brothers as "synir Finnakonungs" (sons of the Lappish King), and the name of Vǫlundr's brother Slagfiðr contains the deuterotheme *Finnr* (Lapp).[22] Ursula Dronke has posited the influence of Lappish shamanic legends and practices both on the

[15] Lyonel D. Perabo, 'Shapeshifting in Old Norse-Icelandic Literature', *Roda da Fortuna* 6:1 (2017), pp. 135–58.
[16] See e.g. Snorri Sturluson, *Skáldskaparmál* G56, i. 2 (Freyja); *Skáldskaparmál* 18, i. 24 (Frigg); *Þrymskviða* 3/1–6: *Eddukvæði* i. 423 (Freyja).
[17] *Vǫlsunga saga* 8: *Fornaldar sögur Norðurlanda*, ed. by Guðni Jónsson, 4 volumes (Reykjavík: Íslendingasagnaútgáfan, 1950), i. 123–4.
[18] Snorri Sturluson, *Skáldskaparmál* G56, i. 2.
[19] *Vǫlsunga saga* 5: *Fornaldar sögur Norðurlanda* i. 119.
[20] Perabo, 'Shapeshifting' (2017), pp. 141–7.
[21] Thomas A. DuBois, *Nordic Religions in the Viking Age* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp. 23–8.
[22] McKinnell, '*Vǫlundarkviða*' (2014), p. 229; Orchard, *Cassell's Dictionary* (1997), p. 151.

magical conception of Vǫlundr's escape flight and on his remodelling of the corpses of Niðuðr's sons, particularly the fantastical transformation of eyes into jewels.[23] The supernatural variant of Vǫlundr's flight is in all probability a peculiarly Scandinavian development.

Wayland's presence in Old English literature is far more oblique. The most substantial reference occurs in *Deor*, an elegiac poem preserved in the tenth-century Exeter Book manuscript, but possibly composed much earlier. Therein, the straitened narrator consoles himself by contemplating the transience of the suffering experienced by a series of historical-legendary figures. The opening lines of the poem recall how Welund "wean oft onfond | siþþan hine Niðhad on nede legde" (often found misery after Niðhad lay fetters on him).[24] The crux of the story, Wayland's revenge and escape, is only alluded to through the final verse of the stanza, "Þæs ofereode, þisses swa mæg" (That passed over, so may this),[25] which appears throughout the poem as a refrain. This of course indicates that the poet could rely on his audience's familiarity with the legend. Similarly, the poet immediately goes on to relate the sorrow of Beadohild (Bǫðvildr) due to her pregnancy and the loss of her brothers,[26] without mentioning that Welund caused it. This might reflect, as Kopár suggests, the concern of the poet to make personal misery "the thematic core of the story",[27] but it also indicates that the audience could be expected to make the connection between the two episodes automatically.

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[23] *Poetic Edda II*, ed. & transl. by Dronke (1997), pp. 266–7; cf. Paul Budd & Timothy Taylor, 'The Faerie Smith Meets the Bronze Industry: Magic and Science in the Interpretation of Prehistoric Metal-Making', *World Archaeology* 27:1 (1995), pp. 133–43, at p. 139.

[24] *Deor* 4–5, ed. by K. Malone, 4th edition (London: Methuen, 1966), p. 23. For the sake of consistency with other Old English texts cited, I have standardised the Old English characters yogh (*ȝ*) and wynn (*ƿ*) respectively to *g* and *w*, which represent the same phonemes.

[25] *Deor* 7, p. 23.

[26] *Deor* 8–12, p. 24.

[27] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers* (2012), p. 6.

A.C. Bouman has proposed that the highly enigmatic elegy *Wulf and Eadwacer*, also preserved in the Exeter Book, should be interpreted as a lament spoken by Beadohild.[28] His argument notes that in the manuscript *Wulf and Eadwacer* directly follows *Deor*, with which it shares distinctive formal elements such as a stanzaic arrangement with a refrain. The personal name Eadwacer is connected to Odoacer, King of Italy in the late fifth century until his deposition by Theodoric the Great. Odoacer is associated in legend with Theodoric and Ermaneric, who both appear in *Deor*. An implicit association can moreover be made with Widia by way of his rescue of Theodoric alluded to in *Waldere*, which Bouman takes as a reference to Theodoric's exile by Ermaneric on Odoacer's advice. Widia in turn connects Odoacer to his parents, Weland and Beadohild, so that "we see Eadwacer in Old English tradition connected with all persons mentioned in Deor."[29] Since *Deor* has been argued to have close textual affinities with *Vǫlundarkviða*, we are justified in seeking a connection between the eddic poem and *Wulf and Eadwacer*. Beadohild (Bǫðvildr) is identified as the only figure in *Vǫlundarkviða* who could be the narrator of the elegy, and a line-by-line commentary explains its cryptic phrasing with reference to details from *Vǫlundarkviða*.

The argument is unconvincing. The formal affinity between *Wulf and Eadwacer* and *Deor* can only be given so much weight in the context of an incomplete literary record, and their juxtaposition in the manuscript need not indicate any connection between the poems' respective contents. The connection between Odoacer and Widia is indirect, and the exile of Theodoric is hardly the only conceivable referent of the *nearwum* (difficulties) cited in *Waldere*.[30] Bouman's commentary arbitrarily assigns literal significance to some but not other

[28] A.C. Bouman, '*Leodum is minum*: Beadohild's Complaint', *Neophilologus* 33:1 (1949), pp. 103–13.
[29] Bouman, 'Beadohild's Complaint' (1949), p. 106.
[30] *Waldere* II. 8, ed. by A. Zettersten (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979), p. 19. R.W. Chambers, *Widsith: A Study in Heroic Legend* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), p. 49, envisaged one of Theodoric's many monster encounters such as related in later German sources as the subject of the allusion.

elements of *Vǫlundarkviða* – for instance, Vǫlundr's imprisonment "í hólmi" (on an island) and the fact that Bǫðvildr "gekk ór eyju" (went from the island) are cited to explain the elegy's statement, "Wulf is on iege" (Wulf is on an island), but the b-verse, "ic on oþerre" (I am on another) is explained away, as either being literally true despite the absence of a corroborating source, or as being added "merely for the sake of contrast".[31] Unsatisfactory psychologising is invoked to explain why Beadohild would use Eadwacer's name but not those of Weland or Widia. The argument additionally requires the supposition of an otherwise unknown legendary episode, the abduction of the infant Widia by Odoacer. It is also instructive to note that the poem has been just as plausibly attached to a number of other heroic legends.[32] Given the lack of consensus on the poem, it cannot be admitted as evidence for the Wayland legend in England.

Elsewhere in Old English, Wayland is a byword for exceptional craftsmanship. In the Alfredian translations of Boethius, Wayland is invoked to make a philological joke. Boethius had contemplated the fleeting nature of human renown by citing the example of a famously incorruptible Republican-Period senator, asking: "ubi nunc fidelis ossa Fabricii manent [?]" (Where now lie the bones of trusty Fabricius?)[33] Deriving Fabricius' name from the Latin *faber*

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[31] Bouman, 'Beadohild's Complaint' (1949), pp. 109–10.

[32] W.W. Lawrence, 'The First Riddle of Cynewulf', *PMLA* 17:2 (1902), pp. 247–61, argued that the poem was translated from an Old Norse exemplar, and an accompanying article by P.H. Schofield, 'Signy's Lament', *PMLA* 17:2 (1902), pp. 262–95, associated the poem with the Vǫlsung legend – see also further discussion of 'The Sigurd-Cycle and Britain' by A. Nutt, *Athenaeum* 3912 (Oct. 18, 1902), pp. 521–2 & *Athenaeum* 3914 (Nov. 1, 1902), p. 587; I. Gollancz, *Athenaeum* 3913 (Oct. 25, 1902), pp. 521–2 who posited a link with the *Hildebrandslied*; and H. Bradley, *Athenaeum* 3919 (Dec. 6, 1902), p. 758. R. Imelmann, *Die altenglische Odoaker-Dichtung* (Berlin: Julius Springer, 1907), saw the poem as part of a cycle centred on Odoacer, which also included several other Exeter Book poems. L.L. Schücking, *Kleines angelsächsisches Dichterbuch: Lyrik und Heldenepos* (Köthen: Otto Schulze, 1919), identified the poem as a version of the German *Wolfdietrich B* narrative. P.J. Frankis, '*Deor* and *Wulf and Eadwacer*: Some Conjectures', *Medium Ævum* 31 (1962), pp. 161–75, has suggested that Wulf is the same person as the *scop* Deor, and that *Wulf and Eadwacer* tells the same narrative as *Deor* from the perspective of his lover. Ruth P.M. Lehman, 'The Metrics and Structure of "Wulf and Eadwacer"', *Philological Quarterly* 48:2 (1969), pp. 151–65, believed that the poem conflates a legend of the Frankish Dietrich/Theodoric with names from the tradition of the Ostrogothic Theodoric the Great.

[33] *De Consolatione Philosophiae* II. metre 7. 15: *Boethius De Consolatione Philosophiae, Opuscula Theologica*, ed. by C. Moreschini (Munich: K.G. Saur, 2000), p. 53.

(craftsman), the English translators replaced him with the craftsman nearest at hand: "hwaer sint nu þæs wisan Welandes ban þæs gold-smiþes?" (Where now are the bones of Weland the wise goldsmith?)[34] This substitution illustrates a ready association in England of Wayland with exceptional craftsmanship. Likewise in *Beowulf*, the hero requests that in the event of his death at Grendel's hands Hrōðgār should return to Hygelāc "beaduscrūda betst, þæt mīne brēost wereð, | hrægla sēlest; þæt is Hrædlān lāf, | Wēlandes geweorc" (The best of battle-shrouds, that protects my breast, finest of garments; that is Hrēðel's relic, Weland's work).[35] In the first of the two fragments of *Waldere* (an epic poem relating the legend of Walter of Aquitaine), Waldere is motivated for battle by his lover, *Hildegyð (unnamed in the surviving fragments), who declares: "Huru Welande[s] worc ne geswiceð | monna ænigum ðara ðe Mimming can | hearne gehealdan" (Surely Weland's work will not fail any man, of those who can wield hard Mimming).[36] We might observe at this juncture that "Wielandia fabrica" (Wieland's work) also occurs in the Latin epic *Waltharius*,[37] composed by the tenth-century German monk Ekkehard, which treats the same legendary material as *Waldere*. The Latin form *Wielandia* is clearly based on the German form of Wayland's name, which suggests a common tradition underlying his connection to the English and German branches of the Walter legend. The second *Waldere* fragment, meanwhile, mentions Widia, who is called "Niðhades mæg, | Welandes bearn" (Niðhad's kinsman, Weland's son),[38] indicating that the revenge and resulting progeny were established in the Anglo-Saxon Wayland tradition.

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[34] Metre X. 33–4: *The Old English Boethius: An Edition of the Old English Versions of Boethius's* De Consolatione Philosophiae, ed. by M. Godden, S.E. Irvine, M.S. Griffith & R. Jayatilaka, 2 volumes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), i. 427. Cf. *Old English Boethius* 19: i. 283.

[35] *Beowulf* 453–5. *Klaeber's Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. by R.D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork & John D. Niles, 4th edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008, repr. 2014), p. 17.

[36] *Waldere* I. 2–3, p. 15.

[37] *Waltharius* 965: *Die latenischen Dichter des deutschen Mittelalters VI: Nachträge zu den Poetae Ævi Carolini*, ed. by Karl Strecker (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau, 1951) p. 64.

[38] *Waldere* II. 8–9, p. 19.

The literary sources may be supplemented with evidence from iconography. Visual depictions of Wayland have been identified on several picture stones from the Swedish island of Gotland. The clearest is Ardre VIII, one of several Viking-Age stones from Ardre church (figure 4). Dated to the eighth or ninth century, it depicts various scenes from Norse myth, including Þórr fishing for the Miðgarðsormr, and the punishment of Loki. Near its centre a vignette displays a birdlike figure exiting a forge (identifiable by the presence of smithing tools),[39] leaving behind two decapitated corpses. The impression of the image is that the flying figure has performed some sort of metamorphosis, which is interesting in light of the apparently supernatural flight reported in *Vǫlundarkviða*. The winged figure's head is pressed against the back of a female figure, generally thought to be Bǫðvildr/Beadohild.[40] We shall see below that a very similar composition recurs in Viking-Age carvings in Yorkshire. As Richard Bailey notes, a direct connection between Gotland and Northern England is unlikely, so that the similarity suggests that this iconographic pattern was also current in the western parts of Scandinavia.[41] The distinctive fashion in pre-Christian Gotland for figurative carving in stone (rather than woodwork or other less permanent media) simply means that potentially widespread iconographic designs have only survived in a limited area.[42]

Precise interpretation of the motif is open to debate. Collingwood and Bailey saw the arrangement of the two figures as an attempt to combine visually the rape of Beadohild and Wayland's escape;[43] Lilla Kopár notes an alternative possibility that the sculptor knew a variant of the legend in which Wayland abducted the princess.[44] It is difficult to judge between these possibilities. Given that an abduction is not known from any written source, we might be

[39] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers* (2012), p. 17.
[40] W.G. Collingwood, *Northumbrian Crosses of the Pre-Norman Age* (London: Faber & Gwyer, 1927), p. 163; Bailey, *Viking Age Sculpture* (1980), p. 106; Kopár, *Gods and Settlers* (2012), p. 18.
[41] Bailey, *Viking Age Sculpture* (1980), p. 106.
[42] Bailey, *Viking Age Sculpture* (1980), p. 76.
[43] Collingwood, *Northumbrian Crosses* (1927), p. 163; Bailey, *Viking Age Sculpture* (1980), p. 106.
[44] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers* (2012), p. 8.

tempted to prefer the former, on the basis that if such an episode were sufficiently familiar for contemporary viewers to have been able to recognise it unambiguously in iconographic form, we might expect it to have left some mark on the literary record. However, it is not at all implausible that a local variation of the legendary narrative current in Viking-Age Gotland should have escaped the notice of antiquarians in thirteenth-century Iceland.

Efforts have been made to identify Wayland on other Gotlandic stones, with less conclusive results. Kopár follows Sigmund Oehrl in proposing relevant material on Ardre III, an eleventh-century rune stone also from Ardre church, and a stone from Alskog church, which Oehrl dates to the tenth century.[45] In the centre of Ardre III (figure 5), between two symmetrically arranged serpentine motifs, a seated figure is depicted working at an anvil; a second figure in the lower left corner appears to have an injured and bound leg, recalling the laming and/or fettering of Wayland. Both figures possess appendages resembling beak and wings,[46] suggesting in Oehrl's words "einem Hybriden, einer Art Vogel-mensch" (A hybrid, a sort of bird-man).[47] This is reminiscent of the depiction on Ardre VIII, and is again suggestive of a magical element to Wayland's character.

The Alskog stone (figure 6) is badly damaged, but clearly depicts a number of scenes, including another probable representation of Loki's punishment. Oehrl and Kopár suggest that amongst these are several episodes from the Wayland narrative. A pentagonal shape at the top is taken to be the lake where Wayland and his brothers lived with their wives; Oehrl suggested that the corners of the pentagon were shaped as wolf heads, alluding to the lake's name Úlfsjár (Wolf Lake) and location in Úlfdalir (Wolf Dales).[48] A winged suit surrounded by birds and two female figures perhaps gestures at "the dual nature of the swan maidens", or may even

[45] Sigmund Oehrl, 'Wieland der Schmeid auf dem Kistenstein von Alskog kyrka und dem Runenstein Ardre kyrka III. Zur partiellen Neulesung und Interpretation zweier gotländischer Bildsteine', *Analecta Septentrionalia: RGA-E-Band* 65 (2009), pp. 540–66, at p. 542.
[46] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers* (2012), p. 18.
[47] Oehrl, 'Wieland der Schmied' (2009), p. 551.
[48] Oehrl, 'Wieland der Schmied' (2009), p. 548.

denote that they play a role in Wayland's escape.[49] The allusion to the liminality of the swan maidens could in turn hint at Wayland's supernatural abilities, since it is hard not to suspect a link in their shared capacity for flight in *Vǫlundarkviða*. On the right of the panel in a roofed enclosure, a figure kneels at an anvil with a headless body, evoking Wayland's first act of vengeance against Nidhad; Oehrl links the kneeling to the depiction of Wayland's lameness on the Franks Casket, noting also that another legendary Norse smith, Reginn, is contrastingly always pictured iconographically seated on a chair.[50] In Roman art, Vulcan is also frequently depicted kneeling.[51]

A second kneeling figure appears again directly above the first, with a third kneeling figure opposite. This has drawn little comment; Oehrl notes the presence of the pair, and that they appear also on Ardre VIII,[52] but does not fit them into his interpretative framework. It might be tempting to associate the stacking of the first two kneeling figures as an attempt to capture in visual terms the spontaneity with which Vǫlundr takes flight in the poem: "Hlæjandi Vǫlundr hófsk at lofti" (Laughing, Vǫlundr rose into the air),[53] but the third figure facing the upper kneeling figure renders this problematic. The kneeling figures on Ardre VIII are placed under a similar domed structure, and are clearly separate from the Wayland section. It is thus possible that the kneeling pair on the Alskog stone in fact have nothing to do with the kneeling Wayland beneath them.

The foregoing images have each displayed at least two points of contact with the account in *Vǫlundarkviða*, through which we can discern a probable connection with the Wayland narrative. Kopár has cited one further stone monument and several items of

[49] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers* (2012), p. 18.
[50] Oehrl, 'Wieland der Schmied' (2009), p. 547.
[51] Sigmund Oehrl, 'Bildliche Darstellungen vom Schmied Wieland und ein unerwarteter Aufdritt in Walhall', in Alexandra Pesch & Ruth Blankenfeldt (eds.), *Goldsmith Mysteries: Archaeological, Pictorial and Documentrary Evidence from the 1st Millennium AD in Northern Europe* (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 2012), pp. 279–332, at p. 281, with further references.
[52] Oehrl, 'Wieland der Schmied' (2009), pp. 544, 548.
[53] *Vǫlundarkviða* 28/5–6, 37/–12: *Eddukvæði* i. 435, 436.

metalwork from Viking-Age Scandinavia as possible instances of Wayland iconography. The first is Stora Hammars III, a picture stone from Lärbro parish in the north of Gotland (figure 7). One panel features a bird-man figure not unlike that on the Ardre VIII stone, flying towards a female figure with a drinking horn. The arrangement resembles that which we shall see below in Anglo-Scandinavian images, and Kopár suggests a Wayland connection.[54] An armed male figure behind the woman is, however, hard to account for on this basis. More plausible is Hilda Ellis Davidson's earlier interpretation of the scene as a portrayal of Óðinn's theft of the mead of poetry,[55] recorded in the eddic poem *Hávamál* and in Snorri Sturluson's *Edda*.[56] The flying figure is Óðinn, who having acquired the mead escapes by adopting the *hamr* of an eagle (see above, pp. 58–60); alongside Óðinn we would have Gunnlǫð, who allowed Óðinn access to the mead; the figure behind her could be the *jǫtunn* (giant) Suttungr, Gunnlǫð's father, who earlier demanded the mead from its dwarf brewers in revenge for their murder of his parents.[57]

The metal artefacts are a bronze belt fitting from Uppåkra in southern mainland Sweden; a sword chape from from Birka, on the island of Björkö, Sweden; and a fitting from Tissø on Zealand, Denmark.[58] The Uppåkra fitting depicts a man strapped into a frame with wings and tail feathers, who also possesses markedly avian features, such as a pointed beard tilted forward to resemble a beak, suggesting a transitional state (figure 8). The clear indications of avian metamorphosis are tantalising alongside the images on the Ardre stones. Moreover, the fine detail of three drops of blood under the left wing of the figure have been connected with the account in *Þiðreks saga*, in which Velent's brother Egill is commanded to fire an

[54] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers* (2012), p. 18.
[55] H.R. Ellis Davidson, *The Lost Beliefs of Northern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 72–3.
[56] *Hávamál* 13–14 & 104–110: *Eddukvæði* i. 324 & 343–4; *Skáldskaparmál* G58, ed. by Anthony Faulkes, 2 volumes (London: VSNR, 1998), i. 4–5.
[57] *Skáldskaparmál* G57, i. 3–4.
[58] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers* (2012), pp. 16–17.

arrow at him as he escapes; Egill's shot pierces a blood-filled bladder tied under Velent's left arm, creating the illusion of a fatal shot.[59]

The Uppåkra arrangement finds an intriguing parallel in the beakheads decorating the west portal of the Romanesque Church of St Mary the Virgin in Iffley, Oxfordshire.[60] The portal features two orders of radial beakheads, with several beakheads in the inner order featuring human heads whose beards transition into beaked birds heads (figure 9). Beakhead ornament is first attested in England around 1130 at Reading Abbey, Berkshire and Old Sarum Cathedral, Wiltshire,[61] with examples also known from around this time in Ireland.[62] Precursors in western and northern France are known from the early twelfth century,[63] and the precedent of the biting or gripping beast in insular manuscript illumination has been widely noted.[64] Human heads feature more commonly in continental examples, whilst animal heads predominate in England;[65] the examples at Iffley are conspicuous in combining the two in an overtly metamorphic fashion. Whilst a direct connection between the church portal and either the Uppåkra piece or the Wayland iconography more generally is unlikely, it is conceivable that the correspondence reflects a common iconographic tradition once common in

[59] *Þiðreks saga af Bern* 77–78, ed. by Guðni Jónsson, 2 volumes (Reykjavík: Íslendingasagnaútgáfan, 1951), i. 113–5. Michaela Helmbrecht, 'A Winged Figure from Uppåkra', *Fornvännen* 107 (2012), pp. 171–8; Torun Zachrisson, 'Volund Was Here: A Myth Archaeologically Anchored in Viking Age Scania', in Hermann, Mitchell & Schjødt (eds.), *Old Norse Mythology* (2017), pp. 139–162.
[60] I was alerted to the resemblance by Heather O'Donoghue (pers. comm.).
[61] Janet Newson, 'Beakhead Decoration on Romanesque Arches in the Upper Thames Valley', *Oxoniensia* 78 (2013), pp. 71–86, at p. 71.
[62] Ron Baxter, 'Beakhead Ornament and the Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture', *Historic Churches* (2004), available online at: https://www.buildingconservation.com/articles/beakhead/beakhead.htm [accessed 3 May 2020]; Tessa Garton, 'Masks and Monsters: Some Recurring Themes in Irish Romanesque Sculpture', in Colum Hourihane (ed.), *From Ireland Coming: Irish Art from the Early Christian to the Late Gothic Period and its European Context* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 121–40, at p. 127.
[63] Françoise Henry & George Zarnecki, 'Romanesque Arches Decorated with Human and Animal Heads', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 20:1 (1957), pp. 1–34, at pp. 6–16.
[64] Henry & Zarnecki, 'Romanesque Arches' (1957), p. 25; Baxter, 'Beakhead Ornament' (2004); Newson 'Beakhead Decoration' (2013), p. 71;
[65] Newson 'Beakhead Decoration' (2013), p. 71.

Scandinavia and brought southwards by the Normans, to be combined with local iconographic conventions.

The Birka sword chape and the Tissø piece both feature similar arrangements to that of the Uppåkra fitting; in the latter, the figure is clearly depicted with wings strapped on. Kopár deems the Tissø fitting "unrelated to the Wayland iconography",[66] which seems rather arbitrary given the acceptance of the Birka chape; in fact, neither of these finds can be connected with any confidence to the Wayland iconography. The interpretation of the Stora hammars III imagery endorsed above has important repercussions for the interpretation of these metalwork finds, as it shows that the same (or at any rate a very similar) motif could be used to evoke at least two quite distinct narratives. The three metal items are standalone pieces, so it is difficult to connect them with much certainty to any specific referent.[67] This is especially true given the number of Norse mythological figures who adopt a bird form – at least one of whom, Óðinn, was probably depicted contemporaneously in very similar style to Wayland. In the case of the Uppåkra fitting, as with the Ardre III and Alskog stones, an additional detail of the iconography served to connect the artefact with a literary version of the story. As regards the Birka and Tissø artefacts, however, we lack any such contextualising evidence. To use these artefacts as evidence for a Scandinavian conception of Wayland would therefore be circular reasoning, since it is by no means clear that it is Wayland who is being depicted.

Whilst it is doubtful that the picture stone Stora Hammars III depicts Wayland after all, it could nonetheless offer important, if indirect, insight into the way his flight was understood in the region during the Viking Age. The fact that Óðinn and Wayland could apparently be depicted using such similar iconography (with the means of identification supplied by the wider context) provides further indication that Vǫlundr's escape flight was widely considered to be

[66] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers* (2012), p. 17, n. 17.
[67] Cf. McKinnell, '*Vǫlundarkviða*' (2014), p. 233 & n. 61.

supernatural, like Óðinn's, rather than a feat of mechanical ingenuity. This coheres with the other indications we have seen in literary and pictoral sources for the legend in Scandinavia but contrasts with the impression given by insular iconography, to which we now turn.

Important evidence for a pre-Scandinavian understanding of the Wayland legend in England is provided by the Franks Casket, a whalebone chest generally thought to have been produced in Northumbria in the early eighth century.[68] Its front panel features a composite scene from the legend, alongside a depiction of the Adoration of the Magi (figure 10). Wayland stands at a forge, one leg bent to denote his lameness. Beneath his feet is one headless body, representing by synecdoche the two murdered sons. Next to him stands Beadohild, either giving or receiving a cup of beer. Behind her is a second female figure, whom Bailey and Kopár identify, probably correctly, as Beadohild's maid.[69] This character appears only in the *Velents þáttr* section of *Þiðreks saga af Bern*, accompanying Bǫðvildr as she asks Velent to mend her ring.[70] Even so, the alternative view that this is a second Beadohild fetching drink is less satisfactory, as McKinnell notes, since this motif is not corroborated by any other source.[71] A final figure is depicted killing birds. This may or may not be Egill, Wayland's brother, who in *Velents þáttr* provides the feathers for Velent's wings. Kopár is sceptical on the grounds that Egill is represented differently in the carving on the lid of the casket, and that as a famed archer he would more naturally be shooting the birds.[72] However, it is difficult to see in what respects

[68] Bailey, *Viking Age Sculpture* (1980), p. 103; Kopár, *Gods and Settlers* (2012), p. 7; Winroth, *The Conversion of Scandinavia* (2012), p. 64. For arguments dating the artefact to the tenth or early eleventh century, see Amy L. Vandersall, 'The Date and Provenance of the Franks Casket', *Gesta* 11:2 (1972), pp. 9–26; Roberta Frank, 'Review: Alfred Becker, *Franks Casket. Zu den Bildern und Inschriften des Runenkästchens von Auzon*', *Speculum* 52:1 (1977), pp. 120–2; Marilyn Dunn, *The Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons c.597–c.700* (New York: Continuum, 2009), pp. 66–7. These, however, have been refuted on stylistic grounds: Leslie Webster, 'Stylistic Aspects of the Franks Casket', in R.T. Farrell (ed.), *The Vikings* (London: Phillimore, 1982), pp. 20–31.

[69] Bailey, *Viking Age Sculpture* (1980), p. 104; Kopár, *Gods and Settlers* (2012), p. 8.

[70] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers* (2012), p. 8.

[71] McKinnell, '*Vǫlundarkviða*' (2014), p. 234.

[72] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers* (2012), pp. 8–9. It should be acknowledged that the lid is not unanimously interpreted as a depiction of Egil: see *inter alia* Karl Schneider, 'Zu den Inschriften und Bildern des Franks Casket und einer ae. Version des Mythos von Balders Tod', In Horst Oppel

the two figures are irreconcilably different in their appearance (except, of course, that one is using a bow and the other is not – but this is begging the question). Moreover, *Velents þáttr* states that "Egill ferr í skóg ok veiðir alls kyns fugla" (Egill goes into the forest and catches all sorts of birds);[73] the Old Norse *veiða* (to catch; to hunt) is not incompatible with archery, but it certainly doesn't entail it, and the choice of this verb in prose (and therefore unconstrained by metrical and alliterative considerations) favours the view that Egill conducted his avicide without the use of his bow. Finally, since there is no record of a tradition in which someone other than Egill collected the feathers for Wayland's wings, this remains the likeliest interpretation. In any case, regardless of his identity, the figure indicates a version of the legend in which Wayland escapes on manufactured wings, contrary to the Scandinavian sources. As Kopár observes, the fact that the carver has juxtaposed the Wayland scene with the presentation of treasures by the Magi also indicates a focus on Wayland's skill as a craftsman.[74]

Wayland also features on several stone monuments from Viking-Age Yorkshire. As "products of culturally mixed communities",[75] these sometimes articulate a typological relationship between Norse mythic/heroic material and Christian tradition and symbolism.[76] As such they raise important questions concerning patronage, likely involving a combination

(ed.), *Festschrift für Walther Fischer* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1959), pp. 4–20; Amy L. Vandersall, 'Homeric Myth in Early Medieval England: The Lid of the Franks Casket', *Studies in Iconography* 1 (1975), pp. 2–37; Marijane Osborn, 'The Lid as Conclusion of the Syncretic Theme of the Franks Casket', in A. Bammesberger, ed., *Old English Runes and their Continental Background* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1991) pp. 262–263; L. Peeters, 'The Franks Casket: A Judeo-Christian Interpretation', *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistic* 46 (1996), p. 44; Gabriele Cocco, 'The Bowman Who Takes the Lid off the Franks Casket', in Maria Elena Ruggerini, ed., *Studi Anglo-Norreni in Onore di John S. McKinnell: He Hafað Sundorgecynd* (Cagliari: CUEC, 2009), p. 30.

[73] *Þiðreks saga* 77, i. 112.

[74] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers* (2012), p. 9. Heather O'Donoghue has suggested to me that the contemporary viewers may also have perceived a link between the macabre nature of Wayland's gifts and the foreshadowing of Christ's death by the gift of myrrh in the Christian tradition (the latter fact being observed as early as Origen, *Contra Celsum* I. 60). The depiction of Wayland fashioning ornate objects from the bones of Nidhad's sons additionally relates to the riddle inscribed in runes on the same panel, which emphasises that the casket itself is carved from *Hronæs ban* (whale's bone).

[75] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers* (2012), p. 204.

[76] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers* (2012), p. 167–179.

of Scandinavian and native elites with various motives for expressing familiarity with two different iconographic traditions. Such inquiries are outside our immediate concern here. What is significant, however, is that, as Kopár observes:

> The ability to relate the different traditions, the Scandinavian and the Christian Anglo-Saxon culture, and the need to do so suggest an acquaintance with both traditions to a degree which could only be characteristic of individuals or communities who have already taken steps in the process of cultural integration.[77]

Thus, whilst we may question the extent to which true "integration" may be said to have occurred in the communities of the Danelaw, the depictions of episodes from Norse myth and legend on these monuments may be seen as representing reconstrued versions of Scandinavian material viewed partially through an Anglo-Saxon lens. In a similar way, the belt fitting from Uppåkra may illustrate a conflation of a northerly Scandinavian conception of Wayland's flight, influenced by Sámi shamanic traditions, with the north German version of the legend given in *Velents þáttr*, which retained the mechanical flying suit.

In the four or possibly five depictions of Wayland from Anglo-Scandinavian Yorkshire, we see (in differing states of preservation) a repeated iconographic figure that resembles the Scandinavian bird-man imagery. The most complete example on a cross from Leeds Parish Church (Leeds 1Cghj) features the flying man alongside the tools of a smith, indicating Wayland (figure 11). The female figure from Ardre VIII is present both on this cross and on a fragment from Sherburn (Sherburn 3A), further corroborating a connection with the iconographic scheme preserved in the Gotland carving (figure 12). Strikingly, however, whereas the Ardre VIII image suggested a magical dimension to Wayland's flight, the stones in Yorkshire all unmistakably depict a winged contraption tied onto the figure. Leeds 1C and Sherburn 3A clearly show the binding straps, as do a fragment from Bedale (Bedale 6A) and a fragment now in Leeds City Museum (Leeds 2cA). Similarly, we saw in Scandinavian

[77] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers* (2012), p. 205.

iconography the portrayal of a man with birdlike features, whilst the insular pattern clearly shows a bird's head as part of the flying device, with the human head separate. This is unmistakably visible in the Sherburn fragment; Leeds 1 is worn away where the human and bird heads ought to be, but the curved beak is apparent, and the winged contraption clearly leaves a space for separate human and bird heads. Thus, whilst it is true that Scandinavian and Anglo-Scandinavian depictions cohere with "a basic recognized composition or iconography for the scene",[78] this does not tell the whole story. I suggest that the version of the Wayland motif on the Yorkshire stones is the result of a Scandinavian iconographic pattern like that found on Ardre VIII having been reinterpreted, with a view to bringing it in line with the pre-existing Anglo-Saxon interest in Wayland primarily as a remarkable craftsman, rather than as a supernatural being. It bears emphasising that despite the supernatural depiction of Wayland's flight in Scandinavian sources, his connection with excellent craftwork was not forgotten. In *Vǫlundarkviða* he has forged the sword and the rings which Níðuðr takes from him,[79] and crafts *vél* (cunning artefacts)[80] – ultimately including the jewellery and crockery made from the princes' corpses,[81] whilst in *Hamðismál*, his name is used as a common noun for the craftsmen who wove Guðrún's coverlets.[82]

The archaeological evidence from Germany provides our earliest extant material relating to the development of the legend. A silver belt buckle from a mid-sixth-century Alemannic warrior-grave in Pforzen, Bavaria, bears a runic inscription in alliterative verse: "Aigil andi Ailrūn (a)l tahu gasokun" (? Aigil and Ailrun vigorously fought all). Whilst the precise reading and translation of the inscription may be debated, the names Aigil and Ailrun are unmistakable; these correspond to Egill and Ǫlrún, Vǫlundr's brother and his wife

[78] Bailey, *Viking Age Sculpture* (1980), p. 106.
[79] *Vǫlundarkviða* 18/1–10: *Eddukvæði* i. 433.
[80] *Vǫlundarkviða* 19/3: *Eddukvæði* i. 433.
[81] *Vǫlundarkviða* 23/5–24/8: *Eddukvæði* i. 434.
[82] *Hamðismál* 7/1–3: *Eddukvæði* ii. 408.

according to *Vǫlundarkviða*, and the inscription has been interpreted as a quotation from a lost early German poem about Wayland.[83] If the reading cited above is correct, the verses may be connected with the otherwise unattested legend of Egill illustrated on the lid of the Franks Casket.[84] Wayland himself has been identified, albeit less surely, as the subject of the inscription *wela(n)du* on a gold solidus from Schweindorf, Lower Saxony, dated to the late sixth or early seventh century (figure 13).[85] Sigmund Oehrl has recently made a strong case for a connection with the legendary Wayland: the loss of a nasal before a homorganic consonant is common in runic writing, and the iconography of the artefact shows a figure with outstretched arms in a confined space, surrounded by smithing tools, a bow (alluding to Egill?), and possibly a walking prop (indicating Wayland's lameness?). As Oehrl notes, this design is more in keeping with the specific legendary referent rather than with a self-appellation by the manufacturer, which in any case would be improbable at this early period. The iconographic scheme is additionally paralleled by the imagery on a contemporary solidus from Harlingen, Friesland, suggesting the wider currency of the material on the continent during this period.[86]

In addition to the literary and material sources, the legend can also be glimpsed in English toponymic evidence. A neolithic long barrow on the Berkshire Downs (now in Oxfordshire) is labelled in a charter from 955 CE as *welandes smiððan* ("Wayland's Smithy", which name it bears to this day),[87] and a later addition to a charter of 903 CE mentions *welandes stocc* ("Wayland's stump") in the bounds of Monks Risborough in Buckinghamshire.[88] L.V.

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[83] Looijenga, *Texts and Contexts* (2003), pp. 253–5; cf. McKinnell, '*Vǫlundarkviða*' (2014), p. 229.
[84] Robert Nedoma, 'Noch einmal zur Runeninschrift auf der Gürtelschnalle von Pforzen', in Hans-Peter Naumann (ed.), *Alemannien und der Norden: Internationales Symposium vom 18.–20. Oktober 2001 in Zürich* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004), pp. 340–70, at. p. 359.
[85] Looijenga, *Texs and Contexts* (2003), p. 308.
[86] Oehrl, 'Bildliche Darstellungen', in Pesch & Blankenfeldt (eds.), *Goldsmith Mysteries* (2012), pp. 291–4.
[87] P.H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1968), no. 564. The texts of this and subsequent charters are available at *The Electronic Sawyer*, www.esawyer.lib.cam.ac.uk.
[88] Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (1968), no. 367; Ellis Davidson, 'Weland the Smith' (1958), p. 149.

Grinsell has argued that several other English place-names refer to figures from the Wayland legend.[89] In the charter of 955 we also find an allusion to Wayland's son Widia in the site of *hwittucs hlæw* ("Widia's mound"), a little over a mile to the north of Wayland's Smithy,[90] and a charter of 856 mentions *beahhildæ byrigels* ("Beadohild's burial place"), located a similar distance north again from Widia's Mound.[91] These identifications have been challenged by Margaret Gelling and Robert Nedoma on the grounds that the forms of the names are philologically inconsistent with those found in literary sources.[92] A cursory glance at the Germanic heroic tradition, however, reveals numerous examples of similar fluidity: the two recorded forms of Wayland's name, for instance, are traceable to different roots (see above, pp. 57–8), whilst equivalent legendary figures such as OE *Hrōðgār/*ON *Hróarr*, OE *Eadgils*/ON *Aðils*, and ON *Sigurðr*/MHG *Sîfrit* likewise have etymologically distinct names.

In the same vicinity is Hardwell Camp, an Iron-Age promontory fort known in a charter of 903 as *telles burh* ("Tell's fort").[93] Diana Woolner has suggested a link between this original name and (Wilhelm) Tell, which she takes as a byname for Wayland's brother Egill.[94] The two are linked by a legendary feat of marksmanship, in which each shoots an apple off the head of his son; but the sources are late (for Egill, the thirteenth-century *Þiðreks saga*, for Tell the late fifteenth-century *Weisses Buch von Sarnen*), and the same tale has been told of other unrelated figures. There is no evidence that the Anglo-Saxons knew of the legend,[95] or that they knew Tell as a name for Egill. Similar names, moreover, are well attested in other contexts in Anglo-

[89] L.V. Grinsell, 'Wayland's Smithy, Beahhild's Byrigels, and Hwittuc's Hlaew: A Suggestion', *Transactions of the Newbury District Field Club* 8 (1939), pp. 136–139; Grinsell, 'Wayland the Smith and His Relatives: A Legend and its Topography', *Folklore* 102: 2 (1991), pp. 235–236.
[90] Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (1968), no. 564.
[91] Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (1968), no. 317.
[92] Margaret Gelling, *The Place Names of Berkshire Part II*, English Place Name Society Volume L (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 347; Robert Nedoma, 'The Legend of Wayland in *Deor*', *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik* 38 (1990), pp. 129–145, at p. 142, n. 50.
[93] Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (1968), no. 369.
[94] Diana Woolner, 'New Light on the White Horse', *Folklore* 78: 2 (1967), p. 106.
[95] The Franks Casket illustration shows that he was renowned as an archer, no more.

Saxon England,[96] so that the name of the earthwork could plausibly be named for a historical individual. In view of these observations, the connection of the earthworks to Egill is highly doubtful. However, a charter of 958 cites *æceles beorh*,[97] which has been identified as referring to a Bronze-Age barrow one mile southeast of Ashbury,[98] but which is more probably to be identified as an artificially flattened natural mound now known as Dragon Hill, in the valley beneath the White Horse.[99] The element *æcel*, *ecel* in English place-names is usually thought to denote the site of a church, derived from Latin *ecclesia*, probably via a British **eclēs*, with descendants in Old Welsh, Old Irish and Old Cornish.[100] Since there is no archaeological or documentary evidence that either of the possible locations of *æceles beorh* was ever the site of a church, the analysis "Church mound" is highly unsatisfactory, and it may be for this reason that some scholars have proffered the far-fetched interpretation of "Achilles' barrow".[101] However, the hypothesised personal name *Ægel, the Old English reflex of Egill (PGmc. **Agilaz*), is elsewhere required to account for place-names in *Ecel-*/*Egel-*.[102] Given the close proximity of several other burial mounds associated with figures from the same legendary tradition, a reference to Wayland's brother Egill is highly likely in this instance. It should be remembered that these charters in many cases survive only in twelfth- or thirteenth-century copies, and is easy to envisage how Egill's name might have been hyper-corrected to a more familiar toponymic element by a copyist working at a time in which the Anglo-Saxon legendary

[96] W.G. Searle, *Onomasticon Anglo-Saxonicum: A List of Anglo-Saxon Proper Names from the Time of Beda to that of King John* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1897), *s.v.* 'Telia', 'Tella', 'Tello', 'Thola', 'Tile', 'Tilli', 'Tillo'.
[97] Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (1968), no. 575.
[98] L.V. Grinsell, 'Berkshire Barrows. Part III. Evidence from the Saxon Charters', *Berkshire Archaeological Journal* 42 (1938), p. 109.
[99] Sarah Semple, *Perceptions of the Prehistoric in Anglo-Saxon England: Religion, Ritual and Rulership in the Landscape* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 264.
[100] Eilert Ekwall, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-names*, 4th edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960), *s.v.* 'Ecchinswell', 'Eccles', 'Ecclesfield', 'Egglescliffe', etc.
[101] Richard Coates, Andrew Breeze & David Horovitz, *Celtic Voices, English Places: Studies of the Celtic Impact on Place-Names in England* (Stamford: Shaun Tyas, 2000), pp. 142–144; Semple, *Perceptions of the Prehistoric* (2014), p. 264.
[102] Ekwall, *English Place-names* (1960), *s.v.* 'Ecchinswell'.

traditions had faded from currency. Leonard Neidorf has shown that this process of cultural amnesia regarding Migration-Period legendry had already begun well before the Norman Conquest.[103] In a similar vein, Grinsell fleetingly contemplated whether *weardaes beorh* ("Watchman's mound", possibly "Beacon mound", now Idlebush Barrow due south of White Horse Hill)[104] might originally have been "Wade's barrow" (OE **wadan beorh*) in reference to Wayland's father, a common place-name element again substituted for the forgotten hero's name.[105] It may be pertinent to note in this connection that the barrow in question, located as it is in a flat expanse some distance below the crest of the Ridgeway with no clear line of sight to any major settlement, would make for a poor choice of lookout or beacon site.

*Ægel also appears uncorrupted as an element in several other English place-names, most of which, despite the absence of independent attestation of the name in Old English,[106] should be assumed to have been named for Anglo-Saxon settlers; but Aylesbury, at least, is close to the aforementioned *welandes stocc*, which strengthens the case for its being connected

[103] Leonard Neidorf, 'Beowulf Before Beowulf: Anglo-Saxon Anthroponymy and Heroic Legend', *The Review of English Studies* 64 (2013), pp. 553–573. The same and related arguments are presented by Neidorf in 'The Dating of *Widsið* and the Study of Germanic Antiquity', *Neophilologus* 97 (2013), pp. 165–83, and in his chapter, 'Germanic Legend, Scribal Errors, and Cultural Change', in Neidorf, ed., *The Dating of Beowulf: A Reassessment* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2014), pp. 37–57.

[104] First mentioned in the Woolstone charter of 856, Sawyer no. 317; also in the *Æscesbyrig* charter of 958, Sawyer no. 575.

[105] Grinsell, 'Berkshire Barrows' (1938), p. 108. Cf. Ekwall, *English Place-names* (1960), *s.v.* 'Wardle', 'Wardlow', 'Warsill', 'Warslow', 'Warton', 'Wolford', etc. A charter purportedly of the late seventh century, but preserved in manuscripts from the tenth century onwards, cites *wadan hlæw* as a boundary marker for Pagham in Sussex: Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (1968), no. 230. It might be objected that the references in *Troilus and Criseyde*, III. 614, *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. by F.N. Robinson, 2nd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 427, and *The Merchant's Tale*, *Canterbury Tales* IV. 1424: *Works* p. 117, demonstrate continued familiarity with Wade in the later medieval period, but we cannot assume Chaucer's breadth of reading on the part of scribes in the twelfth century, nor can we rule out the later reintroduction of tales about Wade from a Continental or Scandinavian source. In any case, the Middle English references to Wade give no indication that he was remembered (by whatever means) in connection with Wayland, so that the scribe responsible for the charter copy in question would have had no special reason to retain the hypothesised form *wadan* from an exemplar.

[106] As has been discussed, the runic inscription *Ægili* on the lid of the Franks Casket likely refers to the legendary hero, who is probably pictured on the panel, and thus does not provide evidence for wider use of the name.

to the legendary hero. Withington in Gloucestershire was *Wudiandun* in a synodic decree of 737,[107] and a charter of 982 cites *widian byrig* at Longstock in Hampshire,[108] nearby *beagilde stoc* and *wadan campe* in a charter of 901 CE for Abbotts Ann.[109] These may have been named directly for the legendary Widia, or (perhaps more likely, in the absence of related legendary referents in the vicinity) for historical Anglo-Saxon settlers who were themselves named after him.[110]

It is worth emphasising that all of these place-names must be considerably older than their first documented use, in order for them to have become sufficiently familiar to be casually cited as boundary markers. Jacob Grimm noted that Wayland's name also appears in numerous place-names recorded in medieval German documents,[111] often in connection with foundries, and the account of Velent's apprenticeship with dwarves in *Velents þáttr* suggests a local tradition associating the legendary smith with the cave at Balve in Westphalia.[112]

The Historical Background to the Wayland Legend

In the literary as well as the toponymic evidence, the localisation of the Wayland legend naturally varies from source to source, but several considerations point to its having originated in the region of the Rhine. The prose preface to *Vǫlundarkviða* makes Vǫlundr and his brothers "synir Finnakonungs" (sons of the Lappish King), whilst Niðuðr is "konungr í Svíþjóð" (a king

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[107] Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (1968), no. 1429; Ekwall, *English Place-names* (1960), p. xxx & ad loc.
[108] Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (1968), no. 840.
[109] Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (1968), no. 365.
[110] For the overwhelming improbability that a name such as Widia could have been given accidentally, without deliberate reference to the legendary hero, see the arguments of Leonard Neidorf, cited in n. 103 above (p. 78).
[111] Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology* (1882), i. 377.
[112] *Þiðreks saga* 58, i. 84. The form *Ballova* is found only in one late manuscript, whilst earlier manuscripts give *Kallava*, but the former is nonetheless probably the correct reading: William J. Paff, *The Geographical and Ethnic Names in the Þíðriks Saga: A Study in Germanic Heroic Legend* (The Hague: Mouton, 1959), p. 116; Heinz Ritter-Schaumburg, *Die Nibelungen zogen nordwärts* (Munich: Herbig, 1981), pp. 41–42, is right on this point if little else.

in Sweden); the poem itself further clarifies, thrice calling him "Níara dróttinn" (lord of the Njars), placing him probably in the Swedish province of Närke. However, Niðuðr's name, as well as those of Bǫðvildr and the steward Þakkráðr, and indeed of Vǫlundr himself, appear to have southern Germanic origins. Nidada was an ancient Gothic king according to the sixth-century historian Jordanes,[113] whilst Widia is a hypocoristic form of the Gothic name Vidigoia, most notably borne by a fourth-century Gothic warrior in Jordanes' text. Nithad, Wielant, Baduhilt, Witege/Witigouwe and Dancrât appear as personal names in Frankish or Alemannic documents from the seventh century onwards, but the cognates in Old English or Old Norse are rare or unattested outside of the legendary context.[114] This points to the involvement of these groups in the early development and transmission of the legend (though not necessarily its ultimate genesis). Þakkráðr, it may be noted, does not feature in other literary sources for the legend and may be the poet's invention, in which case his use of a German name would indicate his own awareness of the southern provenance of his material.

In a similar vein, the three swan maidens are said to hail from the south – two are daughters of King Hlǫðver, the third the daughter of Kjárr of Valland. Kjárr is also cited in a verse in *Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks* as ruler of the Valir, an ethnonym which denoted Celtic or Romance southerners. The name Kjárr is thought to derive from the Latin Caesar,[115] whilst Hlǫðver corresponds to Frankish *Hlōdowig, and may be a reflex of the Merovingian Clovis I, the first King of the Franks. Whilst these names may well be later incorporations into the

[113] Jordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum* XXII. 113: *Iordanis Romana et Getica*, ed. by Theodore Mommsen. MGH. AA. 5.1 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1882), p. 87.

[114] *Poetic Edda II*, ed. & transl. by Dronke (1997), pp. 269–70, 327–8. A monk named Þancred appears in an Old English charter of *c*. 1040 recording the restoration of Sandwich, Kent, to Christ Church Canterbury – Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (1968), no. 1467. He is almost certainly the same individual as Tancradus, who signed a Latin charter for the lease of land at Reculver, Kent, *c*. 1020–1038 (Sawyer no. 1390).

[115] *The Saga of King Heidrek the Wise*, ed. & transl. by Christopher Tolkien (London: Harper Collins, 2010 [1960]), p. 46 & n. 4. See also *Atlakviða* 7: *Eddukvæði* ii. 373–374; *Skáldskaparmál* 64, i. 103; *Flateyjarbók*, ed. by Sigurður Nordal *et al*., 4 volumes (Akraness: Flateyjarútgáfan, 1944–1945), i. 26.

legend, their use indicates an awareness on the part of the poet of a more southerly provenance of the legend. We may note also Vǫlundr's reply to Niðuðr's false accusation: "Gull var þar eigi á Grana leiðu, | fjarri hugða ek várt land fjǫllum Rínar" (The gold was not there on Grani's road; far, I think, is our land from the hills of the Rhine).[116] Interpretative difficulties notwithstanding (it is not clear, for instance, whether these lines are in fact spoken by Vǫlundr or by Niðuðr), the association with the Rhenish setting of the Vǫlsung material is significant, providing further indication that the material was transmitted northwards from continental Germanic territory.

No historical prototype for the figure of Wayland can be identified. Indeed, in light of the extremity of his revenge, and the allusions in the Norse tradition to his elfish nature and unaided flight, it is possible that he was in origin a divine or at any rate supernatural and mythological entity.[117] However, as noted briefly above, several sources make him the father of Widia (OE Widia/Wudga; OHG Witige/Witege; ON Viðga). Widia is widely accepted as a legendary reflex of the historical Vidigoia (see above, p. 80), whom Jordanes in the sixth century dubbed "Gothorum fortissimus" (the bravest of the Goths), and who, we are told, became the subject of heroic songs after his death as a result of Sarmatian treachery in the fourth century.[118] As we have seen, several English place names cited in Anglo-Saxon charters indicate familiarity with the legendary Widia,[119] and with his relationship to Wayland.

None of this, of course, definitively proves the circulation of the Wayland legend as we have it. It has been suggested that the connection between Widia and Wayland was a later innovation: Jordanes gives no indication of the relationship in the passages where he mentions the historical Vidigoia, nor is it acknowledged in the passage concerning Wudga (Widia) in the

[116] *Vǫlundarkviða* 14/7–10: *Eddukvæði* i. 431.
[117] McKinnell, '*Vǫlundarkviða*' (2014), p. 242; Grimstad, 'Revenge' (1983), pp. 187–209.
[118] Jordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum* V. 43 & XXXIV. 178, pp. 65, 104.
[119] Ekwall, *English Place-names* (1960), p. xxx.

Old English poem *Widsith*,[120] which, revisionist efforts notwithstanding,[121] is likely an early work.[122] Yet Jordanes was writing as a historian, whilst *Widsith* too has a distinctly historical bent, and the lack of reference to Wayland may simply reflect a qualitative distinction on the part of the respective authors, between historical-legendary material pertaining to Widia and more mythical-legendary material concerning Wayland. The kinship of the two heroes is prominent in all the branches of the Germanic tradition, which is at least suggestive of a common background. Moreover, the dynastic element of the Wayland legend is acknowledged in all its major literary manifestations,[123] which would make sense only if Wayland's son were a famous hero in his own right. In this case, he could not easily have been ousted by an entirely different hero at a later stage.

The Daedalus Myth

The story of Wayland's escape from captivity has long been noted for the striking resemblance it bears to the Greek myth of Daedalus. Like Wayland, Daedalus was a peerless craftsman, imprisoned by a king on an island, from which he escaped by means of ingeniously crafted wings. A more thorough discussion of the points of comparison will follow, but first a detailed overview of the material pertaining to the classical legend is called for.

Daedalus' fame as a craftsman boasted considerable antiquity in the classical tradition. A casual mention by the *Iliad* poet,[124] in which his construction of a dance floor for Ariadne is cited in a description of the shield wrought for Achilles by Hephaestus, indicates that he was

[120] *Widsith* 123–130, ed. by K. Malone (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde & Bagger, 1962), p. 26.
[121] Frank, 'Germanic Legend' (1991), p. 99.
[122] Neidorf, 'The Dating of *Widsið*' (2013), pp. 65–83.
[123] *Pace* A.C. Bouman, 'On *Vǫlundarkviða*', *Neophilologus* 34:3 (1950), pp. 169–73, at p. 169, who denies the poet any knowledge of Widia, disregarding the fact that such knowledge is clearly presupposed by the poem's allusions to the child.
[124] *Iliad* XVIII. 590–593: *Homeri Opera* ii. 152.

assumed to be familiar as a peerless artisan to audiences in the Archaic Period.[125] Sarah Morris has argued conversely that Daedalus as a mythical character was invented by the poet in this passage, who having exhausted all other semantic options for the *δαιδαλ-* root had recourse only to personification.[126] This is unconvincing for several reasons: it would be rather faint praise for Hephaestus' work to be favourably compared to that of somebody who didn't exist. The connection to Ariadne and Crete would also be unsatisfactorily arbitrary if the poet was not drawing on an existing association. Above all, this theory sits ill with the early iconographic evidence discussed below. The Daedalus legend may also be presupposed by a passage in the *Odyssey*, which tells how the Cretan princess Ariadne eloped with Theseus. The episode is briefly related in an otherwise unattested form, indicating the possibility that multiple divergent traditions were current already at this stage.[127]

We know from vase illustrations that Daedalus' winged escape was an early feature of the myth, and one seventh-century Etruscan example demonstrates that it was early transmitted westwards. The piece in question, a ceramic wine vessel dated to *c*. 630 BCE, depicts a winged figure labelled in Etruscan characters as TAITAΛE (figure 14), alongside a scene of Medea (METAIA) rejuvenating either Jason or his father Aeson.[128] The juxtaposition with what was

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[125] Robin Lane Fox, *Travelling Heroes: Greeks and their Myths in the Epic Age of Homer* (London: Penguin, 2009), p. 198. The dance floor has furthermore been speculatively associated with the Linear B inscription *da-da-re-jo-de* (? "towards the Daidaleion") on a tablet at Knossos, taken to indicate a cult site of Daedalus in the Bronze Age: see e.g. Nigel Spivey, *Greek Sculpture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 59; Simon Hornblower, Anthony Spawforth & Esther Eidinow (eds.), *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 4th edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 409. However, there are many difficulties surrounding this interpretation: even if the inscription is accepted to be connected with Daedalus on a philological level, this does not prove the existence in this period of the Daedalus of later myth. See Lisa Maria Bendall, *Economics of Religion in the Mycenaean World: Resources Dedicated to Religion in the Mycenaean Palace Economy* (Oxford: Oxford University School of Archaeology, 2007), p. 17; Lane Fox, *Travelling Heroes* (2009), p. 199.

[126] Sarah P. Morris, *Daidalos and the Origins of Greek Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 13.

[127] *Odyssey* XI. 321–325: *Homeri Opera* iii. 200; Robin Hard, *The Routledge Handbook of Greek Mythology* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), p. 438.

[128] Erika Simon, 'Daidalos-Taitale-Daedalus: Neues zu einem wohlbekannten Mythos', *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (2004), pp. 419–432. For literary accounts of the rejuvenation episodes, see Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VII. 159–293: *P. Ovidii Nasonis Metamorphoses*, ed. by W.S. Anderson

by this period a well-developed myth suggests that the Daedalus story was at a similar stage of development. Another Etruscan depiction of winged figures labelled as Daedalus (TAITΛE) and Icarus (VIKAPE) on either side of a gold bulla demonstrates that the two aviators were connected at least by the fifth century, and archaic features of the writing such the digamma in Icarus' name indicate earlier familiarity with the material in Etruria.[129] Lane Fox notes evidence securing Daedalus' refuge with Cocalus on Sicily by the mid-sixth century. The early first-century-BCE Lindian Chronicle, including a catalogue of treasures held by the temple of Athena at Lindos, notes the donation by Phalaris, tyrant of Acragas from *c*. 570–554 BCE, of a mixing-bowl purporting to be Daedalus' gift of hospitality to Cocalus; a Delphic oracle recorded by Herodotus further indicates wide knowledge of and earnest belief in this element of the myth in the early fifth century.[130] We have only patchy remains of the Classical Greek literary treatments of the legend, though fragments and title lists testify to numerous treatments of Daedalus' adventures by tragic and comic playwrights in fifth-century Athens. The literature of the later Roman world provides complete narratives, notably those in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Hyginus' *Fabulae*, and the pseudo-Apollodorean *Bibliotheca*, which make for a suitable starting point.

Daedalus, we are told, was a renowned Athenian craftsman, but was banished for murdering his nephew Perdix, who had incurred his uncle's jealousy by inventing the saw and paired compasses. He went in exile to the court of King Minos on Crete. When Minos angered the gods by refusing to sacrifice a prize bull, his wife Pasiphaë was cursed with an unnatural lust for the bull. Daedalus assisted her by designing a counterfeit wooden cow suit, which she could use to deceive the bull into copulating with her. She bore a monstrous hybrid offspring,

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(Leipzig: Teubner, 1982), pp. 151–6; *Nostoi* fr. 6: *Greek Epic Fragments*, ed. & transl. by M.L. West, LCL 497 (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 158; Simonides fr. 548: *Greek Lyric Volume III: Stesichorus, Ibycus, Simonides and Others*, ed. & transl. by David A. Campbell, LCL 476 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 442.

[129] Morris, *Daidalos* (1992), pp. 195–6.

[130] Lane Fox, *Travelling Heroes* (2009), pp. 200–1; Herodotus, *Historiae* VII. 169–171, ii. 220–2.

the Minotaur, which was concealed in a labyrinth, also constructed by Daedalus. As a wergild for his true son Androgeus, who was murdered by bitter rivals after winning all the prizes at the Panathenaic games, Minos demanded an annual tribute of youths from Athens to feed his monstrous stepson.

At some point after this, Minos imprisoned Daedalus on Crete, though there are discrepant accounts as to why. Hyginus was possibly confused when he wrote that Minos was punishing Daedalus for his role in abetting Pasiphaë's bestiality; others say Daedalus was detained because he alone knew how to navigate the labyrinth, a knack Minos did not want shared. Or perhaps Daedalus was punished for his role in the death of the Minotaur: Theseus, heir to the throne of Athens, volunteered as one of the annual victims, with the aim of killing the monster. He drew the eye of Minos' daughter Ariadne, who asked Daedalus for a means by which she might help the young hero escape the labyrinth. Daedalus gave her a ball of string, which Theseus used to retrace his steps after defeating the Minotaur.

Whatever the reason, Daedalus was incarcerated along with his son Icarus (the latter may in fact have been born into captivity). According to Hyginus, he was chained, but Pasiphaë released him without Minos' knowledge;[131] there is no indication of this in other sources. He escaped with his son by ingeniously crafting wings from feathers and wax. Ovid relates that the young Icarus gleefully snatched feathers from the air, to be carefully arranged by his father.[132] When the time came, however, Icarus ignored his father's warning not to fly too close to the sun; the wax of his wings melted and he drowned, giving his name to the Icarian Sea between the Cyclades and Asia Minor. Daedalus flew safely on to Sicily (Virgil, unusually, says Cumae on the west coast of Italy, in which he is followed by the early second-century

[131] Hyginus, *Fabulae* XL, ed. by P.K. Marshall (Munich: K.G. Saur, 2002), p. 51
[132] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII. 189–200, pp. 180–1.

satirist Juvenal),[133] where he founded a temple and dedicated his wings to Apollo. Minos pursued him and discovered him at the court of King Cocalus of Sicily. He demanded that Daedalus be surrendered, and Cocalus agreed, but first offered Minos his hospitality. Minos was thereupon killed in his bath, either by Cocalus' daughters or by Daedalus himself.

As supplement to the narrative treatments of the Daedalus myth, we can also discern continued interest in the material in the Roman world through more casual and oblique references in a range of literary sources. Ovid, for instance, makes detailed reference to the story in his account of the totally separate myth of Iphis and Ianthe.[134] The decision may have been prompted by the thematic link of illicit or unnatural love, and additionally both tales are localised on Crete, but the readiness with which the poet could refer to the Daedalus myth in a separate context testifies to its contemporary familiarity. This is further indicated by the fact that the material was amenable to a range of generic contexts. Ovid had earlier referenced it, for example, in his mock-didactic works *Ars Amatoria* and *Remedia Amoris*,[135] and other Latin poetry of the Augustan period offers epic, pastoral, elegiac and lyric treatments. The legend was a common referent for Virgil; Pasiphaë's madness is discussed in his sixth *Eclogue*,[136] and her ghost is spotted by Aeneas during his visit to Hades.[137] Prior to his descent into the

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[133] Virgil, *Aeneid* VI. 1–19: *Opera* p. 227; Juvenal, *Saturae* I. 3. 25: *A. Persi Flacci et D. Iuni Iuvenalis Saturae*, ed. by W.V. Clausen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 50.

[134] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* IX. 669–797, esp. 735–744, pp. 225–9. Ligdus and Teletheusa, whose poverty meant they could not afford a dowry if they had a daughter, prayed unsuccessfully for a son. Teletheusa passed the infant Iphis off as male to save her life, and she was betrothed to one Ianthe. Ianthe fell in love with Iphis, unaware that she was a woman; Iphis likewise fell in love with Ianthe but knew her love was doomed. Yet on the eve of the wedding Teletheusa took her daughter to the temple of Isis and prayed for aid. Isis transformed Iphis into a man, and he married Ianthe as intended.

[135] Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* I. 289–326, II. 21–96; *Remedia Amoris* 63, 43: *P. Ovidi Nasonis Amores, Medicamina Faciei Femineae, Ars Amatoria, Remedia Amoris*, ed. by E.J. Kenney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961, repr. 1995), pp. 133–4, 154–7; 226–7. See also Ovid, *Heroides* IV. 57, XVIII. 49–52: *Ovid Heroides, Amores*, ed. & transl. By Grant Showerman, 2nd edition rev. by G.P. Goold, LCL 41 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. 48, 246; *Tristia* III. 4. 21ff, III. 8. 5–6: *P. Ovidii Nasonis Tristium Libri Quinque, Ibis, Ex Ponto Libri Quattuor, Halieutica Fragmenta*, ed. by S.G. Owen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1915), pp. 54, 61.

[136] Virgil, *Eclogues* VI. 45–60: *Opera* p. 16,

[137] Virgil, *Aeneid* VI. 447: *Opera* p. 241.

underworld, Aeneas surveys Daedalus' own rendering of the legend on the doors to the temple of Apollo at Cumae, which Virgil describes in a compressed and allusive ekphrasis.[138] The Cretan labyrinth is also cited in a simile describing the elaborate choreography of a horseback procession at the funeral games of Aeneas' father Anchises.[139] Virgil's fellow Augustan poets Horace and Propertius also made use of the material. Propertius once passingly mentions "proba Pasiphae" (wicked Pasiphae),[140] and elsewhere references the wooden cow with which she tricked the bull into intercourse;[141] Horace in his *Carmina* consciously engages with the legend of Daedalus' flight as a metaphor for his own ambitious literary project.[142]

Looking eastwards and outside of verse, the Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria cites Pasiphaë's bestiality, and Daedalus' role in facilitating it, to illustrate the dangers of sexually permissive legislation.[143] Amongst other first-century references to the legend we find several in the tragedies of Seneca the Younger;[144] in the agricultural manual of Columella;[145] in the *Naturalis Historia* of the Elder Pliny;[146] in Silius Italicus' account of the Punic Wars;[147] and in one of the philosophical discourses of Dio Chrysostom.[148] In the *Satyricon*, generally

[138] Virgil, *Aeneid* VI. 14–33: *Opera* pp. 227–228.
[139] Virgil, *Aeneid* V. 558–93: *Opera* pp. 216–7.
[140] Propertius, *Elegi* II. 28. 52: *Sexti Properti Elegos*, ed. by S.J. Heyworth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 84.
[141] Propertius, *Elegi* III. 19. 11–12, p. 138.
[142] Cynthia Hornbeck, 'Caelum Ipsum Petimus: Daedalus and Icarus in Horace's *Odes*', *The Classical Journal* 109:2 (2014), pp. 147–169.
[143] Philo, *De Specialibus Legibus* III. VIII. 43: *Philo Volume VII*, ed.& transl. by F.H. Colson, LCL 320 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937), p. 502.
[144] Seneca the Younger, *Phaedra* 120–128; *Oedipus* 892ff; [attrib.] *Hercules Oetatus* 683ff: *L. Annaei Senecae: Tragoediae*, ed. by O. Zwierlein (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 169; 346; 362. See also Seneca, *Epistulae Morales* XIV. 90. 14: *L. Annaei Senecae Ad Lucium Epistulae Morales*, ed. by L.D. Reynolds, 2 volumes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), ii. 335.
[145] Columella, *Res Rustica* X. 29: *L. Iuni Moderati Columellae Res Rustica, Incerti Auctoris Liber de Arboribus*, ed. by R.H. Rodgers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 403.
[146] Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia* VII. 209, iii. 646.
[147] Silius Italicus, *Punica* VIII. 470–1, XII. 89–103, XIV. 39–44, ed. & transl. by J.D. Duff, 2 volumes, LCL 277–8 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934), i. 426, ii. 152–4, ii. 274–6.
[148] Dio Chrysostom, *Discourses* 16. 10; 64 (II) 2; 66. 16: *Dio Chrysostom Discourses*, ed. & transl. by J.W. Cohoon, 5 volumes, LCL 257, 339, 358, 376, 385 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932–1951), ii. 182; v. 44–6; v. 104.

accepted be the work of the Neronian courtier Gaius Petronius (*c*. 27–66 CE),[149] comic effect is generated when the vulgar and pretentious (but very wealthy) freedman Trimalchio unwittingly reveals his lack of education by misremembering Greek myths, as he boasts of owning engraved silver tableware "ubi Daedalus Niobam in equum Troianum includit" (On which Daedalus is shutting Niobe up in the Trojan horse).[150] The joke, of course, relies on the readers' familiarity with the myths that are being conflated: Trimalchio confuses Niobe with Pasiphaë, and the Trojan Horse with Daedalus' wooden cow. Daedalus is also the name the Trimalchio has given his head chef in recognition of his intricate food-sculptures,[151] and when the protagonist and his companions try unsuccessfully to escape from Trimalchio's banquet, they feel like "homines miserrimi et novi generis labyrintho inclusi" (Wretched men, entrapped in a new kind of labyrinth),[152] in one of a series of labyrinthine allusions in the work.

The imperial biographer Suetonius, writing in 121 CE, reported that Nero himself, fond of extravagant entertainments, once presented a reenactment of the legend in dance form, which apparently involved a real bull mounting one of the dancers, and a mechanism to simulate flight across the stage.[153] In a similar vein, the poet Martial (*c*. 40 – *c*. 104 CE) had earlier discussed instances of public executions taking the form of mythological enactments, with one routine featuring the condemned man playing the part of Daedalus.[154] Suetonius also

[149] The setting and style of the work are consistent with a date of composition during the reign of Nero, and this may be corroborated by possible references to contemporary performers, and perceived responses to other literature certainly of the Neronian era. However, none of the sources for the life of Gaius Petronius reports that he was a writer, and the manuscripts attribute the work to a Titus Petronius. See *Petronius: Cena Trimalchionis*, ed. by Martin S. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. xii–xiii & 213–9.

[150] Petronius, *Satyricon* 52: *Petronii Arbitri Satyricon Reliquiae*, ed. by Konrad Müller (Stuttgard & Leipzig: Teubner, 1995), pp. 45–6.

[151] Petronius, *Satyricon* 70, p. 66.

[152] Petronius, *Satyricon* 73, p. 70.

[153] Suetonius, *De Vita Caesarum* VI (Nero), 12. 2, pp. 291–2.

[154] Martial, *Liber Spectaculorum* 8: *M. Val. Martialis Epigrammata*, ed. by W.M. Lindsay, 2nd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 29; see *M. Valerii Martialis Liber Spectaculorum*, ed. by Kathleen M. Coleman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 97–99, for a discussion of theories about the form the charade may have taken.

reports that Nero's successor Galba claimed descent from Pasiphaë on his mother's side.[155] Returning to the second century, Apuleius casually alludes to Pasiphaë's unnatural lust,[156] and his contemporary Aulus Gellius rebuts criticisms of Virgil's description of Daedalus' flight.[157] the legend features in the writings of several authors of the 'Second Sophistic', including Aelius Aristides[158] and Lucian.[159] The historian Arrian (*c.* 86 – *c*. 160 CE?) records that Alexander the Great had an island in the Persian Gulf named after Icarus, and briefly recounts the legend of his death.[160] The Greek geographer Pausanias notes a multitude of sculptures and monuments throughout Greece that are attributed to Daedalus,[161] and cites several historical artists whom he says were apprentices of Daedalus.[162]

Besides the enduring popularity of such 'Golden Age' poets as Virgil and Ovid, we continue to see engagement with the Daedalus myth in Late Antique texts. The fourth-century Emperor Julian (remembered as 'The Apostate' for his attempts to restore Roman paganism as the state religion) jokingly contrasts Daedalus' artistic skill with his disastrous lack of judgment

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[155] Suetonius, *De Vita Caesarum* VII (Galba), 2. 1, p. 332.
[156] Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* X. 19. 3–4: *Apulei Metamorphoseon Libri XI*, ed. by Maaike Zimmerman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 243–4.
[157] Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* VII. 6. 1, ed. by P.K. Marshall, 2 volumes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), i. 260.
[158] Aelius Aristides, *Orationes* II. 118, III. 309: *P. Aelii Aristidis Opera Quae Exstant Omnia*, ed. by Friedrich Walter Lenz & Charles A. Behr, 4 volumes (Leiden: Brill, 1976), ii. 181, 396.
[159] *The Dream, or The Cock* 23; *Icaromenippus* 2; *The Lover of Lies* 19; Lucian, *Astrology* 15–16: *Lucian*, ed. & transl. by A.H. Harmon & M.D. McLeod, 8 volumes, LCL 14, 54, 130, 162, 302, 430–432 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1913–1967), ii. 218; ii. 272; iii. 350; v. 358–60;
[160] Arrian, *Anabasis Alexandri* VII. 20. 5: *Arrians Anabasis*, ed. by C. Sintenis, 2nd edition (Berlin: Weidmann, 1860), p. 208.
[161] Pausanias, *Descriptio Graeciae* I. 27. 1; II. 4. 5; VIII. 35. 2; VIII. 46. 2; IX. 11. 4; IX. 39. 8; IX. 40. 3: *Pausanias: Description of Greece*, ed. & transl. by W.H.S Jones, 5 volumes LCL 93, 188, 272, 297, 298 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1918–1955), i. 138; i. 268; iv. 72; iv. 130; iv. 216; iv. 350; iv. 356. The alleged tomb of Kalos (= Talos a.k.a. Perdix, Daedalus' murdered nephew), is also said to lie near the Acropolis of Athens: *Descriptio Graeciae* I. 21. 4, i. 104.
[162] Pausanias, *Descriptio Graeciae* I. 26. 4–5; II. 15. 1; III. 17. 6, i. 134; i. 322; ii. 106. Amongst points of interest from a legendary perspective, we may also note Pausanias' euhemerised account of the flight from Crete, in which he has Daedalus use sails on ships for the first time, and thus outstrip Minos' rowers (IX. 11. 4, v. 218).

in a letter to the philosopher Eugenius.[163] The poet Ausonius (*c.* 310 – *c*. 395 CE), at least nominally a Christian, refers several times to Pasiphaë's false cow,[164] and elsewhere imagines "Gortynius aliger" (the winged man of Gortyn, i.e. Daedalus) and other renowned artists admiring the natural beauty of the River Moselle.[165] Pentadius, a poet of the third century or probably later, cites Daedalus' flight as one of several instances in which an individual receives both good and ill fortune through the same action.[166] The fifth-century poet Nonnos composed an epic about the life of Dionysus, in which he refers several times to Pasiphaë and the bull.[167] Writing shortly after his baptism in 386 CE, Augustine of Hippo used Daedalus' flight in a thought experiment about the nature of truth and falsehood.[168] In another work from the same time period, he questions whether one should be considered ignorant simply for not knowing the story of Daedalus;[169] clearly, the very fact that Augustine felt the need to question this indicates that it was a widely held contemporary opinion. In *The City of God* Augustine mentions the labyrinth and the escape flight in a list of myths (*fabulae*) he states were invented in the era of the Hebrew Judges.[170] Finally, Boethius employs labyrinthine imagery extensively in his *Consolation of Philosophy*, and explicitly evokes both Ariadne's thread and Daedalus' wings.

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[163] Julian, *Epistolae* 60: *The Works of Emperor Julian Volume III*, ed. & transl. by Wilmer Cave Wright, LCL 157 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1923), pp. 210–12.

[164] Ausonius, *Epigrammata de diversis rebus* 65, 66, 69; *Cupido Cruciatus* 30–34: *The Works of Ausonius*, ed. by Roger P.H. Green (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 82–3; 141.

[165] Ausonius, *Mosella* 300–317, *Works* pp. 124–5.

[166] Pentadius, *De Fortuna* 11–12: *Minor Latin Poets Volume II*, ed. & transl. by J. Wright Duff & Arnold M. Duff, LCL 434 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935), p. 542.

[167] Nonnos, *Dionysiaca* XXXIII. 149–50, 311; XLV. 260–1, ed. & transl. by W.H.D. Rouse, 3 volumes, LCL 344, 354, 356 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1940) ii. 476, 488; iii. 338. Amongst his other works, a paraphrase of John's Gospel suggests Christian belief, which did not preclude a fascination with pagan myths and legends.

[168] Augustine, *Soliloquia* II. 11. 20: *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Soliloquorum Libri Duo, De Immortalitate Animae, De Quantitate Animae*, ed. by Wolfgang Hörmann, CSEL 89 (Vienna: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1986), pp. 71–2.

[169] Augustine, *De Ordine* II. 12. 37: *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Contra Academicos, De Beata Vita, De Ordine, De Magistro, De Libero Arbitrio*, ed. by W.M. Green, CCSL 29 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1970), p. 128.

[170] Augustine, *De Civitate Dei Contra Paganos* XVIII. 13: *City of God*, ed. & transl. by Eva M. Sanford & William M. Green, 7 volumes, LCL 411–7 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1957–1972), v. 406–8.

Elsewhere, Boethius turns instinctively to Daedalus. as Augustine did, in order to illustrate a philosophical argument.[171]

To reiterate: we should not envisage any of the texts cited above as direct sources for the incorporation of the escape flight into the Wayland tradition. The foregoing survey instead testifies to the temporal, spatial and generic breadth of engagement with the Daedalus myth in the Roman world. Whilst it is certainly conceivable that some wealthier or higher-ranking Roman soldiers took favourite texts on campaign, the salient point is that the Daedalus myth was bread-and-butter for writers of all periods in the Roman world, which in turn strongly indicates that it would have been a prominent feature in the mythological frame of reference for the averagely educated Roman officer.

The Genealogical Argument

As we can see, the manner of Wayland's and Daedalus' respective escapes from captivity are remarkably alike, and comparison with legendary artisans in other traditions offers nothing equivalent.[172] The correspondence in the motif of the manufactured wings is made even more conspicuous by the observation that Wayland is otherwise famed for crafting beautiful objects rather than ingenious mechanical devices.[173] Of course, we must not lose sight of the clear differences between the two traditions, some of which have been already discussed. We have noted, for instance, the conspicuous absence from the classical tale of the theme of vengeance:

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[171] Boethius, *De Topicis Differentiis* 87. 1190A3 (53.58), transl. by Eleonore Stump (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), p. 53.

[172] See Stith Thompson's motif F2021.1 'Flight on artificial wings', citing Daedalus (but not Wayland), alongside Indian and Chinese instances. Cf. also D2165.1 'Escape by flying through the air'; D2135.0.3 'Magic ability to fly'; D1520.35 'Magic transportation by feather–dress'; D.150–166 'Transformation: man to bird'.

[173] Cf. Jan de Vries, 'Bemerkungen zur Wielandsage', in H. Schneider (ed.), *Edda, Skalden, Saga. Festschrift zum 70. Geburtstag von Felix Genzmer* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1952), p. 187: "Der Flugapparat . . . paßt aber vorzüglich zu der Persönlichkeit des sich ebenso wohl auf technischem wie auf rein künstlerischem Gebiet betätigenden griechischen Wundermannes." (The flying machine is, however, particularly suited to the figure of the Greek genius [i.e. Daedalus], who operates equally in technological as in purely artistic territory.)

this is, as Jan de Vries has pointed out, the core of the Wayland legend, without which "die Sage fällt zu einem kläglichen Nichts zusammen" (the legend collapses to a pitiful nothingness),[174] while his escape by flight is "nur ein nebengeordnetes, streng genommen sogar ein überflüssiges Element" (only a subordinate element, strictly speaking even a superfluous one).[175] The two figures are moreover imprisoned for different reasons, and Daedalus is not maimed by his captor. We have further seen how, where Wayland's escape is a triumphant culmination to his revenge, the classical sources emphasise the tragic consequences of Daedalus' flight, and his continued persecution. The list of discrepancies could continue.

Yet they fail to obscure the clear affinity between the two tales, which has been widely recognised.[176] Indeed, the likeness was not lost on the medieval Icelanders, for whom the term for a labyrinth was *vǫlundarhús* (house of Vǫlundr) in vernacular adaptations of classical texts from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[177] Modern scholars in various disciplines have also noted the correspondence, but more recent contributions appear reticent to endorse any one specific explanatory framework.[178] The human ambition to fly is no doubt ancient, and is widely reflected in both myth and historical anecdote. However, the closeness of the parallel we are concerned with is sufficient to rule out a coincidence of independent development or isolated preservation of an archetype. An Indo-European background to the story is similarly

[174] de Vries, 'Bemerkungen' (1952), p. 187.
[175] de Vries, 'Bemerkungen' (1952), p. 186.
[176] James Bradley, 'Sorcerer or Symbol? Weland the Smith in Anglo-Saxon Sculpture and Verse', *Pacific Coast Philology* 25:1/2 (1990), p. 42; Clunies Ross, 'Transmission and Preservation', in Larrington, Quinn & Schorn (eds.), *Handbook* (2016), p. 24.
[177] One text, *Kirialax saga*, features a fight between Egias and a monster in a *vǫlundarhús*, which is evidently a distorted version of the fight between Theseus (here confused with his father Aegeus) and the Minotaur. The saga contains much other classical material besides.
[178] Janet B.T. Christie, 'Reflections on the Legend of Wayland the Smith', *Folklore* 80:4 (1969), pp. 286–287, hedges her bets with a reference to the suppositions of "some" and a very dated footnote; Christopher R. Fee & David A. Leeming, *Gods, Heroes, & Kings: The Battle For Mythic Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 61 & p. 160, note "several narrative links" between the two legends, but do not expand or explain; West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth* (2007), p. 156 & n. 123, is rightly circumspect about the hypothesis of common inheritance, and cursorily deems horizontal transmission from the classical tradition "possible".

problematic, since there is no trace of a proto-myth in any other related traditions. The flight of the legendary early British king Bladud, first reported by Geoffrey of Monmouth, does not occur in the context of escape from captivity, and additionally has been argued to have its origins in a creative misinterpretation of Roman sculpture at Bath.[179] Regardless of the validity of this hypothesis, it is very unlikely to have anything to do with 'authentic' Celtic myth.[180] A Hindu myth recounted in the *Ramayana* tells of Sampati and his younger brother Jatayu, demi-gods in vulture form who would compete to fly the highest; when Jatayu flew too close to the sun, Sampati shielded him from the heat, burning his wings in the process. Amongst the manifold differences, the story does not feature either the artisanal element or the context of imprisonment and escape common to the Wayland and Daedalus episodes.

The similarity is thus to be explained as the result of horizontal transmission. A variety of socio-historical contexts have been suggested by those who assert a borrowing from the Graeco-Roman legend. Sophus Bugge argued that the transmission was a piecemeal process occurring during the Viking Age and stemming ultimately from classical learning in Anglo-Saxon England;[181] Bugge's time-frame, if not the insular contexts, seems implicitly to be accepted by Anders Winroth.[182] This sits ill, however, with the fact that Wayland's escape is depicted iconographically in Scandinavia possibly as early as the eighth century (see above, p. 63), and also with the fact that the legend of his flight is a well-established element of his presentation in all branches of the Germanic tradition. A.C. Bouman has denied that the escape flight features in *Vǫlundarkviða* or is alluded to by the bird-catcher on the Franks Casket; influence from the Daedalus myth is therefore asserted to be a literary phenomenon postdating the creation of both, and present only in *Þiðreks saga*.[183] His argument, however, relies on

[179] A.T. Fear, 'Bladud: The Flying King of Bath', *Folklore* 103:2 (1992), pp. 222–4.
[180] Fear, Bladud' (1992), p. 224; John Clark, 'Bladud of Bath: The Archaeology of a Legend', *Folklore* 105 (1994), pp. 39–50, at p. 50.
[181] Bugge, 'Det oldnorske Kvad' (1910), p. 33.
[182] Winroth, *The Conversion of Scandinavia* (2012), p. 65.
[183] A.C. Bouman, 'Vǫlundr as an Aviator', *ANF* 55 (1940), pp. 27–42.

highly flawed readings of the crucial passages in *Vǫlundarkviða*, and fails to account for the flight motif in Gotlandic iconography. Whilst other correspondences with classical legends specific to Velent in *Þiðreks saga*, such as his ability to create hyper-realistic sculptures, do reflect later literary borrowing,[184] the flight on manufactured wings cannot be included in this category.

Arguments have also been made for dating the hypothesised transmission to the Migration Period, and some scholars have even attached the Wayland legend to a particular Germanic tribe. De Vries suggested a Gothic origin, on the grounds of Wayland's connection to the Gothic hero Vidigoia; similarities to the Attila legend, which he considered to be Gothic material; and the prominence of other Gothic names, including those of Egill and Nidhad.[185] In a subsequent study, de Vries additionally cited the magnificence of archeological finds from the Gothic cultural area in northeastern Europe, suggesting that Wayland represents "den Höhepunkt und den Inbegriff der gotischen Ornamentalkunst" (The pinnacle and epitome of Gothic ornamental art).[186] As regards the Daedalus myth, he suggested that the Goths could plausibly have assimilated Graeco-Roman material either during the reign of Theodoric the Great or in the earlier Gothic kingdom of Ermaneric to the north of the Black Sea.[187]

Others, including George Gillespie, have argued for the legend's genesis amongst the Rugians, a tribe first mentioned by Tacitus as inhabitants of the Pomerania region of the Baltic coast.[188] By the fifth century a Rugian kingdom was established in the territory of Noricum, in what is now northeastern Austria, in close contact with the Western Roman Empire. Furthermore, Gillespie notes a story told in the early sixth-century *Vita Sancti Severini* composed by Eugippus, in which the fifth-century Rugian queen Giso imprisons some

[184] de Vries, 'Bemerkungen' (1952), pp. 177–8.
[185] Jan de Vries, *Altnordische Literaturgeschichte*, 2 volumes (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1941–1942), i. 55–56, cf. pp. 47ff.
[186] de Vries, 'Bemerkungen' (1952), p. 188.
[187] de Vries, 'Bemerkungen' (1952), p. 188.
[188] Tacitus, *Germania* 43: *Opera Minora* p. 59.

goldsmiths and forces them to make her jewellery; the smiths manage to capture her son and intend to kill him, but Severinus intervenes.[189] Gillespie cites this tale as evidence that the Wayland legend was current among the Rugians in the late fifth century,[190] whilst James Bradley conversely sees it as the original inspiration for the murder of Nidhad's sons in the legendary tradition.[191] The parallel is certainly striking, and a relationship between the stories is probable, but it is ultimately impossible to say whether the Severinus story represents a stimulus or a reflex of the Wayland legend, or indeed whether both have drawn on a common source, of which other manifestations have not survived.

The attempt to locate the origins of the Wayland legend firmly within the context of a specific tribe may represent an overreach of Icarian proportions, particularly when one takes into consideration the fluidity of group identity amongst Germanic peoples in the Migration Period.[192] Nevertheless, we have seen several reasons for supposing that the flying episode in the Germanic legend was derived from the classical tradition, and for tracing the early development of the legend to the Germanic inhabitants on the Rhine-Danube frontier of the Western Roman Empire. The personal names attached to the legend indicate its early currency amongst several Germanic groups in sustained contact with the late Roman Empire along the Rhine-Danube frontier – Goths, Franks, and Alemanni – and the circulation of the Wayland legend by the late sixth century from southernmost to northernmost Germany is attested by the Pforzen buckle and the Schweindorf solidus. Through a systematic comparison of the manifestations of the legend in the different branches of the Germanic tradition, we can

[189] *Eugippi Vita Sancti Severini* VIII. 1–6, ed. by Hermann Sauppe, MGH AA 1.2 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1877), pp. 11–12.
[190] Gillespie, *Catalogue of Persons* (1973), p. 143.
[191] Bradley, 'Sorcerer or Symbol?' (1990), p. 42.
[192] See Heather, *Empires and Barbarians* (2009), pp. 12–21. The phenomenon is arguably also discernible in *Beowulf*, when Wealhþeow worries that the honour shown to Beowulf by Hroðgar indicates the king's intent to adopt Beowulf as his heir, over his true sons: *Beowulf* 1175–1180, p. 41.

reconstruct the outlines of the legend in an earlier form, as it may have circulated in continental Germanic territory before its diffusion into Scandinavia and the British Isles.

We have already seen that Jan de Vries considered Wayland's gruesome revenge against his captor to be the core element of the legend, and indeed it takes essentially the same form in all of the sources, comprising the murder of Nidhad's sons and the rape of his daughter. The antiquity of the dynastic element necessarily follows on from this, since the rape of Beadohild only functions as revenge against her father on the basis that she consequently bears a child. Moreover, *Deor*, *Waldere*, and *Velents þáttr* all give clear testimony to this aspect of the legend, whilst the *Vǫlundarkviða* poet, notwithstanding his decision to sideline this element,[193] was clearly familiar with it, and expected the same of his audience. Wayland's child by Beadohild must therefore be an early feature, known to all the branches of the Germanic tradition. It is perhaps worth noting at this point that the rape of Beadohild has been cited in combination with Wayland's lameness as reflecting the influence of a separate figure from Graeco-Roman myth, namely the smith-god Hephaestus,[194] on which more will be said below.

As noted above, we may also conclude that Wayland's escape by means of flying must have been incorporated into the tradition at an early stage, before the legend was transmitted northwards and westwards from its continental source. We have discussed the discrepancy between the conception of Wayland's flight as a supernatural act according to Scandinavian sources, as opposed to a technological accomplishment as presented in Anglo-Saxon and German tradition, as evinced by the Franks Casket and *Velents þáttr*. It is evident that the latter represents the earlier form of the legend, with the supernatural flight in *Vǫlundarkviða* and the Ardre VIII image probably reflecting the influence of Lappish magical and shamanic

[193] McKinnell, '*Vǫlundarkviða*' (2014), p. 235.
[194] The Romans came to identify their native Italic fire–god Vulcan with the Greek Hephaestus, possibly as early as the sixth century BCE: see Mary Beard, John North & Simon Price, *Religions of Rome Volume 2: A Sourcebook* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 22.

traditions.[195] This helps to account for the fact that Vǫlundr and his brothers are made the sons of a Lappish king, and for the way in which the Scandinavian iconographic pattern depicting Wayland as part-bird was reinterpreted in the Anglo-Scandinavian context (see above, p. 63). There are indications of a supernatural aspect to the Anglo-Saxon conception of Wayland,[196] at least in a pre-Christian context, but this does not appear to have extended to the nature of his escape flight.[197] Also according to *Velents þáttr* and probably the Franks Casket (see above, pp. 69–70), Egill contributed to Wayland's contraption by collecting bird feathers, but he does not feature in this capacity in *Vǫlundarkviða*. This absence, however, follows naturally from the peculiarly Norse conception of Wayland's flight as magical, and we may thus suppose that Egill's involvement was a feature of the tradition in its early stages. That the association between Egill and Wayland was an ancient one is further corroborated by the fact that Egill's presence is retained in a superficial way in *Vǫlundarkviða* even though he plays no role in the primary action.

It may also be worth contemplating the reasons for Wayland's initial imprisonment. These, of course, could have varied according to different contemporaneous tellers (and even different performances by the same teller), so it is futile to attempt to reconstruct a single original version. Nevertheless, the discrepancies in the extant literary sources merit close consideration. In *Velents þáttr*, Velent proves his skill in his duel with Amilias, after which he works freely at Niðungr's court, and he is imprisoned only after attempting to murder Niðungr.[198] *Vǫlundarkviða*, by contrast, sees Vǫlundr unjustly seized by Niðuðr, who covets the treasures he has crafted. The Welund passage in *Deor* gives the impression that his suffering was undeserved, but this is of very limited significance in so allusive a poem. A closer look at

[195] *Poetic Edda II*, ed. & transl. by Dronke (1997), pp. 266–7.
[196] Ellis Davidson, 'Weland the Smith' (1958), pp. 145–159.
[197] Cf. Bradley, 'Sorcerer or Symbol?' (1990), pp. 40–43.
[198] *Þiðreks saga* 68–72, i. 99–106.

Vǫlundarkviða, however, suggests that the poet may have known a variant in which Vǫlundr was punished for wrongs done to the king. Niðuðr gives a pretext for his arrest of Vǫlundr, accusing him of stealing gold.[199] Vǫlundr denies the accusation, but it would make little sense for the poet to raise this possibility, unless he felt compelled to acknowledge an authoritative tradition from which he intended to deviate. Thus, it is possible that the notion of Wayland's innocence is an innovation by the *Vǫlundarkviða* poet, though it is difficult to say anything conclusive in the absence of additional comparative material.

Even so, this reconstructed outline indicates that, though the legend developed in different ways following its diffusion to the peripheries of the Germanic world, the underlying common tradition already included the important elements that form the basis of the comparison with the Daedalus myth. Our early Migration-Period Wayland, like Daedalus, was imprisoned by a king; possibly he deserved it, just as Daedalus was initially freely employed but imprisoned for his role either in the death of the Minotaur and Ariadne's abduction, or in Minos' cuckoldry. He crafted wings, using feathers collected for him by his brother, just as Daedalus was assisted in this regard by his son.

As mentioned above, it has been argued that in addition to elements derived from Daedalus, Wayland also possesses character traits that reflect the influence of myths about the Olympian smith Hephaestus.[200] Like Wayland, Hephaestus is lame – from birth, according to one tradition; according to another as a result of being hurled from Olympus. Moreover, a widely- and diversely-attested Athenian foundation myth tells of the birth of the autochthonous hero Erichthonius: Athena came to Hephaestus' smithy to commission weapons from him, whereupon he attempted to force himself on her; Athena resisted him, causing him to ejaculate

[199] *Vǫlundarkviða* 14: *Eddukvæði* i. 431.

[200] G.W.B. Huntingford, 'Traces of Ancient Paganism in Berkshire', *Berkshire Archaeological Journal* 37 (1933), pp. 17–22, at p. 21; Gillespie, *Dictionary of Persons* (1973), p. 143; Fee & Leeming, *Gods, Heroes & Kings* (2001), pp. 61 & 160; cf. Bugge, 'Det oldnorske Kvad' (1910), p. 33. See also Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology* (1882), p. 378, though he does not explicitly suggest the influence of the classical tradition.

onto the ground, impregnating the earth-goddess Gaia. When the child Erichthonius was born, he was given to Athena to be raised. Once grown to adulthood, he won the Athenian throne and established a royal dynasty.[201]

Considered in conjunction with the common trait of lameness, it is perhaps understandable that this myth has led some scholars to make the comparison between Hephaestus' advances towards Athena and the interaction between Wayland and Beadohild. However, the significance of the shared infirmity is questionable. The widespread association of lameness with smithing has long been noted, and as Jan de Vries has pointed out the prevalence of this phenomenon is readily explicable on both psychological and pragmatic grounds: the strength of the arms is compensated by the infirmity of the legs, just as poetic or prophetic insight is frequently accompanied by physical blindness, whilst from a practical perspective lameness would have disqualified one from the majority of the conventional occupations expected of men in ancient societies.[202] From a different perspective, Henry Saggs has suggested that the prevalence of the lame smith motif may be the result of smiths' exposure to arsenic fumes in early bronzemaking, with symptoms of chronic arsenic poisoning including muscular wasting.[203]

The lameness of Hephaestus is additionally quite different in nature from that of Wayland. Hephaestus was either born lame, to the disgust of his mother Hera, or else incidentally crippled by the impact of his fall to earth; Wayland, conversely, was lamed deliberately for a specific purpose – to neutralise the threat he poses to Nidhad's family, and

[201] See e.g. Hyginus, *De Astronomica* 2. 13: http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/hyginus/hyginus2.shtml (accessed 25 April 2020); Hyginus, *Fabulae* CLXVI, p. 138; [Apollodorus], *Biblioteca* III. 14. 6. 1–6: *Mythographi Graeci I: Apollodori Bibliotheca, Pediasimi Libellus, De Duodecim Herculis Laboribus*, ed. by Richard Wagner (Leipzig: Teubner, 1894), pp. 160–1. The accounts differ in certain details, but the essence of the narrative is consistent.

[202] De Vries, 'Bemerkungen' (1952), pp. 182–183.

[203] H.W.F. Saggs, *Civilization before Greece and Rome* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), pp. 200–1.

ostensibly eliminate the possibility of escape.[204] No argument for deriving Wayland's lameness from that of Hephaestus can be accepted without accounting for this discrepancy.

The fact that Wayland and Hephaestus are both lame, therefore, should not be ascribed to the latter's influence on the former, and the merit of the comparison between the two figures resides in no small part in the cumulative force of the correspondences. Without the lameness to corroborate, the parallel between Wayland's rape of Beadohild and Hephaestus' attempted rape of Athena thus starts to look far less impressive. We may also note that Daedalus' aid is requested by Ariadne, in circumstances just as comparable to those of the Germanic legend. Like Beadohild, Ariadne approaches Daedalus without her father's knowledge or permission, an important dynamic that is absent from the Hephaestus myth. Given the centrality of Wayland's revenge to the Germanic legendary tradition, the secret meeting between the princess and the prisoner may have been a factor in prompting the initial comparison of Wayland with Daedalus. The meeting in each instance has similar consequences from the perspective of the hero's captor: Daedalus himself does not rape the princess as Wayland does, but he abets Ariadne's liaison with (and therefore her abduction by) Theseus, so that she is lost to Minos as a progenitor of his family line.

On a different level, the impregnation of Beadohild by Wayland may also be aligned with Daedalus' role in orchestrating the "foul adultery" of Pasiphaë,[205] for the latter too has the consequence of forcing upon the king an unwanted child, for whom he is nonetheless obliged to care. The classical sources give limited indication as to why Minos did not opt to expose or kill the infant Minotaur; only the *Bibliotheca* attributed to Apollodorus plausibly explains that he sheltered it "κατά τινας χρησμοὺς" (in obedience to certain oracles).[206] In *Vǫlundarkviða*, Vǫlundr demands an oath from Niðuðr not to harm Bǫðvildr, whom he calls his *kván* (wife)

[204] *Vǫlundarkviða* 17/1–4: *Eddukvæði* i. 432; *Þiðreks saga* 72, i. 105–6.
[205] *foedum adulterium*: Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII. 155–156, p. 179.
[206] [Apollodorus], *Bibliotheca* III. 1. 4. 3, p. 109.

and his *bruði* (bride);[207] the fact that this demand immediately precedes the revelation that Bǫðvildr is pregnant with Vǫlundr's child illustrates that this is the reason Vǫlundr should fear for her safety, and that of the child. In the following chapter, these and other correspondences between the two traditions will be considered in detail from an analogical perspective. As regards the geneological connection between the traditions, it may be that the chance correspondences between Beadohild's narrative function and those of Pasiphaë and Ariadne served to encourage the transferral of additional motifs from the classical myth to the Germanic tradition. This process of accretion continued into the literary period, so that *Þiðreks saga* attaches to Velent further elements from classical sources, likely encouraged by the already existing similarity.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered the relationships between the three medieval Germanic literary traditions (Norse, English and German) in which the legend of Wayland's revenge is extant. Through a systematic examination of the correspondences and discrepancies, we can reconstruct in outline a form of the legend as it circulated during the Migration Period. The Germanic tradition provides no precedent for Wayland's invention of wings, which constitutes the key point of comparison with the classical myth. Other internal evidence from the Germanic texts indicates a residual awareness of the story's connection with the Rhineland, and the earliest evidence for the Wayland legend associates its development with several Germanic groups in close and sustained contact with the late Roman Empire on the Rhine-Danube frontier. A survey of the literature of the Roman world in Late Antiquity demonstrates widespread interest in and engagement with the myth of Daedalus' flight. None of these classical works should be envisaged as a vector for the diffusion of the Daedalus story into

[207] *Vǫlundarkviða* 32/8–9: *Eddukvæði* i. 435.

Germanic-speaking territories, and in any case it is extremely improbable that any hypothetical traces of specific Graeco-Roman texts could remain discernible in medieval texts after centuries of predominantly oral transmission. Nevertheless, the cumulative evidence of the observations synthesised above supports the hypothesis that the legend of Wayland's escape flight was modelled in part on the Daedalus myth, as one of many facets of cultural interaction and influence between the Roman and Germanic worlds.

CHAPTER 3: ANALOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON VǪLUNDR AND DAEDALUS

In the previous chapter, the Daedalus story in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* VIII and the Old Norse poem *Vǫlundarkviða* were used alongside numerous other sources in the reconstruction of preliterary forms of the legends they recount. The current chapter will consider how a typological or analogical perspective on these two texts can illuminate our readings of both myths, independent of any argument for either a common source or horizontal transmission. It will be argued that the texts in question, and by extension the wider traditions of which each is a product, articulate a cultural anxiety over the dangerous potential of craftsmanship. However, whereas *Vǫlundarkviða*, and the Germanic legend of which it is a reflex, focuses this anxiety on the craftsman himself, the Daedalus myth exemplified by Ovid's treatment presents technology itself as a potentially destabilising force. Despite this discrepancy, both traditions share a framework of gendered causality, presenting dynastic collapse as the consequence of the disruption of patriarchal authority by female agents. This gendered dynamic is in keeping with the worldviews presented more broadly in both Graeco-Roman and Norse myth; the application of this gendered framework in the context of craft and technology is furthermore considered in an anthropological perspective, which notes a striking correspondence in nineteenth- and twentieth-century ethnographic reports of the gendered and sexualised ritualisation of metallurgy in central Africa.

Survey of the Texts

Since *Vǫlundarkviða* was a major literary source for the arguments concerning the development of the Wayland legend in the previous chapter, a detailed précis of the poem has been provided there: briefly, the master smith Vǫlundr is seized, maimed and imprisoned by King Níðuðr; he takes revenge by murdering Níðuðr's sons and making ornaments from their

corpses, and by raping and impregnating Níðuðr's daughter Bǫðvildr. He then escapes captivity by flying. We have also noted the poem's preservation in the thirteenth-century Codex Regius manuscript, and its possible composition by a Norse poet in the Danelaw in the tenth or early eleventh century (see above, p. 54). The nature of our interest in the classical sources, on the other hand, meant that Ovid's handling of the Daedalus story in *Metamorphoses* was treated more cursorily as only one witness to the myth among many; it will therefore be apposite to begin with a more detailed survey of its contents and provenance.

Information about Ovid's life is extracted mostly from his own poetry, in particular *Tristia* IV. 10. He was born in Sulmo (present day Sulmona, Abruzzo) in 43 BCE, during the civil conflicts which arose in the wake of Julius Caesar's assassination. He was trained in rhetoric and public speaking in preparation for a legal or political career, but after holding a few minor public offices he abandoned the civic life to pursue literary ambitions. He made his first public recital around 25 BCE, marking the start of a prolific period of poetic composition up to 2 CE, during which he produced several acclaimed works of love elegy (*Amores*, *Heroides, Ars Amatoria*, and *Remedia Amoris*) as well as now-lost works including his only attempt at tragic drama, a highly regarded *Medea*. Alongside the *Fasti*, he worked on the *Metamorphoses* from *c*. 1 CE up until his expulsion from Rome by Augustus in 8 CE, at which point it was published without his final revisions. He composed several further collections of poetry, including the *Tristia* in five books and *Epistulae ex Ponto* in four, during his exile in Tomis (now Constanța, Romania), where he died in 17 or 18 CE.

Metamorphoses is widely regarded as one of Ovid's most ambitious projects.[1] As a long narrative poem and his only work in dactylic hexameter, it asserts itself as an epic, yet it

[1] Stephen M. Wheeler, 'Ovid's Metamorphoses and Universal History', in David S. Levene & Damien Nelis (eds.), *Clio and the Poets: Augustan Poetry and the Traditions of Ancient Historiography* (Boston: Brill, 2002), pp. 163–89, at p. 163; Peter White, 'Ovid and the Augustan Milieu', in Barbara Weiden Boyd (ed.), *Brill's Companion to Ovid* (Boston: Brill, 2002), pp. 1–26, at p. 14; E.J. Kenney, 'The *Metamorphoses*: A Poet's Poem', in Peter E. Knox (ed.), *A Companion*

constantly strains against the conventions of the genre. In about 12,000 verses over fifteen books the poem presents some 250 distinct myths, legends and historical episodes woven into a continuous narrative from the creation of the cosmos to Augustan Rome. Many of the myths Ovid narrates are not attested elsewhere, making the *Metamorphoses* a crucial though problematic source for Greek mythology.

Ovid's account of the Daedalus myth begins *in medias res*. Minos is introduced in Book 7 when he wages war against Athens to avenge the death of his son Androgeus, curtailing the joy of King Aegeus at his reunion with his son Theseus (VII. 453–8). Book 8 opens with Minos' attack on Megara, ruled by Aegeus' brother Nisus (VIII. 1–13). Nisus' daughter Scylla falls in love with Minos and betrays the city to him in the hopes of gaining his affections (VIII. 14–95), but he rejects her in horror at her lack of filial loyalty (VIII. 95–103). In the course of an invective address to the departing Minos (VIII. 104–142), Scylla makes the first allusion to Daedalus' work when she references Pasiphaë's deception of the bull by means of the wooden cow. The subjugation of Athens is passed over, and Minos returns to Crete to find his wife's monstrous child approaching maturity and attracting unwanted attention (VIII. 152–6). The narrative continues in sequence, though with great variation in pace. In order to conceal the Minotaur, Minos commissions Daedalus to build a labyrinth, the unprecedented complexity of which Ovid memorably conveys through his meandering verses (VIII. 157–68). He then swiftly recounts Theseus' defeat of the Minotaur, his escape from the labyrinth with Ariadne's aid, their elopement and Ariadne's marooning on Naxos, and her rescue by Bacchus (VIII. 169–82). The account of Daedalus' escape flight is a reworking of Ovid's earlier treatment of the episode in *Ars Amatoria*.[2] Ovid describes in fine detail the crafting of the wings, Daedalus'

to Ovid (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 140–53, at pp. 141–2; Joseph Farrell, 'Ovid's Generic Transformations', in Knox (ed.), *A Companion to Ovid* (2009), pp. 370–80, at p. 376.

[2] Among the points of detail recycled from *Ars Amatoria* are Daedalus' musing on the impossibility of escaping by land or sea; an emphasis on Daedalus' work as a defiance of the laws of nature; Icarus' uncomprehending assistance with his father's work; Daedalus' admonition not to navigate by the constellations; his tears as he prepares to depart; a simile describing a bird instructing its

unheeded warning to Icarus, and the latter's fall into the sea (VIII. 183–235). Daedalus recovers his son's body; as he digs a grave he is taunted by a partridge (Lat. *perdix*), reminding us finally of the reason for Daedalus' exile from Athens: he had thrown his nephew Perdix from the Acropolis, envious of his precocious technological accompaniments. Ovid tells that Pallas (Athena) saved Perdix by transforming him into a bird which retained his name (VIII. 236–59). Daedalus' final sojourn with Cocalus on Sicily is briefly mentioned (VIII. 260–2) before Ovid segues into his next myth.

Daedalus has a much more diverse repertoire than Wayland, and he is not depicted as exclusively or even primarily as a smith in the extant sources. However, two of the earliest literary references to him associate him with metalwork, specifically weaponry: we have noted that his first appearance in the literary record is in the *Iliad* (see above, p. 81 & n. 121), in the context of describing the divinely wrought shield of Achilles, whilst Pindar, composing in the early fifth century BCE, recounts how "τᾷ Δαιδάλου τε μαχαίρᾳ φύτευέ οἱ θάνατον | ἐκ λόχου, Πελίαο παῖς" (with the sword of Daedalus, the son of Pelias sowed death for him [Peleus] in an ambush).[3] Sarah Morris argues for the emendation of the manuscript reading *Δαιδάλου* to an adjectival *δαιδάλῳ* in this passage, translating as "an elaborate knife";[4] even accepting this, however, the use of an adjective derived from Daedalus' name would indirectly associate him with the manufacture of weaponry. More generally, Morris has shown that words formed from the reduplicated *δαιδαλ-* root in the Homeric poems are primarily associated with ornate metalwork.[5] Morris herself downplays this conclusion, since already in Homer these terms are

chicks in their first flight; a cartographic commentary on their progress over the Aegean; and the awe of a fisherman who sees the pair airborne.

[3] Pindar, *Nemean* IV. 59–60: *Pindari Carmina cum Fragmentis*, ed. by C.M. Bowra (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935, repr. 2009), p. 127.

[4] Morris, *Daidalos* (1992), pp. 47–8.

[5] Morris, *Daidalos* (1992), pp. 3–29. Cf. Lane Fox, *Travelling Heroes* (2009), pp. 198–9; Martin Bernal, 'Review of Sarah Morris: *Daidalos and the Origins of Greek Art*', *Arethusa* 28:1 (1995), pp. 113–35, at p. 113.

occasionally applied to other crafts including woodwork and textiles;[6] however, since these broader uses become more prevalent in later literature, it is reasonable to suppose that they represent an extension of the semantic field by analogy. Moreover, according to Plato, Socrates claimed descent from Daedalus, and in one dialogue traces this lineage back to Hephaestus, who was certainly conceived of as a smith.[7] Daedalus' polymathy grew organically, as successive generations attributed him with mastery in whatever arts were of particular prominence at a given time and place. Thus, for instance, the traditions drawn on by Homer had associated Daedalus with the monumental architecture of Minoan Crete, as well as perhaps the Mycenaean remains in mainland Greece, and pre-Greek ruins at other Greek colonies in the Mediterranean,[8] whilst in fifth-century Athens, he had additionally become the archetypal exponent of lifelike sculpture.[9]

The Threat of Technology

The conception of the smith as a liminal and superhuman figure in *Vǫlundarkviða* has analogues in many cultures worldwide. In the first place, as has frequently been observed, the first individuals to discover the means of extracting and working metals from the earth would have been perceived by their contemporaries as possessing magic or supernatural abilities; theirs was not only a technical but also a magical and spiritual expertise.[10] Thus, for instance,

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[6] Morris, *Daidalos* (1992), p. 30.
[7] Plato, *Alcibiades I*, 121a: *Platonis Opera II*, ed. by J. Burnet (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1901), p. 327
[8] Lane Fox, *Travelling Heroes* (2009),
[9] See e.g. Euripides, *Hecuba* 836–40: *Euripidis Fabulae*, ed. by J. Diggle, 3 volumes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), i. 377; Euripides, Fr. 372 (*Eurystheus*): Euripides, *Fragments: Aegeus–Meleager*, ed. & transl. by Christopher Collard & Martin Cropp, LCL 504 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 406; Plato, *Euthyphro* 11b–e: *Platonis Opera I*, ed. by E.A. Duke, W.F. Hicken, W.S.M. Nicoll, D.B. Robinson & J.C.G. Strachan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 17–8; cf. *Meno* 87d: *Platonis Opera III*, ed. by J. Burnet (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1903).
[10] De Vries, 'Bemerkungen' (1952), pp. 182–3; Eugenia W. Herbert, *Red Gold of Africa* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), p. 33; *Poetic Edda II*, ed. & transl. by Dronke (1997), p. 260. This dichotomy, of course, is unlikely to have been recognised by Iron-Age societies, but it

the juxtaposition of Daedalus' flight with the magic of Medea on an Etruscan vase (see above, p. 82) indicates that his technical genius could be readily construed as supernatural. In *Gísla saga*, the blacksmith Þorgrímr 'Nef' is described as "fullr af gørningum ok fjǫlkynngi ok var seið skratti, sem mestr mátti verða" (full of sorcery and witchcraft and a wizard, as much as it is possible to be),[11] and the prose preface to the eddic poem *Reginsmál* casts Reginn in similar terms: "Hann var hverjum manni hagari ok dvergr of vǫxt; hann var vitr, grimmr ok fjǫlkunnigr" (He was the most skillful of men, and a dwarf in size; he was wise, grim and versed in magic).[12] Also relevant here are Vǫlundr's own creations: in particular the transformation of human eyes into ornate jewels suggests a mysterious process that cannot be reduced to the merely technical.[13] It is also notable that even in *Velents þáttr*, which includes details of a straightforwardly 'technical' nature such as the use of bird excrement to harden steel,[14] or Egill's painful lesson in aerodynamics when Velent falsely instructs him to take off upwind and land downwind,[15] the unrealistic transformation of human bones into ornate tableware is still retained. The specialist knowledge of metallurgy would naturally become a closely guarded secret, thereby encouraging a sense of separation from the wider community; for this reason, various forms of endogamy within groups of artificers including metalworkers have been documented in a number of nineteenth- and twentieth-century African societies.[16]

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remains an expedient shorthand when discussing the mythologising and ritualising of metallurgical practices.

[11] *Gísla saga Súrssonar* 11; cf. 18, 21, 26: *Vestfirðingar Sögur*, ed. by Björn Karel Þórólfsson & Guðni Jónsson, ÍF IV (Reykjavik: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 1943), pp. 37; 56–7, 69, 84.

[12] *Reginsmál* prose: *Eddukvæði* ii. 296.

[13] This is not to suggest that the *Vǫlundarkviða* poet was himself ignorant of the technological processes involved in metalworking (we have no way of knowing); rather, he draws on a conventional mythic understanding of smithing as an arcane process in which the 'technical' and the 'magical' aspects cannot be clearly separated.

[14] *Þiðreks saga* 77, i. 112–3. The practice is paralleled in Asiatic sources, and possibly has archaeological and experimental support: Ellis Davidson, *The Sword in Anglo-Saxon England* (1994), pp. 160–1, with further references.

[15] *Þiðreks saga* 73, i. 108.

[16] Herbert, *Red Gold* (1984), pp. 45–7; Sandra Blakely, *Myth, Ritual and Metallurgy in Ancient Greece and Recent Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 171–4.

This disconnect between the smith and the wider community is reflected in various ways in mythological and legendary records, including those with which we are here concerned. Daedalus is an exile from his homeland due to the murder of his nephew, and his life is characterised by ceaseless wandering. Elsewhere in Greek myth, we are told that Hephaestus was twice thrown down from Olympus, once by his mother Hera, and once by Zeus.[17] It is true that he is eventually restored to Olympus, though even after returning from his expulsion he remains a somewhat marginalised figure in the community of the gods. The *Iliad* recounts how he is mocked by the other gods for his limp.[18] In the Homeric poems he still plies his trade on Olympus, but subsequent texts locate his forge on the island of Lemnos or beneath various volcanoes around the Mediterranean basin, including Etna on Sicily. According to some sources, he is assisted by the Cyclopes, who manufacture Zeus' thunderbolts. Similarly, in Old Norse-Icelandic tradition the dwarves, who forged many of the greatest treasures of the Æsir, are said to reside "í jǫrðu ok í steinum" (in the earth and in rocks),[19] a notion familiar to earlier poets as well as to Snorri. The dwarves are called "dagskjarr" (day-shy) by the ninth-/tenth-century skald Þjoðolfr of Hvinir, and "grjótaldar" ([of the] rock-people) by the eleventh-century skald Hofgarða-Refr Gestsson, whilst in the eddic poem *Alvíssmál* the dwarf Alvíss tells Þórr: "bý ek fyr jǫrð neðan, | á ek undir steini stað" (I live beneath the earth, I have my home under a rock).[20] In English and German sources, we have seen local topographic traditions connecting Wayland with cavernous or subterranean dwellings peripheral to sites of human habitation (see above pp. 75; 79). Lotte Motz has noted local legends of hidden smiths across central Europe,[21] though the parallels are often loose. Similarly, in *Vǫlundarkviða*, Vǫlundr dwells in the wilderness, and his solitude is established

[17] *Iliad* XVIII. 395–7: *Homeri Opera* ii. 145; *Iliad* I. 590–3: *Homeri Opera* i. 21.
[18] *Iliad* I. 599–600: *Homeri Opera* i. 21.
[19] *Gylfaginning* 13, p. 15.
[20] *Alvissmal* 3/2–3: *Eddukvæði* i. 438.
[21] Lotte Motz, 'The Craftsman in the Mound', *Folklore* 88:1 (1977), pp. 46–60.

early on with the departure of his brothers; the significance of the place-names Úlfsjár and Úlfdalir has been noted in associating Vǫlundr with outlaw tales.[22] In *Þiðreks saga*, as Ursula Dronke has noted,[23] Velent is far more integrated with the rest of society, becoming a respected figure in Niðungr's retinue after demonstrating his skill. This is in all probability a consequence of the saga's transplanting of the legend into a high medieval courtly setting;[24] in any case, Velent's status as a liminal outsider is still residually evident, for instance in his arrival from overseas; in his hostile reception by others amongst Niðungr's courtiers; and in the saga's account of his supernatural heritage and apprenticeship.

It has been observed that the smith in pre-industrial societies is variously (indeed, sometimes simultaneously) revered and despised.[25] These attitudes have their origin in the fear stimulated by the earliest metalworkers' possession of a special brand of practical and spiritual knowledge beyond the grasp of their contemporaries. The application of this knowledge, of course, brought great benefits to the wider community, but the impact of this new technology on human society was not wholly benign. Various studies in diverse areas have shown the remarkable degree of pollution resulting from ancient mining and smelting centuries and even millennia before the industrial era.[26] The detrimental effects of metallurgical pollution on environmental and human health were certainly recognised at least from the first century BCE

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[22] Bouman, 'Vǫlundr as an Aviator' (1940), p. 31.
[23] *Poetic Edda II*, ed. & transl. by Dronke (1997), p. 261.
[24] Grimstad, 'Revenge' (1983), p. 188.
[25] Herbert, *Red Gold* (1984), p. 33; *Poetic Edda II*, ed. & transl. by Dronke (1997), p. 260; A. Andrén, 'Beyond *Heathendom*' (2005), p. 119.
[26] Sungmin Hong, Jean-Pierre Candelone, Clair C. Patterson & Claude F. Boutron, 'Greenland Ice Evidence of Hemispheric Lead Pollution Two Millennia Ago by Greek and Roman Civilizations', *Science* 265 (September 1994), pp. 1841–3; Adrian P. Harrison, Ilenia Cattani & Jean M. Turfa, 'Metallurgy, Environmental Pollution and the Decline of Etruscan Civilisation', *Environmental Science and Pollution Research* 17:1 (April 2009), pp. 165–80; Joey Williams, 'The Environmental Effects of Populonia's Metallurgical Industry: Current Evidence and Future Directions', *Etruscan and Italic Studies* 12:1 (June 2009), pp. 129–48; David P. Pompeiani, Mark B. Abbott, Byron A. Steinman & Daniel J. Bain, 'Lake Sediments Record Prehistoric Lead Pollution Related to Early Copper Production in North America', *Environmental Science and Technology* 47:11 (2013), pp. 5545–52; Aubrey L. Hillman, Mark B. Abbott, JunQing Yu, Daniel J. Bain & TzeHuey Chiou-Peng, 'Environmental Legacy of Copper Metallurgy and Mongol Silver Smelting Recorded in Yunnan Lake Sediments', *Environmental Science & Technology* 49:6 (2015), pp. 3349–57.

in the Roman world. Lucretius comments on the unhealthy appearance and high mortality rates of workers in the gold mines,[27] and Pliny the Elder states that the fumes from the silver mines are harmful to all animals but particularly dogs.[28] Vitruvius observes both the pernicious effects of springs coming from mining sites, and the unnatural pallor of smelters and workers of lead;[29] Strabo observes the necessity of building silver-smelting furnaces with tall chimneys to disperse the toxic fumes.[30] It is highly likely that other cultures drew similar connections. From a more abstract perspective, the fifth-century-BCE historian Herodotus describes how a Delphic oracle cryptically revealing the resting place of the legendary Spartan hero Orestes was correctly deciphered as denoting the site of a forge. One part of the oracular verse, "… καὶ πῆμ᾽ ἐπὶ πήματι κεῖται" (and grief is piled upon grief),[31] was interpreted as referring to the iron being worked by the smith, "ὡς ἐπὶ κακῷ ἀνθρώπου σίδηρος ἀνεύρεται" (since iron was discovered as an evil for humankind).[32] A similar attitude may be discerned at a yet earlier stage of the Greek tradition in Hesiod's account,[33] subsequently adapted by Ovid,[34] of the progressive debasement of humankind from the peaceful and prosperous age of gold to the wretched and war-torn age of iron.[35] Beyond this, the very mystery of the smith's abilities could provoke anxiety over the prospect of their being implemented for hostile purposes.

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[27] Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura* VI. 808–15: *Lucreti De Rerum Natura Libri Sex*, ed. by Cyril Bailey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1921), p. 229.
[28] Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* XXXIII. 98, ix. 74.
[29] Vitruvius, *De Architectura* VIII. 6. 11; VIII. 3. 5: *On Architecture*, ed. & transl. by Frank Granger, 2 volumes, LCL 251, 280 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931–1934), ii. 188, 154.
[30] Strabo, *Geographica* III. 2. 8: *Strabo Geography*, ed. & transl. by Horace Leonard Jones, 8 volumes, LCL 49, 50, 182, 196, 211, 223, 241, 267 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1917–1949), ii. 42.
[31] Herodotus, *Historiae* I. 67. 4, i. 34.
[32] Herodotus, *Historiae* I. 68. 4, i. 35.
[33] Hesiod, *Work and Days* 109–201: *Hesiodi Theogonia, Opera et Dies, Scutum*, ed. by Friedrich Solmsen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 53–7.
[34] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* I. 89–150, pp. 4–6.
[35] It is possible, as suggested by Margaret Clunies Ross, *Prolonged Echoes, Volume I: Old Norse Myths in Medieval Northern Society* (Odense: Odense University Press, 1994), p. 163 & n. 10, that Ovid's account of the end of the golden age influenced that of Snorri discussed below (p. 128).

The conception of the smith as a sinister figure survives in the portrayal of Reginn, who manipulates Sigurðr into being his accomplice in fratricide whilst ultimately intending to betray him. Þorgrímr nef in *Gísla saga* is similarly portrayed in a decidedly negative light. In a version of *Hervarar saga ok Heiðreks*, the dwarves Durinn and Dvalinn, forced by Svafrlami to forge him the sword Tyrfing, curse the sword to be the instrument of "þrjú níðingsverk in mestu" (three most hateful deeds), as well as Svafrlami's own death.[36] Similarly destructive properties are attributed to the dwarf-forged sword Dáinsleif wielded by Hǫgni in Snorri's account of the Hjaðningavíg legend,[37] and to the swords forged by the dwarves Alíus and Olíus for King Buðli in *Ásmundar saga kappabana*.[38] The tenth-century skald Eilífr Goðrúnarson appears to have imagined the giant Geirrøðr as a metalworker, since he depicted him hurling at Þórr "sega tangar afli soðnum" (the forge-heated tongs-morsel).[39]

The menacing aspect of the smith figure is also clearly preserved in *Vǫlundarkviða*. Vǫlundr is given Lappish ancestry, and is twice designated "vísi álfa" (lord of elves),[40] and once "álfa ljóði" (kinsman of elves), hinting at his superhuman powers. Kaaren Grimstad has pointed out that in spite of their superior numbers, Níðuðr's soldiers are afraid to confront Vǫlundr openly; after infiltrating his dwelling in his absence, they withdraw before he returns, and wait until he is asleep before seizing him.[41] His threatening nature is further emphasised when he sees Níðuðr wearing his sword, and Bǫðvildr wearing the ring meant for his swan-bride: to Níðuðr's wife he resembles a wild animal baring his teeth, and his eyes are like those of a serpent.[42] A prose insert following his maiming and imprisonment on Sævarstaðir

[36] *The Saga of King Heidrek the Wise*, ed. and transl. by Tolkien (2010 [1960]), p. 68.
[37] Snorri Sturluson, *Skálskaparmál* 50, i. 72.
[38] *Ásmundar saga kappabana* 1: *Fornaldar sögur Norðurlanda* i. 385–8.
[39] Eilífr Goðrúnarson, *Þórsdrápa* 16/6–7, ed. by Edith Marold, in Gade & Marold (eds.), *Poetry from Treatises on Poetics* (2017), p. 111; translation after Snorri Sturluson, *Edda*, transl. by A. Faulkes (London: Dent, 1987), p. 85. Cf. Motz, 'The Craftsman in the Mound' (1977), p. 53.
[40] *Vǫlundarkviða* 14, 32: *Eddukvæði* i. 431, 435.
[41] Grimstad, 'Revenge' (1983), p. 197.
[42] *Vǫlundarkviða* 17/1–6: *Eddukvæði* i. 432.

moreover states: “Engi maðr þorði at fara til hans nema konungr einn” (no man dared to visit him except the king alone).[43] The latter stages of the poem foreground the reality of the threat posed by Vǫlundr, as he appears victorious over his powerless enemies. The repeated verse, “Hlæjandi Vǫlundr | hófsk at lopti” (Laughing, Vǫlundr rose into the air),[44] is highly significant, since laughter in Old Norse literature frequently connotes power and dominance. The Æsir laugh after they have successfully bound Fenrir, but Týr cannot share in their mirth, since he has lost his hand to the wolf;[45] Brynhildr laughs on hearing of the successful murder of Sigurðr;[46] Hǫgni laughs in paradoxical triumph as his heart is cut out, since he is flouting Atli’s attempt either to claim the treasure hoard (*Atlakviða*) or to torment Guðrún by exposing her brothers as cowards (*Atlamál*).[47] Moreover, the balanced phrasing in each occurrence of the verse starkly contrasts Vǫlundr’s exultant laughter with the dejection and impotence of his enemies – in the first instance Bǫðvildr (“grátandi Bǫðvildr | gekk ór eyju” [Weeping, Bǫðvildr went from the island]),[48] and in the second Níðuðr (“en ókátr Níðuðr | sat þá eptir” [but sadly Níðuðr sat there behind]).[49] Vǫlundr’s dominance is also evident in the way he is able to dictate terms to Níðuðr, demanding, “Eiða skaltu mér áðr | allra vinna ... at þú kveljat | kván Vǫlundar” (First you will swear to me all the oaths … that you will not torment Vǫlundr’s lady);[50] Níðuðr, on the other hand, goes on to lament his own powerlessness in contrast to Vǫlundr: “erat svá maðr hár | at þik af hesti taki | né svá ǫflugr | at þik neðan skjóti” (there is no man so tall that

[43] *Vǫlundarkviða* 17: *Eddukvæði* i. 432.
[44] *Vǫlundarkviða* 28/5–6 = 37/1–2: *Eddukvæði* i. 435–6.
[45] Snorri Sturluson, *Gylfaginning* 34, pp. 28–9.
[46] *Sigurðarkviða in skamma* 30/1: *Eddukvæði* ii. 340.
[47] *Atlakviða* 24/1 & *Atlamál* 64/5: *Eddukvæði* ii. 377 & 394. The heart-cutting motif has been considered out of place in *Atlamál*, since the motivation of the treasure-hoard is absent; in fact, it makes perfect sense as part of Atli’s intention (explicitly stated in stanza 58) to torment Guðrún in revenge for the deaths of his own brothers. See Carola L. Gottzmann, ‘*Atlamál*: Eine jüngere nordische Version des Nibelungenstoffes’, in Klaus Matzel & Hans-Gert Roloff (eds.), *Festschrift für Herbert Kolb zu seinem 65. Geburtstag* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1989), pp. 131–44.
[48] *Vǫlundarkviða* 28/7–8: *Eddukvæði* i. 435.
[49] *Vǫlundarkviða* 37/3–4: *Eddukvæði* i. 436.
[50] *Vǫlundarkviða* 32/1–8: *Eddukvæði* i. 435.

he could catch you from a horse, nor so strong that he could shoot you from beneath).[51] Bǫðvildr's powerlessness is also poignantly emphasised in the poem's closing lines, as she tells her father, "Ek vætr honum | *vinna* kunnak, | ek vætr honum | vinna máttak" (I did not know how to strive against him, I was not able to strive against him).[52]

This differs markedly from the Graeco-Roman tradition. Daedalus' menacing potential is latent in his status as an exiled murderer, but this fact plays no role in the narrative, beyond explaining his presence on Crete. Indeed, in Ovid's account, the Perdix episode is appended almost as an afterthought to the narrative of Icarus' fall, and the murder itself is moreover downplayed, since Perdix is in fact said to have been saved by Athena and transformed into a partridge.[53] The lack of emphasis on Daedalus' threatening nature in comparison to Vǫlundr is paralleled by Hephaestus, who, as we have noted, attempted sexual violence against Athena but was successfully repelled.

Furthermore, the revenge element is entirely absent from Daedalus' escape: he simply yearns for home.[54] Indeed, where Vǫlundr's escape is a triumphant culmination to his vengeance, the classical writers frequently emphasise the devastating consequences of the escape flight for Daedalus himself. In *Ars Amatoria* Ovid states, "Hinc data sunt miserae corpora bina fugae" (then their two bodies were given to the wretched flight)[55] – with the passive verb furthermore hinting at Daedalus' inability to control his invention. In *Metamorphoses*, he poignantly describes Daedalus, "pater infelix, nec iam pater" (the unhappy father, no longer a father),[56] conducting his desperate search for Icarus after the latter's fall – "pennas aspexit in undis | devovitque suas artes" (he saw feathers on the waves, and cursed his

[51] *Vǫlundarkviða* 36/5–8: *Eddukvæði* i. 436.
[52] *Vǫlundarkviða* 40/7–10: *Eddukvæði* i. 437.
[53] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII. 236–59, pp. 182–3.
[54] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII. 183–5, p. 180.
[55] Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* II. 72, p. 156.
[56] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII. 231, p. 182.

skill);[57] Virgil with equal pathos apostrophises Icarus himself as he describes Daedalus' failed attempts to commemorate his son in sculpture: "bis conatus erat casus effingere in auro, | bis patriae cecidere manus" (twice he tried to fashion [your] fall in gold, twice the father's hands fell).[58] Pausanias, a Greek geographer writing in the second century CE, comments that Daedalus was renowned "ὁμοῦ τῇ τέχνῃ τῆς πλάνης τε ἕνεκα καὶ ἐπὶ ταῖς συμφοραῖς" (not only for his art but also on account of his wandering and calamities).[59] In contrast to Wayland, Daedalus is just as vulnerable to the destructive potential of his work as those around him, and the essence of his story is a warning against hubris. The emphasis on the tragic results, rather than on the successful escape, mirrors Daedalus' earlier achievement with the wooden cow, which likewise had highly significant unintended consequences. The appropriation of Daedalus as a local hero in Athenian tradition adds a further layer of tragedy to this, since the Minotaur is nourished by the decimation of the youth of Daedalus' native city. Similarly, the theme of the artificer becoming the victim of his own invention is foreshadowed by the labyrinth, which, Ovid tells us, was so complicated that even Daedalus himself could barely find the way out.[60] Finally, the aftermath of Daedalus' escape is not triumphant like Wayland's: rather, he is a fugitive, relentlessly pursued by his former captor.

The contrast underlies an important difference between the two traditions, namely that whereas the Wayland legend preserves in fossilised form an archaic perception of the smith as a dangerous figure, the Daedalus legend foregrounds the threat posed by technology itself, rather than by its creator, who indeed suffers more than most as a consequence of his own inventions.

[57] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII. 233–234, p. 182.
[58] Virgil, *Aeneid* VI. 32–33: *Opera* p. 228.
[59] Pausanias, *Descriptio Graeciae* VII. 4. 5, iii. 188.
[60] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII. 166–8, p. 180.

In the absence of surviving antecedent narrative versions of the Daedalus myth in the classical corpus we cannot be certain to what extent Ovid's treatment reflects either his own particular emphases on elements already present in the tradition he inherited or his unique perspective on the story, though we have seen indications in favour of the former hypothesis. In any case, as we have noted, the perspective on the Daedalus myth given in Ovid's treatment complements the contemporary awareness of the adverse physical effects of metallurgy. In a different way, two purportedly historical anecdotes suggest an awareness or concern about the detrimental social effects of technological innovation. The first is told in several forms: in Petronius' *Satyricon*, Trimalchio recounts how an emperor is said to have granted an audience to an inventor who has made pliable or non-shattering glass; after watching a demonstration and ascertaining that the secrets of its manufacture had not been shared with others, the emperor had him executed, since if the material was proliferated, "aurum pro luto haberemus" (we would treat gold as if it were dirt).[61] Isidore of Seville tells much the same story, identifying the emperor as Tiberius, and endorsing the latter's suppression of the invention.[62] Pliny the Elder also attaches the story to Tiberius, though he is doubtful of its truth; in his account, rather than killing the inventor Tiberius destroys his workshop, similarly perceiving the glass as a threat to the value of gold, silver and copper.[63] Cassius Dio's version is somewhat different: the man in question had previously incurred Tiberius' jealousy by ingeniously repairing a collapsing portico, for which he was rewarded but also banished from Rome. While petitioning the emperor for a pardon, he dropped a crystal goblet accidentally on purpose, and ostentatiously restored it to its proper shape, hoping this feat would earn him his pardon; instead he was executed.[64] In the second anecdote, Vespasian is presented with a labour- and cost-

[61] Petronius, *Satyricon* 51, p. 45.
[62] Isidore, *Etymologiae* XVI. 16. 6: *Isidori Hispalensis Episcopi Etymologiarum sive Originum Libri*, ed. by W.M. Lindsay, 2 volumes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911, repr. 1962), ii. 211.
[63] Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* XXXVI. 195, x. 154.
[64] Cassius Dio, *Historia Romana* LVII. 21. 5–7, vii. 172–4.

efficient mechanism for transporting heavy columns to the Capitoline hill. He rewards the inventor handsomely but does not implement the device, fearing that to do so would cause mass unemployment.[65]

The historicity of these stories is questionable; the first in particular appears to draw on a folkloric motif of an artisan executed by his patron.[66] A related folk story is the widespread Masterbuilder tale type, in which a supernatural builder is commissioned to complete a task for a great reward, but is defrauded and/or killed by his patron. The tale type is exemplified by the account of the building of Ásgarðr, the stronghold of the Æsir, in Snorri's *Edda*: a disguised jǫtunn builder offers to build a fortress for the Æsir, demanding in payment the hand of Freyja in marriage, as well as the sun and the moon; the Æsir agree with the additional terms that he must complete the work within one winter, and that he may not receive help from any man, confident that the builder will fail to complete the work on time and thus forfeit his payment. However, they allow him the assistance of his stallion Svaðilfari, whose strength, to the Æsir's dismay, triples his master's work rate. With the builder closing in on his deadline, Loki is enlisted to find a way to prevent the him from completing the work, which he does by adopting the form of a mare and distracting Svaðilfari. When the builder realises he will not complete his work in time he flies into a rage, revealing his true nature, whereupon Þórr kills him in violation of the Æsir's oaths.[67] Related stories have been documented in folklore across

[65] Suetonius, *De Vita Caesarum* VIII (Divus Vespasianus), 18, pp. 385–6.

[66] See Stith Thompson's motifs W154.21 'Workers (builder) killed when secret building or grave is finished'; W181.2 'King kills architect after completion of great building, so that he may never again build one so great'; S161.0.1 'Masons who build mausoleum of princess lose their right hands so they may never again construct so fine a building'.

[67] Snorri Sturluson, *Gylfaginning* 42, pp. 34–5. Cf. Joseph Harris, 'The Masterbuilder Tale in Snorri's *Edda* and Two Sagas', *ANF* 91 (1976), pp. 66–101 for further analogues in Old Norse literature.

Europe,[68] and a variant form occurs in the *Iliad*, in the account of how Laomedon cheated Poseidon and Apollo of their payment for the construction of the walls of Troy.[69]

These two Roman anecdotes have been cited as evidence that the classical period was characterised by a stagnation in and antipathy towards technological innovation. Such a view was forcefully expounded by M.I. Finley in an influential 1965 article;[70] as Kevin Greene has noted, his arguments were restated with little change up to three decades later.[71] Aside from the questionable treatment of the whole period of Classical Antiquity as a uniform entity,[72] Finley's reading of these stories is flawed in several ways, from his decontextualising of the passages to his generalisation (for instance, he overlooks the fact that Cassius Dio's variant of the unbreakable glass story fundamentally alters the emperor's motivation for executing the artisan). The stories were deemed notable precisely because Tiberius' and Vespasian's responses were unexpected, evincing an expectation that innovators would in fact be rewarded.[73] As Greene has additionally noted, his dismissive approach to archaeological evidence caused Finley to disregard important perspectives that would have nuanced his interpretation of the literary sources, such as the observation that the high survival rate of pottery can provide indirect evidence for other industries that are less visible in the material record.[74] Nonetheless, these anecdotes – regardless of their historicity – do testify to the authors' consciousness of the possibility that ostensibly beneficial innovations could have

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[68] Martin Puhvel, 'The Legend of the Church-building Troll in Northern Europe', *Folklore* 72:4 (1961), pp. 657–83.
[69] *Iliad* VII. 452–3, XXI. 441–57: *Homeri Opera*, i. 152, ii. 202–3; Joseph Fontenrose, 'The Building of the City Walls: Troy and Asgard', *Journal of American Folklore* 96:379 (1983), pp. 53–63; Dmitri Panchenko, 'Building Laomedon's Troy: A Northern Parallel', *Comparative Mythology* 2:1 (2016), pp. 27–32.
[70] M.I. Finley, 'Technical Innovation and Economic Progress in the Ancient World', *Economic History Review* (New Series) 18:1 (1965), pp. 29–45.
[71] Kevin Greene, 'Technological Innovation and Economic Progress in the Ancient World: M.I. Finley re-considered', *Economic History Review* 53:1 (2000), pp. 29–59, at p. 29.
[72] *Greene, 'Finley re-considered' (2000), pp. 34–5.*
[73] Miko Flohr, 'Innovation and Society in the Roman World', *Oxford Handbooks Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 1–35, at p. 7.
[74] Greene, 'Finley re-considered' (2000), p. 48.

unforeseen consequences. In this regard they may be aligned with Ovid's treatment of the Daedalus myth.

To sum up: the myths of both Wayland and Daedalus illustrate an ambivalent perceptions of craftsmen and their work. However, whereas *Vǫlundarkviða* focuses specifically on the artisan as a threatening figure, the Daedalus story sees a different concern play out in a mythological context, evincing a degree of wariness towards technology itself as representing a potential threat to social stability. Vǫlundr's escape and the acts of vengeance that precede it foreground his command of mysterious superhuman powers, through which he is able to engineer his triumph over his tormentors; Daedalus is also able to subvert the course of nature, but his mastery in this regard is shown to be limited in catastrophic fashion, as his short-term benefit is superseded by immense personal tragedy.

Gendered Causality

Despite this difference in emphasis between the two texts, on a different level *Vǫlundarkviða* and Ovid's Daedalus narrative correspond in reflecting a worldview in which the destabilizing potential of technology and craftsmanship must be controlled by patriarchal authority. This is made apparent when one looks beyond the centrality of the craftsman figure to consider each myth as narrating the collapse of a royal dynasty. Though this is brought about in very different ways in the classical versus the Old Norse story, a structural parallel becomes evident in the roles of the respective kings' wives and daughters. The narrative functions of the royal women in each case cohere to a pattern in which their involvement with the craftsman has the direct consequence of depriving the king of dynastic potential through male progeny.

The actions of Minos' queen serve to remove the king's son as a viable dynastic option. By taking steps to satisfy her lust for Poseidon's bull, Pasiphaë bears a monstrous child, whom her husband is obliged to safeguard. From a modern standpoint, the ascription of blame to

Pasiphaë may seem objectionable, since she was stricken with her unnatural desire by Poseidon as punishment for Minos' infraction.[75] To a contemporary audience, however, this would not have seemed egregious. This is an example of the phenomenon of archaic Greek thought known as 'double determination' or 'double motivation', terms which refer to the principle whereby a given action may have one cause on the divine plane and another on the mortal plane, but the predetermination of the action due to the divine initiative does not absolve the mortal agent from responsibility, praise or blame. Thus in the *Iliad*, Diomedes' heroic stature is not diminished by the poet's statement that Athena imparted strength and courage to him,[76] whilst Agamemnon's folly in insulting Achilles is not mitigated by his claim that Zeus and Ate caused him to act – and nor is his obligation to make material reparations.[77] The principle is carried forward into later Greek literature, so that Herodotus and Bacchylides each articulate the Lydian king Croesus' defeat by the Persians in terms of both predetermined fate and personal error.[78] In *Oedipus Tyrannus*, Sophocles intertwines Oedipus' character flaws inextricably with his destiny to kill his father and sleep with his mother: Oedipus is portrayed throughout the play as obstinate, rash and swift to anger,[79] and these traits seal his fate – particularly since he acts with full knowledge of the prophecy, and with doubts raised about his truly being the son of Polybus and Merope.[80] Euripides, in his *Medea*, exploits the tensions inherent in this system of personal responsibility for dramatic effect. The Chorus interprets Medea's murder of Creon and Glauce as a divinely ordained punishment for Jason, but soon

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[75] Hyginus, in fact, says that Pasiphaë was cursed by Venus for neglecting her cult: *Fabulae* XL, p. 51.
[76] *Iliad* V. 1–2: *Homeri Opera* i. 88
[77] *Iliad* XIX. 86–138: *Homeri Opera* ii. 157–9.
[78] Herodotus, *Historiae* I. 91, i. 51–2; Bacchylides, *Epinician* 3. 23–76: *Bacchylides: A Selection*, ed. by H. Maehler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 34–6.
[79] See e.g. Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus* 334–6, 339–40, 532–42, 697–8: *Sophoclis Fabulae*, ed. by H. Lloyd-Jones & N.G. Wilson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 134, 141–2, 147. Creon and the Chorus implicitly criticises Oedipus' propensity for rash words and actions, advocating reasoned decision–making – *Oedipus Tyrannus* 569, 583, 608, 616–7, pp. 143–4; Oedipus disregards the advice: 618–21, p. 144.
[80] Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus* 774–813, pp. 150–2.

afterwards implores the gods to restrain Medea on learning of her further plan to kill her children;[81] Medea in contrast casts herself and the gods as joint agents in her revenge including the filicide.[82] Euripides leaves the matter conspicuously undecided.[83]

"Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit" (Conquered Greece captured her uncultured captor),[84] and since this ethical system underpins so much of Greek heroic myth it is unsurprising to find it surfacing also in Roman literature. Thus, in a similar vein, Ovid repeatedly highlights Pasiphaë's status as a guilty party. In her rage at being spurned by Minos, Scylla remarks that Minos is a fit match for Pasiphaë, "quae torvum ligno decepit adultera taurum" (the adulteress who deceived the bull with a wooden cow);[85] the verb *decepit* is prominently advanced in the line, emphasising the queen's active role in her liaison with the bull. Later in her diatribe, Scylla states, "iamiam Pasiphaen non est mirabile taurum | praeposuisse tibi" (Now it is not surprising that Pasiphae preferred the bull to you),[86] with *Pasiphaen* conspicuously taken out of sequence, and the verb *praeposuisse* in emphatic position at the start of the enjambed line. Admittedly, Scylla has something of an axe to grind at this point, and her opinions on Minos' domestic arrangements may not reflect those of the narrator; but authorial statements reinforce Pasiphaë's agency and culpability. Having concluded his Athenian war, Minos returns to find the Minotaur fully grown, "foedumque patebat | matris adulterium" (And the mother's foul adultery was laid bare),[87] with *matris* again prominently placed at the start of the line. In a separate narrative in the *Metamorphoses*, Iphis

[81] Euripides, *Medea* 1231–2, 1251–70: *Euripidis Fabulae* i. 146–8.
[82] Euripides, *Medea* 1013–4: *Euripidis Fabulae* i. 136.
[83] Holly M. Sypniewski & Anne MacMaster, 'Double Motivation and the Ambiguity of "Ungodly Deeds": Euripides's *Medea* and Milton's *Samson Agonistes*', *Milton Quarterly* 44:3 (2010), pp. 145–161, at pp. 155–61. Cf. *Medea*, ed. by Donald J. Mastronarde (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 33–4.
[84] Horace, *Epistulae* II. 1. 156: *Q. Horatii Flacci Opera*, ed. by H.W. Garrod (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1901), p. 242.
[85] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII.132, p. 179.
[86] Ovid, *Metamoprhoses* VIII. 136–7, p. 179.
[87] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII. 155–6, p. 179.

despairs at her doomed love for another woman. She compares her plight to Pasiphaë's, recalling how "taurum dilexit filia Solis, | femina nempe marem" (The daughter of the Sun loved a bull, a female with a male),[88] and that "illa dolis et imagine vaccae | passa bovem est" (She [Pasiphaë], with deceit and the likeness of a cow, submitted to the bull).[89] In his earlier work *Ars Amatoria*, Ovid tells how the Minotaur was conceived "crimine matris" (through the mother's sin),[90] and that "Pasiphae fieri gaudebat adultera tauri" (Pasiphaë rejoiced in becoming the bull's adulteress).[91] He additionally details her campaign of sexual jealousy against real heifers she saw as love rivals, either having them yoked as draught animals or slaughtered at the altar.[92] In each of these passages, the focus is again entirely on the mortal plane of causality, and on Pasiaphaë's own active efforts to fulfil her desire. That this perspective is not unique to Ovid is illustrated for instance by Virgil's description of the Minotaur as "Veneris monimenta nefandae" (a record of heinous love),[93] and by Propertius' mention of "proba Pasiphae" (wicked Pasiphaë).[94]

It bears emphasising that although Ovid does not explicitly mention Daedalus' role in abetting Pasiphae, he was obviously aware of it, and expected the same of his audience. As we have seen he alludes twice – first in Scylla's diatribe and later Iphis' lament – to the counterfeit cow, which is nowhere cited as being anything other than the work of Daedalus. Scenes of Daedalus presenting the wooden cow to Pasiphaë were moreover a popular subject in visual art of the first century CE. A number of examples have been identified amongst the extant frescoes of Pompeii including in the Casa del Cenacolo, V 2, 9–12; Casa degli Scienzati; Casa dei Vettii, IV 14, 43 (figure 15); Casa del Menandro, I 10, 4; Casa della Caccia Antica, VII 4,

[88] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* IX. 736–7, p. 227.
[89] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* IX. 739–40, p. 227.
[90] Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* II. 23, p. 154.
[91] Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* I. 295, p. 133.
[92] Ovid, *Ars Amatoria* I. 313–320, p. 134.
[93] Virgil, *Aeneid* VI. 26: *Opera* p. 228.
[94] Propertius, *Elegi* II. 28. 52, p. 84.

48 (figure 16), and Casa del Cenacolo, V 2, 10–11 (figure 17). Also documented is a now-lost painting from Pompeii's Casa di Meleagro (V 9, 2) which showed Pasiphae explaining her predicament to Daedalus, a scene also found at Herculaneum, Casa del Bicentenario V 13, 8 (figure 18).[95] The wider currency of the theme in artistic representations is shown by contemporary plaster, marble and terracotta reliefs in Rome, and a later depiction amongst the reliefs of the Palazzo Spada in Rome, dated to the second century CE (figure 19).[96]

Ovid also stresses the disastrous consequences of Pasiphaë's adultery for Minos' patriliny. The Minotaur is first introduced to us during Scylla's tirade as a "discordem fetum" (unnatural offspring).[97] On Minos' return to Crete it is, even more explicitly, "opprobrium generis" (an ignominy to the family),[98] and a "pudorem" (disgrace),[99] who must be concealed from public view. Its very nature as a hybrid – "monstri … biformis" ([of the] double-formed monstrosity);[100] "geminam tauri iuvenisque figuram" (twin form of bull and man)[101] – constitutes visible testimony to its illegitimacy, and its unsuitability as an heir. The magnitude of Minos' shame is heightened by the juxtaposition with his ostentatious return from war – "spoliis decorata est regia fixis" (the palace was adorned with fastened spoils).[102] It is thus made abundantly clear that Pasiphaë's bestial affair has divested Minos of a viable heir.

The poet of *Vǫlundarkviða* likewise foregrounds the agency of Níðuðr's queen at a crucial juncture, in this instance the decision to lame and incarcerate the captured Vǫlundr.[103] There is no indication that this is Níðuðr's plan before his wife suggests it, and indeed the

[95] The cited iconographic material is catalogued with reproductions in Lilly Kahil, Hans Christoph Ackermann & Jean-Robert Gisler (eds.), *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae VII: Oidipous–Theseus* (Zürich: Artemis, 1994).
[96] Nathalie B. Kampen, 'Observations on the Ancient Uses of the Spada Reliefs', *L'Antiquité Classique* 48:2 (1979), pp. 583–60, at p. 584.
[97] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII. 133, p. 179.
[98] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII. 155, p. 179.
[99] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII. 157, p. 179.
[100] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII. 156, p. 179.
[101] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII. 170, p. 180.
[102] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII. 154, p. 179.
[103] Bouman, 'Vǫlundr as an Aviator' (1940), pp. 29–30; Bouman, 'On *Vǫlundarkviða*' (1950), p. 170.

manner in which the advice is delivered strongly suggests that it has not occurred to Níðuðr. The queen's intervention is not a feature of the Wayland legend in its other literary manifestations, though this does not necessarily signify a great deal – *Deor* gives a highly allusive treatment of the material and is concerned with the story only for the precedents it offers for suffering overcome, whilst *Velents þáttr* transposes the legend into a high medieval courtly setting, far removed from any other version. We have noted the intriguing parallel with the story of the Rugian queen Giso in the *Vita Sancti Severini* of Eugippus (see above, p. 93) which, alongside other more distant analogues provided by the German romance *Friedrich von Schwaben* and the English ballad *Lamkin*, suggests on balance that the queen's involvement was probably an early feature of the tradition, even if the *Vǫlundarkviða* poet has given it particular prominence in his treatment of the material. [104]

In any case, the *Vǫlundarkviða* poet explicitly makes it the queen's initiative to add injury to insult, and moreover draws a series of links between the maiming and imprisoning of Vǫlundr and the murder of the young princes. Níðuðr himself certainly holds his wife responsible for the latter – in stanza 30 he directly links her *kǫld ráð* (cold counsels) to the death of his sons.[105] This impression of her culpability is reinforced by a prominent phraseological echo in the previous stanza, which describes the queen approaching the despairing Níðuðr:

> Úti stendr kunnig
> kván Níðaðar,
> ok hon inn um gekk
> endlangan sal;
>
> (Outside stood the cunning queen of Níðuðr,
> and in she went down the length of the hall). [106]

[104] McKinnell, '*Vǫlundarkviða*' (2014), p. 238.
[105] *Vǫlundarkviða* 30/1–6: *Eddukvæði* i. 435. It should be emphasised that Níðuðr's grief at this stage is entirely predicated on the loss of his sons, since he is not yet aware of the second facet of Vǫlundr's revenge, of which he is informed implicitly in stanza 32, and explicitly in stanza 35.
[106] *Vǫlundarkviða* 29/1–4: *Eddukvæði* i. 435.

These verses are a near-verbatim repetition of the queen's earlier approach before making her decisive intervention in Vǫlundr's initial interrogation,[107] signalling to the poem's audience a causal link between these two scenes. The queen's role in the poem is bookended by the repeated lines; the second iteration precedes Níðuðr's rejection of his wife's influence over him, as he recognises too late the ruin it has brought upon his family.

Moreover, both the narrator and Vǫlundr himself indicate that his revenge is consciously designed with the queen in mind. The poet tells us that "Sneið af hǫfuð | húna þeira" (he cut off the heads of those young cubs),[108] and Vǫlundr reiterates to Níðuðr how "sneið ek af hǫfuð | húna þinna" (I cut off the heads of your young cubs),[109] with each couplet echoing the queen's recommendation for Vǫlundr's mutilation: "Sníðið ér hann | sina magni" (cut from him the strength of his sinews).[110] As Pete Sandberg has noted, the connection here is further underlined by the poet's unusual choice of the verb *sníða* to denote decapitation.[111] Finally, the link between the queen's advice and the murder of the sons is strengthened by the symbolism of Vǫlundr's gifts to his captors. In broad terms, the fashioning of precious objects from the remains of their sons serves as a grim parody of the reciprocal relationship between artisan and patron;[112] on top of this, the morbid touch of fashioning jewellery from the boys'

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[107] *Vǫlundarkviða* 16/1–4: *Eddukvæði* i. 432. It should be acknowleged that verses 1–2 of stanza 16 are not found in the manuscript, but are supplied by editors of the text on the basis of the partial correspondence with stanza 29. The argument for rhetorical repetition thus risks becoming circular; however, the emendation is internally plausible, since stanza 16 would otherwise fail to identify the feminine pronoun *hon* as Niðuðr's queen: See Klaus von See, Beatrice La Farge, Eve Pickard & Katja Schulz, *Kommentar zu den Liedern der Edda 3: Götterlieder* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2000), pp. 188–9. Von See *et al.* agree that lines introducing the queen must be missing at the beginning of the stanza, but conclude: "Müßig ist es, über den Wortlaut der fehlenden Passage zu spekulieren" (it is idle to speculate about the wording of the missing passage). This seems to me overcautious: in view of the repetition of 16/3–4 at 29/3–4, it is likely that 29/1–2 was similarly a repetition of the missing 16/1–2. The emendation is accepted by numerous editors and translators.

[108] *Vǫlundarkviða* 23/1–2: *Eddukvæði* i. 433.

[109] *Vǫlundarkviða* 33/5–6: *Eddukvæði* i. 436.

[110] *Vǫlundarkviða* 17/7–8: *Eddukvæði* i. 432.

[111] Pete Sandberg, 'Repetition in Old Norse Eddic Poetry: Poetic Style, Voice, and Desire' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University College London, 2018), p. 244.

[112] Leif Einarson, 'Artisanal revenge in *Völundarkviða*: Völundr's Creations in the Spatial Relations of the Poem', *JEGP* 114:1 (2015), pp. 1–31, at p. 29.

eyes and teeth strikingly recalls the queen's initial observations of the captive Vǫlundr, in which she focussed specifically on his serpentine eyes and savagely bared teeth. John McKinnell interprets this detail somewhat differently, seeing the queen's receipt of jewellery made from her sons' eyes as "brutally ironic" poetic justice in view of her powers of observation in discerning the threat posed by Vǫlundr in the first place.[113] In fact, this reading is readily compatible with that suggested above; in isolation, moreover, McKinnell's interpretation does not account for the fact that Bǫðvildr is given brooches fashioned from her brothers' teeth. The drinking vessels made from the skulls of Níðuðr's sons also have clear symbolic resonance, drawing on the importance of the mead-cup ritual for maintaining a king's power, and in particular for securing its transfer from father to son.[114] It does not seem likely that the poet would give only two of the three gifts a symbolic significance.[115]

In both instances, then, the involvement of the queen with the craftsman figure is, albeit in very different ways, presented as a direct cause of depriving the king of dynastic potential through male offspring. If we turn now to the kings' respective daughters, we find again a shared pattern of causality in the two traditions. Ovid describes how Theseus escaped the inescapable labyrinth "ope virginea" (with the maiden's aid),[116] and in narrating Ariadne's elopement with Theseus he once again foregrounds the dynastic consequences by referring to both by their respective patronymics: "protinus Aegides rapta Minoide Diam | vela dedit" (Immediately Aegeus' son seized Minos' daughter and spread his sails for Dia [Naxos]).[117] Whilst the account in *Metamorphoses* does not mention that Daedalus was the ultimate source of the advice, it was clearly an established feature of the narrative both for Ovid and for his

[113] McKinnell, '*Vǫlundarkviða*' (2014), pp. 239 & 241.
[114] Einarson, 'Artisanal Revenge' (2015), pp. 23–6.
[115] Einarson, 'Artisanal revenge' (2015), p. 29, n. 151, additionally builds upon McKinnell's reading of the eye-jewels, but admits difficulty in incorporating the brooches made of teeth into his interpretative framework.
[116] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII. 172, p. 180.
[117] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII. 174–5, p. 180.

contemporary readers. He has already stressed the fact that the labyrinth was so complex that only Daedalus himself could find the exit.[118] In Virgil's *Aeneid*, Daedalus decorates the doors of his temple to Apollo at Cumae with scenes from his time on Crete, including how he pitied Ariadne and assisted her: "Daedalus ipse dolos tecti ambagesque resoluit, | caeca regens filo vestigia" (Daedalus himself unwound the tricks and ambiguities of the building, guiding blind footsteps with a thread).[119] It is also worth recalling that the connection between Daedalus and Ariadne is part of the oldest extant stratum of the myth, being referred to in the *Iliad* (see above, p. 81, n. 121).

Ovid's appreciation of the damage Ariadne's actions cause to her family is made clear in his earlier treatment of the story in the *Heroides*, in which he has her recognise that she cannot return to her father, whom she has betrayed.[120] Ariadne's words in the *Heroides* are echoed by those of Scylla in *Metamorphoses*, abandoned by Minos after handing him her father's lock of hair which guaranteed the safety of his kingdom,[121] suggesting that (at least in Ovid's view) Ariadne's betrayal of her family is of the same magnitude as Scylla's.

In *Vǫlundarkviða*, Bǫðvildr, like Ariadne, approaches Vǫlundr without her father's knowledge or consent to ask for his help – "Þoriga ek at segja | nema þér einum" (I did not dare to tell anyone except you alone)[122] – and is understood within the value system of the poem as having wronged her father, hence Vǫlundr's later concern to shield her from Níðuðr's wrath.[123] Vǫlundr impregnates her, thus completing the elimination of Níðuðr's patriliny and replacing it with his own. That the impregnation of Bǫðvildr is a blow directly against Níðuðr is illustrated by the fact that Vǫlundr makes sure to force an oath from his erstwhile captor not to

[118] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII. 166–8, p. 180.
[119] Virgil, *Aeneid* VI. 29–30: *Opera* p. 228.
[120] Ovid, *Heroides* X. 59–74, pp. 124–6.
[121] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VIII. 113–18, p. 178.
[122] *Vǫlundarkviða* 25/5–6: *Eddukvæði* i. 434.
[123] Cf. McKinnell, '*Vǫlundarkviða*' (2014), pp. 239–40, who argues that the poet and contemporary audiences would have considered Bǫðvildr to have deserved her fate.

harm Bǫðvildr or her child before revealing the extent of his revenge.[124] The clear implication is that Níðuðr would kill the child unless bound by oath to safeguard it, rather as Minos is forced to nurture the Minotaur, "κατά τινας χρησμοὺς" (in obedience to certain oracles).[125] Both scenarios exemplify a cultural anxiety about having to raise a child with no value to the propagation of a patriliny.

The Texts in Context

Elements of this gender dynamic are paralleled elsewhere in both classical and Norse tradition. An admittedly rather opaque connection between social stability and the exclusion of women from control over metalwork and other craft is suggested in Snorri's account of how the Æsir first settled on Iðavǫllr. In an expanded paraphrase of the allusive account in the eddic poem *Vǫluspá*,[126] Snorri ascribes this marginalisation to the dawn of the cosmos. He describes the building of two separate halls for the male and female deities, and tells that the male Æsir erected forges and made tools and ornaments – "Ok því næst smíðuðu þeir málm ok stein ok tré" (and then they worked in metal and stone and wood).[127] This golden age (*gullaldr*) lasted, strikingly, "áðr en spiltisk af tilkvámu kvennanna" (until it was ruined by the coming of the women).[128] These women are said to hail from Jǫtunheim, but no further information is provided concerning their identity or the nature of the threat they pose to the golden age of the Æsir.[129] Whatever their identity, it is striking that their arrival brings an end to a period of social harmony characterised particularly by male-dominated industry and an abundance of workable metals, and the absence of any further detail about these women heightens the significance of Snorri's gendered phrasing.

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[124] *Vǫlundarkviða* 32/1–14: *Eddukvæði*, i. 435–6.
[125] [Apollodorus], *Bibliotheca* III. 1. 4. 3, p. 109.
[126] *Vǫluspá* 7–8: *Eddukvæði* i. 293.
[127] Snorri Sturluson, *Gylfaginning* 14, p. 15.
[128] Snorri Sturluson, *Gylfaginning* 14, p. 15.
[129] Clunies Ross, *Prolonged Echoes* (1994), pp. 162–4.

Though the Æsir are themselves portrayed as smiths in the distant past, in other instances they commission artefacts from the dwarves, who are presented as the preeminent smiths of the mythic present. It is significant, in light of this, that female dwarves do not feature in Old Norse myths.[130] It is true that some sources allude to dwarf family units. In the eddic poem *Fáfnismál*, the dragon Fáfnir states that the Norns are of diverse races with some being "dœtr Dvalins" (Dvalinn's daughters),[131] which is to say, dwarves,[132] and several late *fornaldar sǫgur* mention dwarf-children. The term *dyrgja*, a feminine counterpart to *dvergr*, occurs in three fourteenth-century texts,[133] and its form suggests sound changes consistent with its being an old noun, rather than a late coinage.[134] However, named dwarves are almost exclusively masculine,[135] with two fourteenth-century exceptions in Herriðr, the daughter of Sindri according to *Þorsteins saga Vikingssonar*, [136] and Svama, the wife of Svammr in *Þjalar-Jóns saga*.[137] Whilst the late saga evidence problematises the outright denial of the existence of female dwarves, their marginalisation in the mythology is nonetheless clear: "the *dyrgjur* are only mentioned alongside male *dvergar*, and they do not seem to play important independent roles in the sagas."[138]

The dependence of the Æsir on dwarf smiths is detailed by Snorri. In *Gylfaginning* he tells how the Æsir tried unsuccessfully to bind the wolf Fenrir with fetters they had made,

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[130] Clunies Ross, *Prolonged Echoes* (1994), p. 168.
[131] *Fáfnismál* 13/6: *Eddukvæði* ii. 305.
[132] Dvalinn is a dwarf-name according to *Vǫluspá* 11/4: *Eddukvæði* i. 294.
[133] Ugnius Mikučionis, 'The Family Life of the Dwarfs and its Significance for the Relationships between Dwarfs and Humans in the Sagas', *Maal og Minne* 106:2 (2014), pp. 155–91, at p. 167 & n. 11.
[134] Anatoly Liberman, 'What Happened to Female Dwarfs?', in Rudolf Simek & Wilhelm Heizmann (eds.), *Mythological Women: Studies in Memory of Lotte Motz (1922–1997)* (Vienna: Fassbænder, 2002), pp. 257–263, at p. 262.
[135] Lotte Motz, 'New Thoughts on Dwarf-Names in Old Icelandic', *Frümittelalterliche Studien* 7:1 (1973), pp. 100–17, at p. 107; Jenny Jochens, 'Vǫluspá*: Matrix of Norse Womanhood*', *JEGP* 88:3 (1989), pp. 344–62, at pp. 351 & 354.
[136] *Þorsteins saga Vikingssonar* 22: *Fornaldar sögur Norðurlanda* iii. 63.
[137] *Þjalar-Jóns saga* 6: *Þjalar-Jóns saga, Dámusta saga*, ed. by Louisa Frederika Tan-Haverhorst (Haarlem: H.D. Tjeen Willink & Zoon, 1939), p. 10.
[138] Mikučionis, 'The Family Life of the Dwarfs', (2014), p. 168.

before enlisting dwarves to forge the unbreakable fetter Gleipnir.[139] In *Skáldskaparmál* we hear how Loki cut off Síf's hair, and under coercion had a golden headpiece crafted for her by a group of dwarves, the sons of Ivaldi.[140] They also made Skíðblaðnir, the ship of Freyr (referenced also in the eddic poem *Grímnismál*),[141] and Gungnir, the spear of Óðinn. The dwarf brothers Brokkr and Eitri forge Freyr's boar-steed Gullinbursti, Óðinn's self-multiplying ring Draupnir, and Þórr's hammer Mjǫllnir. Significantly, the last of these is judged by the Æsir to be the most valuable, because it offers the best protection against the Jǫtnar.

In the eddic poem *Atlamál*, Guðrún takes revenge on her husband Atli by killing their sons and serving him their flesh. In an additional macabre flourish, she mixes their blood into ale, which she serves from goblets made from their skulls. The use of the artisanal motif here might be taken as a challenge to the notion of an ideological connection between male authority and craftsmanship. However, the motif does not feature elsewhere in association with Guðrún, and may well have been borrowed from the Vǫlundr tradition to add further morbid colour to the cannibalism episode. This is consistent with the lack of pragmatic detail concerning the manufacture of the skull-goblets in a poem which elsewhere dwells on such particulars.[142] Moreover, both Atli poems foreground Guðrún's rejection of conventional femininity – whether through her participation in combat (initiated, as Carolyne Larrington notes, by her jettisoning of feminine accoutrements),[143] her disavowal of her role as both wife and mother, her distribution of treasure in the manner of a king,[144] the phallic symbolism in her murder of Atli (see below, p. 209), or, as we shall see in chapter 5, her appropriation of sacrificial

[139] Snorri Sturluson, *Gylfaginning* 34, pp. 27–9.
[140] Snorri Sturluson, *Skáldskaparmál* 35, ii. 41–3.
[141] *Grímnismál* 43: *Eddukvæði* i. 376.
[142] See e.g. *Atlamál* 9/5–6, 29/1–14, 36/1–8, 43/3–6, 49/1–6, 52/1–10, 53/5–8, 76/1–2, 82/1–8: *Eddukvæði* ii. 384, 388–91, 396–7.
[143] *Atlamál* 45–50: *Eddukvæði* ii. 390–1; Carolyne Larrington, '"I Have Long Desired to Cure You of Old Age": Sibling Drama in the Later Heroic Poems of the Edda', in Paul Acker & Carolyne Larrington (eds.), *Revisiting the Poetic Edda: Essays on Old Norse Heroic Legend* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), pp. 140–56, at p. 143.
[144] *Atlakviða* 41: *Eddukvæði* ii. 381.

authority. Her appropriation of patriarchal control over artificers would fit squarely into this pattern, and the episode does not constitute evidence against the exclusion of women from artisanal control.

More generally, Old Norse myth is underpinned by a connection between social stability and patriarchal control of women. Margaret Clunies Ross has discussed how the sexual politics of Ásgarðr are characterized by a 'negative reciprocity' by which the primacy of the Æsir over other kinship groups is maintained, in particular through the unequal exchange of women.[145] The male Æsir are unrestricted in their choice of sexual partners, though marriage is usually to Ásynjur. Óðinn has affairs with jǫtunn women including Jǫrðr, the mother of Þórr; Gríðr, mother of Víðarr; Rindr, mother of Baldr's avenger Váli; and Gunnlǫð, whom he seduces in order to procure the mead of poetry. According to Snorri, the jǫtunn Járnsaxa was a lover of Þórr.[146] The Vanir are subordinated to the Æsir following the cessation of their primordial war, and according to Snorri's euhemerized account in *Ynglinga saga*, the male Vanir are prohibited from marrying sisters, as had been their custom. Equally, they cannot marry the Ásynjur, their social superiors, and must therefore marry jǫtunn women, who are thus also incorporated as subordinates to the Æsir.[147] Thus, for instance, the eddic poem *Skírnismál* details the Vanr Freyr's pursuit of the jǫtunn Gerðr,[148] whilst Skaði, the daughter of the jǫtunn Þjazi, is married off to the Vanr Njǫrðr when she comes to demand compensation for the death of her father.[149] Conversely, attempts by the jǫtnar to make off with one of the Ásynjur are both unsuccessful and fatal. In *Þrymskviða*, the jǫtunn Þrymr is killed when he steals Þórr's hammer and offers it as ransom for Freyja's hand in marriage;[150] the aforementioned Þjazi temporarily succeeds in abducting the goddess Iðunn, but she is retreived

[145] Clunies Ross, *Prolonged Echoes* (1994), pp. 103–43.
[146] Clunies Ross, *Prolonged Echoes* (1994), pp. 100–1.
[147] Clunies Ross, *Prolonged Echoes* (1994), p. 97.
[148] *Eddukvæði* i. 380–88.
[149] Snorri Sturluson, *Skáldskaparmál* G56, i. 2
[150] *Eddukvæði* i. 422–7.

by Loki, and Þjazi is summarily killed. The same dynamic applies in the case of other races, as illustrated by the eddic poem *Alvissmál*, in which Þórr lethally thwarts a dwarf's attempt to claim his daughter as a bride.[151] Finally, the reproductive dimension to this pattern is indicated by the character of the trickster-god Loki, fickle ally and future enemy of the Æsir, whose chaotic and ambivalent nature is signified in part by the fact that, as the son of the jǫtunn Fárbauti and the (presumed) Ásynja Laufey, his parentage violates the unidirectionality of marital relations between the Æsir and other kinship groups.[152]

Turning to the classical tradition, Adrian Kelly has shown how the Divine Succession Myth in Hesiod's *Theogony* is given a consistently gendered slant in comparison to its Near Eastern analogues (the Hurro-Hittite *Song of Emergence*, and the Babylonian *Enūma Eliš* and *Theogony of Dunnu*).[153] In the Greek myth, the wife-mother figure in each generation of the gods is consistently reduced to a destabilising role, subverting the dynastic stability of her ruling husband. Gaia urges her children by Ouranos to revolt against their father. Kronos volunteers, castrates Ouranos using an adamantine sickle shaped by Gaia, and usurps his throne. Though not strictly metallurgical, the fashioning of the sickle by the subversive wife is a significant detail. In order to preserve his own rule, Kronos devours his children by Rheia as each is born; however, Rheia conceals her sixth child Zeus from Kronos, handing him instead a stone wrapped in swaddling clothes. When Zeus comes of age, he and Gaia cause Kronos to vomit up the stone and Zeus' siblings – Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, and Poseidon. Together they overthrow Kronos and rule as the Olympian pantheon. Hera is consistently portrayed in Greek literature as seeking to undermine Zeus' authority, mostly without success. Hesiod tells how she conceives Hephaestus parthenogenically in anger at Zeus' giving birth to Athena;[154]

[151] *Eddukvæði*, i. 438–43.
[152] Clunies Ross, *Prolonged Echoes* (1994), pp. 64–5 & n. 22.
[153] Kelly, 'Gendering the Succession Myth' (forthcoming).
[154] Hesiod, *Theogony* 924–9, p. 44. For the birth of Athena see below, p. 134.

in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* she herself concedes the inferiority of her own effort to that of Zeus.[155] The *Iliad* poet cites several instances of Hera's subversive role. In Book 8, for instance, she urges Poseidon to intervene on behalf of the Greek army, contrary to Zeus' orders;[156] later, she distracts Zeus' attention from the battlefield, allowing other gods to assist the Greeks without his knowledge.[157] When Zeus discovers the ruse, he threatens Hera with repercussions, reminding her of a time he punished her severely for her ill-treatment of his son Heracles.[158] Hera's persecution of Heracles is revisited later in the poem, when in the course of his reconciliation with Achilles Agamemnon relates how she prevented Zeus' son Heracles from inheriting the kingdom of Argos, condemning him to servitude under Eurystheus.[159] Hera's antipathy towards Zeus' extramarital children is a common trope elsewhere in Greek literature. In addition to cheating him of his kingdom, she attempted to kill the infant Heracles with poisonous snakes; we also hear how she tried to prevent Leto from giving birth to Apollo and Artemis. The pattern is repeated in later Greek and Roman sources, which tell that Hera commanded the Titans to dismember the newborn Dionysus, and how she destroyed all the children Zeus fathered on Lamia. Conversely, Hesiod relates that she nurtured various monsters hostile to Zeus and his offspring, including the Lernaean Hydra and the Nemean Lion;[160] the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* makes her the father of the monster Typhoeus/Typhaon.[161] It is true

[155] *Homeric Hymn* III. 311–20: *Homeri Opera* v. 33.
[156] *Iliad* VIII. 198–211: *Homeri Opera* i. 161.
[157] *Iliad* XIV. 153–362: *Homeri Opera* ii. 36–44.
[158] *Iliad* XV. 18–33: *Homeri Opera* ii. 50–1.
[159] *Iliad* XIX. 91–133: *Homeri Opera* ii. 157–8.
[160] Hesiod, *Theogony* 314–5, 328–9, pp. 18–9.
[161] *Homeric Hymn* III. 307–9: *Homeri Opera* v. 33. Hesiod (*Theogony* 820–2, p. 40) has Typhoeus as the son of Gaia by Tartaros, but the attribution of the birth to Hera by a later remains illustrative of her broader function within the divine apparatus of Greek myth. Similarly, one of the scholia to *Iliad* vv. 783 preserves an Orphic tradition which relates that Hera, at the prompting of Gaia, conspired with Kronos to bring forth Typhon, who would usurp Zeus' throne; however, she subsequently confessed to the plot after reconciling with her husband, and Zeus destroyed his adversary. See G.S. Kirk, J.E. Raven & M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 59; Daniel Ogden, *Drakon: Dragon Myth and Serpent Cult in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 76, n. 46.

that in the *Iliad*, Hera finds herself working alongside Zeus' daughter Athena, who like her resents Zeus' delaying of Greek victory. As Kelly has noted elsewhere, however, Athena's reminiscence to Hera of the aid she gave Heracles (Hera's consistent enemy) while he laboured for Eurystheus points to a tension between the two even in the course of their temporary alliance.[162]

Zeus, for his part, preserves his supremacy through various strategies, all overt assertions of control over female reproductive potential. For instance, he impregnates the Titan Metis but swallows her before she gives birth, thus himself producing Athena and diverting the threat posed by the subversive alliance between mother and offspring in previous generations; as a virgin goddess, moreover, Athena will not threaten Zeus' reign by producing a rival to challenge him. The symbolic appropriation of female reproductive power is evident elsewhere in Greek myth, for instance in the birth of Aphrodite who, according to Hesiod, sprang from the foam produced by Ouranos' severed genitals (see above) after Kronos threw them into the sea.[163] Margaret Clunies Ross has noted the prevalence of this concept of pseudo-procreation also in Norse myth,[164] exemplified by the primordial giant Ymir, who produces the frost-giants (*hrímþursar*) parthenogenically, and from whose dismembered body the world is created.[165]

It also bears noting at this juncture that in addition to exemplifying her dissociation from female reproductive potential, the circumstances of Athena's birth also cast her as "the product of a metallurgical operation",[166] since the smith god Hephaestus extracts her fully armed from Zeus' head; the episode thus draws a clear link between metalwork and the male

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[162] Adrian Kelly, 'Hypertexting with Homer: Tlepolemus and Sarpedon on Heracles (*Il*. 5.628–698)', *Trends in Classics* 2:2 (2010), pp. 259–76, at p. 275.
[163] Hesiod, *Theogony* 188–200, p. 13.
[164] Margaret Clunies Ross, 'Pseudo-Procreation Myths in Old Norse: An Anthropological Perspective', *TAJA* 1:2-3 (1990), pp. 147–58.
[165] *Vafþrúðnismál* 21/1–6, *Grímnismál* 40–41: *Eddukvæði* i. 359, 376; Snorri Sturluson, *Gylfaginning* 5, pp. 10–11.
[166] Marcel Detienne & Jean-Pierre Vernant, *Cunning Intelligence in Greek Culture and Society*, transl. by Janet Lloyd (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 183.

usurpation of female reproductive capacity. This feature of the myth is first attested in literature in the fifth century,[167] but appears in visual art at least a century earlier.[168] Hephaestus' involvement problematises the chronology of the Olympian gods, as we have already noted the earlier tradition that Hephaestus' birth was motivated by Hera's anger at Athena's. The development of this alternative tradition in spite of the contradiction it introduces underscores the significance of the connection between procreation and craftsmanship.

Zeus additionally fathers powerful offspring by multiple goddesses other than his main consort, Hera, correcting the error of his predecessors who produced a younger generation who could be united against him by their mother. Finally, the Greek tradition beyond Hesiod shows how Zeus is explicitly invested in maintaining control over the sexual freedom of others, particularly goddesses. Kelly cites as examples the complaint of Calypso when ordered to let Odysseus return to Ithaca, in which she points to other instances in which Zeus and his offspring have denied goddesses sexual freedom;[169] the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, which details Zeus' plan, alluded to also by Hesiod,[170] to marry off Persephone without her mother Demeter's knowledge or consent;[171] and the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, in which Zeus turns Aphrodite's own erotic powers back on her.[172] In terms of a further link between this gender dynamic and craftsmanship, a suggestive passage in the same poem notes Athena as one of three goddesses who are unaffected by Aphrodite's influence, and draws an implicit connection between this immunity and her patronage of artisans.[173] Her jurisdiction over crafts may be seen as contingent on her rejection of female reproductive potential.

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[167] Pindar, *Olympian* VII. 35–8, *Carmina* p. 26.
[168] Morris, *Daidalos* (1992), p. 84.
[169] *Odyssey* V. 116–29: *Homeri Opera* iii. 88.
[170] Hesiod, *Theogony* 912–4, p. 44.
[171] *Homeric Hymn* II: *Homeri Opera* v. 2–20.
[172] *Homeric Hymn* V: *Homeri Opera* v. 64–75.
[173] *Homeric Hymn* V. 7–15: *Homeri Opera* v. 65.

The foregoing discussion has centred on early Greek texts due to the detailed evidence they contain on cosmogonic and theogonic traditions. It is therefore important to note that whilst these texts are many centuries earlier than Ovid, the relevant myths were all incorporated into the Roman mythological tradition. Cicero offers an allegorical discussion of the castration of Caelus (Ouranos) by Saturn (Kronos), and Saturn's devouring of his children until his usurpation by Jupiter/Jove (Zeus).[174] Saturn's cannibalism and the concealment of the infant Jupiter are also narrated by Ovid himself in the *Fasti*,[175] and by the first-century-BCE poet Lucretius,[176] whilst numerous other texts make offhand allusions to these events.[177] They are mentioned by the north African Christian apologist Arnobius, writing in the early fourth century, who furthermore discusses the birth of Venus from the severed genitals of Caelus.[178] Ovid also cites the birth "sine matre" (without a mother) of Minerva (Athena) from the head (*caput*) of Jupiter as a possible etymology for a shrine dedicated to Minerva *Capta*.[179] The rape of Proserpina (Persephone) by Dis (Hades/Pluto) appears in both *Fasti* and *Metamorphoses*,[180] and is noted also by Cicero.[181]

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[174] Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* II. 24. 63–4, cf. III. 24. 62: *Cicero On the Nature of the Gods, Academics*, ed. & transl. by H. Rackham, LCL 268 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1933), pp. 184, 344.

[175] Ovid, *Fasti* IV. 196–214: *P. Ovidi Nasonis Fastorum Libri Sex*, ed. by E.H. Alton, D.E.W. Wormell & E. Courtney (Leipzig: Teubner, 1978), pp. 89–90.

[176] Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura* II. 629–39, pp. 57–8.

[177] For the castration of Caelus, see e.g. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* I. 6. 36: *M. Fabii Quintiliani Institutionis Oratoriae Libri Duodecim*, ed. by M. Winterbottom, 2 volumes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), i. 47; Ovid, *Ibis* 271–2, p. 136; Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* VII. 19, ii. 438–42 (quoting from Varro's lost *Antiquitates Rerum Humanorum et Divinarum*). For Saturn's deposition, Virgil, *Aeneid* VIII. 319–20: *Opera* p. 292; Tibullus *Elegiae* II. 5. 9–10: *Tibulli Aliorumque Carminum Libri Tres*, ed. by John Percival Postgate (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1915), p. 40; Juvenal, *Saturae* V. 13. 38–40, p. 147; Tacitus, *Historiae* V. 2, pp. 229–30; Minucius Felix, *Octavius* XXIII. 5: *Tertullian Apology, De Spectaculis, Minucius Felix Octavius*, ed. & transl. by T.R. Glover & Gerald H. Rendall, LCL 250 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), p. 384.

[178] Arnobius, *Adversus Nationes* III. 30. 1–2, IV. 24. 3: https://www.thelatinlibrary.com/arnobius.html (accessed 25 April 2020). Cf. Macrobius, *Saturnalia* I. 8. 6, ed. & transl. by Robert A. Kaster, 3 volumes LCL 510–12 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), i. 88.

[179] Ovid, *Fasti* III. 834–42, p. 81.

[180] Ovid, *Fasti* IV. 417–620, pp. 96–102; *Metamorphoses* V. 341–571, pp. 113–20.

[181] Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* II. 26. 66, pp. 186–8.

To recapitulate: this section has identified a common pattern of causality underlying the narratives of both *Vǫlundarkviða* and *Metamorphoses* VIII, in which the interference in a king's control over an artisan by the women of the royal family results in his loss of that control and the ruin of his dynasty; the queen's actions in each instance deprive the king of a male heir, whilst the princess rules herself out as a perpetuator of the king's line. Aspects of this gender dynamic may be identified elsewhere in both literary traditions.

Anthropological Perspectives

This interrelation between craft, gender and sociopolitical authority finds a striking parallel in anthropological observations regarding the heavily gendered and sexualized rituals associated with metalwork in various societies of sub-Saharan Africa, in which the male-controlled metallurgical processes are symbolically equated with female reproductive processes.[182] The primary fieldwork carried out in the region was conducted in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the data need some justification as comparanda for the classical and Norse material.

Jens Peter Schjødt has highlighted the value of typological comparisons between unrelated cultures that nevertheless display certain commonalities in their social situations.[183] In our case, we may note that ferrous metallurgy in Graeco-Roman, Viking-Age Scandinavian, and African contexts relied on similar technology, namely the use of bloomery furnaces.[184] The

[182] An analogue between the African metallurgical rituals and the sexualised nature of mythical Norse smiths including Vǫlundr has also been put forward in a paper by Tom Grant, 'Vǫlundr's Revenge in an Anthropological Perspective', given at an informal workshop on eddic poetry at the University of Cambridge, 23 February 2018; Tom very kindly agreed to share a transcript of his talk with me.
[183] Schjødt, 'Pre-Christian Religions' (2017), pp. 3–28.
[184] Janet Lang, 'Roman Iron and Steel: A Review', *Materials and Manufacturing Processes* 32:7–8 (2017), pp. 857–66; Eugenia W. Herbert, *Iron, Gender, and Power: Rituals of Transformation in African Societies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press,1993), p. 9; Randi Haaland, 'Iron in the Making – Technology and Symbolism: Ethnographic Perspectives on European Iron Working', in Anders Andrén, Kristina Jennbert & Catharina Raudvere (eds.), *Old Norse Religion in Long-Term Perspectives: Origins, Changes and Interactions* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2006), pp. 79–85, at pp. 82–3.

bloomery process extracts base metal from ore through the application of heat and a chemical reducing agent, producing a spongy mass of iron.[185] Due to its sensitivity to chemical and physical conditions, the process is difficult to execute and unpredictable,[186] which may lend it to ritualization. It is notable in this connection that sexualised smelting rituals similar to those recorded in Africa have additionally been documented in Nepal, where the technological circumstances are also similar.[187] As Randi Haaland has noted, the correspondence cannot be explained "only as a result of the diffusion of ideas or the migration of people",[188] and the geographical and cultural separation tells against an underlying common heritage. A further parallel may be drawn between the use of ornamental metalwork as an expression of prestige and power in both the African and Iron-Age and Viking-Age Scandinavian contexts.[189] This is less applicable to the first-century Imperial Roman context of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, though it is more pertinent in the context of Archaic Greece, when the Daedalus myth developed.[190]

Given the existence of certain common elements in both technological and social circumstances, then, we are justified in employing African ethnographic material in an analogical perspective in order to elucidate the ancient and medieval mythic traditions.[191] More

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[185] Herbert, *Iron, Gender, and Power* (1993), p. 9.

[186] Robert B. Gordon & David J. Killick, 'Adaptation of Technology to Culture and Environment: Bloomery Iron Smelting in America and Africa', *Technology and Culture* 34:2 (1993), pp. 243–70, at p. 244.

[187] Gunnar Haaland, Randi Haaland & Suman Rijal, 'The Social Life of Iron: A Cross-Cultural Study of Technological, Symbolic, and Social Aspects of Iron Making', *Anthropos* 97:1 (2002), pp. 35–54.

[188] Haaland, 'Iron in the Making' (2006), p. 79.

[189] Herbert, *Red Gold* (1984), pp. 244–54; Winroth, *The Conversion of Scandinavia* (2012), pp. 41–51, 61–75; Lotte Hedeager, *Iron-Age Societies: From Tribe to State in Northern Europe, 500 BC to AD 700* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 250–3.

[190] Ian Morris, 'Gift and Commodity in Archaic Greece', *Man* (New Series) 21:1 (1986), pp. 1–17.

[191] A further ritual parallel may also be indicated in the use of human bones in the forging process by Iron-Age Scandinavian smiths: Terje Gansum, 'Role the Bones – from Iron to Steel', *Norwegian Archaeological Review* 37:1 (2004), pp. 41–57; Ing-Marie Back Danielsson, 'Bodies and Identities in the Scandinavian Late Iron Age', in Andrew Jones (ed.), *Prehistoric Europe: Theory and Practice* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), pp. 312–29. The use of bone coal served a technical purpose, carbonising soft bog iron to make hard steel; yet evidence of the exhumation of human remains for this purpose can perhaps be seen as analogous to the important role of ancestors in African ironworking rituals: Herbert, *Iron, Gender, and Power* (1993), pp. 4, 14, 34–6, 55–77, 108–11.

specific reservations may be prompted by the methodological challenges that attend the use of the African anthropological data. Sandra Blakely has succinctly highlighted the limitations of both the documentation and the interpretation of the African rituals by colonial-era observers:

> The evolutionary perspective […] was the dominant anthropological model of the time, and encouraged an approach to Africa as the living museum of the human race. Early colonial administrators were often trained in Classical philology; their reports reflect a predisposition for models of diffusion that prioritized derivation from Greco-Roman types. Administrators as well as missionaries were also dedicated to Christianity, and so viewed the rituals as behavior in need of correction.
>
> […] Discretion, or embarrassment, constrained some to euphemism, and the omission of ideas that conflicted with Christianity. Others emphasized the spectacular sexuality of the gynecomorphic furnaces while ignoring the technological processes of which these traditions were a part. Missionaries and administrators characteristically knew little of Africa beyond their own area, lacked formal anthropological training, and recorded observations only in their spare time. They also lacked the technological expertise to correctly evaluate the technological systems they observed, some of which were unknown in European metallurgical practice.[192]

Subsequent anthropological studies, however, have supplemented the important though problematic colonial-era reports through reconstructions of smelts, informed by locals' memories of the technical and ritual procedures. Naturally, the process of reconstruction brings complications of its own, yet the collaboration of fieldworkers with local informants has provided documentation of insiders' perspectives which are unavailable in the case of the ancient and medieval material. Improved archaeological research has also helped to corroborate both technical and ritual aspects of the reconstructions.[193] Even in view of the caveats that are rightly raised regarding the process of reconstruction,[194] the testimony of local informants with personal memory of the rituals in question is clearly of considerable value in supplementing theoretical interpretations of comparable phenomena in ancient and medieval traditions, for which such testimony is unavailable.

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[192] Blakely, *Myth, Ritual, and Metallurgy* (2006), p. 64.
[193] Blakely, *Myth, Ritual, and Metallurgy* (2006), pp. 66–8.
[194] Herbert, *Iron, Gender, and Power* (1993), pp. 16–17; Blakely, *Myth, Ritual, and Metallurgy* (2006), pp. 67–8.

Whilst traditional metallurgical practices were naturally subject to considerable variation across the region of central Africa, some general features were highly consistent, and Eugenia Herbert has argued that they were underpinned by a common cosmology, which articulated a connection between female sexuality and fertility and iron production, as well as other male-dominated activities such as hunting and chiefly investiture. Perhaps the most striking illustration of the ritual sexualisation of metallurgy in central Africa was provided by the widespread documentation of furnaces decorated with "exuberantly gynecomorphic" features such as breasts, navel, and female scarification patterns.[195] Conversely, the bellows and tuyère pipes were often (though not always) construed as phallic symbols.[196] Smelters and smiths were both exclusively male,[197] and in some cases even tasks such as bringing food for the smelters were restricted to pre-menarche girls or post-menopausal women – i.e. those who could not bear children.[198] Amongst the Fipa people of southwestern Tanzania, the male smelters additionally made the clay tuyères, despite pottery being conventionally a female occupation in these and other societies.[199] Smelters were commonly required to abstain from sexual intercourse prior to and during the smelt; local informants are recorded as explaining that during this period the furnace is understood as a smelter's wife, and sexual contact with any other woman (including his human wife) would constitute adultery. Herbert further notes the extreme case of the Bassari people, amongst whom the sexual taboo was extended both in

[195] Herbert, *Iron, Gender, and Power* (1993), p. 25.
[196] Herbert, *Iron, Gender, and Power* (1993), pp. 37–8.
[197] Herbert, *Iron, Gender, and Power* (1993), pp. 25, 107; Nicholas David, Robert Heimann, David Killick & Michael Wayman, 'Between Bloomery and Blast Furnace: Mafa Iron-Smelting Technology in North Cameroon', *African Archaeological Review* 7 (1989), pp. 183–208, at p. 184; G.R. Celis, 'La métallurgie traditionelle au Burundi, au Rwanda et au Buha', *Anthropos* 84 (1989), pp. 25–46; Randi Barndon, 'Iron Working and Social Control: The Use of Anthropomorphic Symbols in Recent and Past East African Contexts', *Kvinner i arkeologi i Norge*, 22–23 (1999), pp. 59–77.
[198] Herbert, *Iron, Gender and Power* (1993), pp. 78–9; Haaland, Haaland & Rijal, 'The Social Life of Iron' (2002), p. 47.
[199] Herbert, *Iron, Gender, and Power* (1993), p. 28; Randi Barndon, *An Ethnoarchaeological Study of Iron-Smelting Practices among the Pangwa and Fipa in Tanzania* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2004), p. 95.

its application to mining, building the furnace, and preparing charcoal, and in its requirement that smelters should not have any contact at all with sexually active individuals. It is significant that violation of such sexual taboos was the most common explanation cited for an unsuccessful smelt.[200]

The sexualised rituals surrounding the smelting and forging processes have been widely considered to be an expression of the usurpation of female reproductive potential by the male smelters and smiths.[201] As Herbert notes:

> The iron smelter constructing his furnace and summoning all the forces at his command to make it bear iron demonstrates his control of both sides of the procreative equation, male and female, father and mother.[202]

Discussing the metallurgical practices of the Fipa, Sandra Blakely has questioned elements of this interpretation, arguing that such a gendered inequality "is not reflected in the social divisions of labor and power."[203] She further notes the use of feminised props by the master smelter, as well as feminine terminology applied to those attending the furnace.[204] It remains the case, however, that women "are never in control of either the key technological or ritual procedures."[205] In this context, any variety of ritual sexualisation applied to the metalworking process inescapably reflects an ideology of male appropriation of female procreative power. As Herbert notes, this is true even in cases where the basic gendered paradigm appears to be undercut – for instance, by examples of furnaces identified as "male" in northern Ghana.[206] Since the metallurgical process remained exclusively under male control, such apparent

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[200] Herbert, *Iron, Gender, and Power* (1993), pp. 80–82.
[201] S. Terry Childs & David Killick, 'Indigenous African metallurgy: Nature and culture', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 22 (1993), pp. 317–37, at pp. 325–6; Herbert, *Iron, Gender, and Power* (1993), pp. 16, 39–40.
[202] Herbert, *Iron, Gender, and Power* (1993), p. 228.
[203] Blakely, *Myth, Ritual and Metallurgy* (2006), p. 99.
[204] Blakely, *Myth, Ritual and Metallurgy* (2006), p. 122.
[205] Herbert, *Iron, Gender, and Power* (1993), p. 25; cf. Blakely, *Myth, Ritual and Metallurgy* (2006), p. 107.
[206] Herbert, *Iron, Gender, and Power* (1993), p. 36.

counter-examples should in fact be seen not as exceptions, but rather as "the male appropriation of gestation [carried] to its ultimate limits."[207]

Of additional significance is the documentation of legends in many of the African societies telling that the art of metallurgy was originally introduced or practiced by women. As Herbert argues, these are unlikely to reflect a historical reality, but should rather be connected with widespread myths of primordial gynocracy, which typically tell that women wielded sociopolitical power ineptly, and thereby serve to justify the political subjugation of women in historical time.[208] In this context, then, the sexualised metallurgical rituals may be seen as applying to the technological sphere a broader ideology regarding the necessity of patriarchal authority for the preservation of social order.

The sexualising of metallurgical rituals has been explained as stemming from an intuitive analogy between the extraction of metal from ore and the process of childbirth; Herbert has posited a "procreative paradigm" whereby the familiar experience of human reproduction serves as a model for other "transformative" processes such as metalworking.[209] Whilst this may well be a factor in prompting the association, however, Dena Freeman has challenged this interpretation, pointing out that this alone does not account for the absence of the procreative paradigm in the metallurgical practices of several Ethiopian societies.[210] Freeman argues that the lack (noted but not explained by Herbert) of ritual sexualisation of metallurgy amongst the Gurage people of southern Ethiopia was a result of the political disempowerment of Gurage smiths. In support of this theory she points to evidence of the

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[207] Herbert, *Iron, Gender, and Power* (1993), p. 40.

[208] Herbert, *Iron, Gender, and Power* (1993), p. 25; for a discussion of gynocratic myths in several Native South American societies, see Joan Bamberger, 'The Myth of Matriarchy: Why Men Rule in Primitive Society', in Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo & Louise Lamphere (eds.), *Women, Culture and Society* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1974), pp. 263–80.

[209] Herbert, *Iron, Gender, and Power* (1993), pp. 5, 32–40, 116–7; cf. Haaland, Haaland & Rijal, 'The Social Life of Iron' (2002), p. 39.

[210] Dena Freeman, 'Conclusion I: Understanding marginalisation in Ethiopia', in Aula Pankhurst & Dena Freeman (eds.), *Peripheral People: The Excluded Minorities of Ethiopia* (London: Hurst, 2003), pp. 301–333, at pp. 327–30.

historical ritual sexualisation of goldsmithing amongst the Dawro people, also of southern Ethiopia, and connects the fading of the procreative symbolism to radical political and economic changes in the region in the twentieth century. As a consequence of these changes, the importance of the products of metalworking for the maintenance of political power structures came to an end; Freeman draws a causal link between this decline in importance and the dissociation of metallurgical practices from the procreative paradigm.

Overall, then, the ethnographic data points to a broadly consistent trend in recent central African metallurgical practices, in which the cultural and political importance of metalwork is underpinned by an ideology of male hegemony over the metallurgical processes. This hegemony was characterized not only by the exclusion of women from control of the technical procedures involved, but also by the ritual arrogation of female reproductive potency by male practitioners. A comparable pattern has been identified in classical and Norse mythologies: *Vǫlundarkviða* and *Metamorphoses* VIII both portray dynastic ruin resulting from the compromise of patriarchal control over craftsmen, whilst the broader traditions underlying both texts assert in different ways a symbiotic relationship between social stability, craft, and male hegemony. These ideological similarities are unlikely to be the result of the cross-cultural transmission of ideas, and should be seen instead as independent developments of comparable worldviews owing to broad similarities in cultural circumstances.

Conclusion

This chapter has approached the correspondence between the imprisonment and escape of Daedalus in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and that of Vǫlundr in *Vǫlundarkviða* from a typological-comparative perspective, exploring the ways in which these texts can be productively read against each other irrespective of whether or not there exists a genetic relationship between them. The discussion has highlighted the value of considering both similarities and differences

between analogous materials. Vǫlundr and Daedalus achieve markedly divergent results through the exercise of their artisanal skills, and this difference is illustrative of a nuanced but important distinction between first-century Roman and Viking-Age Scandinavian attitudes towards the dangers of technology. On the other hand, the two texts display a structural correspondence in their presentations of the respective myths, through which the political and cultural hegemony of males is asserted and justified by presenting its disruption as the cause of social disaster. Other myths in both Graeco-Roman and Norse traditions corroborate and develop this ideology, aspects of which appear also to have developed independently in the context of African metallurgical rituals. Although far removed in time and place from both the classical and medieval situations, the anthropological material is of great value both in demonstrating the possibility of such independent development under broadly similar cultural circumstances, and in offering insider perspectives which can be used as a model for the interpretation of traditions (such as the classical and medieval) for which such perspectives are lacking. The parallel though independent framework of causality underlying both *Metamorphoses* VIII and *Vǫlundarkviða* may well have been present in some form in versions of both stories circulating in the Migration Period, a chance similarity which may have facilitated the incorporation of elements from the Daedalus myth into the Wayland legend as discussed in the previous chapter.

CHAPTER 4: MEDEA AND THE NIBELUNG TRADITION

This chapter will make a case for the influence of the classical myth of Medea on the Germanic Nibelung legend. The matter of the Vǫlsungs and Nibelungs is amongst the most renowned Germanic heroic tales today, thanks in no small part to Richard Wagner's acclaimed four-part operatic adaptation *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, first performed in 1876.[1] The legend is also one of the most widely attested in the corpus of medieval Germanic literature, with complete narrative versions extant in Middle High German and Old Norse texts and allusions to several of the primary characters in Old English, as well as iconographic representations from Viking-Age Scandinavia and the British Isles. I shall begin with a survey of the sources for the legend in each of the branches of the Germanic literary tradition, before turning to consider the relationship of these sources to the historical individuals and events that underlie the legendary versions – the destruction of the Burgundian kingdom on the Rhine by a Hunnic army in 437 CE, and the death of the Hunnic king Attila in 453. Whilst the extant literary treatments were recorded many centuries after the historical events that underlie them, a careful synthesis of the various legendary and historical materials enables the reconstruction of hypothesised earlier stages of the development of the legendary tradition(s) from the historical kernel. This synthesis reveals correspondences between the German and Old Norse traditions regarding the revenge of Attila's wife, which must have accrued to the historical legend during the Migration Period, but which cannot have been derived from the historical root. I argue that these features developed under the influence of the myth of Medea, the vengeful wife *par excellence*, which circulated widely in the Roman world well into Late Antiquity.

[1] Árni Björnsson, *Wagner and the Volsungs: Icelandic Sources of* Der Ring des Nibelungen (London: VSNR, 2003), has traced Wagner's dependence on Old Norse literature in preference to the *Nibelungenlied* as inspiration for the contents and versification of his operas.

The Norse Tradition

The fall of the Burgundians is the subject of two consecutive poems of the *Poetic Edda*. The first, *Atlakviða*, is widely considered to be amongst the oldest poems in the anthology, dating to the tenth or perhaps the late ninth century.[2] The poem tells how Atli dispatched a messenger, Knefrøðr, to invite Gunnarr and Hǫgni, the sons of Gjúki, to his hall, offering rich gifts. Gunnarr is initially reluctant, since he already possesses far greater wealth than Atli, but Hǫgni notes an cryptic message from Atli's wife, their sister Guðrún, warning of Atli's treacherous intent, which prompts the brothers to accept the invitation "sem konungr skyldi" (as a king should).[3] When they arrive at Atli's hall, Gunnarr is seized and bound, whilst Hǫgni kills eight Hunnic warriors before he is taken. Gunnarr is offered his life in exchange for his treasure. Gunnarr first demands Hǫgni's heart as proof of his death; Atli tries to deceive him by substituting the heart of one of his servants, Hjalli, but Gunnarr retorts that its continued quivering shows it to be the heart of a coward. Hǫgni laughs as his heart is cut out; on being presented with the heart, Gunnarr triumphantly declares that he alone now knows where the treasure is hidden, a secret he will not disclose. Furious, Atli has Gunnarr thrown into a snake pit. He defiantly plays the harp as he dies. When Atli returns, he is greeted by Guðrún who offers him drink, and the Huns feast in his hall. Guðrún reveals to Atli that she has murdered their sons, Erpr and Eitill, and served their flesh to him. Atli drinks himself insensible, and Guðrún murders him in their bed, before setting the hall on fire with the Huns inside. The poem's conclusion, which states that Guðrún caused the deaths of three great kings before she died, possibly implies her own suicide in the fire,[4] though the poem makes no explicit statement to this effect.

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[2] *Poetic Edda I*, ed. & transl. by Dronke (1969), pp. 42–5; Victor Millet, *Germanische Heldendichtung im Mittelalter* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008), p. 51.
[3] *Atlakviða* 9/6: *Eddukvæði* ii. 374.
[4] Theodore M. Andersson, *A Preface to the Nibelungenlied* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987), p. 108.

Atlakviða is followed in the Codex Regius manuscript by *Atlamál*, probably composed in Greenland in the twelfth century.[5] The core narrative is essentially the same as that of *Atlakviða*, narrated in a more expansive style and with added scenes indicating the poet's awareness of contemporary German versions of the story. Atli invites the Burgundian lords to his homestead; Guðrún sends a message in runic script to alert her brothers to the danger, but Atli's emissary Vingi renders it illegible. The wives of Gunnarr and Hǫgni urge them not to go, reporting dreams portending their doom. They disregard the warnings and set out with a few retainers. When they arrive at Atli's homestead, Vingi reveals his treachery and is killed. The outnumbered Burgundians battle against Atli's retainers, and Guðrún takes up arms to assist them. Gunnarr and Hǫgni are ultimately captured, and Atli seeks to torment Guðrún by cruelly executing them. He orders his servants to cut out Hǫgni's heart; initially they attempt to substitute that of the scullion Hjalli, but Hǫgni accepts his fate in order to put an end to Hjalli's wailing, and laughs as his heart is removed. Gunnarr is bound and thrown in a snake pit, but plays the harp stirringly with his toes. Guðrún and Atli argue bitterly, until Guðrún feigns submission and arranges a memorial feast for the fallen. She kills her children by Atli, makes goblets from their skulls in which she serves ale mixed with their blood, to accompany the children's roasted hearts. Guðrún reveals this to Atli and the two renew their mutual recriminations. Hǫgni's son Hniflungr plots revenge with Guðrún for his father's death, and the two murder Atli in his bed. Guðrún acquiesces to Atli's dying request for an honourable funeral. She then attempts suicide by drowning, but is unsuccessful.

At some stage of its transmission, the Burgundian legend became attached to the legend of the Vǫlsungs, with Guðrún becoming the wife of Sigurðr the dragon-slayer; Gunnarr and Hǫgni became Sigurðr's killers at the instigation of Gunnarr's wife Brynhildr, and their great

[5] *The Poetic Edda Volume I: The Heroic Poems*, ed. & transl. by Ursula Dronke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), pp. 107–12; Tom Birkett, 'A Cautionary Tale: Reading the Runic Message in *Atlamál in Grœnlenzko*', *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia* 9 (2013), pp. 1–18, at p. 2.

wealth was thus explained as the result of their appropriation of Sigurðr's dragon hoard. As we shall see, the same combination is present in the German Nibelung legend. In the Norse tradition, Guðrún additionally became associated with the legend of Jǫrmunrekkr (Ermanaric): Jǫrmunrekkr is married to Svanhildr, whom he has cruelly executed on suspicion of infidelity; Svanhildr's brothers, Hamðir and Sǫrli, avenge their sister by mutilating Jǫrmunrekkr, but are stoned to death in the process. Svanhildr became Guðrún's daughter by Sigurðr, Hamðir and Sǫrli her sons by a third husband, Jónakr. The linkage had evidently been made at least in some circles by the ninth century, since the skald Bragi Boddason refers to Hamðir and Sǫrli as "Gjúka niðja" (descendants of Gjúki).[6] Both connections are foregrounded in the eddic poem *Hamðismál*, in which Hamðir counters Guðrún's lament for her lost brothers by pointing out that they had themselves deprived her of her husband, Sigurðr. *Atlakviða* shows no trace of either: no indication is given that the Burgundians' wealth is derived from Sigurðr or that Guðrún bears her brothers any ill-will over Sigurðr's deaths; meanwhile, whether or not the poem indeed ends with Guðrún's death, at any rate it makes no mention of her onward travel by which she enters the sphere of Jǫrmunrekkr. We may also note the concluding statment, "hon hefir þriggja þjóðkonunga | banorð borit | bjǫrt, áðr sylti" (she brought the doom of death to three kings of men, that bright woman, before she died); [7] If these three kings are interpreted as Atli and his two sons, the assertion does not seem compatible with her responsibility for Jǫrmunrekkr's death.

The fully developed cycle is summarised by Snorri Sturluson in his *Edda*,[8] and presented at length in the *Vǫlsunga saga*,[9] both compiled in thirteenth-century Iceland. Both texts synthesise the episodes known from extant poetry, and the saga adds an introductory

[6] Bragi Boddason, *Ragnarsdrápa* 6/2, ed. by Margaret Clunies Ross, in Gade & Marold (eds.), *Poetry from Treatises on Poetics* (2017), p. 36.
[7] *Atlakviða* 45/5–8: *Eddukvæði* ii. 382. Dronke considered this stanza to be a late and clumsy addition: *Poetic Edda I*, ed. & transl. by Dronke (1969), pp. 72–3.
[8] Snorri Sturluson, *Skáldskaparmál* 39–42, ii. 45–51.
[9] *Fornaldar sögur Norðurlanda* i. 107–218.

report of the preceeding generations of the Vǫlsung family. Since both Snorri and the saga-author were clearly substantially informed by eddic poetry, the texts are of particular value in filling in the gap left by eight missing folia in the Codex Regius. The lacuna certainly contained the end of *Sigrdrífumál* and the first part of a *Sigurðarkviða in forna*, whose surviving fragment is referred to as *Brot af Sigurðarkviðu*. Theodore Andersson follows Andreas Heusler in positing a third (totally lost) poem, *Sigurðarkviða in meiri*, whose contents can be reconstructed by subtracting the contents of *Sigurðarkviða in forna* from *Vǫlsunga saga*.[10] Though the precise details of Andersson's reasoning are more contentious than he acknowledges, it is clear that the lacuna contained poetry about Sigurðr and his association with the Burgundians, and that *Vǫlsunga saga* offers crucial testimony to the narrative gist of this poetry. As regards the Burgundian legend, however, neither Snorri nor the saga provides significant new information.

Scenes from the legendary cycle are additionally depicted frequently in Viking-Age visual art. Episodes involving Sigurðr are most common, in Scandinavia and in areas of northern England settled by Norsemen. However, several depictions of Gunnarr in the snake pit attest to the currency of this motif some centuries before the literary sources were written down. The earliest proposed example is a carving on the Norwegian Oseberg cart, *c.* 800 (figure 20), though the identification is disputed.[11] More certain instances appear in stone carvings, including a tenth-century cross-shaft fragment from Kirk Andreas, Isle of Man (no. 121 (95)) (figure 21), and the Klinte Hunninge I picture stone from Gotland (ninth–tenth century) (figure

[10] Theodore M. Andersson, *The Legend of Brynhild* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), pp. 24–77.
[11] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers* (2012), p. 26.

22);[12] significantly, both of these also feature Sigurðr material,[13] showing that the fusion of the legendary traditions was well established by this period.

Before turning to the sources for the German tradition, it is worth considering the abnormality of Guðrún's revenge within the context of Old Norse-Icelandic literature. Ursula Dronke has pointed out the striking terms in which Guðrún is characterised at the point of her vengeance in *Atlakviða*.[14] She is described as "afkár dís" (ferocious woman) as she serves the flesh of her sons to Atli and his warriors;[15] the word *afkárr* is attested only in verse, and there rarely, so that its use here suggests that the *Atlakviða* poet was unable express the extremity of Guðrún's actions in more familiar language.

Jenny Jochens has suggested four principal roles of human women in the medieval Icelandic literary tradition.[16] She sees Guðrún as exemplifying the 'avenger', who achieves vengeance through physical acts, whereas Brynhildr is the archetypal 'whetter', achieving revenge against Sigurðr by appealing to her brothers. This delineation, whilst instructive in many respects, fails fully to appreciate the singularity of Guðrún's vengeance against Atli. As Jochens acknowledges, "[t]he activities of revenge naturally blend with those of whetting",[17] and conversely Guðrún's actions may be seen as clearly distinct from other instances of 'bodily revenge". Jochens notes for instance the case of Signý,[18] who in *Vǫlsunga saga* seeks

[12] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers* (2012), p. 28; Jörn Staecker, 'Heroes, kings and gods: Discovering sagas on Gotlandic picture-stones', in Anders Andrén, Kristina Jennbert & Catharina Raudvere (eds.), *Old Norse Religion in Long-Term Perspectives: Origins, Changes and Interactions* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2006), pp. 363–8, at. p. 365.
[13] Adalheiður Guðmundsdóttir, 'Gunnar Gjúkason and Images of Snake-Pits', in Wilhelm Heizmann & Sigmund Oehrl (eds.), *Bilddenkmäler zur germanischen Götter- und Heldensage* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), pp. 351–73, at pp. 353, 360.
[14] *Poetic Edda I*, ed. & transl. by Dronke (1969), p. 69.
[15] *Atlakviða* 37/3: *Eddukvæði* ii. 380; Dronke translates as "demonic woman": *Poetic Edda I*, ed. & transl. by Dronke (1969), p. 10. *The Poetic Edda*, transl. by Carolyne Larrington (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 215, gives "terrible woman".
[16] Jenny Jochens, *Old Norse Images of Women* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), pp. 87–203.
[17] Jochens, *Old Norse Images* (1996), p. 133.
[18] Jochens, *Old Norse Images* (1996), p. 155–58.

vengeance against her husband Siggeir for the murder of her father, Vǫlsungr, and nine of her brothers. To this end she commits incest with her last surviving brother, Sigmundr, in order to conceive a son of pure Vǫlsung stock who can assist his father in this revenge.[19] Although Signý does accomplish vengeance through bodily means, she may be just as easily aligned with the whetting strategy exemplified by Brynhildr, insofar as each woman seeks to engineer a situation whereby a male relative exacts vengeance on her behalf.

Elsewhere in the eddic corpus this is presented as the suitable way for a female figure to participate in an act of vengeance. In *Reginsmál* the dying Hreiðmarr calls for vengeance against his son and murderer, Fáfnir. Hreiðmarr's daughters, Lyngheiðr and Lofnheiðr, recoil at the idea of sisters taking revenge on brothers, and Hreiðmarr tells Lyngheiðr that she should instead bear a son to avenge him, or else a daughter whose son in turn will become the avenger.[20] Of course, part of the problem may stem from the proximity of the daughters' kinship to the targets of the revenge. According to allusions in several eddic poems, when Baldr is killed by his brother Hǫðr their father Óðinn begets another son, Váli, to avenge Baldr by killing Hǫðr;[21] the much-discussed analogue of Baldr's death in *Beowulf* explicitly notes the father's inability to exact vengeance on one son for the slaying of another.[22] In the *Reginsmál* episode, however, the requirement of a male avenger is made clear by the instruction to bear either an avenging son or, failing that, a daughter who will in turn bear an avenging son. Though Lyngheiðr and her offspring play no further part in the extant sources, Hreiðmarr's appeal, alongside his daughters' reaction to the notion of active revenge, expresses a clear societal expectation regarding the nature of female involvement in acts of vengeance. This is corroborated by the fact that Guðrún herself at a later stage of her narrative arc performs the

[19] *Vǫlsunga saga* 5–8: *Fornaldar sögur Norðurlanda* i. 119–26.
[20] *Reginsmál* 10–12: *Eddukvæði* ii. 298–9.
[21] *Vǫluspá* 32/5–33/4; *Baldrs Draumar* 11/18; *Hyndluljóð* 29/1–8: *Eddukvæði* i. 299; 448; 465.
[22] *Beowulf* 2464–7, p. 84.

whetting role, urging Hamðir and Sǫrli to avenge Svanhildr, rather than acting herself. It is probable that Guðrún originally had nothing to do with the Hamðir legend, and the incongruity between her active revenge against Atli and the nature of her involvement in the revenge against Jǫrmunrekkr suggests that the latter represents a more conventional role in vengeance for a female character in Old Norse heroic tradition.

Aside from these instances, female vengeance in the heroic poems does not develop any further than speech acts. Sigrún curses her brother Dagr on learning he has killed Helgi Hundingsbani, declaring that the murder would be avenged if he were forced to live as a wolf, "auðs andvani ok alls gamans, | hefðir eigi mat, nema á hrælum spryngir" (with no possessions and without happiness, having no food, save when you gorged on carrion).[23] Similarly Sváfa, on learning that her husband Helgi Hjǫrvarðsson has been fatally wounded, purposes to "gumna | grand of vinna" (bring ill to men),[24] but this declaration of intent is overridden in short order by Heðinn's promise to exact vengeance for Helgi.[25]

Comparison with avenging or whetting women in the *Íslendingasǫgur* may provide further insight into the distinctiveness of Guðrún's revenge. A survey of the saga corpus quickly makes it apparent how uncommon female violence is, and that it is generally unsuccessful when it does occur. Jochens notes amongst other examples those of Þórdís in *Gísla saga*, who fails to kill Eyjólfr in revenge for her brother Gísli; and Auðr in *Laxdœla saga*, who fails to kill her husband in revenge for his infidelity.[26] Indeed, Guðrún's namesake, Guðrún Ósvífrsdóttir in *Laxdœla saga*, whose character recalls aspects of both Guðrún and

[23] *Helgakviða Hundingsbana II* 33/9–12: *Eddukvæði* ii. 278.
[24] *Helgakviða Hjǫrvarðssonar* 39/7–8: *Eddukvæði* ii. 268.
[25] *Helgakviða Hjǫrvarðssonar* 44/1–8: *Eddukvæði* ii. 268–9.
[26] Jochens, *Old Norse Images* (1996), pp. 158–61. Both sagas are noted for their conscious engagement with the eddic material concerning Guðrún and the Nibelung tradition: *Laxdœla saga, Halldórs þættir Snorrasonar, Stúfs þáttr*, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson, ÍF V (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 1934), pp. xlv–xlvii; *The Laxdoela Saga*, transl. by A.M. Arent (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964), p. xxiii, n. 4; *Vestfirðingar sögur*1943), pp. xxxv–xxxvii; P. Foote, 'An Essay on the Saga of Gisli and its Icelandic Background', in *The Saga of Gisli* transl. by G. Johnston (London: J.M. Dent, 1963), p. 108.

Brynhildr from the eddic material, is known not for active vengeance but for goading others, first into killing the man she loves, Kjartan, and later into avenging the death of her third husband, Bolli. Though the bare facts of her life can be confirmed by *Landnámabók*,[27] the characterisation of Guðrún in *Laxdœla saga* owes a considerable amount to artistic license. It is therefore noteworthy that the author opted not to align Guðrún Ósvífrsdóttir fully with Guðrún Gjúkadóttir, though their having both name and multiple marriages in common would have made this the natural course. The fact that he used Brynhildr as the model for his Guðrún's approach to vengeance suggests that the active revenge of Guðrún Gjúkadóttir was deemed incompatible with the realism of saga narrative.

The German Tradition

The principal witnesses to German Nibelung traditions are the *Nibelungenlied* and *Niflunga saga*, a component part of *Þiðreks saga af Bern*. Both texts integrate the destruction of the Burgundians with the legend of Sîvrit/Sigurðr, though contrary to the Old Norse tradition the deaths of Gunther and Hagen (Gunnarr and Hǫgni) are engineered by Kriemhilt/Grímhildr, in revenge for their murder of Sîvrit.[28] Both moreover combine their heroic-legendary subject matter with the form, style and ethos of high medieval chivalric romance,[29] yet in spite of this they offer valuable comparative evidence for earlier forms of the legend.

The *Nibelungenlied* is a Middle High German epic composed *c*. 1200 in south Germany or Austria,[30] and extant in three redactions, preserved across 37 manuscripts.[31] The poem

[27] Jochens, *Old Norse Images* (1996), p. 187.
[28] The Kriemhilt/Grímhildr of German tradition corresponds to the Icelandic Guðrún, whilst in the Icelandic tradition Grímhildr is the name of the Burgundians' mother, the wife of Gjúki.
[29] Andersson, *Brynhild* (1981), p. 151; Millet, *Germanische Heldendichtung* (2008), p. 260.
[30] Gillespie, *Catalogue* (1973), p. xvi; Millet, *Germanische Heldendichtung* (2008), pp. 185–7, plausibly suggests that the poem was patronised by Wulfger von Erla, bishop of Passau 1991–1204.
[31] The secondary literature on the *Nibelungenlied* is vast and notoriously unwieldy. Since source-critical approaches to the text have fallen out of favour particularly in German scholarship, much of the critical material is peripheral to the concerns of our discussion; surveys of prior critical

divides naturally into two halves; the first deals with Sîvrit's marriage to the Burgundian princess Kriemhilt and his murder by her brother Gunther and his vassal Hagen, who claim possession of Sîvrit's treasure. In the second part of the poem, Kriemhilt is married to Etzel, king of the Huns. Seeking an opportunity for revenge, she invites the Burgundian lords to Etzel's castle for the baptism of her son. Hagen suspects a trap, but is ridiculed; however, as they travel to Etzel's kingdom, they receive prophetic confirmation of their fate. Kriemhilt greets her kinsmen warmly, but they are warned of danger by Etzel's ally Dietrich. Kriemhilt subsequently confronts Hagen over Sîvrit's death and demands that his treasure be restored to her. Etzel hosts the Burgundians graciously, but during the feast fighting erupts between the Hunnic and Burgundian soldiers. When word reaches the great hall, Hagen decapitates Ortliep, the son of Etzel and Kriemhilt. (According to the standard B-text, Kriemhilt had brought Ortliep to the table intending that his death would catalyse the fighting by which she could achieve her vengeance; the revisor of the later C-text leaves out the strophe in which this is stated.) The Burgundians gain control of the hall and fend off Hunnic attacks. Kriemhilt attempts to bargain with her brothers for the surrender of Hagen; when they refuse to give him up, she orders that the hall be set alight. The fighting continues until Gunther and Hagen are captured, with all their allies. Kriemhilt has Gunther beheaded, and executes Hagen herself when he refuses to reveal where Sîvrit's treasure is hidden. Dietrich's vassal Hildebrant, outraged at her treatment of the Burgundians, kills Kriemhilt by cutting her in two. Etzel, Dietrich and the other survivors mourn the fallen heroes.

In *Niflunga saga*, Grímhildr is likewise married to Attila after Gunnarr and Hǫgni murder her first husband, Sigurðr. She urges Attila to invite her brothers to visit her and tells him of Sigurðr's treasure. When the Niflungs receive Attila's invitation, Hǫgni suspects a trap,

approaches can be found in Francis G. Gentry, 'Trends in 'Nibelungenlied' Reserarch since 1949', *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik* 7 (1974), pp. 125–39; Andersson, *Preface* (1987).

but Gunnarr rebukes him; Gunnarr's mother Oda tells of a dream portending great disaster, but is disregarded. The Niflungs are well received by Attila, but Þiðrekr, Attila's ally yet a friend of Hǫgni's, warns them to be on their guard. Attila has a feast prepared, whilst Grímhildr searches for accomplices in her planned revenge; Þiðrekr and Attila refuse, but Írungr joins her. During the feast, Grímhildr incites hostilities between the Huns and the Niflungs by urging Aldrian, her son by Attila, to punch Hǫgni in order to demonstrate his courage. Hǫgni decapitates Aldrian and throws the head at Grímhildr. Attila orders the Huns to kill the Niflungs, and fighting breaks out. During the battle, Gunnarr is overpowered and taken bound before Grímhildr, who has him thrown in a snake pit. On the second day of battle, Hunnic reinforcements arrive from the countryside. Hǫgni takes a stand in a hall, which Grímhildr orders the Huns to burn. The remaining Niflungs rally to Hǫgni. Þiðrekr finally joins battle following the death of his friend Roðingeirr; he and Hildibrandr cut down the remaining Niflungs, with Hildibrandr killing Gernoz. Hǫgni urges Attila to spare Gíslher's life, since he had no part in Sigurðr's death; Gíslher refuses to survive his brothers alone, and is fatally wounded by Hildibrandr. Þiðrekr duels Hǫgni and eventually defeats him when his frustration causes him to breathe fire, roasting Hǫgni in his armour. Grímhildr finishes off Gíslher by thrusting a firebrand into his mouth. Þiðrekr and Attila are appalled at Grímhildr's treatment of her brothers, and agree that she should die. Þiðrekr cuts her in half and then tends to the dying Hǫgni, who requests a woman with whom to spend his final night. He tells her, should she bear a son, to name him Aldrian. He also gives her the keys to a cellar where Sigurðr's treasure is hidden, which are to be passed on to Aldrian. Hǫgni dies, and the saga author concludes by defending the authenticity of his account, stating that details of the battle are still preserved in the local nomenclature of Susat (Soest).

The correspondences between *Niflunga saga* the second part of the *Nibelungenlied* are readily apparent. Andreas Heusler believed the two accounts to have drawn on a common

source, a hypothesised earlier epic known as the *Ältere Nôt*, the contents of which he reconstructed through comparison of the extant texts.[32] Theodore Andersson has consistently defended Heusler's thesis against a trend of scepticism towards source criticism, and has furthermore reconstructed other antecedent textual models for the extant sources.[33] Andersson's certainty in the precise stemmatic relationships he adduces between these hypothetical texts is surely unwarranted; however, he rightly notes that phraseological parallels between the *Nibelungenlied* and *Niflunga saga* are most economically explained as deriving from a common written source.[34]

The existence of at least one antecedent version of the story in twelfth-century Saxony is attested by Saxo Grammaticus, who reports that in 1131 a Saxon singer, reluctantly embroiled in a plot against the life of Danish prince Knut Lavard, attempted to warn Knut by reciting the lay of "notissimam Grimildae erga fratres perfidiam" (Grimhild's renowned treachery against her brothers).[35] Andersson notes a striking parallel between Saxo's lay and *Niflunga saga*: when Knut fails to apprehend the coded message, the singer tries to emphasise the similarity to the legend by revealing the armour he is wearing beneath his cloak; in *Niflunga saga* Grímhildr realises the Niflungs are expecting trouble when she sees them wearing armour under their clothes.[36] However, the comparison does not bear out Andersson's suggestion that Saxo's lay was "more or less one and the same version" as *Niflunga saga*'s second source beside *Ältere Nôt*.[37] The hidden armour in *Niflunga saga* signals to Grímhildr that the Niflungs

[32] Andreas Heusler, *Nibelungensage und Nibelungenlied: Die Stoffgeschichte des deutschen Heldenepos* (Dortmund: Ruhfus, 1920), pp. 37ff.
[33] Theodore M. Andersson, 'The Epic Source of Niflunga saga and the Nibelungenlied', *ANF* 88 (1973), pp. 1–54; Andersson, *Preface* (1987); cf. Edward R. Haymes, *The Nibelungenlied; History and Interpretation* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1986), pp. 68–71.
[34] Andersson, *Brynhild* (1981), p. 6.
[35] Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum* 13. 6. 7: *Saxo Grammaticus Gesta Danorum, Danmarkshistorien*, ed. by Karsten Friis-Jensen & transl. by Peter Zeeberg, 2 volumes (Copenhagen: Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab & Gads Forglag, 2005), ii. 114.
[36] Andersson, *Preface* (1987), pp. 109–10.
[37] Andersson, *Preface* (1987), p. 110.

are alert to the threat of treachery, whilst in Saxo's account the implication seems to be that in the version of the legend to which he refers, the victims of treachery belatedly comprehend their danger when they realise their hosts are secretly armed. In that case, the motif was deployed quite differently in Saxo's lay, which can therefore not be considered a direct source for the motif in *Niflunga saga*. Saxo's report is nonetheless important testimony to the currency of a narrative at least somewhat similar to that of the *Nibelungenlied* and *Niflunga saga* at an earlier period.

The Insular Evidence

Evidence of the currency of the legendary cycle in Anglo-Saxon England is far sparser than from either Germany or Norse territory. Sigurðr, whose legend is consistently attached to the Burgundian material in other soures, was by all appearances unknown as a hero in England before his introduction by Norse settlers in the Viking Age. He is only represented iconographically in Anglo-Scandinavian monuments from the Danelaw, which clearly draw on Scandinavian traditions, and the only extant literary reference to any part of the legend attributes the dragon-slaying to Sigemund Wælsing (Vǫlsung),[38] the father of Sigurðr/Sîvrit in Norse and Continental tradition. In the passage in question, Hroðgar's bard celebrates Beowulf's triumph over Grendel by comparing it with the dragon-slaying of Sigemund (for the external audience, the reference also foreshadows Beowulf's own dragon encounter at the end of the poem). It has been suggested that the poet deliberately altered the attribution of the dragon-slaying so as implicitly to link his hero with the more morally ambiguous figure of Sigemund, as part of a wider program of selective allusion to darker elements of Old Norse

[38] Place-names including Walsingham and North Walsham (Norfolk), and perhaps Walsden (Lancashire), are formed from the name Wæls, and the name Fitela (ON Sinfjǫtli, the son of Sigemund/Sigmundr) is preserved in Fittleworth (Sussex), Fitling (Yorkshire) and Fittleton (Wiltshire). Whether these are direct references to the legendary figures, however, cannot be determined.

myth.[39] Certainly, several lexical choices in the Sigemund passage seem calculated to evoke the more problematic aspects of Sigemund's heroic career, such as his incest with his sister to conceive Fitela (Sinfjǫtli).[40] Yet it does not follow from this that Sigurðr/Sîvrit has been replaced by his father for this purpose. It is equally likely that Sigmund was simply known as the original dragon-slayer, as well as for his more troubling history, in which case the poet could have consciously evoked the negative associations without the need for the substitution.

References to other figures from the legendary cycle also occur in Old English texts. The narrator of the Exeter Book poem *Widsith* recalls receiving lavish gifts from Guðhere (= Gunther/Gunnarr) whilst he was "mid Burgendum" (amongst the Burgundians),[41] and the Burgundians under Gifica (= Gibeche/Gjúki) are mentioned in close proximity to the Huns under Ætla (= Attila).[42] This may reflect familiarity with the destruction of the Burgundians by the Huns in the fifth century, though it more likely preserves a memory of an earlier geographical situation, when the Burgundians were neighbours of the Goths under Ermanaric (Eormanric, mentioned in the same couplet) before migrating westwards to establish the doomed kingdom on the Rhine.[43]

The surviving fragments of *Waldere* also feature Guðhere,[44] who is called "wine Burgenda" (friend of the Burgundians) alongside Hagena (= Hagen/Hǫgni),[45] an epithet which also occurs in *Atlakviða*.[46] In the latter poem, the manuscript gives the nominative plural form

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[39] Heather O'Donoghue, *English Poetry and Old Norse Myth: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 18. Cf. Andy Orchard, *A Critical Companion to* Beowulf (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer), p. 105, who suggests instead that the poet made the substitution for the sake of a pun on the etymology of Sigemund's name ('Victory-Hand'), since the episode is recounted directly after Beowulf has conquered Grendel by ripping off his arm.

[40] M.S. Griffith, 'Some difficulties in *Beowulf*, lines 874–902: Sigemund reconsidered', *Anglo-Saxon England* 24 (1995), pp. 11–41.

[41] *Widsith* 65–6, p. 25.

[42] *Widsith* 18–9, p. 23.

[43] Malone, *Widsith* (1962), p. 107.

[44] *Waldere* I. 25, p. 17.

[45] *Waldere* II. 14–5, p. 19.

[46] *Atlakviða* 18/3: *Eddukvæði* ii. 376.

"vinir Borgunda" (friends of the Burgundians), which may be taken as an ironic designation of the Huns who seize Gunnarr, but some editors have emended to an accusative singular "vin Borgunda" (friend of the Burgundians), referring to Gunnarr himself;[47] in either case, the correspondence is suggestive of a common poetic tradition underlying both texts. The extant text of *Waldere* also associates its protagonists with heroes including Ætla and Đeodric,[48] suggesting a basis in a similar background of legendary material to that underlying the German and Norse Nibelung traditions. In a recent study of the *Waldere* fragments, Jonathan Hines has additionally proposed a bold new reading of a mostly obliterated word at fragment II. 23a as *nifleun* (? Nibelungs);[49] if correct, this would be the only occurrence of the term in Old English, and its earliest appearance in any source. The Burgundian heroes in the other branches of the legendary tradition are also called Nibelungs (ON *Niflungar*;[50] MHG *Nibelungen*). The earliest manuscript of the tenth-century Latin epic *Waltharius* calls them *Nivilones*, a name apparently lost on subsequent copyists who altered it to *nebulones* (scoundrels),[51] though in this poem they have become Franks rather than Burgundians, reflecting the subjugation of the Burgundian kingdom by the Franks from 534 CE. As Dronke has argued,[52] *Nibilung* was in origin most likely a Burgundian clan-name attached to the family of the historical king Gundaharius (see below, pp. 161–2), which was subsequently absorbed into Frankish legend and anthroponymy. The use of the term in *Waldere* would offer the tantalising possibility of evidence for Anglo-Saxon knowledge of the Burgundian legend via a Frankish source. It should be noted, however, that Himes' reading causes the alliteration of the line to be

[47] See Klaus von See, Beatrice La Farge, Simone Horst & Katja Schulz, *Kommentar zu den Liedern der Edda 7: Heldenlieder* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2012), pp. 274–7, for a comprehensive discussion of critical interpretations of the verse.
[48] *Waldere* I. 6; II. 4–5, pp. 15; 19.
[49] Jonathan B. Himes, *The Old English Epic of* Waldere, (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), pp. 26, 89–90.
[50] See e.g. *Atlakviða* 11/2, 17/2, 25/2, 27/3: *Eddukvæði* ii. 374, 376, 378; *Atlamál in Grœnlenzku* 46/5, 51/5: *Eddukvæði* ii. 390–1.
[51] *Waltharius* 555, p. 47, & apparatus.
[52] *Poetic Edda I*, ed. & transl. by Dronke (1969), pp. 36–42.

defective;[53] it must thus remain an interesting conjecture until this metrical violation can be accounted for.

Wider familiarity with Frankish legendry in Anglo-Saxon England is suggested by the use of a typically Frankish name, *Dæghrefn*, for a Frankish warrior in *Beowulf*;[54] by the same poem's (uniquely) philologically accurate rendering of the name *Merewīoingas* to denote one of the Frankish Merovingian dynasty (though the name clearly meant nothing to the eleventh-century scribe, who rendered it as three separate words);[55] and by the appearance of the name Helpric – cf. the Frankish king Chilperic I (*c.* 539– 584); ON Hjálprekr; MHG Helferîch – in the original core of the *Durham Liber Vitae*.[56] Awareness of the Frankish Nibelung tradition is thus highly plausible. On the other hand, the possibility must be weighed against the evidence (discussed above) that the Sigurðr/Sîvrit legend, attached to the Burgundian material in all other branches, was not known in England prior to the Viking settlements. Since the fusion of these originally separate traditions appears to have happened in a Frankish context, Sigurðr's absence from Anglo-Saxon legendry may imply that the story of the fall of the Burgundians was likewise absent. Equally, however, the heroes involved (Guðhere; Ætla) were familiar, and it is entirely conceivable that an earlier version of the Burgundian legend reached England prior to its synthesis with the Sigurðr material; as Dronke notes, this appears to have been the case for the initial transmission of the Burgundian legend to Scandinavia.[57] All things considered, it is likely that the legend of the fall of the Burgundians was known in some form in Anglo-

[53] Leonard Neidorf, 'Review: Jonathan B. Himes. *The Old English Epic of Waldere*', *Anglia* 130:1 (2012), pp. 158–61, at p. 159.
[54] *Beowulf* 2501, p. 86; Tom Shippey, 'Names in *Beowulf* and Anglo-Saxon England', in Leonard Neidorf (ed.), *The Dating of Beowulf: A Reassessment* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2014), pp. 58–78, at pp. 65–8.
[55] *Beowulf* 2921, p. 99; Tom Shippey, 'The Merov(Ich)Ingian Again: *Damnatio Memoriae* and the *Usus Scholarum*', in Katherine O'Brien O'Keefe & Andy Orchard (eds.), *Latin Learning and English Lore: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge*, 2 vols. (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2005), i, p. 389–406; Shippey, 'Names in *Beowulf*' (2014), pp. 74–5.
[56] Leonard Neidorf, 'Legends of Chilperic in Anglo-Saxon England', *ANQ* 32:1 (2019), pp. 6–8; cf. Gillespie, *Catalogue* (1973), p. 67.
[57] *Poetic Edda I*, ed. & transl. by Dronke (1969), p. 34.

Saxon England; however, the extant literary record forces uncertainty, and at any rate the insular materials are of only limited use in elucidating the genesis and development of the legend.

The Historical Core

It has long been recognised that several of the names attached to the legend corrsespond to those of figures from Migration-Period history. The early sixth-century *Lex Burgundionum* lists Gibica, Gundomar, Gislaharius and Gundaharius as ancestors of the Burgundian king Gundobad. Gibica and Gundaharius correspond by regular sound change respectively to Gibiche/Gifica/Gjúki and Gunther/Guðhere/Gunnarr from the legendary material; Gislaharius corrsponds to Gîselhêr/Gíslher, the youngest brother of Gunther in the *Nibelungenlied* and *Niflunga saga*,[58] whilst in the eddic tradition the murder of Sigurðr is carried out by Gunnarr's brother Gutþormr, whose name is possibly connected with that of Gundomar.[59] ON Atli and MHG Etzel both derive from Attila, the name of the famous fifth-century ruler of the Huns.

It is moreover clear that the heroic traditions preserve traces of fifth century historical events in legendary form. In the early fifth century, a conglomerate of barbarian groups, probably including Burgundians,[60] crossed the Rhine and invaded northern Gaul; the Burgundians were eventually settled as Roman *foederati* on the Middle Rhine. In 411–13, now ruled by our Gundaharius, they established a kingdom centred on Borbetomagus (now Worms). The proceeding decades witnessed increasingly expansionist ambitions which were ultimately curtailed in 436–7, when the Roman general Aetius induced Hunnic mercenaries to attack the Rhine kingdom. Gundaharius was killed, and his people suffered immense losses; one contemporary source reports an admittedly unlikely death toll of 20,000,[61] whilst others talk of

[58] Wisith 123, p. 26, also mentions Gislhere, in close proximity to Ætla (Attila, v. 122).
[59] Gillespie, *Catalogue* (1973), p. 50.
[60] E.A. Thompson, *The Huns*, rev. by Peter Heather (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), p. 72.
[61] *Hydatii Limici Continuatio Chronicorum Hieronymianorum* 110: *Chronica Minora Saec. IV. V. VI. VII*, ed. by Theodore Mommsen, vol. II, MGH. AA. 11 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1894), p. 23.

the near-extermination of the Burgundian people.[62] The remnants of Gundaharius' Burgundians were resettled in Sapaudia (Savoy) in 443, and within a century were assimilated into the Frankish kingdom under Clovis I, founder of the Merovingian dynasty.

Since 434, Attila had ruled with his brother Bleda over a united Hunnic Empire, incorporating many Germanic groups including Ostrogoths, Thurungii, Scirii, Gepids, Rugii, and Heruli, as well as Burgundians who had remained east of the Rhine. Bleda was killed *c*. 445 (by Attila, various sources concur),[63] leaving Attila in sole command of the Empire. In 451, he launched an assault on Gaul, ravaging the countryside and sacking several cities; in the summer of that year he was engaged by his former ally Aetius in coalition with the the Visigothic king Theodoric I, in a clash known as the Battle of the Catalaunian Fields. Contemporary estimates of the death toll, even if obviously exaggerated, testify to an extremely bloody affair.[64] Its outcome was not entirely clear, but appeared to entail a strategic victory for the Roman and allied forces, and did at least curtail Attila's invasion. The following year he invaded Italy, destroying cities including Milan and Aquileia, and marched on Rome but again retreated (various reasons have been suggested).[65] In 453, Attila died in his sleep from a nosebleed, after drinking heavily in celebration of his marriage to a woman called Ildico, whose name appears to be of Germanic derivation. Contrary to the legendary tradition, Attila was survived by his three sons, whose fraternal squabbling over the succession ultimately destroyed

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[62] *Prosperi Tironis Epitoma Chronicon* 1322: *Chronica Minora*, ed. by Mommsen, vol. I, MGH. AA. 9 (1892), p. 475; *Chronica Gallica* OL. CCCIIII. 118. XIII: *Chronica Minora* i. 660.

[63] *Prosperi Tironis Epitoma Chronicon* 1353, in *Chronica Minora* i. 380; *Chronica Gallica* OL. CCCVII. 131. XXIII, in *Chronica Minora* i. 660; *Marcellini V.C. Comitis Chronicon* 445. 1, in *Chronica Minora* ii. 81.

[64] Guy Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations and the Roman West 376–568* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 253.

[65] Prosper Tiro piously stresses the influence of Pope Leo I in brokering the peace: *Chronica Minora* i. 482; Jordanes cites Priscus' suggestion that Attila or his followers superstitiously feared the precedent of the Visigothic king Alaric, who died shortly after sacking Rome in 410: Jordanes, *Getica* XLII. 222, pp. 114–5. Likelier pragmatic considerations include the diminishing of Hunnic supplies due to a famine in Italy; possible outbreak of disease in Attila's army; and the threat of an East Roman army which had attacked the Hunnic homeland and defeated those left to guard it: see Thompson, *The Huns* (1990), pp. 161–3; Halsall, *Barbarian Migrations* (2007), pp. 253–4.

the Hunnic Empire.[66] Several subject peoples led by the Gepid king Ardaric revolted against Hunnic rule; Attila's eldest son Ellac was killed in battle against the rebels in 454; the remaining brothers, Denzigich and Ernak, are recorded seeking settlement within the territory of the eastern Roman Empire in the 460s. When negotiations failed, Denzigich crossed the Danube to invade the Roman provinces, and was killed in battle in 469. Ernak, Attila's youngest son and according to Priscus his favourite on account of a prophecy that Attila's family would fall from greatness but be restored by this son, appears to have reached an agreement with Constantinople, and he and his followers were settled in Scythia Minor.[67]

Genesis and Transmission

Ursula Dronke has plausibly reconstructed the development of the legendary tradition from the historical kernel.[68] The names in the *Lex Burgundionum* testify to the memorialisation of the Burgundian kingdom at Worms amongst at least some of the Savoy Burgundians. Attila does not appear to have played any part in the destruction of the Burgundian kingdom in 437; however, his ascendancy to sole kingship in the next decade, and his general contemporary notoriety as the scourge of Europe,[69] make it highly likely that popular tradition quickly came to credit him with this victory. Paulus Diaconus is the first to say so in the eighth century;[70] one of his accounts shows the influence of legendary traditions in its claim that Gundaharius marched east to his doom, contradicting the historical reports that the Huns invaded the

[66] Jordanes, *Getica*, L. 259, p. 125.
[67] Heather, *Empires and Barbarians* (2010), pp. 223, 259.
[68] *Poetic Edda I*, ed. & transl. by Dronke (1969), pp. 29–34; cf. Gillespie, *Catalogue* (1973), p. 21.
[69] Jordanes, *Getica* XXXV. 182, p. 105 (quoting Priscus); *Marcellini V.C. Comitis Chronicon* 454. 1, in *Chronica Minora* ii. 86.
[70] Paulus Diaconus, *Pauli Historia Romana* XIV. 5, in *Eutropi Breviarum Ab Urbe Condita cum Versionibus Graecis et Pauli Landolfique Additamentis*, ed. by H. Droysen, MGH. AA. 2 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1874), p. 202; *Pauli Warnefridi Liber de Episcopis Mettensibus*, in *Scriptores Rerum Sangallensium, Annales, Chronica et Historia Aevi Carolini*, ed. by G.H. Pertz, MGH. SS. 2 (Hannover: Impensis Bibliopoli Hahniani, 1829), p. 262.

Burgundians.[71] Similarly, it is probable that rumours of conjugal murder arose very soon after Attila's death, perhaps almost immediately. The earliest known report to this effect is in the *Annales* of the Byzantine chronicler Marcellinus Comes (d. 534 CE), who stated that "Attila ... noctu mulieris manu cultroque confoditur" (Attila was struck down at night by a knife and the hand of a woman),[72] but it is not difficult to imagine how suspicion of a foreign wife, combined with the no doubt dramatic scene of the blood-drenched bed, could have overridden the absence of any wound.[73] It is easy to envisage how rumours about his death at the hands of a Germanic bride, in conjunction with a popular misattribution of Gundaharius' death to Attila, could have given rise to the skeletal form of the legend as we know it, by making Attila's wife the sister and avenger of the slain Burgundian king. Ildico herself need not have been Burgundian.

It is widely accepted that the Franks were involved in the early transmission of the legend: we have already noted that the name *Nibelung* was adopted into Frankish toponymy and anthroponymy following the conquest of the Burgundians; the Sigurðr/Sîvrit legend, moreover, has superficial connections to figures from sixth-century Frankish history.[74] It is probable, therefore, that the amalgamation of the Sîvrit material and the Nibelung material occurred in a Frankish context. Several scholars have agreed that this fusion prompted the development of the alternative role for Attila's wife found in the German legendary tradition, whereby her vengeance is directed against her brothers rather than against Attila;[75] since there is nothing in the historical core to which this variant can be traced, this is a plausible conclusion.

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[71] Chambers, *Widsith* (1912), p. 63.
[72] *Marcellini V.C. Comitis Chronicon* 454. 1, in *Chronica Minora* ii. 86.
[73] *Poetic Edda I*, ed. & transl. by Dronke (1969), p. 32.
[74] Gillespie, *Catalogue* (1973), pp. 122–3; Shami Ghosh, 'On the Origins of Germanic Heroic Poetry: A Case Study of the Legend of the Burgundians', *Beitrage zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 129:2 (2007), pp. 220–52, at pp. 231–2; Francis G. Gentry, Winder McConnell, Ulrich Müller & Werner Wunderlich (eds.), *The Nibelungen Tradition: An Encyclopedia* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), p. 26.
[75] Millet, *Germanische Heldendichtung* (2008), p. 198; Elisabeth Lienert, *Mittelhochdeutsche Heldenepik* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2015), p. 35; Gentry, McConnell, Müller & Wunderlich (eds.), *The Nibelungen Tradition* (2011), p. 76.

Additional support for this supposition may be provided by the observation that the discrepancy between the two versions is predicated on the relative importance assigned to clan loyalty versus marital loyalty; Kriemhilt's prioritising of the latter in the German tradition has perhaps evolved under the influence of courtly ideals of romantic love and marital fidelity.[76]

The historical background of the legend may help to account for a further significant discrepancy between the Norse and German traditions. In the former, Attila (Atli) is presented as a cruel, grasping and treacherous tyrant, whereas the German Attila (Etzel) is a benevolent, even somewhat ineffectual king – though his sustained interest in Sigurðr's treasure in *Þiðreks saga* may hint that he too is prone to avarice. As we have seen, *Niflunga saga* makes his desire for the gold a primary motive for his invitation to the Niflungs, and it ultimately leads to his death: in a subsequent section of the saga, *Dauði Atilla konungs*, Aldrian, the son Hǫgni conceived before succumbing to his wounds, lures Attila to a cave to claim the treasure of Sigurðr, and traps him inside to starve.[77] Conversely, the Burgundians are portrayed far more favourably in the Icelandic than in the German sources. Gunther's heroic stature is considerably diminished in comparison with the Icelandic Gunnarr,[78] and Hagen exhibits a cruel streak that is absent from the characterisation of the Icelandic Hǫgni. Accordingly, the German tradition sullies their motives for murdering Siegfried, whereas in the Icelandic tradition the responsibility for Sigurðr's murder lies squarely with Brynhildr.

The divergent characterisation may be explained with reference to the Battle of the Catalaunian Plains. As we have noted, this was nominally a clash between the western Roman and Hunnic Empires, yet both forces included substantial contingents of Germanic warriors – either as *foederati* serving the Roman general Aetius, or as vassals of Attila. Chambers and de

[76] Andersson, *Preface* (1987), p. 93; Gentry, McConnell, Müller & Wunderlich (eds.), *The Nibelungen Tradition* (2011), pp. 26–7.
[77] *Þiðreks saga* 423–8, ii. 570–7.
[78] The same may also be said of Guntharius in the tenth-century Latin epic *Waltharius*.

Vries have argued that the German conception of Attila has its roots in the traditions of the Goths who were his longtime subjects, noting also that his name is a diminuitive form of Gothic *atta* (father), whilst the character of the Norse Atli is traced back to the traditions of Attila's enemies, including the Burgundians.[79] It is also worth noting, however, that both forces at the Catalaunian Plains included a Burgundian contingent. We have seen that following Gundaharius' death the remnants of his people had been resettled in Sapaudia (Savoy) in 443; these fought under Aetius in 451. Meanwhile, a group of Burgundians who had remained east of the Rhine at the beginning of the century had in the intervening period evidently been subjugated by Attila. Archaeological evidence appears to show Hunnic cultural influences on these transrhenane Burgundians,[80] and their presence in Attila's army in 451 is directly attested in a poem by Sidonius Apollinaris.[81] At least some of the transrhenane Burgundians are recorded in the *Lex Burgundionum* as having joined the Savoy settlement at a later stage,[82] so that both conceptions of Atli could have coexisted and cross-pollinated in a Burgundian context. By the same token, the absence of Attila's death from the German legend does not preclude its having been an early addition to some versions of the legend; rather, it is a consequence of the fact that in this branch of the tradition Attila/Etzel is no longer a primary driver of the narrative.[83]

Shami Ghosh has questioned the value of the later literary sources as evidence for Migration-Period versions of the Burgundian legend, or even whether such a legend existed in

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[79] Chamber, *Widsith* (1912), pp. 44–5; de Vries, *Heroic Song and Heroic Legend* (1963), pp. 197–8. As Heather, *Empires and Barbarians* (2010), p. 228, has noted, a Germanic dialect (probably Gothic) was the *lingua franca* in Attila's empire due to the fact that the majority of his subjects were Germanic-speakers.

[80] *Poetic Edda I*, ed. & transl. by Dronke (1969), p. 30, with further references.

[81] Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carmina* VII. 322: *Gai Solli Apollinaris Sidonii Epistulae et Carmina*, ed. by C. Luetjohann, MGH. AA. 8 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1887), p. 211; Thompson, *The Huns* (1999), pp. 149, 152–3.

[82] *Constituones Extravagantes* XXI. 12: *Leges Burgundionum*, ed. by L.R. von Salis, MGH. LL. Nat. Germ. 2.1 (Hannover, Impensis Bibliopoli Hahniani, 1892), p. 121.

[83] Cf. *Poetic Edda I*, ed. & transl. by Dronke (1969), p. 34.

a poetic form at this stage. As Ghosh notes, the Burgundian elites under Gundobad in the sixth century were heavily Romanised, understood and presented themselves as Roman officials, and adopted Romance language at an early stage. As he also acknowledges, however, the existence of vernacular poetry amongst at least some of the Savoy Burgundians in the late fifth century is attested by the complaints of the Roman bishop and diplomat Sidonius Apollinaris, who lamented having to feign appreciation of his Burgundian hosts' singing in German.[84] Whilst these particular songs cannot be assumed to have contained heroic material,[85] the preservation of legendary traditions about the earlier Rhine kingdom is independently indicated by the *Lex Burgundionum*. On a linguistic level, it should also be stressed that the adoption of a Romance language amongst parts of the Burgundian population does not entail the automatic extinction of Germanic language. Ghosh rightly finds it "important ... that the settlement [of Burgundians in Sapaudia] was probably not a single event, but an ongoing process";[86] however, he neglects to consider how this piecemeal process would have complicated the transition from Germanic to Romance language.

A more compex linguistic scenario than that envisaged by Ghosh may be suggested by comparison with other Germanic successor kingdoms to the western Roman Empire. Germanic languages continued to be spoken by Frankish officials at least into the ninth century.[87] Similarly, the Ostrogothic king Theodoric the Great presented himself as a Roman emperor, and his kingdom was "the most conspicuously Roman of the successor states to the western Roman Empire".[88] Yet the preservation of the Gothic language even amongst the elite is indicated by the production of manuscripts of Ulfila's fourth-century Gothic translation of the

[84] Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carmina* XII. 1–7, pp. 230–1.
[85] Ghosh, 'Origins' (2007), p. 229 & n. 27.
[86] Ghosh, 'Origins' (2007), p. 226, n. 17.
[87] Jan de Vries, Roland Willemyns & Peter Burger, *Het verhaal van een taal*, 6th edition (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2003), pp. 25–7; Urban T. Holmes & Alexander H. Schutz, *A History of the French Language* (New York: Farrar & Reinhart, 1938), p. 29.
[88] Heather, *The Goths* (1996), p. 221.

Bible, in particular the ornate Codex Argenteus. Jordanes, writing in Latin some 25 years after Theodoric's death, cites Gothic oral traditions amongst his sources, including heroic songs concerning figures including the fourth-century warrior Vidigoia.

Further possible evidence of vernacular heroic legends amongst the sixth-century Goths may be provided by Jordanes' account of the death of Ermanaric, the ruler of the fourth-century Gothic kingdom in Scythia. Ermanaric was a prominent figure in legendary tradition. In *Widsith* he is noted as a generous patron but also, here and in *Deor*, as a ruthless king,[89] while in *Beowulf* he is mentioned in connection with Hama;[90] in German texts he appears as the adversary of Dietrich in numerous German sources; as previously noted, in Old Norse sources he cruelly executes his wife Svanhildr, having her trampled by horses after she is slandered as an adulteress. He is killed in turn by Svanhildr's brothers, Hamðir and Sǫrli, who dismember him but are themselves killed in the process. By the ninth century, this story had become appended anachronistically to the Vǫlsung cycle, with Svanhildr the daughter of Sigurðr and Guðrún, and Hamðir and Sǫrli Guðrún's children by her third husband Jónakr, whom she marries after the deaths of Gunnarr, Hǫgni and Atli.

The historical Ermanaric in fact died *c*. 376, more than seventy years before Attila (indeed some thirty years before his birth). The contemporary account of Ammianus Marcellinus moreover reports that he committed suicide in despair when the Huns descended on his Black Sea empire.[91] Jordanes, however, reports Ermanaric's death very differently in the middle of the sixth century. His account is likely modelled on that of Cassiodorus, a Roman official under Theodoric whose now-lost Gothic history was one of Jordanes' principal sources; it should therefore be noted that Cassiodorus also belonged to the same mileu of the Romanised

[89] *Widsith* 88–92, 8–9, pp. 25, 23; *Deor* 21–6, pp. 24–5.
[90] *Beowulf* 1197–1201, p. 42.
[91] Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res Gestae* XXXI. 3. 2: *Ammiani Marcellini Rerum Gestarum Libri qui Supersunt*, ed. by V. Gardthausen, 2 volumes (Leipzig: Teubner, 1875), ii. 237–238.

Ostrogothic court earlier in the sixth century. Jordanes tells how Ermanaric executed a young woman named Sunilda, having her torn apart between two chariots after her husband led his people in rebellion against Ermanaric's rule. He further details Ermanaric's grievous wounding by Sunilda's avenging brothers, Ammius and Sarus.[92] Although this is presented as a factual report, it is obviously at variance with what we know from contemporary historical records. This, along with the striking resemblance to the account of Jǫrmunrekkr's death in the later eddic tradition,[93] makes it clear that the account has been informed by a legendary model, from which the Old Norse tradition also ultimately derives. Theodore Andersson has additionally observed the way in which the legendary source material has been combined with features characteristic of classical historiography;[94] the episode therefore points not only to the continued currency of vernacular legendary narratives, but also to a rich dialogue between the vernacular heroic tradition and the adopted classical tradition. Whilst this is not in itself evidence for the situation in contemporary Burgundia, it offers a precedent for the preservation of vernacular traditions after the adoption of Latinate culture.

Moreover, the *Lex Burgundionum*, which explicitly presents Gundobad as descended from legendary Burgundian kings, cannot simply be dismissed as "not really a form of self-representation".[95] On the contrary, the genealogical preface to the legal text is one facet of a programmatic assertion of Gundobad's authority over the culturally mixed subjects of his Savoy kingdom. The prominence given to these illustrious ancestors in the text indicates that Gundobad perceived this authority as deriving as much from his descent from heroes as from his adopted *Romanitas*; it is predicated on at least some degree of perceived cultural continuity with the earlier Rhine kingdom amongst the Burgundian portion of his subjects, even if the

[92] Jordanes, *Getica* XXIV. 129–130, pp. 91–92.
[93] Chambers, *Widsith* (1912), pp. 16–9; Gillespie, *Catalogue* (1973), p. 39; *Eddukvæði* ii p. 162.
[94] Andersson, *Preface* (1987), pp. 8–9.
[95] Ghosh, 'Origins' (2007), p. 229.

distinction between Burgundian and Roman had become primarily a legal and political rather than an ethnic one.

Ghosh additionally suggests that any hypothesised poetry on the subject of the Rhine kingdom distaster would have remained historical rather than legendary in character for several generations. The narrative content of the later sources for the Burgundian legend tells us nothing about the content of its Migration-Period prototypes, since the deviation of the legend from historical events "would have taken place at least after the passing of eyewitnesses, and thus probably at least a few generations after the recorded events".[96] He later specifies that the shift from political to personal motivation for the conflict narrated in the legend "*must* have taken place at a later stage" (my emphasis),[97] and points to the example of the death of the Lombard king Alboin in support of this: near-contemporary chronicles give a sparse account of Alboin's murder, instigated by his wife Rosamund, whose father he had earlier killed; Rosamund was having an affair with Alboin's foster-brother, Helmigis, with whom she conspired.[98] These reports are argued to lack the 'heroic' details that characterise the later rendition by Paulus Diaconus,[99] in which macabre elements have been introduced and sexual intrigue amplified. On the basis that Paulus was informed by the oral traditions of his own time, his version is accorded little or no value as evidence of the form and content of the legendary tradition shortly after the events took place. Whilst it is recognised that "[t]his is not direct evidence for Burgundian practice", it is taken to be suggestive of a similar developmental process in the case of the Burgundian legend.

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[96] Ghosh, 'Origins' (2007), p. 239.
[97] Ghosh, 'Origins' (2007), p. 244.
[98] *Marii Episcopi Aventicensis Chronica*, in *Chronica Minora* ii. 238; *Gregorii Episcopi Turonensis Libri Historiarum X*, ed. by Bruno Krusch & Wilhelm Levison, MGH. SS. rer. Merov. 1.1 (Hannover: Impensis Bibliopoli Hahniani, 1951), p. 174; *Iohannis Abbatis Biclarensis Chronica*, in *Chronica Minora* ii. 213; *Continuatio Havniensis Prosperi*, in *Chronica Minora*, ed. by Mommsen i. 337–8.
[99] Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* II. 28: *Scriptores Rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum*, pp. 87–9.

This supposition is flawed for several reasons. In the first place, the insistence on the integrity of historicity close to the time of the events is not necessarily reflected in what we know about orally transmitted legendary traditions. James A. Notopolos, in his documentation of the development of a Cretan epic celebrating the abduction in 1944 of the German general Karl Kriepe led by Patrick Leigh Fermor, has provided an instructive example of just how quickly significant distortion of historical fact can occur in the context of heroic poetry.[100] In the song in question, composed less than a decade after the abduction took place, characters have been invented, historical figures conflated or transplanted, and motivation altered;[101] furthermore, as Notopoulos notes, this "metamorphosis of the facts of history into myth" was more than just the whim of one poet, since similar tendencies were also evident in the testimony of another Cretan informant who had personally been involved in the resistance to German occupation.[102]

Additionally, the argument by analogy with the Lombard legend is far from straightforward. Paulus' text is generally far more expansive in narrative style than the earlier chronicles, and we cannot rule out the possibility that the sparseness of the earlier reports of Alboin's murder merely reflects this qualitative difference. Additionally, the *Origo Gentis Langobardorum*, a brief seventh-century text that was among the sources for Paulus' *Historia*, includes an additional, apparently ahistorical detail: after her murder of Alboin, Rosamund subsequently attempts to poison her lover and accomplice Hilmichis (identical to the Helmigis of earlier chronicles), but he realises the deceit and invites Rosamund to drink with him, so that the pair perish together.[103] The incorporation of this motif in the earlier text shrinks the temporal gap between the historical events and their distortion into a 'heroic' tradition.

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[100] James A. Notopoulos, 'The Genesis of an Oral Heroic Poem', *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 3:2 (1960), pp. 135–44.
[101] Notopoulos, 'Genesis' (1960), p. 140.
[102] Notopoulos, 'Genesis' (1960), p. 141.
[103] *Origo Gentis Langobardorum* 5: *Scriptores Rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum*, p. 5.

Moreover, the comparison with the Alboin legend risks becoming circular, since it is even conceivable that the chronicle accounts of Alboin's murder had already been somewhat influenced by proto-legendary versions of the events. The chronicle accounts present the assassination of Alboin as motivated by vengeance and sexual desire, common features of heroic narrative; admittedly, as Ghosh observes, this is plausible enough in the context of the period, but in that case it is hardly unlikely that some contemporary reporters could also have suspected foul play in Attila's death. Ghosh counters that no such possibility is mentioned in the earliest sources, yet he is simply mistaken in identifying the ninth-century Poeta Saxo as the earliest source for the allegation:[104] as we have seen, the chronicle of Marcellinus Comes reported this already in the early sixth century. If not directly contemporary, this is nonetheless highly significant as an early source. It is particularly notable that the stabbing by a woman is there presented not merely as an alternative to the accidental death reported elsewhere, but as an uncontroversial historical account; this indicates not only that a rumour attributing Attila's death to murder existed by the sixth century, but also that it had achieved sufficient traction that in some circles it had supplanted the accidental death as authentic history. This in turn suggests that it had been in circulation for some time prior to its recording by Comes, which lends support to Dronke's reconstruction of the legend's genesis outlined above.

Ghosh is of course correct in his basic contention that the medieval literary sources do not preserve unaltered the contents of Migration-Period historico-legendary material. He identifies four important commonalities between the historical records and the narrative of *Atlakviða*, and which may therefore be assumed to derive from Migration-Period traditions: (1) the names of heroes in the legend correspond to those of historical kings; (2) some of the heroes are identified as Burgundians; (3) a conflict is reported between a Burgundian kingdom on the Rhine and the Huns; (4) the conflict results in the destruction of the Burgundians. As Ghosh

[104] Ghosh, 'Origins' (2007), pp. 224, 238–9.

states, this is "more historical fact than is common for most of the corpus of Germanic heroic literature".[105] It should be noted that these facts are preserved in the German legendary tradition as well as the Norse. Alongside these elements of genuine history, we may add the 'quasi-historical' features of Attila's involvement in the destruction of the Burgundians and his subsequent murder by a woman, which as argued above were early accretions to the tradition. The first of these elements is retained also in the German tradition, since the final battle takes place at Etzel's court; the diminished role of Etzel himself is a consequence of the fact that Kriemhilt has in this version become the villain. This also accounts for the fact that Attila/Etzel's death is not part of the narrative in the German sources. German tradition nonetheless retains some connection between Attila's death and the fall of the Burgundians: in *Niflunga saga*, Hǫgni's son Aldrian is said to have trapped Attila in a cave to starve.

Additional correspondences may be discerned between the Norse and German legendary traditions, which have no relation to historical or quasi-historical data. The most striking fictional element of the legend in Old Norse sources is Guðrún's filicide; this is not suggested by any early source, and is moreover highly unlikely to have arisen within a decade of Attila's death, whilst his sons were still alive and prominent in historiography. However, the comparative evidence of the German sources indicates that this innovation was introduced at a relatively early stage. In *Niflunga saga*, Grímhildr indirectly (but deliberately) causes her son Aldrian's death, as she encourages him to prove himself by striking his irascible uncle Hǫgni.[106] In the *Nibelungenlied*, Hagen decapitates Kriemhilt's son Ortliep upon hearing of the slaughter of Burgundian knights and squires by Etzel's brother Blœdelin;[107] however,

[105] Ghosh, 'Origins' (2007), p. 225.
[106] *Þiðreks saga* 379, ii. 512–3.
[107] *Nibelungenlied* XXXIII. 1951–1961: *Das Nibelungenlied*, ed. by Helmut de Boor, 21st ed., rev. by R. Wisniewski (Weisbaden: F.A. Brockhaus, 1979), pp. 306–8.

Kriemhilt's culpability for the death of her son Ortliep is made unambiguously clear by an earlier strophe, in which we are told:

> Dô der strît niht anders kunde sîn erhaben
> (Kriemhilt ir leit daz alte in ir herzen was begraben),
> dô hiez sie tragen ze tische den Etzelen sun.
> wie kunde ein wîp durch râche immer vreislîcher tuon?
>
> (Since the battle could not be started any other way (Kriemhilt's old grief was buried in her heart), She had Etzel's son brought to the table. How could a woman ever take such terrible vengeance?)[108]

As Edward Haymes has pointed out, these verses are omitted from the C-text of the poem, which is widely agreed to represent a later revision. A later strophe is also inserted by the redactor, which further attempts to absolve Kriemhilt of blame.[109] In view of this, Hagen's suspiciously under-motivated killing of Ortliep has the appearance of a deliberate suppression of the version attested in *Niflunga saga*.[110] Perhaps the *Nibelungenlied*'s courtly setting made maternal infanticide beyond the pale even for the demonic figure of Kriemhilt. Nevertheless, her culpability is additionally indicated by the retention of the detail that Ortliep's severed head lands in her lap:[111] in *Niflunga saga*, Hǫgni throws Aldrian's head into Grímhildr's breast to demonstrate that he knows she engineered the altercation.[112]

If this is the case, the motif of infanticide must have been introduced early on in the legend's developmental history. First, it must have been present when the story was first transmitted to Scandinavia, since it is implausible that both Continental and Scandinavian traditions developed the same motif independently. Moreover, the motif is fully integrated into the Norse accounts, with no indication of having been borrowed from German sources at a later

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[108] *Nibelungenlied* XXXI. 1912/1–4, p. 300.
[109] Haymes, *The Nibelungenlied* (1986), pp. 84–5.
[110] A possible Celtic parallel to Hagen's actions may be discerned in those of Efnysien, who in the Second Branch of the *Mabinogion* starts a battle when he kills his nephew, the Irish prince Gwern, by throwing him on a fire at a feast: *The Mabinogion*, transl. by Sioned Davies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 31–2.
[111] *Nibelungenlied* XXXIII. 1961/3, p. 308.
[112] *Þiðreks saga* 379, ii. 512.

stage. Additionally, the nature of its deployment in the German sources is best explained as a feature retained in residual form from older versions but no longer prominent. It must have had time to take sufficient root in the German tradition that the *Nibelungenlied* poet, despite wanting to suppress it, could not simply ignore the son's death altogether.

The Old Norse eddic tradition is additionally consistent in casting the infanticide as a sacrifice. Carolyne Larrington has noted how the poet of *Atlakviða* employs sacrificial imagery in the presentation of the feast at which Atli unwittingly consumes the flesh of his sons; in particular she suggests that the striking designation of Guðrún as *afkár dís*,[113] in view of the wider associations of the *dísir*, "may well point to Guðrún's anomalous role as a quasi-sacrificer".[114] In the same poem, Guðrún herself offers the children's flesh to Atli as "gnadda niflfarna" (little animals gone down to the darkness),[115] and in *Atlamál* Guðrún's sons stoically accept their fate with the words, "Blótt sem vilt bǫrnum, | bannar þat manngi" (sacrifice your children, if you wish, nobody will stop you).[116] In *Guðrúnarkviða II*, Atli tells Guðrún about a disturbing dream he has had, which she cryptically interprets as forshadowing "sœing" (sacrifice).[117] This sacrificial framing is also evident in the German sources, since we have seen that in *Niflunga saga* as well as in the *Nibelungenlied* Grímhildr/Kriemhilt knowingly engineers her son's death as a catalyst for the fighting against the Burgundians that will ensure her vengeance. Whilst the *Nibelungenlied* poet presents the action of the poem in a contemporary Christianised setting, there are still hints of ritual connotations in the the description of Ortliep's death. On Kriemhilt's instructions, Ortliep is carried to the table – "si truogen Ortlieben, den jungen künec, dan | zuo der fürsten tische" (they carried Ortliep, the young king, over to the lords' table)[118] – as if to an altar. Hagen's ironic toast to Etzel's

[113] *Atlakviða* 37/3: *Eddukvæði* ii. 380.
[114] Larrington, 'Sibling Drama' (2013), pp. 148–50.
[115] *Atlakviða* 35/8: *Eddukvæði* ii. 380.
[116] *Atlamál* 77/5–6: *Eddukvæði* ii. 396.
[117] *Guðrúnarkviða II* 43/2: *Eddukvæði* ii. 361.
[118] *Nibelungenlied* XXXI. 1913/1–3, p. 301.

hospitality – "nu trinken wir die minne unde gelten 's küneges wîn" (now let us drink love, and repay the king's wine) – has overtones of a ritual libation for the dead;[119] in particular, the verb *gelten* (repay, atone for) has sacrificial connotations,[120] so that Hagen's subsequent targeting of "der junge vogt der Hiunen" (the young lord of the Huns) resembles the selection of a sacrificial victim.[121]

The Norse and German traditions also concur in having the vengeful wife burn down Attila's hall. Kriemhilt/Grímhildr starts a fire in an attempt to finish off the beleaguered Burgundian force, whereas the the Icelandic Guðrún in *Atlakviða* murders Atli before burning the hall with the Huns inside. As with the infanticide, this cannot be an original motif, since it has no basis in the historical events, but its presence in both branches of the Germanic tradition suggests early inclusion. Once again, moreover, it is not an essential feature of the narrative. In the Icelandic tradition, the fire is brilliantly handled by the poet of *Atlakviða*, but though it makes for a striking scene it ultimately contributes nothing to Guðrún's vengeance, since Atli is already dead and his legacy extinguished. In the German tradition, the torching of the hall likewise accomplishes very little. In the *Nibelungenlied*, a disbelieving Kriemhilt is informed that that the majority of the Burgundian force has survived the inferno;[122] in *Niflunga saga* the fire seems to be forgotten about completely: Grímhildr orders Írungr to attack the hall in which Hǫgni has taken refuge, immediately after setting it alight,[123] but the blaze neither impedes Írungr's entry nor forces Hǫgni to evacuate. The fire plays no further part in the narrative,

[119] *Nibelungenlied* XXXIII. 1960/3, p. 308, with apparatus. D.G. Mowatt & Hugh Sacker, *The Nibelungenlied: An Interpretative Commentary* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), p. 129, doubt whether such an allusion is unambiguously present, but accept that it may have resonated with some of the poem's primary audience.
[120] *Nibelungenlied* XXXIII. 1960/3–4, p. 308, with apparatus; Friedrich Kluge, *An Etymological Dictionary of the German Language*, transl. by John Francis Davis (London: George Bell, 1891), p. 112.
[121] *Nibelungenlied* XXXIII. 1961/4, p. 308.
[122] *Nibelungenlied* XXXVI. 2124–2126, pp. 332–3.
[123] *Þiðreks saga* 387, ii. 521–2.

though Hǫgni remains in the hall and rallies the remaining Niflung warriors to his side. This 'fossilising' of the motif is suggestive of considerable antiquity.

Classical Connections

The revenge of Guðrún has frequently been noted for its similarity to that of the Graeco-Roman heroine Procne.[124] The story is told most famously and fully by Ovid:[125] Procne, the daughter of King Pandion of Athens, is married to Tereus, king of Thrace, to whom she bears a son, Itys. At Procne's request, Tereus travels to Athens to escort her sister Philomela to visit; on seeing Philomela, however, Tereus is filled with lust and rapes her, cuts out her tongue to silence her, and keeps her hidden as a captive. He tells Procne that her sister died on the voyage from Athens. Philomela, however, weaves a tapestry depicting Tereus' crime, which she contrives to have delivered to Procne. Procne rescues Philomela from her imprisonment, and the two avenge themselves on Tereus by murdering Itys, his son by Procne, and feeding him his flesh. They reveal the deed to Tereus and flee from him, and all three are transformed into birds: Philomela becomes a swallow, Procne a nightingale, and Tereus a hoopoe or hawk.

The earliest reference to some form of the Procne myth is in the *Odyssey*; Odysseus' wife Penelope contemplates "Πανδαρέου κούρη, χλωρηὶς ἀηδών … ἥ τε θαμὰ τρωπῶσα χέει πολυηχέα φωνήν, παῖδ᾽ ὀλοφυρομένη Ἴτυλον φίλον, ὅν ποτε χαλκῷ κτεῖνε δι᾽ ἀφραδίας, κοῦρον Ζήθοιο ἄνακτος" (Pandareus' daughter, the yellow nightingale, who with frequent turns pours out her tuneful voice, lamenting her dear son Itylus, whom once she slew with a sword in her madness, the child of King Zetheus).[126] The story is also alluded to in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, in which the "ὀρθογόη Πανδιονὶς … χελιδὼν" (the early-wailing daughter of

[124] Larrington, 'Sibling Drama' (2013), p. 147; Peggy McCracken, *The Curse of Eve, The Wound of the Hero: Blood, Gender, and Medieval Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), p. 41, and see further below (p. 179).
[125] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VI. 412–674, pp. 137–45.
[126] *Odyssey* XIX. 518–23: *Homeri Opera* ii. 130.

Pandion, the swallow) marks the arrival of spring.[127] The fifth-century tragedian Sophocles composed a *Tereus*, now lost, which was parodied by Aristophanes in his comedy *Birds*, performed in 414 BCE; Aristophanes also testifies to another play on the subject by Philocles. Earlier in the same century, a choral ode in Aeschylus' *Suppliant Women* identifies nightingale song with Procne's lament for her son, and recalls "ὡς αὐτοφόνως | ὤλετο πρὸς χειρὸς ἔθεν | δυσμάτορος κότου τυχών" (how he perished by her hand, the victim of a wicked mother's wrath).[128]

The father's unwitting consumption of his son's flesh has been posited as an Indo-European motif.[129] The Indo-European data set, however, is largely restricted to Greek material: most famously, Atreus inflicted this fate on his brother Thyestes; somewhat differently, their ancestor Tantalus served his son Pelops at a feast for the gods, in order to test their omniscience; differently again, we have seen above (p. 132) that Kronos deliberately devoured his children to forestall their prophesied usurpation of his throne. Herodotus' account of the Median king Astyages punishing his general Harpagus by forcing him to eat his son's flesh may testify to an analogue in Median legend, but it could equally be an intrusion from Herodotus' own native tradition.[130] West also notes a Caucasian parallel in the story of Syrdon, whose theft of Hæmyts' cow prompts Hæmyts to kill and cook Syrdon's family.[131] In fact, the motif is widespread in global folklore.[132] This may make it *prima facie* likely that it was present in Indo-European tradition,[133] but it is certainly not evidence of this.

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[127] Hesiod, *Works and Days* 568–9, p. 74.
[128] Aeschylus, *Hiketides* 65–7: *Aeschyli Septem Quae Supersunt Tragoedias*, ed. by Denys Page (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 93.
[129] West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth* (2007), pp. 442–3.
[130] Herodotus, *Historiae* I. 119, i. 67–8. See Walter Burkert, *Homo Necans: The Anthropology of Greek Sacrificial Ritual* (Berkely, CA: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 103–9, for a detailed comparison of the Thyestes and Astyages episodes.
[131] West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth* (2007), p. 443.
[132] See Thompson, *Motif Index* G.61 'Relative's flesh eaten unwittingly'.
[133] See the comment by West quoted above, p. 16, n. 62.

Sophus Bugge has rejected the possibility of a common origin for the Procne and Guðrún stories, arguing that the cannibalism was only introduced into the Procne myth by fifth-century Athenian tragedians, on the grounds that there is no trace of the motif in the *Odyssey*.[134] This is questionable, since the *Odyssey* passage assumes familiarity with the story and thus does not flesh out all its details; consequently, we cannot tell whether contemporary tradition included this feature or not. In any case, Bugge has seen the correspondence between Procne and Guðrún as the consequence of literary borrowing from classical tradition. These classical influences are supposed to have been picked up by Norse poets in the British Isles, where Bugge believed most or all of the eddic poems had been composed.[135] He explains the name of one of the sons, Eitill, as a corruption of Itys, the son of Procne and Tereus,[136] but the derivation is not convincing. Additional evidence is adduced from textual correspondences between *Atlamál* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*:[137] each poem recounts the attempts of the child(ren) to embrace the mother;[138] Tereus and Atli both unwittingly inquire as to the whereabouts of their son(s);[139] neither Guðrún nor Procne wishes to conceal her deed;[140] in both cases some flesh is roasted on spits.[141] It should be noted that the phraseological correspondence in each case is not especially remarkable; the similarities are rather situational, and in fact could easily have occurred to the poets independently. The child(ren)'s attempted embrace heightens the pathos of the imminent filicide; the father asking after his son(s) sets the stage for the wife's dramatic revelation; the pleasure the wife takes in revealing her vengeance is an obvious consequence of the narrative; the roasting of meat on spits is

[134] S. Bugge, 'Erpr og Eitill: Et lidet Bidrag til den nordiske Heltedigtnings Historie', *Videnskabsselskabets Skrifter II. Historisk-filosofisk Klasse. 1898. No. 5.* (1898), pp. 1–12, at p. 9.
[135] Bugge, 'Erpr og Eitill' (1898), pp. 9–10.
[136] Bugge, 'Erpr og Eitill' (1898), p. 8.
[137] Bugge, 'Erpr og Eitill' (1898), p. 11.
[138] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VI. 640, p. 144; *Atlamál* 76/4: *Eddukvæði* ii. 396.
[139] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VI. 655–6, p. 144; *Atlamál* 78/5–8: *Eddukvæði* ii. 396.
[140] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VI. 653–5, p. 144; *Atlamál* 79/1–4: *Eddukvæði* ii. 396.
[141] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VI. 646, p. 144; *Atlamál* 82/1–2: *Eddukvæði* ii. 396.

commonplace, and is moreover narrated in real-time in *Metamorphoses* but retrospectively in *Atlamál*. Additionally, since Bugge explicitly discounts the *Atlamál* poet's direct knowledge of Ovid,[142] it is unclear how the poem, of late Greenlandic provenance, could have preserved textual affinities with Ovid's account which are not present in *Atlakviða*, our only extant antecedent treatment of the Atli legend in Old Norse.

Despite these objections to Bugge's theories, I believe that we are justified in seeking an external impetus for the incorporation of the filicide into the Germanic legendary tradition. It has been argued above that this motif was included at a relatively early stage, on the basis of a comparison between the Norse and German traditions; whilst the mutation of recent history into legend was found not to be inherently implausible as Shami Ghosh argued, it nonetheless seems appropriate to seek explanation for major departures from historical fact at a time when these facts must still have been widely known.

A precedent for the rapid distortion of history into heroic legend was earlier identified in a Cretan oral poem narrating an episode of local Second World War history. The most striking unhistorical innovation in this poem was the invention of a Cretan woman who seduces and spies on the villain, General Kriepe; as Notopoulos notes, this feature may be traced to recent foreign influence in the form of stories about the WWI French spy Mata Hari.[143] In a similar way, a plausible model for the incorporation of the infanticide into the legend of Attila and the Burgundians may be sought in the classical tradition, in the context of Roman cultural influences on the Burgundians and other Germanic-speaking groups in the Migration Period.

Superficially, the Procne myth provides the most promising analogue to the filicide of Guðrún. In addition to the cannibalism, the two also have in common the motive of vengeance for a sibling.[144] Enduring familiarity with and interest in the myth throughout the Roman

[142] Bugge, 'Erpr og Eitill' (1898), p. 11.
[143] Notopoulos, 'Genesis' (1960), pp. 142–3.
[144] Larrington, 'Sibling Drama' (2013), p. 147.

imperial era into Late Antiquity is moreover demonstrated by the wealth of references in literary sources, even though we are unfortunate that only a handful of narrative accounts have survived. However, a closer consideration of our reconstructed proto-legend, based on the comparison of the Old Norse and German sources, problematises a connection with Procne, since there is no indication that the cannibalism was present at this stage of its development. An alternative classical analogue is provided by the myth of Medea, who committed infanticide to avenge herself against her husband Jason. As we shall see, the Medea myth was, to judge from the extant literary record, even more popular in the Graeco-Roman world than that of Procne; moreover, it offers better parallels for the unhistorical early accretions to the Burgundian legend.

The legendary tradition concerning Jason, the Argonauts, and Medea is very old, and was reworked repeatedly throughout Antiquity, to the extent that even ancient commentators struggled to reduce the many variants to a straightforward narrative.[145] Nevertheless, the myth may be summarised relatively canonically as follows: Jason, son of King Aeson of Iolcus, sails to Colchis to retrieve the Golden Fleece, in return for which his uncle Pelias has promised him the throne, which he has usurped from Aeson. Medea, daughter of the Colchian King Aeetes and niece of the divine sorceress Circe, falls in love with Jason and, in return for marriage, aids him in claiming the fleece. She departs with him, but on discovering this Aeetes pursues their ship. Medea murders and dismembers her young brother Apsyrtus (or Absyrtus), whom she had kidnapped,[146] jettisoning the pieces in the knowledge that her father will stop to collect them for proper burial. Alternatively, Apsyrtus is treacherously murdered by Jason, having been tricked into meeting to negotiate Medea's return. On arrival in Iolcus, Medea rejuvenates

[145] Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica* IV. 56. 1: *Diodorus Bibliotheca Historica*, ed. by F. Vogel, 5 volumes (Leipzig: Teubner, 1888–1906), i. 484.
[146] In other accounts, Apsyrtus himself pursues them, and is killed by Jason: Hard, *Handbook of Greek Mythology* (2004), p. 393.

the aged Aeson with blood magic. Pelias' daughters ask the same for their father, but Medea tricks them into killing Pelias. She and Jason flee to Corinth. They have children together, but eventually Jason abandons Medea for Glauce, the daughter of the Corinthian King Creon. In vengeance, Medea kills Creon and Glauce with poisoned or cursed robes, before murdering her children by Jason.[147] She flees to Athens with the help of her grandfather Helios, the sun god, and marries King Aegeus. They have a son named Medus together, but the return of Theseus, Aegeus' son from a previous relationship, endangers Medus' inheritance. Medea therefore convinces Aegeus that Theseus, as yet unrecognised, is a stranger who threatens his rule, and who should be disposed of. Just before Theseus drinks poison given to him by Medea, Aegeus recognises his son by means of tokens left with him as a baby, and foils Medea's scheme. She flees again – either to Mesopotamia,[148] or back to Colchis, where she restores her father Aeëtes to the throne, which he had lost to his brother Perses.[149]

Medea is not mentioned in the Homeric poems, though the poet of the *Iliad* knew at least of one of Jason's former lovers, Hypsipyle, since the Lemnian king Euneus is named as their son.[150] In the *Odyssey*, Circe cites Jason's ship, the Argo, as the only vessel to have safely navigated the Wandering Rocks (*Odyssey* XII.69–72).[151] Medea's marriage to Jason was known to Hesiod, who mentions it toward the end of his *Theogony* (956–962, 993–1002).[152]

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[147] See below (p. 183) for variant accounts of the infanticide.
[148] Herodotus *Historiae* VII. 62, i. 172.
[149] [Apollodorus] *Bibliotheca* I. 9. 28. 4–5, p. 49.
[150] *Iliad* VII.468–469; XXI.41; XXIII.747: *Homeri Opera* i. 153; ii. 188, 253.
[151] *Odyssey* XII.69–72: *Homeri Opera* iii. 214. Other notable similarities between the adventures of Jason and Odysseus led several nineteenth-century classicists to argue that Homer drew on older epics about the Argonauts when composing the *Odyssey*: F.A. Paley, 'Pre-Homeric Legends of the Voyage of the Argonauts', *The Dublin Review*, volume 1 3rd S., 84 O.S. (Jan. 1879), pp. 164–82; George W. Cox, *An Introduction to the Science of Comparative Mythology and Folklore* (London: C. Keegan Paul & Co., 1881), p. 276; contrast, *inter alia*, Andrew Lang, *Homer and the Epic* (London: Longman, Green & Co., 1893), pp. 277–9, for whom the similarities exemplify widespread primeval motifs. More recently, M.L. West, '*Odyssey* and *Argonautica*', *CQ* 55:1 (2005), pp. 39–64, has defended the view that the *Odyssey* poet borrowed elements from a poem on the Argonaut legend, but argued that the relationship was further complicated by the influence of the Gilgamesh epic on both the *Odyssey* and its Argonautic source independently.
[152] Hesiod, *Theogony*, pp. 45–7.

No comment is made on the fraught ending to this union, though this is not particularly telling, since at this stage in the poem Hesiod is simply cataloguing mortals with divine parentage. Her inclusion itself indicates that she was a highly familiar figure to Hesiod's audiences, though there is no way of knowing why. Equally, not all of the later events in the cycle can necessarily be presupposed even by the marriage between Jason and Medea, and it is unclear whether or not Homeric or Hesiodic tradition knew of the subsequent development of the narrative as presented in later sources. It is likely, in fact, that the Colchian Medea was originally a distinct figure from Corinthian Medea, though it cannot be determined precisely when they became conflated.

Certainly before the fifth century BCE, however, at least two divergent traditions existed concerning the death of Medea's children. A lost epic called the *Corinthiaca*, probably composed in the sixth century BCE and attributed to the semi-legendary poet Eumelus, told that Medea's children died as a result of their mother's attempts to make them immortal by burying them in the temple of Hera.[153] Conversely, the scholia to verse 264 of Euripides' *Medea* cite an early poet called Creophylus, who claimed that the relatives of Creon, whom Medea had murdered, killed her children in revenge for his death and blamed it on her.[154]

The tragedy *Medea* by the Athenian playwright Euripides (*c*. 480 – *c*. 406 BCE) was first performed in 431 BCE, along with *Dictys*, *Philoctetes*, and *Theristae*. It has often been supposed that what is now the standard version of the legend, in which Medea deliberately murders her children in vengeance for her abandonment by Jason, was a fifth-century innovation, either by Euripides in this play,[155] or by his approximate contemporary Neophron,

[153] *Greek Epic Fragments*, pp. 242–3 & n. 24.
[154] *Scholia in Euripidem*, ed. by E. Schwartz, (Berlin: Reimer, 1891), ii. 159–60. The scholia also note a slightly different version, in which the Corinthian women kill Medea's children in revolt against her rule, thus bringing down a plague on the city.
[155] Bernard Knox, *Word and Action: Essays on the Ancient Theater* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), p. 299. So thought Aristotle, *Poetics* 1453b, ed. by D.W. Lucas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 22.

the composer of a now fragmentary *Medea* in the same vein, of which the date relative to Euripides' play is unclear.[156] This has been disputed by Sarah Iles Johnson, who argues that this was one of the several variants of the story already in circulation by the fifth century.[157] The question is, however, of only tangential importance for our current purposes, given that Euripides certainly canonised the variant, and in view of the influence of Euripides' tragedy on subsequent treatments.

Initially the play was not overwhelmingly well received, with Euripides placed third of the three competing tragedians at the City Dionysia festival that year. Yet this cannot be taken as evidence of strong dislike of the *Medea*; it has been noted that competition was particularly strong that year,[158] and in any case we cannot determine how far Euripides' other (now lost) entries may have influenced his overall placement. In any case, the *Medea* fairly quickly achieved classic status, as illustrated by its impact on visual depictions of the Medea legend from the late fifth into the fourth century.[159] The depiction of the deliberate infanticide soon became the standard version of the story, and the play was translated and imitated by Roman poets from at least the second century BCE onwards. Ennius (*c*. 239 – *c*. 169 BCE) composed a *Medea*, whose surviving fragments indicate that it was a Latin adaptation of Euripides' play.[160] Ovid (43 BCE – 17/18 CE) wrote a *Medea* (now lost, but well known in Tacitus' day, and highly commended by the late first-century rhetorician Quintilian),[161] in addition to his

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[156] Emily A. McDermott, *Euripides' Medea: The Incarnation of Disorder* (University Park PA: Penn State University Press, 1985), pp. 10–15; William Allan, *Euripides: Medea* (London: Duckworth, 2002), p. 23.

[157] Sarah Iles Johnson, 'Corinthian Medea and the Cult of Hera Akraia', in James J. Clauss & Sarah Iles Johnson (eds.), *Medea: Essays on Medea in Myth, Literature, Philosophy and Art* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 44–70.

[158] *Euripides I*, ed. & transl. by David Kovacs, LCL 12 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 277.

[159] Allan, *Euripides: Medea* (2002), p. 102; Rosanna Lauriola, 'Medea', in Lauriola & Kyriakos N. Dēmētriou, (eds.), *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Euripides* (Boston: Brill, 2015), pp. 406–7.

[160] Cf. Cicero, *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum* I. 4: *M. Tulli Ciceronis De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum Libri Quinque*, ed. by L.D. Reynolds (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 4.

[161] Tacitus, *Dialogus de oratoribus* XII. 6: *Opera Minora* p. 76; Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* X. 1. 98, ii. 587.

treatment of the whole Argonaut legend in *Metamorphoses* which includes a brief but clear reference to Medea's deliberate infanticide: "sanguine natorum perfunditur inpius ensis, | ultaque se male mater Iasonis effugit arma" (The accursed sword was drenched in childrens' blood, | and avenged by the vile deed the mother fled Jason's arms).[162] The *Medea* of Seneca the Younger (4 BCE – 65 CE) differs in many details from the Euripidean template, but reveals its debt to Euripides in details of phraseology, and culminates with the heroine's deliberate murder of her children. Hosidius Geta (*fl.* late second or early third century CE) composed a Virgilian cento concerning Medea, which owes much to the Euripidean treatment, either directly or through the earlier Latin versions that drew on Euripides.[163]

In addition to these narrative accounts, other Roman literature reveals the currency of the legend through casual mentions and allusions. In a famous defence speech, Cicero sought to discredit the testimony of his client's lover-turned-accuser by casting her as "Palatinam Medeam" (Palatine Medea).[164] The first-century BCE elegist Propertius makes several such references, to Medea's sorcery;[165] to her abandonment by Jason;[166] and to her infanticide.[167] His contemporary Horace cites the protective and destructive powers of her drugs.[168] Petronius alludes to Medea's murder of her brother Apsyrtus,[169] and elsewhere, when his uncultured Trimalchio says he has cups engraved with Cassandra killing her children, the reader is evidently expected to realise that he in fact means Medea.[170] The second-century Greek traveller Pausanias notes various monuments and landmarks associated with the legend in

[162] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VII. 396–397, p. 159.
[163] *Hosidius Geta's Tragedy "Medea": A Virgilian Cento*, ed. & transl. by J.J. Mooney (Birmingham: Cornish Brothers, 1919), pp. 6–8.
[164] Cicero, *Pro M. Caelio* VIII. 18: *M. Tulli Ciceronis Orationes I*, ed. by Albert Curtis Clark (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1905), pp. 302–3.
[165] Propertius, *Elegi* II. 1. 53–4, p. 36.
[166] Propertius *Elegi* II. 21. 11–12; II. 24. 45–6; IV. 5. 41–2, pp. 69; 76; 166.
[167] Propertius *Elegi* III. 19. 17–18, p. 138.
[168] Horace, *Epodi* III. 9–14, V. 61–66: *Opera* pp. 114–5, 118.
[169] Petronius, *Satyricon* 108, p. 114.
[170] Petronius, *Satyricon* 52, p. 45; cf. *Cena Trimalchionis*, ed. by Smith (1975), p. 139.

Corinth and elsewhere, including the spring in which Glauce is said to have attempted to wash away Medea's poisons, and an Odeon beside the spring dedicated to Medea's murdered children.[171]

Several sources also attest to the endurance of the Medea myth even into the Christian period of the Roman Empire. Sidonius, who as we have seen visited both Attila's court and the Burgundian kingdom in Savoy, makes several casual references to various aspects of the myth in his poetry.[172] Augustine of Hippo in his *Confessions* recalls performing in his youth a piece he calls *Medea volans* (Flying Medea),[173] and following his conversion to Christianity clearly retained sufficient interest in the legend to use it in exemplification his argument here – that one can learn something of value from mythological poetry without accepting the narratives as factual records. Elsewhere he cites Medea in a philosophical dialogue concerning truth and falsehood.[174] Throughout Antiquity, many other philosophers and theologians, pagan and Christian alike, continued to discuss Medea as characterised by Euripides,[175] indicating that despite their pagan origins, both the play and its subject matter remained familiar and of interest in the Christian era. Testimony to the enduring interest in theatrical treatments of the legend in Late Antiquity is provided by Boethius' theological treatise *Contra Eutychen et Nestorium* (*c.* 513 CE), in which he mentions Medea casually as one of a handful of well-known figures from the tragic stage.[176]

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[171] Pausanias *Descriptio Graeciae* II. 3. 6, i. 262.
[172] Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carmina* II. 493–4; V. 132–6; XI. 65–71; XXIII. 272–6, pp. 185; 191; 229; 256.
[173] Augustine, *Confessions* III. 6. 11, ed. by J.J. O'Donnell, 3 volumes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), i. 27.
[174] Augustine, *Soliloquia* II. 15. 29.
[175] John M. Dillon, 'Medea Among the Philosophers', in Claus & Iles Johnston (eds.), *Essays on Medea* (1997), pp. 211–218.
[176] Boethius, *Contra Eutychen et Nestorium* III. 18–24: *Theological Tractates. The Consolation of Philosophy*, ed. & transl. by H.F. Stewart, E.K. Rand & S.J. Tester, LCL 74 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), p. 86.

We have noted the way in which the Old Norse texts depict Guðrún's filicide as a sacrificial act, and how this is also reflected in the characterisation of Kriemhilt's deliberate engineering of her son's death as a means to an end. This is also true of Medea's infanticide. Euripides' Medea is conflicted as she prepares to kill her children; strengthening her resolve she declares, "ὅτῳ δὲ μὴ | θέμις παρεῖναι τοῖς ἐμοῖσι θύμασιν | αὐτῷ μελήσει" (Whoever is not permitted at my sacrifice should see to it for himself),[177] alluding to the convention of barring uninitiated or ritually unclean people from attending a sacrificial ceremony.[178] As was the convention for violence in Greek tragedy, the infanticide itself occurs offstage, but vase paintings of the myth, likely inspired by Euripides' play, show Medea performing the deed at an altar or in another ritual context (figures 23–26),[179] with some examples depicting her wearing her mantle as a sacrificial apron (figures 25–26).[180] These artefacts illustrate that the sacrificial motif took a firm hold in the popular imagination. It survived into the Roman period; A depiction of the infanticide in Pompeii shows the children playing on top of an altar as Medea draws her knife (figure 27). Seneca's Medea declares to her deceased brother, on killing her first son: "uictima manes tuos | placamus ista" (with this victim I appease your ghost),[181] whilst Hosidius Geta's cento draws repeatedly on verses taken from sacrificial contexts in Virgil's works to narrate the build-up to and completion of Medea's infanticide.[182] Amongst the significant Virgilian scenes evoked by Geta are the lying tale of the Greek warrior Sinon, who claims to be an escaped sacrificial victim;[183] the killing of Priam on the altar of Zeus by

[177] Euripides, *Medea* 1054–5: *Euripidis Fabulae* i. 44.
[178] Allan, *Euripides: Medea* (2002), p. 91.
[179] Walter Burkert, 'Greek Tragedy and Sacrificial Ritual', *Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies* 7:2 (1966), pp. 97–121, at p. 118.
[180] Corinne Ondine Pache, *Baby and Child Heroes in Ancient Greece* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004), p. 32.
[181] Seneca, *Medea* 970–1: *Tragoediae* p. 160.
[182] For further examples of this attention to the narrative contexts of source verses as a feature of Geta's cento technique, see Anke Rondholz, *The Versatile Needle: Hosidius Geta's Cento* Medea *and its Tradition* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), esp. pp. 107–43.
[183] Hosidius Geta, *Medea* 398: *Hosidii Getae Medea: Cento Vergilianus*, ed. by R. Lamacchia (Leipzig: Teubner, 1981), p. 20; Virgil, *Aeneid* II. 118: *Opera* p. 130. After the Greeks have feigned

Achilles' son Pyrrhus/Neoptolemus;[184] and (most heavily) Dido's suicide, in which she disguises her intentions by ostensibly preparing for an ordinary sacrifice.[185] We shall consider in due course the significance of the fact that the Virgilian source passages all depict sacrifices that are in some way aberrant; for our current purposes, the consistent deployment of sacrificial imagery in both traditions is of particular importance.

Peggy McCracken has noted the consistent gendering of sacrificial authority in medieval western literature: In essence, paternal infanticides may be understood as sacrifices, whilst maternal infanticides may not.[186] Medea's case likewise stands apart in the classical tradition as a maternal infanticide presented as sacrifice (though Agamemnon's sacrifice of his daughter Iphigeneia is a prominent theme of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, and Agamemnon's subsequent murder by his wife Clytaemnestra is cast in sacrificial terms).[187] This appears, moreover, to reflect a widespread taboo in actual sacrificial practice: sacrificing women are cast "almost always in some specifically non-childbearing role: as virgins (or dressed as if they were virgins), as consecrated unmarried women, or as post-menopausal women".[188] This should not be taken to signify the wholesale exclusion of women from attendance or participation in sacrificial ritual: in ancient Greek and Roman religion, for example, there is a great deal of evidence for female roles in sacrifices, though they could be excluded from

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flight from Troy, Sinon tricks the Trojans into accepting the wooden horse into the city by pretending that his comrades had intended to sacrifice him to ensure favourable winds on their return to Greece, in accordance (he claims) with an oracle demanding atonement for Agamemnon's sacrifice of his daughter Iphigeneia at the start of the war.

[184] Hosidius Geta, *Medea* 396, p. 20; Virgil, *Aeneid* II. 548: *Opera* p. 143.

[185] Hosidius Geta, *Medea* 376–7, 379–80, 402, pp. 19–20; Virgil, *Aeneid* IV. 494, 495, 516, 637, 638, 639: *Opera* pp. 191–2, 196.

[186] McCracken, *The Curse of Eve* (2003), pp. 41–60; cf. Larrington, 'Sibling Drama' (2013), pp. 147–8.

[187] Froma I. Zeitlin, 'The Motif of the Corrupted Sacrifice in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*', *TAPA* 96 (1965), pp. 463–508.

[188] Nancy Jay, *Throughout Your Generations Forever: Sacrifice, Religion and Paternity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. xxiii.

specific cults (as men were from others).[189] It should be noted, however, that women are very rarely found in the role of slaughterer.[190] Old Norse texts, conversely, provide no evidence of women performing sacrifice.[191] Against this background, the parallel between the filicides of Medea and Guðrún/Kriemhilt becomes especially significant. It should also be noted that whilst a sacrificial context is arguably implicit in Procne's infanticide, it is not emphasised in Ovid's treatment of the Procne myth or in other extant references to the story, nor is it evident in iconographic depictions of the latter story.[192]

We have also seen that the Old Norse and German sources both include the burning of Attila's hall by his wife; in the German sources in particular, this is a mechanical feature that has no real impact on the narrative. The burning of a hall after a feast does recur in several other Germanic legendary narratives. It features by allusion in the Germano-Latin epic *Waltharius*,[193] and more explicitly in the account of the death of Andarchius in Gregory of Tours' *Historia Francorum*.[194] On the basis of these attestations, it has been posited as a particularly Franconian traditional motif,[195] though the *Beowulf* poet also alludes early on to the future destruction of Heorot by fire.[196] In *Vǫlsunga saga*, Sigmundr and Sinfjǫtli avenge Vǫlsungr by burning down the hall of his killer Siggeir.[197] Several *Íslendingasǫgur* narrate the burning of an enemy's house, though this is typically a fall-back strategy when an armed assault

[189] Robin Osborne, 'Women and Sacrifice in Classical Greece', *CQ* 43:2 (1993), pp. 392–405; Matthew Dillon, *Girls and Women in Classical Greek Religion* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002), pp. 237–40; Emily A. Hemelrijk, 'Women and Sacrifice in the Roman Empire', in Oliver Hekster, Sebastian Schmidt-Hofner & Christian Witschel (eds.), *Ritual Dynamics and Religious Change in the Roman Empire* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 253–67.
[190] Osborne, 'Women and Sacrifice' (1993), p. 401.
[191] Larrington, 'Sibling Drama' (2013), p. 148.
[192] The iconographic material is catalogued by Kahil, Ackermann & Gisler (eds.), *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae VII* (1994).
[193] *Waltharius* 318–23, p. 37.
[194] Gregorius Turonensis, *Historia Francorum* IV. 46, pp. 180–3.
[195] Claudia Bornholdt, *Engaging Moments: The Origins of Medieval Bridal-Quest Narrative* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), pp. 51–6.
[196] *Beowulf* 82–83, p. 6.
[197] *Vǫlsunga saga* 8: *Fornaldar sögur Norðurlanda* i. 127.

is failing;[198] it should also be noted that the burning of a house by a vengeful woman is not attested in any Germanic corpus. However, the motif of the burning hall grew in prominence in Roman treatments of the Medea legend. In Euripides, Medea's poisons burn Glauce and Creon to death,[199] and earlier Medea had earlier contemplated "πότερον ὑφάψω δῶμα νυμφικὸν πυρί" (whether to set a fire beneath the bridal house).[200] The Augustan freedman Hyginus (64 BCE–17 CE) reports in his *Fabulae* that Jason perishes alongside Creon and Creusa (= Glauce) in a fire caused by Medea's poisoned gifts; on seeing the fire, Medea kills her sons by Jason and flees to Athens.[201] Whilst Hyginus is not always a reliable source, it is difficult to see how all of this could have arisen from confusion on the part of a semi-educated former slave; Jason's death in the palace fire was moreover Medea's original intention according to the first-century-BCE historian Diodorus Siculus,[202] so Hyginus' account may therefore indicate a relatively well-known variant. Ovid relates that "flagrantemque domum regis mare vidit utrumque" (the sea on either side saw the king's palace burning).[203] The burning palace is also a feature of Seneca's *Medea* (though Jason is not killed),[204] and of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* (second century CE), which recalls how "illa Medea unius dieculae a Creone impetratıs induciis totam eius domum filiamque cum ipso sene flammis coronalibus deusserat" (Medea, in the one day's respite obtained from Creon, consumed his whole palace and his daughter, along with the old man himself, in the flames from the crown).[205] A messenger in Hosidius Geta's poem also

[198] See, e.g., *Brennu-Njáls saga* 129, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson, ÍF XII (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 1954), pp. 328–32; *Eyrbyggja saga* 31, ed. by Einar Ól. Sveinsson & Matthías Þórðarson, ÍF IV (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 1935), pp. 83–7; *Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar* 7, ed. by Guðni Jónsson, ÍF VII (Reykjavík: Hið íslenska fornritafélag, 1936), pp. 17–8; *Gísla saga* 3, pp. 12–13.
[199] Euripides, *Medea* 1186–1221: *Euripidis Fabulae* i. 144–6.
[200] Euripides, *Medea* 378: *Euripidis Fabulae* i. 110.
[201] *Hyginus Fabulae* XXV, p. 40.
[202] Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica* IV. 54. 5, i. 482. Cf. Euripides, *Medea* 371–5, ed. by Diggle (1984), i. 110.
[203] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VII. 395, p. 159.
[204] Seneca, *Medea* 885–887: *Tragoediae* p. 157.
[205] Apuleius, *Metamorphoses* I. 10, p. 8.

reports that "furit immissis Vulcanus habenis" (the fire is raging unrestrained).[206] This could therefore be a further candidate for a motif in a popular Roman legend about a vengeful wife, which may have been incorporated into a nascent Germanic legend on a similar subject. Alternatively, if the motif in the Burgundian legend had a Germanic source, acknowledgment of the similar incident in the Medea-legend may have helped to prompt the incorporation of other narrative elements from the classical tradition.

The Medea myth thus provides a plausible model for components of the reconstructed early Burgundian legend which require some accounting for as early distortions of historical fact. The cannibalistic feast in the Norse tradition may still have been suggested by the Procne myth during the Burgundian legend's period of Frankish transmission. Familiarity with and appetite for classical literature and myth in sixth-century Merovingian Gaul is indicated by the popularity of the itinerant Italian poet Venantius Fortunatus,[207] whose work shows detailed knowledge of classical poets incuding Virgil, Horace, Ovid and Statius. An especially suggestive passage in a poem on the advent of spring addressed to Felix, bishop of Nantes, indicates specific awareness of the Procne myth:

> Ad cantus revocatur aves quae carmine clause
> pigrior hiberno frigore muta fuit.
> Hinc filomela suis adtemperat organa cannis
> fitque repercusso dulcior aura melo.
>
> (The bird is called again to song, which with its music shut off was silent, more sluggish than the winter cold. Here the nightingale [*filomela*] tunes its voice to its piping, and the air becomes sweeter with the resounding tune.)[208]

[206] Hosidius Geta, *Medea* 427, p. 21.
[207] Brian Brennan, 'The Career of Venantius Fortunatus', *Traditio* 41 (1985), pp. 49–78, at pp. 59–66; Helmut Reimitz, *History, Frankish Identity and the Framing of Western Ethnicity, 550–850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 88–97.
[208] Venantius Fortunatus, *Carmina* III. 9, *Ad Felicem episcopum de pascha*, 27–30: *Venantii Honori Clementiani Fortunati Presbyteri Italici Opera Poetica*, ed. by F. Leo, MGH. AA. 4.1 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1881), p. 60.

James Wilhelm and Wendy Pfeffer have both seen this passage as evidence of the nightingale having been detached from its classical context;[209] however, Betty Vanderweilen has persuasively argued that the use of the term *filomela* for nightingale (rather than the more common *luscinia*) alongside the word *muta* (silent, mute) points to a deliberate invocation of the classical myth. The change in the signification of the nightingale is thus being asserted by Fortunatus himself.[210] Assuming his addressee and, by implication, others of the Merovingian nobility were equipped to appreciate such sophisticated manipulation of classical myth, it is certainly conceivable that knowledge of classical material could have informed evolving vernacular heroic legends. However, if any such influence did occur, it could only have done so after the infanticide had been incorporated into the tradition independently, and could only have applied to one strand of the tradition, which ultimately gave rise the Norse texts.

Conclusion

This chapter has considered the early stages of the development of the Germanic Burgundian legend from a core of fifth-century historical fact. A comparison of the extant narratives in Norse and German texts indicates that the transformation of history into legend began early, and that several ahistorical features common to both extant traditions must have been incorporated before those traditions separated from each other. These common elements – the vengeful infanticide of Attila's wife; the overt characterisation of the infanticide as a sacrifice; and the burning of Attila's hall – cannot be derived from the historical kernel of the legend, and are inadequately paralleled in native analogues. The period during which the Nibelung legend crystallised was one of extensive exposure to and uptake of numerous aspects of Roman

[209] James J. Wilhelm, *The Cruellest Month: Spring, Nature and Love in Classical and Medieval Lyrics* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1965) p. 79; Wendy Pfeffer, *The Change of Philomel: The Nightingale in Medieval Literature* (New York: Peter Lang, 1985), p. 27.

[210] Betty Vanderweilen, 'The Myth of Tereus and the Nightingale Motif in Classical and Medieval Literature and the Works of Chaucer', MA thesis, Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University (1989), pp. 80–3.

culture on the part of the Germanic peoples. In this socio-historical context, the incorporation of these motifs into the legendary tradition may be plausibly traced to the influence of the Graeco-Roman myth of Medea, which circulated widely in the Roman world well into Late Antiquity, and which offers clear parallels to the elements in question in the Germanic legend.

CHAPTER 5: MEDEA, GUÐRÚN AND MATERNAL FILICIDE

The preceding chapter suggested that the details of the revenge exacted by Attila's wife in the Germanic legendary tradition were developed under the influence of the Medea myth, which remained in circulation even in post-Roman western Europe. This chapter will focus more closely on the correspondences and contrasts between the portrayals of maternal filicide in classical and Old Norse texts. As the considerable volume of primary sources illustrates, both Medea and Guðrún provoked intense and sustained fascination in the societies that gave rise to the narratives concerned with them: Guðrún is eponymous in four of the poems in the heroic portion of the Codex Regius and features prominently in several others, whilst we have seen that Medea occupied writers and artists throughout antiquity. This should come as no surprise: as Edith Hall has noted, Medea "enacts a primal terror universal to human beings: that the mother-figure should *intentionally* destroy her own children."[1] The filicidal mother may be seen as representing a twofold threat to the stability of patriarchal society, since she simultaneously arrogates the prerogative of the father (who as the head of a family has the right to decide whether his child should live or die) and abjures what is deemed to be essential to her basic nature – the instinct to nurture her offspring. The prevailing appeal of these myths in the present day is equally unsurprising, since the perception of the nurturing instinct as an innate characteristic of womanhood remains widespread today, albeit in a different way. Helen Gavin and Theresa Porter note that "[t]he discourse on child killing by women is muted, due to our tendency to dichotomize the ideas of motherhood and violence".[2] Heather Leigh Stangle has discussed the frequent presupposition of mitigating circumstances for female violence and in particular for maternal infanticide, due to the challenge they pose to societal notions of passive

[1] Edith Hall, 'Medea and British Legislation before the First World War', *Greece & Rome* 46:1 (1999), pp. 42–77, at p. 42.
[2] Helen Gavin & Theresa Porter, *Female Aggression* (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), p. 102.

femininity.[3] This has the somewhat paradoxical consequence that the laws of many modern nations treat infanticide as a distinct, gender-specific offence, with lesser penalties than other forms of homicide:[4] the crime is seen as so terrible that its very occurrence proves the validity of a diminished capacity defence.

In the previous chapter it was noted that (unusually for instances of maternal infanticide) the infanticides of both Medea and Guðrún are imbued in the primary sources with sacrificial connotations. Whilst the parallel remains striking, a more detailed analysis reveals an important distinction in the deployment of sacrificial imagery in the classical versus the Old Norse texts: Medea alone uses sacrificial language to describe her own infanticide, whilst Guðrún's is identified as a sacrificial act by external voices. This discrepancy, I suggest, is reflective of broader contrasts in the contemporary attitudes towards each heroine. Whilst both Medea and Guðrún are presented as highly ambiguous and unsettling figures, deeper consideration of their respective portrayals in the literary sources alongside other evidence for contemporary reception evinces a far greater tendency towards positive assessments of Guðrún than of Medea.

Infanticide as Sacrifice

It has been observed above that depictions of infanticide in western myth and legend are consistently gendered: a father who commits infanticide can be understood as sacrificing his child for a higher purpose, whereas child-killing mothers are portrayed as being motivated by revenge. The correspondence between the infanticides of Medea and Guðrún is so striking

[3] Heather Leigh Stangle, 'Murderous Madonna: Femininity, Violence, and the Myth of Postpartum Mental Disorder in Cases of Maternal Infanticide and Filicide', *William & Mary Law Review* 50:2 (2008), pp. 699–734.

[4] Stangle, 'Murderous Madonna' (2008), pp. 701–3; Sanjeev Anand, 'Rationalizing Infanticide: A Medico-Legal Assessment of the *Criminal Code*'s Child Homicide Offence', *Alberta Law Review* 47:3 (2010), pp. 705–28, at p. 707; Susan Hatters Friedman, James Cavney & Philip J. Resnick, 'Mothers who Kill: Evolutionary Underpinnings and Infanticide Law', *Behavioral Sciences and the Law* 30 (2012), pp. 585–97.

because (although the revenge element is also present) both instances of maternal infanticide are explicitly characterised in sacrificial terms in the extant sources.

To restate the relevant data: in the classical tradition, Euripides' Medea steels herself for her infanticide by referring to it as "τοῖς ἐμοῖσι θύμασιν" (my sacrifice),[5] and Seneca's Medea imagines the apparition of her murdered brother's ghost, to whom she offers the first of her children as a sacrificial victim;[6] Hosidius Geta's cento treatment of the story uses verses taken from sacrificial contexts in their Virgilian source texts; ancient visual depictions of the myth show Medea performing the infanticide at an altar.[7] In the Norse tradition, both of the poems treating Guðrún's revenge in the *Poetic Edda* draw on sacrificial imagery. *Atlakviða* characterises Guðrún as "afkár dís", and the slaughtered children as "gnadda niflfarna" (little animals gone down to the darkness).[8] Likewise in *Guðrúnarkviða II*, Atli's ominous dream is said to portend "sœing" (sacrifice).[9] Larrington contends that the sacrificial element is absent from the narrative according to *Atlamál*,[10] but in fact the boys explicitly tell Guðrún: "Blótt sem vilt bǫrnum, | bannar þat manngi" (Sacrifice your children, if you wish, | nobody will stop you).[11]

Precisely how these different invocations of the sacrificial motif in the Old Norse texts relate to each other is not entirely clear: are we dealing here with the conscious imitation of an earlier poem by later poets, or are all three poems independent witnesses of a broader tradition of depicting Guðrún's infanticide as a sacrifice, of which they are the only remnants? The question is an important one, for on it hinges the distinction between identifying the sacrificial imagery as, on the one hand, a single poet's creative impulse that happened to be acknowledged

[5] Euripides, *Medea* 1054: *Euripidis Fabulae* i. 138.
[6] Seneca, *Medea* 970–1: *Tragoediae* p. 160.
[7] Burkert, 'Greek Tragedy and Sacrificial Ritual' (1966), p. 118.
[8] *Atlakviða* 35/8: *Eddukvæði* ii. 380.
[9] *Guðrúnarkviða II* 43/2: *Eddukvæði* ii. 361.
[10] Larrington, 'Sibling Drama' (2013), pp. 149–150.
[11] *Atlamál* 77/5–6: *Eddukvæði* ii. 396.

by two later poets or, on the other, a well-established aspect of the legendary tradition inherited by all three. Larrington raises in a footnote the possibility that *Guðrúnarkviða II* adopted the sacrificial imagery from *Atlakviða*, though she recognises the difficulty in assigning priority to either poem.[12] Paul Acker has expressed suspicion about a direct connection between the two poems, rightly suggesting that purported verbal echoes in the eddic corpus may be better accounted for with reference to oral formulaic theory.[13]

Acker's remarks occur in the context of a discussion of the relationship between *Atlakviða* and *Atlamál*, a question specifically addressed in an article by Theodore Andersson.[14] The relative dating is more secure in this instance, with *Atlakviða* widely considered to be one of the oldest poems in the Codex Regius, and *Atlamál* generally agreed to have been composed in Greenland in the twelfth century. Anderson accordingly makes a case for the direct influence of *Atlakviða* on *Atlamál*, in which contention he is endorsed by David Clark.[15] However, Andersson's argument takes insufficient account of the background of traditional material underlying both the poems we have and the many others that were undoubtedly composed but have not survived. Andersson acknowledges that verbal parallels *per se* are insufficient evidence for a direct connection between the poems.[16] He thus bolsters his case by positing three instances of 'mechanical dependence' on *Atlakviða* as further proof of borrowing. First, he contends that the Huns' attempted deception in substituting Hjalli's heart for Hǫgni's makes little narrative sense in *Atlamál*, since it is Atli, not Gunnarr, who has called for Hǫgni's heart. Second, the ambiguity surrounding Gunnarr's execution (arising from the mutually exclusive orders given by Atli that he be hanged and left for the snakes) suggests that the poet has tried

[12] Larrington, 'Sibling Drama' (2013), p. 149 & n. 2.
[13] Paul Acker, *Revising Oral Theory: Formulaic Composition in Old English and Old Icelandic Verse* (New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 79.
[14] Theodore M. Andersson, 'Did the poet of *Atlamál* know *Atlaqviða*?', in Robert J. Glendinning & Haraldur Bessason (eds.), *Edda: A Collection of Essays* (1983), pp. 243–257.
[15] David Clark, *Gender, Violence, and the Past in Edda and Saga* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 30.
[16] Andersson, 'Poet of *Atlamál*' (1983), p. 250.

to harmonise the snakepit account from *Atlakviða* either with an alternative tradition of Gunnarr's death or with the fate implied by Glaumvǫr's prophetic dream in his own account.[17] Third, Hǫgni is confident that he and Gunnarr will be honoured with gifts by Atli even though Vingi has made no promise to this effect, which Andersson believes indicates that the poet had in mind the offer of gifts by Knéfrøðr in *Atlakviða*.[18]

The validity of the first of these three cases is dependent on two suppositions: that Hjalli's part in the heart-cutting scene was the invention of the *Atlakviða* poet, and, granting this, that no other poet in the period between the composition of *Atlakviða* and the composition of *Atlamál* thought the idea worth drawing upon. The first is certainly possible, but cannot be confirmed since we lack antecedent treatments of the legend in the Norse tradition. It should be noted, moreover, that the allusive manner in which the *Atlakviða* poet treats the episode suggests that it is a well-known part of the story.[19] As to the second assumption, the extant sources are insufficient to conclude either way. In addition to the two Atli poems, the excision of Hǫgni's heart is alluded to in *Guðrúnarkviða II* and *Oddrúnargrátr*.[20] Either or both of the references themselves may be a direct response to *Atlakviða*, although as noted above there remains considerable uncertainty regarding the relative dating of *Guðrúnarkviða II* and *Atlakviða*; given the brevity with which Hǫgni's fate is foreshadowed in *Guðrúnarkviða II*, which presupposes familiarity with the detail of the episode, the allusion more plausibly suggests that the motif had become an established part of the legendary tradition. In any case, for our current purposes, given the perfunctory treatment of the heart-cutting episode in *Guðrúnarkviða II*, it can hardly be considered significant that Hjalli is not mentioned in the same context.

[17] *Atlamál* 22–23: *Eddukvæði* ii. 386–387.
[18] Andersson, 'Poet of *Atlamál*' (1983), p. 251–2.
[19] *Poetic Edda I*, ed. & transl. by Dronke (1969), p. 19.
[20] *Guðrúnarkviða II* 31/5–8 & *Oddrúnargrátr* 28/5–6: *Eddukvæði* ii. 359 & 370.

Andersson's assertion that Hjalli's presence in *Atlamál* "leaves an awkward gap in the motivation: there is no good reason to victimize Hialli" is also contentious:[21] we cannot know that the original audiences felt this way. The external motivation for including Hjalli is sound, providing the opportunity to emphasise Hǫgni's unflinching heroism;[22] in terms of internal motivation, the reasons for substituting Hjalli's heart are not spelt out in *Atlakviða* either – we are left to infer that Atli wants to keep both prisoners alive for interrogation, but is second-guessed by Gunnarr. Conceivably, we may imagine Atli's servants in *Atlamál* as dreading to approach the fearsome Hǫgni even in chains, until he willingly consents to the knife. Alternatively, as Dronke suggests, the substitution in *Atlamál* may be a variant of the folktale motif of the kindly servant who refuses to carry out his master's cruel order.[23] Even if one accepts that the use of Hjalli is more clumsy in *Atlamál* than in *Atlakviða*, personal tastes are rarely a reliable guide in matters of literary history, and in any case a poet may use a motif ineptly without having borrowed it from a specific textual source.

Finally, it is also worth noting the name of the Hunnic messenger is changed from Knéfrøðr in *Atlakviða* to Vingi in *Atlamál*, whilst the personal names of several other minor characters in the latter poem appear to be invented. The name of the cowardly scullion, conversely, remains the same. The consistency in Hjalli's name may therefore indicate that his role as foil for Hǫgni had become an established part of the tradition by the time *Atlamál* was composed. This in turn would greatly diminish the likelihood that *Atlakviða* was the only source for this motif available to the poet of *Atlamál*.

In Andersson's second case, it may likewise be countered that the poet need not have been thinking of *Atlakviða* in particular, in preference to any other lost Gunnarr poem that also featured the snake pit – or indeed to the legend independent of any specific textual

[21] Andersson, 'Poet of *Atlamál*' (1983), p. 250.
[22] Clark, *Gender, Violence, and the Past* (2012), p. 32.
[23] *Poetic Edda I*, ed. & transl. by Dronke (1969), p. 18.

manifestation. In *Sigurðarkviða in skamma*, Brynhildr predicts Gunnarr's death in Atli's snake pit,[24] and in *Oddrúnargrátr* Atli's sister Oddrún recalls watching Gunnarr, whom she secretly loved, perish with his harp in the snake pit.[25] Whether or not either of these reflects the direct influence of *Atlakviða* is moot, since either way they testify to the wider familiarity with the episode, proving that *Atlamál* was not alone in using the motif. Looking beyond the literary sources, Andersson himself cites "the relevant iconography", probably in reference to depictions of the episode from the twelfth century onwards in Romanesque carvings in Norway and Sweden.[26] In addition to these later images, however, iconographic sources from Scandinavia and the British Isles indicate that Gunnarr's demise in the snake pit was well established certainly by the tenth century, and possibly as early as the eighth.[27] It is of course highly unlikely that all of the artists involved in these pictorial representations had *Atlakviða* in mind; whether or not the snake pit was the *Atlakviða* poet's innovation, it was thus a firmly established feature of the Norse tradition of Gunnarr's death by the time *Atlamál* was composed. We may also note that Gunnarr's death in the snake pit is foreshadowed earlier on in *Atlakviða*,[28] in terms that would make sense only if the poem's audience already knew this

[24] *Sigurðarkviða in skamma* 59/1–4: *Eddukvæði* ii. 346.
[25] *Oddrúnargrátr* 28–32: *Eddukvæði* ii. 370–1.
[26] Andersson, 'Poet of *Atlamál*' (1983), p. 251. For the Romanesque carvings, see Martin Blindheim, *Norwegian Romanesque Decorative Sculpture 1090–1210* (London: Alec Tiranti, 1965), and Erla Bergendahl Hohler, *Norwegian Stave Church Sculpture*, 2 volumes (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1999).
[27] The Oseberg cart from c. 800 CE has been (perhaps optimistically) posited as an early iconographic representation of the episode. More promising is a ninth- or tenth-century Gotlandic picture stone, Klinte Hunninge I, on which other material from the Vǫlsung cycle is also illustrated. In the British Isles, one face of a tenth-century Manx cross shaft (Andreas no. 121 (95)) clearly depicts the snake pit, and a Gunnar interpretation is supported by the presence of episodes from the life of Sigurðr on the reverse side. A cross shaft at Halton, Lancashire, also of the tenth century, shows Sigurðr scenes, with a possible snakepit motif on an adjacent face. These and related iconographic sources are covered in detail by Kopár, *Gods and Settlers* (2012), pp. 25–56. See also Aðalheiður Guðmundsdóttir, 'Gunnarr and the Snake Pit in Medieval Art and Legend', *Speculum* 87:4 (October 2012), pp. 1015–49, for further discussion, including comparable imagery in material sources from the Rhineland, dating as far back as the late fifth century.
[28] *Atlakviða* 16/11–14: *Eddukvæði* ii. 376.

element of the story. It is therefore highly unlikely that the snake pit was the innovation of the *Atlakviða* poet.

Andersson himself acknowledges the relative weakness of his third case, since Hǫgni's unprompted expectation of guest-gifts is not unreasonable within the value system of the heroic world.[29] In addition to this, the same objection can once again be made: why should we suppose that the offer of gifts featured only in *Atlakviða*? If the evidence available suggests that the snake pit and the heart-cutting episodes existed in the tradition outside of *Atlakviða*, this is even more likely for the gift-giving. For, though we cannot (nor should we expect to) discern the motif in the iconographic sources, the giving of prestige gifts is a commonplace in Old Norse-Icelandic literature, as indeed it is in a range of heroic traditions. Gift-exchange features prominently throughout the saga corpus, both in a formulaic manner in parting scenes, and often as an important motivating factor for the development of the plot – for instance when, in *Njáls saga*, Mǫrðr attempts to engineer hostility between Hǫskuldr and the sons of Njáll, by suggesting to Hǫskuldr that Njáll's sons gave him gifts intended to mock him.[30] An earlier episode in the same saga uses the language of gift-exchange as representative of the wider nexus of reciprocity, when Bergþóra urges her husband and sons to avenge verbal insults against them: "Gjafir eru yðr gefnar feðgum, ok verðið þér litlir drengir af, nema þér launið." (Gifts have been given to you, father and sons, and you will be men of little stature, if you do not repay them.)[31] Several verses of the eddic wisdom poem *Hávamál* express the same symbiosis, with gift-giving and treachery presented as two sides of the same coin.[32] Outside of the *Íslendingasǫgur*, an episode in *Hrólfs saga kraka* illustrates the disastrous consequences of rejecting a host's gift.[33] The importance of gift-exchange also pervades Old English heroic

[29] Andersson, 'Poet of *Atlamál*' (1983), p. 251 – despite which concession he considers that the mention of gifts in *Atlamál* "inevitably" points to the older poem as a direct source.
[30] *Brennu-Njáls Saga* 109, pp. 276–7.
[31] *Brennu-Njáls saga* 44, p. 114.
[32] *Hávamál* 41/1–6; 42/1–6; 45/1–6; 46/1–6: *Eddukvæði* i. 330–1.
[33] *Hrólfs saga kraka* 46: *Fornaldar sögur Norðurlanda* i. 91–2.

poetry. The narrator of *Widsith* comments repeatedly on the generosity of the kings he claims to have visited.[34] In *Beowulf*, kings are routinely referred to by such periphrases as *bēaga bryttan* (ring-dispenser);[35] *bēaggyfa* (ring-giver);[36] *sinces brytta* (treasure-dispenser);[37] *sincgifa* (treasure-giver);[38] *goldgyfa* (gold-giver);[39] *goldwine* (gold-friend);[40] *sinca baldor* (treasure-prince)[41]. The giving of gifts punctuates many of the poem's set pieces, and is several times commended as wise,[42] whilst Hrōðgār conversely condemns Heremōd's lack of generosity towards his followers.[43] Finally, it may also be noted that Hǫgni's eager anticipation of receiving gifts in *Atlamál* in fact contrasts markedly with its alleged model passage in *Atlakviða*, in which Gunnarr is uninterested in Atli's promised gifts, since there is nothing he could be given that he does not already possess.[44] Of course, this difference in perspective in no way proves that the *Atlamál* poet did *not* know the earlier poem, but it suggests at any rate that he had a very different conception of the relative status of the Burgundians and Atli.

The strongest of these proposed mechanical borrowings is the first, concerning the role of Hjalli; yet any of the three cases would be unremarkable in isolation. Their evidential value is cumulative, and must be deemed compromised since they can each be challenged by versions of the same objection. There is no reason to suppose (and several reasons not to) that any of these motifs were peculiar to *Atlakviða*; thus, their presence in *Atlamál*, whether deemed 'out of place' or not, cannot be taken as evincing dependence on the earlier poem.

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[34] *Widsith* 66–7; 70–4; 88–96; 97–102, p. 25.
[35] *Beowulf* 35, 352, 1487, pp. 4, 14, 51.
[36] *Beowulf* 1102, p. 38.
[37] *Beowulf* 607, 1922, 2071, pp. 23, 70; cf. l. 2383, p. 82
[38] *Beowulf* 1012, 1342, 2311, pp. 36, 47, 79.
[39] *Beowulf* 2652, p. 90.
[40] *Beowulf* 1171, 1476, 1602, 2419, 2584, pp. 41, 51, 55, 83, 88.
[41] *Beowulf* 2428, p. 83.
[42] *Beowulf* 1480–7, 1966–70, 2144–9, pp. 51, 66–7, 73.
[43] *Beowulf* 1719–20, p. 58.
[44] *Atlakviða* 6/1–7/12: *Eddukvæði* ii. 373–4.

A further proof of Andersson's concerns the similarity in structure between the two poems. The springboard for this structural argument is the observation that the basic plot outlines of the Atli poems bear far greater resemblance to each other than those of the two extant poems about Helgi Hundingsbani. Whilst true, the contention that this suggests a direct connection between the two Atli poems rests on the unspoken (and unsupported) assumption that the situation with the Helgi poems should be considered more typical of Old Norse heroic poetry in general. With only two traditions to compare with each other in this respect, deeming one atypical is entirely arbitrary. Moreover, not all legendary traditions are likely to develop in equivalent ways, and it would not be surprising for one to have stabilised to a greater extent at an earlier stage than another.

Andersson additionally posits that the removal of "non-integral insertions" from *Atlamál* leaves behind a poem of equivalent size to *Atlakviða*, which "cover[s] the same ground in the same order".[45] This last is a low bar to set for establishing a direct connection between two poems narrating the same story, whilst Carola Gottzmann has rightly challenged the identification of certain passages in *Atlamál* as non-integral or superfluous.[46] Andersson reinforces his argument by positing "a recurrent adherence to the phrasing of *Atlakviða* at regular intervals" throughout *Atlamál*.[47] He suggests eleven instances of such dependence, concluding: "At every important juncture … there is an exact correspondence in the situation and to some extent in the syntax and the phraseology."[48]

For the most part, however, these alleged verbal and syntactic parallels are simply not very close. The eleven pairs of corresponding passages are as follows: (1) *Am.* 2/7–8 < *Akv.* 1/1–2; (2) *Am*. 4/5–8 < *Akv.* 1/3–4; (3) *Am.* 7/1–2 < *Akv.* 3/1–6; (4) *Am.* 8/1–4 < *Akv.* 10/1–4;

[45] Andersson, 'Poet of *Atlamál*' (1983), p. 253.
[46] Carola L. Gottzmann, '*Atlamál*: Eine jüngere nordische Version des Nibelungenstoffes', in Klaus Matzel & Hans–Gert Roloff (eds.), *Festschrift für Herbert Kolb zu seinem 65. Geburtstag* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1989), pp. 131–44.
[47] Andersson, 'Poet of *Atlamál*' (1983), p. 253.
[48] Andersson, 'Poet of *Atlamál*' (1983), pp. 254–5.

(5) *Am*. 34/3–4 < *Akv*. 12/7–8; (6) *Am*. 37/1 < *Akv*. 13/1–2; (7) *Am*. 38/3–4 < *Akv*. 14/1; (8) *Am*. 59/1–4 < *Akv*. 21/1–4; (9) *Am*. 65/5–6 < *Akv*. 24/1–2; (10) *Am*. 66/1–2 < *Akv*. 31/6–8; (11) *Am*. 83/7–8 < *Akv*. 36/5–6. Only five of these pairs (1, 7, 8, 9, and 10), in fact, display any similarities in vocabulary or syntax, and these are far from remarkable. In (1), both *Akv*. 1/1–2 and *Am*. 2/7–8 tell how Atli sent (*sendi*) a messenger to Gunnar; the independent use of the same verb by both poets to describe the dispatching of an envoy would hardly be an unlikely coincidence. In (8), the correspondence consists in the use by both poets of *hjarta* (heart) and *scorið*/*scerið* (cut). Neither word is especially surprising in the context of the heart-cutting episode, and we have already seen that the presence of this episode itself in *Atlamál* is unlikely to reflect the influence of *Atlakviða*, being instead an established feature of the tradition available to both poets: even if the episode was the invention of the *Atlakviða* poet, which cannot be proved, it must have become sufficiently well-established for the allusion in *Guðrúnarkviða II* to be effective. In (10), both poets describe Gunnarr playing a *harpa* (harp); the motif is a widespread feature even of the iconographic tradition, and one wonders what other word the *Atlamál* poet ought to have used instead for the instrument. The resemblances in pairs (7) and (9) are closer: (7) sets "Land sá þeir Atla" (they saw Atli's land: *Akv*. 14/1) against "bœ sá þeir standa | er Buðli átti" (they saw a farmstead standing, which Buðli had owned: *Am*. 38/3–4), with both passages describing the arrival of Gunnar and Hǫgni at Atli's hall. Though the correspondence in phrasing in the same narrative context may seem notable, the matching construction is in fact formulaic; analogous verses may be cited from various other eddic poems, the closest parallels being found in *Vǫluspá*.[49] In (9), both poems describe Hǫgni's reaction to the excision of his heart with the verse "Hló þá Hǫgni" (then Hǫgni laughed: *Akv*. 24/1 = *Am*. 65/3). The verb *hlœja* occurs elsewhere in eddic poetry to denote

[49] *Vǫluspá* 35/1, 38/1, 62/1, 19/1: *Eddukvæði* i. 299; 301; 307; 295. Cf. Acker, *Revising Oral Theory* (2014), pp. 67–78.

heroic or triumphant laughter – for instance when Vǫlundr makes his escape, and again when he reveals his revenge to Níðuðr,[50] or when Guðrún has successfully persuaded Hamðir and Sǫrli to avenge Svanhildr.[51] It additionally occurs in an exactly parallel construction, "Hló þá Brynhildr" (then Brynhildr laughed),[52] when Brynhildr celebrates on hearing that her revenge against Sigurðr has been accomplished in *Brot af Sigurðarkviðu*, suggesting that the expression is formulaic. Furthermore, if, as we have suggested, Hǫgni's fortitude under the knife was a recognised part of the tradition received by both poets, his heroic laughter is likely to have been an important feature of this episode, since it is crucial in demonstrating that even as he dies Hǫgni remains undefeated by Atli. In this case, the poetic associations of the verb *hlæja*, its use in a formulaic expression, and its alliteration with the hero's name would make it the obvious choice for the *Atlamál* poet or any other poet recounting the story, with or without knowledge of *Atlakviða*. The verse thus could well be an established collocation attached to Hǫgni's death in the poetic tradition.

None of these objections, of course, can positively disprove the influence of *Atlakviða* on either poem.[53] The poets of *Guðrúnarkviða II* and *Atlamál* may both have known *Atlakviða*, and borrowed and adapted elements of its presentation of the legend. Yet even if this were the case, which is by no means evident, there would be no need to suppose that they were also responding directly to *Atlakviða* in presenting the infanticide as a sacrificial act. The nature of the sacrificial references in both poems suggest a frame of reference wider than one earlier poetic model, and the way in which the sacrificial framework is deployed in *Atlakviða* also indicates that it was an established part of the tradition.

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[50] *Vǫlundarkviða* 28/5–6 = 37/1–2: *Eddukvæði* i. 435–6.
[51] *Guðrúnarhvǫt* 7/1: *Eddukvæði* ii. 403.
[52] *Brot af Sigurðarkviðu* 9/1: *Eddukvæði* ii. 325.
[53] Cf. Marcello Meli, 'Riscritture eddiche. Il caso della *Atlakviða* e degli *Atlamál*', in Marina Buzzoni and Massimiliano Bampi (eds.), *The Garden of Crossing Paths: The Manipulation and Rewriting of Medieval Texts* (Venice: Cafoscarina, 2005), pp. 272–282, at p. 281, whose conclusion is nevertheless that it is not necessary to refer to *Atlakviða* in the analysis of *Atlamál*.

This sacrificial framing is thus a consistent thread in both the classical and the Old Norse texts. As we have noted, the correspondence is remarkable in view of the widespread gendering of sacrificial authority. In many cultures, sacrificial practice has been the sole preserve of adult men, whilst in others, female participation is restricted to women in a non-maternal function.[54] We have seen in the previous chapter that women in ancient Greek and Roman societies did perform sacrifices in certain ritual contexts (though it is notable that regardless of social reality, representations of female sacrifice in Roman contexts, whether literary or iconographic, are relatively rare),[55] whereas there are no indications that they did so in Old Norse society. In light of this contrast, a notable asymmetry in the ways the infanticides of Medea and Guðrún are portrayed is thrown into sharp relief. Closer consideration of the sacrificial allusions in each case illustrates that Medea's sacrificial authority is consistently undermined, whereas Guðrún's is endorsed by other characters, and by the external narrator(s).

Sacrifice or Sacrilege

In the classical material it is only Medea herself who portrays her filicide as a sacrifice. We have seen (above, p. 187) that in the dramatic treatments by both Euripides and Seneca, Medea seeks to legitimise her crime through the use of sacrificial language. Emily McDermott has pointed out Euripides' engagement in his play with Aeschylus' *Oresteia* trilogy, in which the illegitimate assertion of sacrificial authority is a prominent recurring theme.[56] Moreover, other characters in Euripides' play do not endorse Medea's sacrificial terminology. On learning of Medea's true intention, the shocked chorus asks her, "ἀλλὰ κτανεῖν σὸν σπέρμα τολμήσεις, γύναι;" (but could you bring yourself to kill your own offspring, woman?);[57] *κτείνειν* (to kill)

[54] Jay, *Throughout Your Generations Forever* (1992), p. xxiii; McKracken, *The Curse of Eve* (2003), pp. 41–2.
[55] Hemelrijk, 'Women and Sacrifice' (2009), pp. 259–65.
[56] McDermott, *The Incarnation of Disorder* (1989), pp. 75–6; Zeitlin, 'Corrupted Sacrifice' (1965), pp. 463–508.
[57] Euripides, *Medea* 816: *Euripidis Fabulae* i. 128.

is a relatively neutral verb; at least in Homer it is more commonly used to denote slaying in battle than sacrificial killing.[58] The chorus uses the same verb once more,[59] as does Jason several times.[60] More frequently, however, the chorus explicitly refer to the deed by the noun *φόνος* (murder) or the verb *φονεύειν* (to murder).[61] Jason labels Medea "παιδολέτορ" (destroyer of children) and "παιδοφόνου" (murderer of children),[62] and both he and the chorus declare Medea to be "stained" by the killing of kin.[63] Numerous Latin sources affirm the illegitimacy of Medea's sacrificial act by declaring her *impia* (impious), a designation used for instance by Ovid,[64] Seneca,[65] Valerius Flaccus,[66] and the author of the pseudo-Virgilian *Culex*.[67] In a different vein, it has been noted briefly above that Hosidius Geta, in his Virgilian cento on the Medea legend, constructed the infanticide scene with verses borrowed from aberrant sacrificial episodes in Virgil – Sinon falsely claims to have escaped being sacrificed by the other Greeks; Pyrrhus drags Priam to the altar of Zeus before killing him; Dido disguises the preparations for her suicide as preparations for a sacrifice, not revealing that she herself is the intended victim. It bears emphasising that each of these Virgilian source passages depicts a perversion of proper sacrificial ritual: Sinon's sacrifice is a lie with treacherous intentions; Pyrrhus' killing of Priam is overtly and deliberately sacrilegious;[68] the Carthaginians are tricked into organizing the

[58] Georg Autenrieth & A. Kaegi, *Wörterbuch zu den Homerischen Gedichten*, 14th edition (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1999), p. 144.
[59] Euripides, *Medea* 1281: *Euripidis Fabulae* i. 149.
[60] Of the infanticide: Euripides, *Medea* 1312, 1367, 1411: *Euripidis Fabulae* i. 151, 153, 155; also of Medea's earlier fratricide – Euripides, *Medea* 1334: *Euripidis Fabulae* i. 152.
[61] Euripides, *Medea* 855, 862, 977, 998, 1266–7,1275, 1313: *Euripidis Fabulae* i. 129, 130, 135, 136, 148, 149, 151.
[62] Euripides, *Medea* 1393, 1407: *Euripidis Fabulae* i. 154–5.
[63] Euripides, *Medea* 1268–9, 1346: *Euripidis Fabulae* i. 148, 152.
[64] Ovid, *Tristia* III. IX. 9, p. 63.
[65] Seneca, *Medea* 395: *Tragoediae* p. 139; *Agamemnon* 119–20: *Tragoediae* p. 259.
[66] Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica* V. 686, ed. & transl. by J.H. Mozley, LCL 286 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934), p. 294
[67] *Culex* 249: *Appendix Vergiliana*, ed. by W.V. Clausen, F.R.D. Goodyear, E.J. Kenney & J.A. Richmond (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 29.
[68] Robert John Sklenář, 'The Death of Priam: *Aeneid* 2. 506–558', *Hermes* 118:1 (1990), pp. 67–75, at pp. 71–3.

human sacrifice of their queen. This provides further indication that ancient authors considered Medea's infanticide to constitute an illegitimate appropriation of sacrificial authority.

Conversely, Guðrún is vouched for independently in her capacity as a sacrificer in several places. As we noted earlier, the poet of *Atlakviða*, by describing her as *afkár dís*, bestows upon Guðrún the sacrificial associations of the *dísir*, affording a sense of legitimacy to her designation of her sons as sacrificial beasts. The sacrificial connotations of the filicide are underscored by juxtaposition with Atli's killing of the Niflungs, which is specifically designated as *morðr* (murder).[69] Atli's prophetic dream in *Guðrúnarkviða II* likewise constitutes independent recognition of the sacrificial character of Guðrún's infanticide, since although the sacrificial reading is proffered by Guðrún, whose overall interpretation of the portents is guarded and deliberately misleading, the sacrificial aspect tallies well with the imagery from the dream itself, and Guðrún's reliability is moreover bolstered by the fact that she has earlier correctly predicted to Grímhildr the demise of her brothers at Atli's hands. Finally and most explicitly, in *Atlamál* Guðrún's sons accept the designation of their imminent deaths as a sacrifice, even as they also warn their mother that her actions will bring her no joy.

The appropriation of the male prerogative of sacrificial authority by both heroines coheres with a wider pattern of gender subversion. The literary depictions of both Medea and Guðrún have been frequently noted for their gender ambiguity. Euripides' portrayal of Medea blends the persona of the vitimised woman with typically masculine traits, frequently reminiscent in particular of Sophoclean heroes.[70] Helene Foley has observed the way in which Medea herself justifies her revenge in terms both of erotic jealousy (a characteristically female motive) and of archaic heroic principles.[71] The play's opening monologue delivered by

[69] *Atlakviða* 34/4: *Eddukvæði* ii. 379.
[70] Elizabeth Bryson Bongie, 'Heroic Elements in the *Medea* of Euripides', *TAPA* 107 (1977), pp 27–56; Bernard M.W. Knox, 'The *Medea* of Euripides', *Yale Classical Studies* 25 (1977), pp. 193–225.
[71] Helene P. Foley, 'Medea's Divided Self', *Classical Antiquity* 8:1 (1989), pp. 61–85, at pp. 64–6.

Medea's nurse implicitly casts Medea as an equal partner in her marriage to Jason, in contradiction to contemporary Athenian marriage laws,[72] and in contrast to Medea's own self-presentation (admittedly for rhetorical purposes) as a passive abductee (see below, p. 216). As Stewart Florey points out, the oath Jason has violated, sworn with clasped right hands, additionally evokes those sworn "between male heroes of equal station" in the Homeric epics.[73] Foley also notes the way in which Euripides describes Medea's actions using martial or athletic vocabulary.[74] She judges herself according to a characterisctically masculine standard of *ἀρετη* (virtue), as illustrated for instance by her fixation on the heroic ethos to be "βαρεῖαν ἐχθροῖς καὶ φίλοισιν εὐμενῆ" (harmful to enemies and helpful to friends),[75] and in her desire to win fame and preserve her reputation.[76] In all treatments she employs stereotypically feminine means to murder Creon and his daughter (sorcery or poisons), but Euripides' Medea makes it clear that she would use a sword if logistics allowed.[77]

Similarly, we have already noted several instances in which the eddic poets give Guðrún characteristically masculine attributes. We have seen (above, pp. 146–9) that the very nature of her active vengeance sets her apart from other vengeful women not only in the eddic poems but in the wider corpus of Old Norse literature. In *Atlakviða*, she additionally assumes the role of a king as she distributes treasure to Atli's household servants,[78] and as David Clark notes, Guðrún's killing of her husband draws overtly on the imagery of masculine sexual dominance, as she penetrates the passive Atli with a sword and spills his blood on their marital

[72] Stewart Florey, 'Medea's Right Hand: Promises and Revenge', *TAPA* 108 (1978), pp. 69–74, at p. 70.
[73] Florey, 'Medea's Right Hand' (1978), pp. 70–1.
[74] Foley, 'Medea's Divided Self' (1989), pp. 75–6.
[75] Euripides, *Medea* 809, 1049–50: *Euripidis Fabulae* i. 110, 138; Foley, 'Medea's Divided Self' (1989), pp. 65–6.
[76] For example, Euripides, *Medea* 381–3, 807–10: *Euripidis Fabulae* i. 110, 127; Bongie, 'Heroic Elements' (1977), pp. 31–2.
[77] Euripides, *Medea* 379–86: *Euripidis Fabulae* i. 110; Foley, 'Medea's Divided Self' (1989), p. 76.
[78] *Atlakviða* 41: *Eddukvæði* ii. 381.

bed.[79] In *Atlamál*, as we have seen, Guðrún takes part in physical combat herself;[80] as Larrington notes, she prepares for battle by breaking and discarding her jewellery in a symbolic disavowal of conventional femininity.[81] Her martial credentials are highighted again towards the end of the poem in the course of her bitter arguments with Atli.[82] In *Guðrúnarhvǫt*, Guðrún on the one hand exemplifies the whetting role typical of women in Old Norse revenge narratives, but on the other appears as the head of the household, stating that she gave Svanhildr away as a bride.[83] The absence of Jónakr in this scenario is highly conspicuous; the saga corpus portrays fathers or other adult male relatives as having authority over a women's marriage, whilst the secular laws collected in the thirteenth-century *Jónsbók* stipulated that "Faðir ok móðir skulu ráða giptingum dætra sinna" (both father and mother shall decide on the marriage of their daughter).[84]

The external legitimising of Guðrún's sacrificial act may be seen as reinforcing her success as a male impersonator; as Clark notes, at the climax of *Atlakviða* she achieves "perhaps the ultimate manipulation of gender roles".[85] The undermining of Medea's claim to sacrificial legitimacy, in contrast, reflects her failure to assert her autonomy in the same way. As Foley notes, Euripides' Medea, by conflating Achillean and Odyssean brands of heroism, "shows herself a pathetically confused imitator of heroic masculinity".[86] Unlike Guðrún, the success of Medea's revenge against Jason and Creon is shown in Euripides' play to be dependent on recourse to other male authorities – she mobilises her plan only after she is

[79] *Atlakviða* 42–43: *Eddukvæði* ii. 382–2; Clark, *Gender, Violence and the Past* (2012), p. 40.
[80] *Atlamál* 48–50: *Eddukvæði* ii. 390–1.
[81] *Atlamál* 45: *Eddukvæði* ii. 390; Larrington, 'Sibling Drama' (2013), p. 143.
[82] *Atlamál* 97–98: *Eddukvæði* ii. 399–400.
[83] *Guðrúnarhvǫt* 16/1–4: *Eddukvæði* ii. 405.
[84] Jenny Jochens, *Women in Old Norse Society* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), pp. 26–7, 46; *Jónsbók* V. 1: *Jónsbók … og Réttarbætr*, ed. by Ólafur Halldórsson (Odense: Odense University Press, 1904, repr. 1970), p. 70.
[85] Clark, *Gender, Violence, and the Past* (2012), pp. 39–40.
[86] Foley, 'Medea's Divided Self' (1989), p. 81.

assured of refuge with Aegeus,[87] and her escape is made possible by her divine grandfather Helios.[88]

Contemporary Perceptions of Guðrún and Medea

The portrayals of both Medea and Guðrún in the primary sources have much in common. Both are shown as depicting characteristically masculine attributes, and even as attaining a degree of superhuman stature at the point of accomplishing their revenge. In spite of this, each heroine prompted considerably different reactions from contemporary audiences. Guðrún is generally regarded with cautious admiration, whereas Medea is cast as a negative exemplar of womanhood.

The most explicit expression of approval of Guðrún in Old Norse literature is a well-known verse in *Gísla saga Súrssonar*. The saga narrates how the eponymous hero avenged the death of his brother-in-law and blood-brother Vésteinn by killing Þorgrímr, also Gísli's brother-in-law by marriage to his sister Þordís. Þordís is remarried to Þorgrímr's brother Bǫrkr. She hears of a verse uttered by Gísli at Þorgrímr's burial mound in which he cryptically identifies himself as Þorgrímr's killer; she puzzles out its meaning and informs her husband Bǫrkr. Gísli learns of from his brother Þorkell that Þordís has informed on him, whereupon he castigates his sister for her betrayal, which prioritised marriage bonds over blood bonds. He compares her unfavourably to Guðrún Gjúkadóttir who remained loyal to her brothers over her husband.[89]

David Clark has rightly challenged the assumption that Gísli's praise of Guðrún should be taken to represent the view of the saga author; as Clark notes, the extensive reworking of eddic material in *Gísla saga* serves rather to highlight the old heroic moral code as an outdated

[87] Euripides, *Medea* 764–71: *Euripidis Fabulae* i. 126.
[88] Euripides, *Medea* 1321–2: *Euripidis Fabulae* i. 151.
[89] *Gísla saga* 19, v. 12, p. 62.

worldview incompatible with post-conversion Icelandic society.[90] Equally, however, the saga's evaluation of heroic ethics does not constitute an outright condemnation of Guðrún's actions. Indeed, other evidence illustrates that it remained possible for medieval Icelanders to admire Guðrún whilst recognising that the vengeful ideal she embodied was out of place in a Christian context. In the first place, it is likely that the verses in question, though attributed to Gísli, in fact date from the twelfth century;[91] a later Christian poet, then, was at least capable of envisioning an approving attitude towards Guðrún, even if this did not match his or her own view. Furthermore, the final stanza of *Atlakviða*, in which the poet eulogises "bjǫrt" (bright) Guðrún as the bane of "þriggja þjóðkonunga" (three kings of men),[92] and states that "ferr engi svá síðan | brúðr i brynju | brœðra at hefna" (never since has a bride in her mailcoat acted thus to avenge her brothers),[93] is likely a later addition to the poem.[94] If this is the case, it provides a further instance of a later poet expressing some degree of admiration for Guðrún. The concluding stanza of *Atlamál* also explicitly praises Guðrún alongside her brothers:

> Sæll er hverr síðan
> er slíkt getr fœða
> jóð at afreki
> sems ól Gjúki;
> lifa mun þat eptir
> á landi hverju
> þeira þrámæli,
> hvargi er þjóð heyrir.
>
> (Fortunate is every man afterwards who is able to father such excellent children as Gjúki fathered; after them in every land their defiance lives on, wherever people hear of it.)[95]

[90] Clark, *Gender, Violence, and the Past* (2012), pp. 89–116.
[91] Heather O'Donoghue, *Skaldic Verse and the Poetics of Saga Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 139.
[92] *Atlakviða* 45/5–8: *Eddukvæði* ii. 382.
[93] *Atlakviða* 45/2–4: *Eddukvæði* ii. 382.
[94] *Poetic Edda I*, ed. & transl. by Dronke (1969), pp. 72–3.
[95] *Atlamál* 104/1–8: *Eddukvæði* ii. 401.

David Clarkc finds this strophe "totally off-key" following the climax of the poem, and suggests that the poet is really invoking the earlier heroism of Gunnarr and Hǫgni.[96] However, the poet of *Atlamál* has also substantially reworked the battle between Niflungs and Huns in order to involve Guðrún herself in these heroic feats.[97] Whilst this does not have any direct bearing on her later actions, it is nonetheless significant that the poet has elected to give Guðrún this active role, since it is suggestive of a generally positive evaluation of her character.

Clark conversely notes several instances in which Guðrún's revenge against Atli appears to be criticised in the primary sources. In *Atlamál*, her feigned submission to Atli after his execution of her brothers is implicitly aligned through phrasal recall with the treachery of Atli's messenger in luring Gunnarr and Hǫgni to Atli's farmstead at the start of the poem. In *Guðrúnarhvǫt*, Hamðir argues that, in killing her sons by Atli, Guðrún deprived him and Sǫrli of potential accomplices in their vengeance for Svanhildr. The first of these is not a comment on the act of vengeance itself, but rather on Guðrún's duplicity in ostensibly reconciling herself to the murder of her brothers; moreover, the correspondence in phrasing may just as easily be taken to denote a contrastive evaluation of the two deceptions. By way of analogy, the parallel phrasing in the two heart-cutting scenes in *Atlakviða* is self-evidently not intended to signal an equivalency between the respective victims, Hjalli and Hǫgni.[98]

The second instance is equally problematic as evidence for widespread disapproval of Guðrún's vengeance. Though the criticism may seem valid on its own terms, its force is mitigated by the context of its delivery: a contemporary audience would have been well aware that Hamðir and Sǫrli will go on to murder a step-brother who offers his assistance, undercutting Hamðir's complaint that Guðrún has deprived them of comrades. In *Atlamál*,

[96] Clark, *Gender, Violence, and the Past* (2012), p. 34.
[97] *Atlamál* 48–51: *Eddukvæði* ii. 390–1.
[98] *Atlakviða* 22–25: *Eddukvæði* ii. 377; cf. Edward R. Haymes, 'The Germanic *Heldenlied* and the Poetic *Edda*: Speculations on Preliterary History', *Oral Tradition* 19:1 (2004), pp. 43–62, at p. 53.

Guðrún's sons themselves comment on their imminent murder, but they do not criticise the act of filicide *per se* – they merely suggest that it will cause her more grief than it will assuage. In *Guðrúnarhvǫt* this is shown not to be the case, since Guðrún does not reckon their deaths amongst the greatest woes she has suffered.[99] Clark also cites Guðrún's suicide attempt at the end of *Atlamál*, in which she is given the epithet *fróð* (wise);[100] he interprets this as authorial approval of her attempt to end her life, and thus as condemnation of her previous actions. However, as Larrington notes, in both Atli poems "she is depicted uncritically, mostly with epithets that emphasize her strength and resolution".[101] This includes the infanticide sequence in *Atlamál*, in the course of which she is described as *stórhuguð* (high-minded),[102] and *kappsvinna* (strong-spirited).[103] It is difficult to accept that the aforementioned *fróð* should be interpreted as a situationally specific adjective, while these others should not.

Evidence from outside the eddic corpus further points to an overall positive evaluation of Guðrún in medieval Iceland. A well-known episode in *Íslendinga saga*, part of the *Sturlunga saga* collection, in which Jóreiðr Hermundardóttir dreams repeatedly of Guðrún, suggests that even in the mid-thirteenth century Guðrún could be perceived as a source of reassurance by a young Christian woman. Additionally, the fact that in reporting these apparitions the saga author has taken steps to temper Guðrún's paganism indicates a concern to portray her as a figure of moral authority in a Christian context. It is striking, for instance, that the first of Jóreiðr's dreams is insistently stated to have happened "um messu, Maríumessu Magðalenu, í kirkju" (at mass, the mass of Mary Magdalene, in church), with Guðrún giving her famous evasive answer to Jóreiðr's questioning: "Engu skal þik þat skipta ... hvárt ek em Kristin eða

[99] *Guðrúnarhvǫt* 16/5–18/1: *Eddukvæði* ii. 405–6. It is evident that verses are missing after 18/1, and it could be argued that Guðrún acknowledged her regret over her children by Atli in these verses; this is not likely however, since 18/1 has the force of concluding a list. Cf. Larrington, 'Sibling Drama' (2013), pp. 152–3.
[100] *Atlamál* 103/5: *Eddukvæði* ii. 400.
[101] Larrington, 'Sibling Drama' (2013), p. 147.
[102] *Atlamál* 75/5: *Eddukvæði* ii. 395.
[103] *Atlamál* 78/2: *Eddukvæði* ii. 396.

heiðin, en vinr em ek vinar míns" (it should not concern you whether I am Christian or pagan, for I am a friend to my friend).[104] Guðrún goes on to condemn those responsible for the arson at Flugumýrr specifically because "þá ætla þeir mið illvilja sínum at koma heiðni á allt landit" (they in their malice intend to establish paganism throughout the country), and in a subsequent dream she explicitly invokes the trinity – "Nu hefir þetta þrisvar borit fyrir þik, enda verðr þrisvar allt forðum, þat er ok eigi síðr, at góðr er guðs þrenning" (now this has happened to you three times, for all good things come in threes; and this is no less true, that God's Trinity is good).[105]

Finally, as Jenny Jochens has observed, charter evidence shows that the name remained popular in Iceland all the way through the Christian period, and was Bishop Árni Þorláksson's example of a typical female name in a baptismal formula of 1275.[106] The name is also attested in explicitly Christian runic inscriptions, particularly in Sweden from the eleventh century.[107] Although some of these may be ascribed to coincidence, it is highly likely given the wealth of evidence attesting to the popularity of the Vǫlsung legend in medieval Scandinavia that many were named after the legendary heroine. Additionally, even without direct reference to Guðrún Gjúkadóttir, the continued use of the name illustrates that it was not stigmatised by its association with the legendary figure.

The evidence for ancient attitudes towards Medea paints a considerably different picture. John M. Dillon notes that philosophical opinion throughout antiquity saw Medea as "a dangerous, barbarian woman, occasionally to be pitied ... but generally to be condemned as the

[104] *Sturlunga saga*, ed. by Jón Jóhannesson, Magnús Finbogason & Kristján Eldjárn, 2 volumes (Reykjavík: Sturlunguútgáfan, 1946), i. 521.
[105] *Sturlunga saga*, ed. by Jón Jóhannesson, Magnús Finbogason & Kristján Eldjárn, 2 volumes (Reykjavík: Sturlunguútgáfan, 1946), i. 521.
[106] Jenny Jochens, *Women in Old Norse Society* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 13.
[107] Runestones including Sö 11; Sö 165; Hs 14; U 438. See *Scandinavian Runic-text Database*: http://www.nordiska.uu.se/forskn/samnord.htm

paradigmatic example of a disordered soul".[108] Literary treatments are likewise occasionally sympathetic, but for the most part hostile. Beginning with the first extant appearance of the filicidal Medea in Euripides' tragedy, classical sources present a highly ambivalent figure, combining acknowledgment of her ill-treatment by Jason with consistent and robust condemnation of her retaliation. Euripides' play recognises Medea's legitimate grievances against Jason, but consistently undermines them by highlighting her own hypocrisy. For instance, she condemns Jason as "ψευδόρκου καὶ ξειναπάτου" (oathbreaker and betrayer of strangers),[109] yet she herself is routinely dishonest in her interactions with other characters. In her famous first speech she gains the pity and trust of the Chorus of Corinthian women by highlighting their shared struggle in a world dominated by men, before emphasising her own plight by juxtaposing their domestic support networks with her isolation as a foreign refugee. The speech has been hailed as an example of "Euripides' extreme sympathy with women's lot in life";[110] yet this is to disregard the patriarchal ideology that informed the speech's contemporary reception. Rather, it sets the tone for the rest of the play by exemplifying Medea's disturbing facility with deceptive rhetoric. On top of the general inapplicability of her complaints to her own situation, Euripides has Medea mention specifically her lack of a brother – "οὐ μητέρ, οὐκ ἀδελφόν, οὐχι συγγενῆ" (no mother, no brother, nor any relative),[111] thus foregrounding her deceit in omitting to mention that she was the one who killed him. Her self-identification in this passage as having been "λεληισμένη" (seized as booty)[112] would likewise have been recognised by the audience as fundamentally dishonest,[113] and indeed in her later

[108] Dillon, 'Medea among the Philosophers', in Clauss & Iles Johnston (eds.), *Essays on Medea* (1997), pp. 211–8, at p. 218.
[109] Euripides, *Medea* 1392: *Euripidis Fabulae* i. 154.
[110] Jennifer March, 'Euripides the Misogynist?', in Anton Powell (ed.), *Euripides, Women and Sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1990), pp. 32–75, at p. 32.
[111] Euripides, *Medea* 257: *Euripidis Fabulae* i. 105.
[112] Euripides, *Medea* 256: *Euripidis Fabulae* i. 105.
[113] Cf. Helene P. Foley, *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 259.

argument with Jason she emphasises her own agency in their liaison.[114] By gaining their sympathy and solidarity, Medea convinces the Chorus to abet her in her plans for vengeance against Jason[115] – the true nature of which, however, she conceals from them until the last minute.[116] Later, she deceives Creon into allowing her one day's grace before her expulsion from Corinth, giving her time to enact her revenge.[117] It is noteworthy, in light of her true intentions, that her pretext for this request is that she needs time to ensure that her children will be provided for in exile. She also manipulates Aegeus into granting her unconditional sanctuary at Athens (and it cannot have escaped the notice of fifth-century audiences that her promise in return to help Aegeus produce a male heir looks rather disingenuous in view of her later attempts to banish and poison Theseus, the son Aegeus does eventually beget);[118] feigns apologetic acceptance of Jason's marriage to Glauce;[119] and murders the latter by means of poisoned garments given ostensibly as wedding gifts.[120]

Other texts corroborate Medea's ambivalent and sinister reputation amongst ancient observers. In the *Metamorphoses*, Ovid also repeatedly stresses her duplicity in his detailed account of how she tricked the daughters of Pelias into murdering their father.[121] Her intelligence and expertise in herb-lore and magic are frequently pointed out,[122] though even this is far from being straightforward praise given the frequently negative valorisation of clever

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[114] Euripides, *Medea* 475–89: *Euripidis Fabulae* i. 114.
[115] Euripides, *Medea* 259–68: *Euripidis Fabulae* i. 105.
[116] Euripides, *Medea* 772–810: *Euripidis Fabulae* i. 126–7.
[117] Euripides, *Medea* 340–7: *Euripidis Fabulae* i. 108–9.
[118] Euripides, *Medea* 663–758: *Euripidis Fabulae* i. 121–5. There are good grounds for supposing that Medea's attempted murder of Theseus was already current in the fifth century: Herodotus knew of her flight from Athens, accompanied by her son Medus: Herodotus, *Historiae* VII. 62, ii. 172. The Hellenistic poet Callimachus reported the episode in the third century his now fragmentary epyllion *Hecale* (fr. 232–3): *Callimachus Aetia, Iambi, Hecale and Other Fragments; Musaeus, Hero and Leander*, ed. & transl. by C.A. Trypanis, Thomas Gelzer & Cedric Whitman, LCL 421 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 180.
[119] Euripides, *Medea* 869–905: *Euripidis Fabulae* i. 130–1.
[120] Euripides, *Medea* 784–9, 947–58, 972–3: *Euripidis Fabulae* i. 126–7, 133–4.
[121] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VII. 297–351, pp.156–8.
[122] See e.g. Propertius, *Elegi* II. 1. 53–4, p. 36; Horace, *Epodi* III. 9–14, V. 61–66: *Opera* pp. 114–5, 118.

and/or magic-practicing women in classical literature. Equally often, moreover, she is described in clearly pejorative terms. In Seneca's *Phaedra*, Hippolytus states: "sileantur aliae: sola coniunx Aegei, | Medea, reddet feminas dirum genus" (to say nothing of others, Aegeus' wife Medea alone will prove women to be a monstrous tribe);[123] his opinion of women is clearly not to be taken as representative, and Phaedra's nurse challenges Hippolytus' judgment of all women by the crimes of one – yet tellingly she does not question his choice of exemplar, only his assumption that all other women are like her.[124] For Cicero, Medea was a "scelus" (criminal),[125] whose "nefaria scelera" (appalling crimes) are on a par with those of Atreus.[126] Ovid calls her "impia Medea" (impious Medea) who committed "multa nefanda" (many unspeakable things).[127] Quintilian labels her "atrox Medea" (terrible Medea).[128] The third-century Graeco-Egyptian writer Athenaeus contrasts Medea as an archetypical bad woman with Penelope, the archetypical good wife.[129] Aelian cites the alternative tradition blaming the citizens of Corinth for the murder of Medea's children, which indicates "τὴν φήμην τὴν κατὰ τῆς Μηδείας ψευδῆ εἶναι" (that the reputation of Medea is false);[130] the wording nevertheless provides further evidence that the negative reputation was commonplace.

Heronyms are an only sporadically apparent feature of anthroponymic conventions in the ancient world,[131] and it is therefore not especially notable that the Lexicon of Greek Personal Names (LGPN) database returns only one instance of *Μηδεια* as a historical personal

[123] Seneca, *Phaedra* 563–4: *Tragoediae* p. 185
[124] Seneca, *Phaedra* 565: *Tragoediae* p. 185.
[125] Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* III. XXVI. 68, p. 350.
[126] Cicero, *De Natura Deorum* III. XXIX. 72, p. 356.
[127] Ovid, *Tristia* III. IX. 9–16, p. 63.
[128] Quintilian, *Institutio Oratiae* XI. 3. 73, ii. 668.
[129] Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* XIII. 559c: *Athenaeus: The Learned Banqueters*, ed. & transl. by S. Douglas Olson, 7 volumes, LCL 204, 208, 224, 235, 274, 327, 345, 519 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006–2012), vi. 244.
[130] Aelian, *Varia Historia* V. 21: *Aelian Historical Miscellany*, ed. & transl. by N.G. Wilson, LCL 486 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), p. 226.
[131] See, for example, Peter Thonemann, 'Heroic Onomastics in Roman Anatolia', *Historia* 64:3 (2015), pp. 357–85.

name.[132] Medea's name nonetheless has significant wider connotations stemming from her connection with the Medes, an Iranian people conquered in the sixth century by Cyrus the Great, founder of the Persian Achaemenid dynasty. The ethnonym *Μῆδοι* (Medes) was folk-etymologised as deriving from her name certainly by the fifth century BCE,[133] and probably not earlier than the sixth;[134] in later sources it is traced variably to Medea or to her son, Medus.[135] During the Persian Wars of the early fifth century, the Medes were routinely conflated in Greek thought with the invading Persians; collaboration with the Persians was designated by the noun *Μηδισμός* (Medism) and the verb *Μηδίζειν* (to Medise).[136] Even after the use of *Μῆδοι* to denote the Persians faded from the second half of the fifth century, the Persian War continued to be referred to as *ὁ Μηδικὸς πόλεμος* (the Median War) or *τὰ Μηδικά* (the Median affairs).[137] In Roman literature, both Persians and Medes were in turn conflated with the Parthians, whose empire was a recurring menace on the eastern frontier of Rome's; Horace, for instance, refers to the Parthians on numerous occasions as Medes,[138] as does Propertius.[139] Claudian attests the same usage even in the fourth century CE.[140] It is very likely that the pejorative associations of the Medes in classical texts also applied to their mythical

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[132] *LGPN Online*: http://www.lgpn.ox.ac.uk/online/search_data.html/. Xenophon mentions a Median Medeia, the wife of the sixth-century Median king Astyages: Xenophon, *Anabasis* III. 4. 11–12, ed. & transl. by Carleton L. Brownson, rev. by John Dillery, LCL 90 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 266.

[133] Herodotus, *Historiae* VII. 62, ii. 172.

[134] M.L. West, *Hesiod Theogony* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), pp. 398, 430; Fritz Graf, 'Medea, the Enchantress from Afar: Remarks on a Well-Known Myth', in Clauss & Iles Johnston (eds.), *Essays on Medea* (1997), pp. 21–43, at p. 37.

[135] Pausanias, *Descriptio Graeciae* II. 3. 8, i. 262; Strabo *Geographica* XI. 13. 10, v. 314; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica* IV. 55. 5–56. 2, i. 484–5.

[136] David F. Graf, 'Medism: The Origin and Significance of the Term', *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 104 (1984), pp. 15–30, at pp. 15–6.

[137] Graf, 'Medism' (1984), p. 19.

[138] See e.g. Horace, *Carmina* I. 2. 51, I. 27. 5, I. 29. 4, II. 1. 31, II. 9. 21, II. 16. 6, III. 3. 44, IV. 14. 42: *Opera* pp. 4, 23, 25, 34, 41, 47, 57, 105; *Carmen Saeculare* 54: *Opera* p. 108.

[139] Propertius, *Elegi* III. 9. 25; III. 12. 11, pp. 117; 124.

[140] Claudian, *Panegyricus Dictus Probino et Olybrio Consulibus* 160–3, *Panegyricus De Quarto Consulatu Honorii Augusti* 257–60, *De Consulatu Stilichonis* I (XXI). 64–8: *Claudian*, ed. & transl. by Maurice Platnauer, 2 volumes, LCL 135–6 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1922), i. 12–4, 304, 368; *Panegyricus De Sexto Consulatu Honorii Augusti* 414–6: *Claudian*, ii. 104.

progenitrix, particularly in view of the frequent emphasis placed on Medea's status as a foreign outsider. Greek and Roman authors routinely referred to her as "Colchis" (Colchian woman),[141] and a shift in the portrayal of Medea in Greek vase paintings from the late fifth century onwards, possibly prompted by Euripides' play, saw her increasingly depicted in oriental dress.[142]

A natural explanation for the discrepancy in contemporary attitudes to the two heroines might focus on the fact that Guðrún commits her filicide to avenge wrongs done to others, whereas Medea avenges only herself. However, Procne too is frequently condemned in classical texts, though she, like Guðrún, exacts revenge for a sibling. In fact, Procne and Medea are often placed side-by-side in pejorative contexts: Ovid includes "impia Procne | filiave Aeëtae" (impious Procne or Aeëtes' daughter [Medea]) in a catalogue of wicked women from myth,[143] and elsewhere denounces both women despite acknowledging the wrongs they suffered: "utraque saeva parens, sed tristibus ultraque causis | iactura socii sanquinis ulta virum"(each one a savage mother, but each for tragic reasons took vengeance on a husband by spilling their common blood);[144] Juvenal suggests that the behaviour of women in real life confirms "tragicis quidquid de Colchide torva dicitur et Procne" (whatever is said by the tragedians about the savage Colchian woman and Procne).[145] In a similar vein, Aelian tells an anecdote from his childhood about a woman who had her sons falsely convicted of a capital

[141] Amongst others: Horace, *Epodi* XVI. 58: *Opera* p. 129; Martial, *Epigrams* X. 4. 2, X. 35. 5, pp. 302, 314; Statius, *Silvae* II. 1. 141: *P. Papini Stati Silvae*, ed. by Edward Courtney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 37; *Greek Anthology* IX. 346, XVI. 137. 1, XIV. 141. 1, ed. & transl. by W.R. Paton, 5 volumes, LCL 67–8, 84–6 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916–1918) iii. 186, v. 238, v. 242; Propertius, *Elegi* II. 1. 54, p. 36; Modestinus, *Cupid Asleep* 7: *Minor Latin Poets II*, p. 540; Pentadius, *De Fortuna* 5, p. 542.

[142] Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood, 'Medea at a Shifting Distance: Images and Euripidean Tragedy', in Clauss & Iles Johnston (eds.), *Essays on Medea* (1997), pp. 253–96; *Euripides Medea*, ed. by Donald J, Mastronarde (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 41; Emma Griffiths, *Medea* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), pp. 86–8.

[143] Ovid, *Epistulae ex Ponto* III. 1. 119–20, p. 211.

[144] Ovid, *Amores* II. 14. 31–2, p. 61.

[145] Juvenal, *Saturae* II. VI. 643–4, p. 96.

crime after they admonished her over her adultery; he concludes by asking rhetorically: "τί ἂν ἔτι Μήδειαν εἴποιμεν τὴν Κόλχον ἢ Πρόκνην τὴν Ἀτθίδα, τῶν ἔναγχός τε καὶ καθ᾽ ἡμᾶς παθῶν μνημονεύσαντες;" (why should we still speak of Colchian Medea or Attic Procne, when we consider the things that have occurred recently and in our own time?)[146] The two are also collocated by Statius as "saeva Procne" (savage Procne) and "fera Colchis" (cruel Colchian [Medea]).[147] In a poem by Alpheus of Mytilene (first century BCE?) describing a hen protecting her chicks from the winter elements, they are cited as archetypical bad mothers: "Πρόκνη καὶ Μήδεια, κατ᾽ Ἄϊδος αἰδέσθητε | μητέρες ὀρνίθων ἔργα διδασκόμεναι" (Procne and Medea, be ashamed in Hades, learning from birds a mother's duties).[148] Sidonius Apollinaris judges Procne's revenge to be more wicked than Tereus' initial crime, as he recalls "discerptum […] puerum cibumque factum | iamiam coniugis innocentioris" (the dismembered boy and the meal made for the now more innocent spouse [i.e. Tereus]).[149]

Broader Mythic Contexts

Medea's infanticide in Corinth is consistent with her broader persona in myth: she has already brutally murdered her brother Apsyrtus in the course of her departure from Colchis, and after settling in Athens she unsuccessfully attempts to murder Theseus, the long-lost son of her new husband Aegeus.[150] It is likely, of course, that Colchian Medea and Corinthian Medea were initially separate figures. It is moreover uncertain how far back beyond the fifth century BCE Medea's fratricide may be traced, though several considerations point towards its having been

[146] Aelian, *De Natura Animalium* VII. 15: *Aelian On the Characteristics of Animals*, ed. & transl. by A.F. Schofield, 3 volumes, LCL 446, 448–9 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958–1959), ii. 122–4.
[147] Statius, *Silvae* II. 1. 140–1: *P. Papini Stati Silvae*, ed. by Edward Courtney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 37.
[148] *Greek Anthology* IX. 95, iii. 50.
[149] Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carmina* XXIII (*Ad Consentium*) 279–80, p. 256.
[150] Iles Johnson, 'Corinthian Medea', in Claus & Iles Johnston (eds.), *Essays on Medea* (1997), p. 65.

a feature of the sixth-century BCE *Corinthiaca* epic attributed to Eumelus.[151] In any case, in the composite myth of the Classical Period, Medea had developed a distinctive infanticidal habit. Although in some sources Apsyrtus has become an adult sibling, the earliest extant traditions portray him as a young child, and the etymologising of the name Apsyrtus as 'unshorn' by the early fifth-century writer Pherecydes further suggests his youth in the oldest strata of the myth.[152] Theseus is represented as being on the cusp of adulthood;[153] Callimachus explicitly describes him as a child at the point of retrieving the sword left for him by Aegeus,[154] and he is later able to be included in the final tribute of Athenian youths levied by Minos. Sarah Iles Johnston suggests that the filicidal Medea popularised by Euripides developed from the folkloric paradigm of the 'reproductive demon', a female demon who kills infants and young children after the death of her own.[155] These additional episodes associating Medea with child-killing may be seen as vestiges of the same archetype.

The variant accounts of the murder of Apsyrtus also associate Medea further with pseudo-sacrificial killing. The earliest-attested tradition is that in which Medea has kidnapped her brother prior to her flight with Jason from Colchis, and dismembers him so that her father's pursuit will be delayed as he recovers the pieces of his son's body for burial. This variant is known from the fragments of Pherecydes,[156] and may also have featured in some form in Sophocles' play *Scythae*, a fragment of which suggests that Apsyrtus was still a child at the

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[151] Jan N. Bremmer, 'Why Did Medea Kill her Brother Apsyrtus?', in Clauss & Iles Johnston (eds.), *Essays on Medea* (1997), pp. 83–100, at pp. 86–8; Iles Johnson, 'Corinthian Medea', Claus & Iles Johnston (eds.), *Essays on Medea* (1997), p. 66.
[152] Jan N. Bremmer, *Greek Religion and Culture, the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), p. 334.
[153] Iles Johnston, 'Corinthian Medea', in Claus & Iles Johnston (eds.), *Essays on Medea* (1997), p. 65.
[154] Callimachus, *Hecale* fr. 236, p. 182.
[155] Iles Johnston, 'Corinthian Medea', in Claus & Iles Johnston (eds.), *Essays on Medea* (1997), p. 66.
[156] Felix Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der Greichischen Historiker*, fr. 3 F 32b: https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/die-fragmente-der-griechischen-historiker-i-iii/pherekydes-von-athen-3-a3#BOJTEXT3_F_32_b (accessed 22 April 2020).

time of his death.[157] This tradition is also recorded by later authors including Callimachus,[158] Cicero,[159] Strabo,[160] and Ovid, who etymologises Tomis, where he spent his exile, as the place where Apsyrtus was 'cut up' (from Greek *τέμνειν* "to cut").[161]

According to the scholiast on Apollonius' *Argonautica* IV. 228, Sophocles elsewhere followed an alternative tradition in having Apsyrtus killed in the palace of Aeëtes;[162] Euripides also reflects this version, with Jason revealing the additional detail that the murder was carried out "παρἐστιον" (beside the hearth).[163] As Jan Bremmer notes, this is religiously equivalent to murdering him at an altar, and the scholiast on this verse appears to equate the two.[164]

Apollonius of Rhodes records a further variant, in which Apsyrtus pursues his sister with the Colchian fleet and overtakes her. Medea sends a message to her brother falsely claiming that she wishes to escape from Jason and return home. She lures him to meet her at a temple of Artemis on an island in the River Ister, where Jason kills and dismembers him. Whilst Medea does not commit the murder herself in this version, her equal guilt is made symbolically clear by Apsyrtus' bloodying of her white robe,[165] and by Zeus' decree that both she and Jason

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[157] Sophocles fr. 546; *The Fragments of Sophocles*, ed. by A.C. Pearson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1917), pp. 186–7.
[158] Fr. 8, *Callimachus*, ed. by Rudolf Pfeiffer, 2 volumes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949, reissued 1985), i. 18.
[159] Cicero, *De Imperio Cn. Pompei ad Quirites Oratio* 22: *M. Tulli Ciceronis Orationes*, Volume I, ed. by Albert Curtis Clark (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1905), p. 70.
[160] Strabo *Geographica* VII. 5. 5, iii. 258.
[161] Ovid, *Tristia* III. IX. 1–34, pp. 62–3.
[162] Sophocles fragment 343: *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta Volume 4*, ed. by Stefan Radt (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977), p. 319.
[163] Euripides, *Medea* 1334: *Euripidis Fabulae* i. 152.
[164] Bremmer, 'Why Did Medea Kill Her Brother?', in Claus & Iles Johnston (eds.), *Essays on Medea* (1997), p. 85.
[165] Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* IV. 471–4, ed. & transl. by William H. Race, LCL 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), p.366; Bremmer, 'Why Did Medea Kill Her Brother?', in Claus & Iles Johnston (eds.), *Essays on Medea* (1997), p. 84 n. 2, notes the parallel with Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, in which "the blood of her husband strikes Clytemnestra, although Aegisthus is the actual murderer." Though this is the case in other records, it is inaccurate in the specific case of Aeschylus' play, which explicitly presents Clytaemnestra herself as the murderer. However, the Aeschylean echo in fact makes Medea's culpability therefore more explicit, since she is being compared to an active perpetrator of female sacrilegious violence.

alike must suffer great hardships before they may be purified of the crime.[166] The quasi-sacrificial character of the murder is moreover foregrounded by its situation in a temple, and by the description of Jason striking Apsyrtus "Βουτύπος ὥστε μέγαν κερεαλκέα ταῦρον" (as a slaughterer fells a strong-horned bull).[167] The mutilation of Apsyrtus' corpse is explained as an archaic ritual to expiate a treacherous murder;[168] however, it also has resonances of the Dionysiac *σπαραγμός* (*sparagmos*, literally: 'rending'), in which live animals were sacrificed by ritual dismemberment.[169] This is even more apparent in the older tradition in which Medea performs the mutilation herself, and it may be tempting to see the Medea's strategic calculation in using her brother's body to stall her pursuers as a deliberate contrast to the Dionysiac frenzy associated with the *σπαραγμός*.

Despite the existence of several variant traditions concerning the death of Apsyrtus, then, all agree in presenting the murder as a pseudo-sacrificial and sacrilegious act, whether by situating it at a hearth or a temple, or by invoking sacrificial connotations from earlier literature. Similarly, the death of Pelias at the hands of his unwitting daughters has been identified as a "perversion of ritual sacrifice".[170] As Ovid relates, Medea tricks Pelias' daughters into killing their father as part of a ritual to rejuvenate him. Ovid has already described in detail the ritual

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[166] Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* IV. 557–61, p. 372.
[167] Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* IV. 468, p. 364.
[168] Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica* IV. 477–9, p. 366, and see Bremmer, 'Why Did Medea Kill Her Brother?', in Claus & Iles Johnston (eds.), *Essays on Medea* (1997), p. 84 & nn. 5–6 for further references.
[169] The *σπαραγμός* is most readily associated with the death of Pentheus, dramatised in Euripides' *Bacchae*, and also the subject of Aeschylus' earlier *Xantriae* and *Pentheus*, fragments of which indicate the ritualised character of the killing. The connection of such mythic portrayals to actual ritual practice has been questioned, but the literary treatments, along with depictions of the episode in sixth- and fifth-century vase paintings, present the practice as an element of Dionysiac ritual, suggesting that contemporary audiences at least imagined it to be so: see Benjamin Weaver, 'Euripides' *Bacchae* and Classical Typologies of Pentheus' *Sparagmos*', *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 52 (2009), pp. 15–43, for a survey of the iconographic depictions in relation to Euripides' play. Dionysus is depicted in numerous Greek vase paintings holding dismembered animals: Thomas H. Carpenter, 'On the Beardless Dionysus', in Carpenter & Christopher A. Faraone (eds.), *The Masks of Dionysus* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 185–206, at pp. 190–5.
[170] Griffiths, *Medea* (2006), p. 57.

preparations for the earlier rejuvenation of Aeson;[171] now, she reassures Pelias' daughters by having them bring her the oldest ram of their flock, to demonstrate the efficacy of her powers. Ovid dwells on the act of ritual slaughter itself, noting the detail of the ram's "marcentia guttura" (shrivelled throat), from which "exiguo maculavit sanguine ferrum" (she smeared the blade sparingly with blood).[172] The preparation for the rite itself is pointedly contrasted with that for Aeson: in place of the lengthy list of magical ingredients for Medea's elixir in the case of Aeson, for Pelias she boils "purum laticem et sine viribus herbas" (pure water and herbs without any power).[173] Pelias is repeatedly stabbed by his daughters: "his, ut quaeque pia est, hortatibus inpia prima est | et, ne sit scelerata, facit scelus" (Spurred by these words, as each one was loyal so she was first in disloyalty, and in fear of wickedness committed the wicked deed).[174] The sacrificial overtones of the scene are again foregrounded as Medea herself cuts Pelias' throat – a superfluous act in pragmatic terms, since he has already been butchered by his daughters.[175]

Guðrún can also be associated with further child-killing, since at her instigation her sons Hamðir and Sǫrli go to their deaths in pursuit of vengeance for Svanhildr. However, the connection between this episode and that involving Atli's sons is drastically different from that between Medea's various acts of violence. We have previously noted that Guðrún's whetting function in the Jǫrmunrekkr legend is a marked diminution of her role as an active avenger in the Atli legend. It is true that *Guðrúnarhvǫt* and *Hamðismál* foreground Guðrún's awareness that her sons will die in the process of avenging Svanhildr;[176] equally, however, it is made abundantly clear in *Hamðismál* that the deaths of Hamðir and Sǫrli are a direct consequence of their own murder of Erpr: in committing the murder, "þverrðu þeir þrótt sinn at þriðjungi" (they

[171] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VII. 159–296, pp. 151–6.
[172] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VII. 314–5, p. 156.
[173] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VII. 262–84, 327, pp. 155, 157.
[174] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VII. 339–40, p. 157.
[175] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* VII. 348–9, pp. 157–8.
[176] *Guðrúnarhvǫt* 8/1–8: *Eddukvæði* ii. 404; *Hamðismál* 10/1–10: *Eddukvæði* ii. 409.

diminished their strength by a third), and the brothers poignantly recognise the magnitude of their error as they are overwhelmed, first blaming each other before reconciling as they die side by side.[177]

Moreover, the author of *Vǫlsunga saga* states that Guðrún took specific precautions to keep her sons from harm: "hún hafði svá búit þeira herklæði, at þá bitu eigi járn, ok hún bað þá eigi skeðja grjóti né ǫðrum stórum hlutum ok kvað þeim þat at meini mundu verða, ef eigi gerði þeri svá" (she had prepared their armour so that iron would not bite it, and she told them not to attack with stones or other large objects, and said that they would come to harm if they did not do as she said).[178] Similarly, Snorri reports: "En er þeir bjoggusk til ferðar þá fekk hon þeim brynjur ok hjálma svá sterka at eigi mundi járn á festa" (And as they were preparing to leave, she fetched for them mail-coats and helmets so strong that iron could not pierce them).[179] Snorri's account further indicts Hamðir and Sǫrli over their mother, since Guðrún explicitly tells them the strategy in which Erpr will play a crucial role, despite which they kill him. In *Guðrúnarhvǫt* Guðrún also fetches special armour for her sons; [180] it is not stated at this point to be impervious to iron weapons, but the diction of the poem is highly allusive throughout, and this is a natural inference given that the weapons of Jǫrmunrekkr's warriors cannot harm them.[181]

In the context of the legendary cycle, then, Guðrún's infanticide is a singular event. Her designation as *afkár dís* at the point of committing the atrocity in *Atlakviða* indicates a temporary transformation of her nature; Medea's act, in contrast, is presented as demonstrative of her innate nature. Seneca's Medea, on the point of murdering the first of her children, declares: "Medea nunc sum" (Now I am Medea);[182] she thus fulfils her earlier promise to

[177] *Hamðismál* 26–31: *Eddukvæði* ii. 412–3.
[178] *Vǫlsunga saga* 42: *Fornaldar sögur Norðurlanda* i, p. 217.
[179] Snorri Sturluson, *Skáldskaparmál* 42, i. 49.
[180] *Hamðismál* 7/1–8: *Eddukvæði* ii. 403.
[181] *Hamðismál* 25/5–8: *Eddukvæði* ii. 412.
[182] Seneca, *Medea* 910: *Tragoediae* p. 157.

"become" (*fiam*) Medea.[183] Significantly, upon realising her identity on a metatextual level, Medea celebrates her earlier acts of sacrilegious violence, and the betrayal of her father:

> iuuat, iuuat rapuisse fraternum caput,
> artus iuuat secuisse et arcano patrem
> spoliasse sacro, iuuat in exitium senis
> armasse natas.
>
> (Glad I am, glad that I tore off my brother's head, glad that I carved his limbs and robbed my father of his hidden treasure, glad that I armed daughters for an old man's death).[184]

The conception of Medea's capacity for violence against her family as a central facet of her character is corroborated in other sources. In the eyes of Sidonius she is defined by her (significantly plural) "furores" (madnesses);[185] two poems of the *Greek Anthology* imagine a statue of Medea posing a threat to the chicks of birds that have nested on it.[186]

Conclusion

Whilst the narrative accounts of the infanticides commited by Medea and Guðrún correspond in framing each act in sacrificial terms, the classical and Old Norse traditions contrast in important details in the way this sacrificial imagery is deployed. Guðrún's killing of her children by Atli is depicted as an authentic sacrificial act, and this fact can be related to the more positive attitudes towards Guðrún found in other Icelandic sources. In the classical sources, sacrificial imagery is used to portray Medea as attempting unsuccessfully to legitimise her filicide, an act which is inextricably linked to other acts of pseudo-sacrificial violence in her mythic history, and her unsanctioned usurpation of sacrificial authority reflects wider perceptions of her as a subversive and dangerous figure, consistently condemned by ancient

[183] Seneca, *Medea* 171: *Tragoediae* p. 131.
[184] Seneca, *Medea* 911–14: *Tragoediae* p. 157.
[185] Sidonius Apollinaris, *Carmina* XI. 68, p. 229.
[186] *Greek Anthology* IX. 346, iii. 186; XVI. 141, v. 242.

commentators. Naturally, we should not conclude from this discrepancy that maternal filicide was condoned in medieval Scandinavian societies; Guðrún's killing of her children is a mythic and symbolic act, and its sacrificial character should be understood as reinforcing her successful temporary embodiment of heroic masculinity. Whether this contrast reflects a broader difference in cultural attitudes towards female autonomy is questionable; we have seen in chapter three that both Graeco-Roman and Old Norse myth evince similar ideologies asserting the necessity of patriarchal authority for the preservation of social stability. The comparison undertaken in this chapter nonetheless illustrates once again the value of reading texts from different literary traditions against one another, and that both sides of the equation can be illuminated through this process.

CONCLUSION

The limitations of Sophus Bugge's theories of classical influences have shown that it is not sufficient simply to identify correspondences between two narrative traditions in order to demonstrate the influence of one on the other. Parallels must be contextualised within both the target- and the source-tradition, in order to assess the relative probabilities of alternative explanations. Proposed diffusion of mythic ideas must be anchored to a plausible socio-historical context, and must consider how widely the purported sources circulated during the period of transmission. The mechanisms of diffusion must be shown to be reflective of the proposed period of transmission. Additionally, the target texts must be situated within the broader development of the tradition to which they belong. In practice, this is very difficult to achieve with the requisite level of detail for mythological material in the context of the Migration Period, due to the limited surviving evidence for pre-Christian myth in medieval Germany and England. Conversely, our focus on specific heroic-legendary traditions, well-attested in the three extant branches of the Germanic tradition, provides the required comparative evidence for the reconstructive process.

The period in which the legends of Wayland and Attila began to crystallise has been shown to provide a plausible historical context for the influence of classical traditions. From the first century to the fifth there is evidence for increasingly close contacts between the Germanic-speaking peoples and the Roman Empire, accompanied by many indications of cultural interchange. The prominence of the myths concerning Daedalus and Medea in the Roman imagination during this period render it highly probable that Germanic-speaking groups within and immediately beyond the frontiers of the Empire were exposed to this material, and a study of the early development of the Germanic legends has borne out the hypothesis of classical influence in both cases. The flight of Wayland on mechanical wings is a clear-cut

accretion to the tradition, whilst contemporary reports of the death of Attila were distorted from historical fact at an early stage to incorporate the vengeful infanticide of his wife.

These conclusions should not be taken as suggesting that the heroic traditions of the Germanic-speaking peoples were merely derivative. Elements from the classical traditions coalesced with other materials to form the prototypes of the legends known from medieval literary sources, and these early narratives were not borrowed wholesale from classical myth. Nor was the influence of classical ideas a process of passive assimilation. Just as evidence for Roman influence on ritual practices and visual arts amongst the Germanic peoples shows dynamic engagement with and adaptation of foreign ideas, so the classical elements in both of our heroic legends have undergone considerable transformation in the process of their reception, reflecting both correspondences and discrepancies in ideological perspectives between source- and target-traditions. Wayland's triumphant revenge and escape contrasts with the tragic consequences of Daedalus' flight from Crete, reflecting differing cultural perceptions on the dangers of technology and its practitioners. Conversely, both legends cohere ideologically in portraying dynastic ruin as a consequence of the failure of patriarchal hegemony. The Medea myth prompted the presentation of the filicide in the Germanic Attila legend as a sacrificial act; however, the sacrilegious attempt to usurp patriarchal authority depicted in classical sources has been transformed in the Old Norse tradition into a successful act of female autonomy, which whilst still terrifying is also admirable. These conclusions have highlighted the value of fully acknowledging differences as well as similarities in comparative studies of myth and legend.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1: Silver cups. First century BCE, Hoby, Denmark. Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen. © Marie-Lan Nguyen. Licenced under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence (CC BY 4.0).

Figure 2: Gold bracteate IK 51, 1a. Fifth–sixth century CE, Denmark. Reproduced by kind permission of Morten Axboe, from Karl Hauck, Morten Axboe *et al*., *Die Goldbrakteaten der Völkerwanderungszeit*, 5 volumes (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1985–1989), vol. 1.3, p. 60.

Figure 3: Gold bracteate IK 190 Av a. Fifth–sixth century CE, Trollhättan, Sweden. Reproduced by kind permission of Morten Axboe, from Hauck, Axboe *et al*., *Die Goldbrakteaten der Völkerwanderungszeit* (1985–1989), vol. 1.3, p. 248.

Figure 4: Ardre VIII picture stone (detail). Eighth–tenth century CE, Gotland, Sweden**.** Now in Statens historiska museum, Stockholm. Photograph by the author.

Figure 5: Ardre III rune stone. Eleventh century CE, Gotland, Sweden. Reproduced from Sune Lindqvist, *Gotlands Bildsteine*, 2 volumes (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 1941-1942), volume 1, fig. 169.

Figure 6: Alskog kyrka I picture stone. Eighth–eleventh century CE, Gotland, Sweden. Reproduced from Lindqvist, *Gotlands Bildsteine I* (1941), fig. 135.

Figure 7: Lärbro Stora Hammars III picture stone. Eighth–eleventh century CE, Gotland, Sweden. Reproduced from Lindqvist, *Gotlands Bildsteine I* (1941), fig. 85.

Figure 8: Bronze belt fitting. 950–1000 CE, Uppåkra, Sweden. © The Historical Museum at Lund University. Reproduced by kind permission of the museum.

Figure 9: Metamorphic human-bird beakheads. *c*. 1170 CE, Church of St Mary the Virgin, Iffley, Oxfordshire**.** Photograph by the author.

Figure 10: Franks Casket whalebone chest (front panel). *c*. 700 CE, Northumbria. © Trustees of the British Museum.

Figure 11: Leeds 1ghj Ciii cross shaft. Tenth century CE, Leeds Parish Church, West Yorkshire. © Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture, Durham University, photographers K.P. Dukes & D.J. Craig.

Figure 12: Sherburn 3A cross fragment. Late ninth–tenth century CE, Sherburn, East Yorkshire. © Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture, Durham University, photographer Tom Middlemass.

Figure 13: **Gold solidus.** Sixth–early seventh century CE, Schweindorf, Saxony. © Ostfriesisches Landesmuseum, Emden. Licenced under Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International licence (CC BY-SA 4.0).

Figure 14: **Etrusan bucchero olpe (detail).** *c*. 630 BCE, Cerveteri, Italy. © Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia. Archivio fotographico. Photo: Mauro Benedetti.

Figure 15: Wall painting. First century CE, Pompeii, Casa dei Vettii V 15, 1.
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Figure 16: Wall painting. First century CE, Pompeii, Casa della Caccia Antica VI 7, 8.
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Figure 17: Wall painting. First century CE, Pompeii, Casa del Cenacolo V 2, 10–11.
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Figure 18: Wall painting. First century CE, Herculaneum, Casa del Bicentenario V 13, 8.
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Figure 19: Marble relief sculpture. Second century CE, Palazzo Spada, Rome.
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Figure 20: Wooden cart (detail). *c*. 800 CE, Oseberg, Norway.
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Figure 21: Andreas 121 (95) cross shaft fragment. Ninth–tenth century CE, Andreas, Isle of Man. Reproduced from P.M.C. Kermode, *Manx Crosses* (1907), plate XLV (facing p. 177).

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Figure 23: Red-figure calyx-krater. *c*. 400 BCE, Lucania, Italy.
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Figure 24: Red-figure volute krater (detail). *c*. 330 BCE, Apulia, Italy. Now in Munich, Staatliche Antikensammlungen 3296 (J 810). © Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek München. Photograph by Renate Kühling.

Figure 25: Red-figure amphora. *c*. 330 BCE, Campania, Italy. Paris, Cabinet des Medailles (inventory 876). © Bibliothèque nationale de France/CNRS-Maison Archéologie & Ethnologi, photographer Serge Oboukhoff.

Figure 26: Red-figure amphora. 330-320 BCE, Campania, Italy.
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Figure 27: Wall painting. First century CE, Pompeii, Casa dei Dioscuri VI 9, 6.
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Figure 1: Silver cups; first century BCE, Hoby, Denmark.
Nationalmuseet, Copenhagen. © Marie-Lan Nguyen. Licenced under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International licence (CC BY 4.0).

Relief illustrations of the healing of Philoctetes (L) and Priam's supplication of Achilles (R).



Figure 2: Gold bracteate IK 51, 1a; fifth–sixth century CE, Fakse, Denmark.
Reproduced by kind permission of Morten Axboe, from Karl Hauck, Morten Axboe *et al*., *Die Goldbrakteaten der Völkerwanderungszeit*, 5 volumes (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1985–1989), vol. 1.3, p. 60.

Possible depiction of Baldr's death by means of a dart of mistletoe.



Figure 3: Gold bracteate IK 190 Av a; fifth–sixth century CE, Trollhättan, Sweden.
Reproduced by kind permission of Morten Axboe, from Hauck, Axboe *et al*., *Die Goldbrakteaten der Völkerwanderungszeit* (1985–1989), vol. 1.3, p. 248.

Possible depiction of Týr losing his hand to the wolf Fenrir.



Figure 4 Ardre VIII picture stone (detail); eighth–tenth century CE, Gotland, Sweden.
Now in Statens historiska museum, Stockholm. Photograph by the author.

Vǫlundr escapes from the smithy in metamorphic bird form, leaving behind two headless corpses. His contact with a female figure possibly represents metaphorically his rape of Bǫðvildr.



Figure 5: Ardre III rune stone; eleventh century CE, Gotland, Sweden.
Reproduced from Lindqvist, *Gotlands Bildsteine*, volume I (Uppsala, 1941), fig. 169.

Probable depiction of the lamed Vǫlundr kneeling at an anvil with hammer and ring.

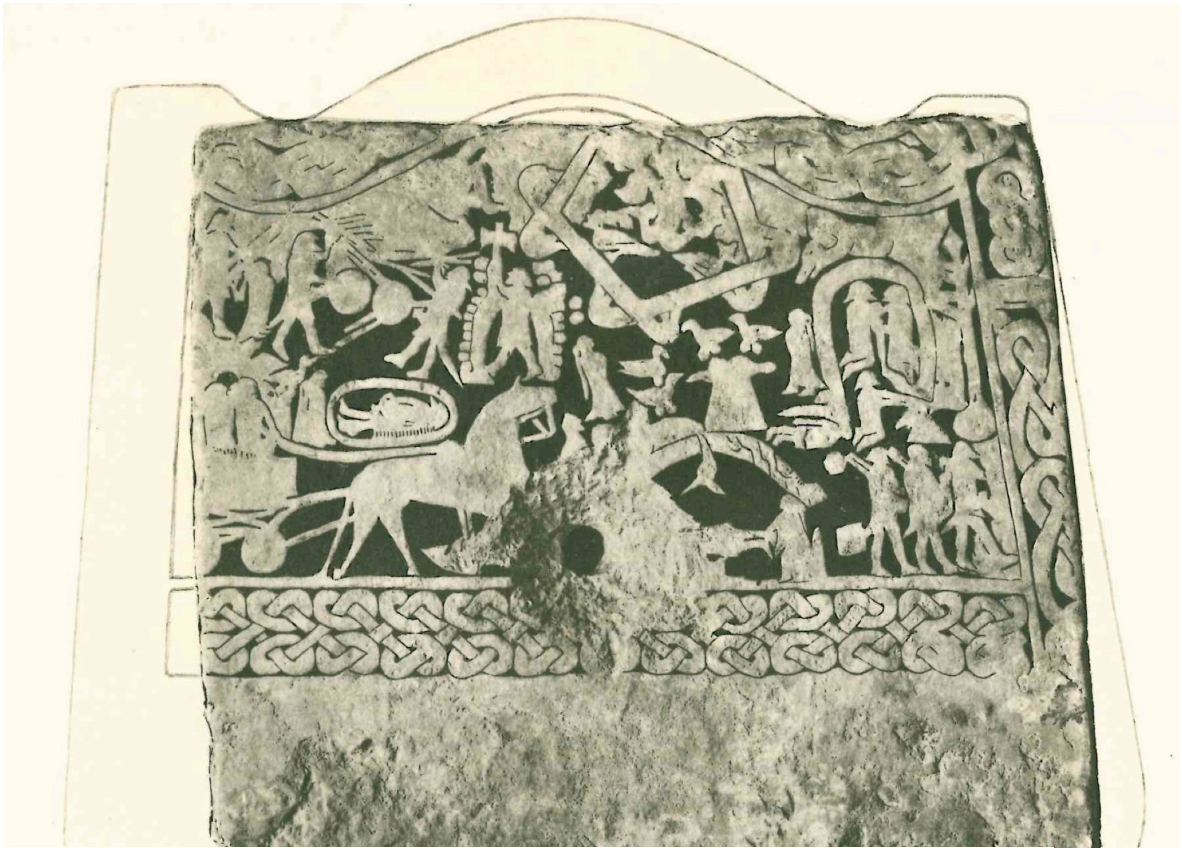


Figure 6: Alskog kyrka I picture stone; eighth–eleventh century CE, Gotland, Sweden.
Reproduced from Lindqvist, *Gotlands Bildsteine I* (1941), fig. 135.

Probable depictions of Vǫlundr kneeling at an anvil beside a headless corpse (R), and swan maidens around Úlfsjár (top).

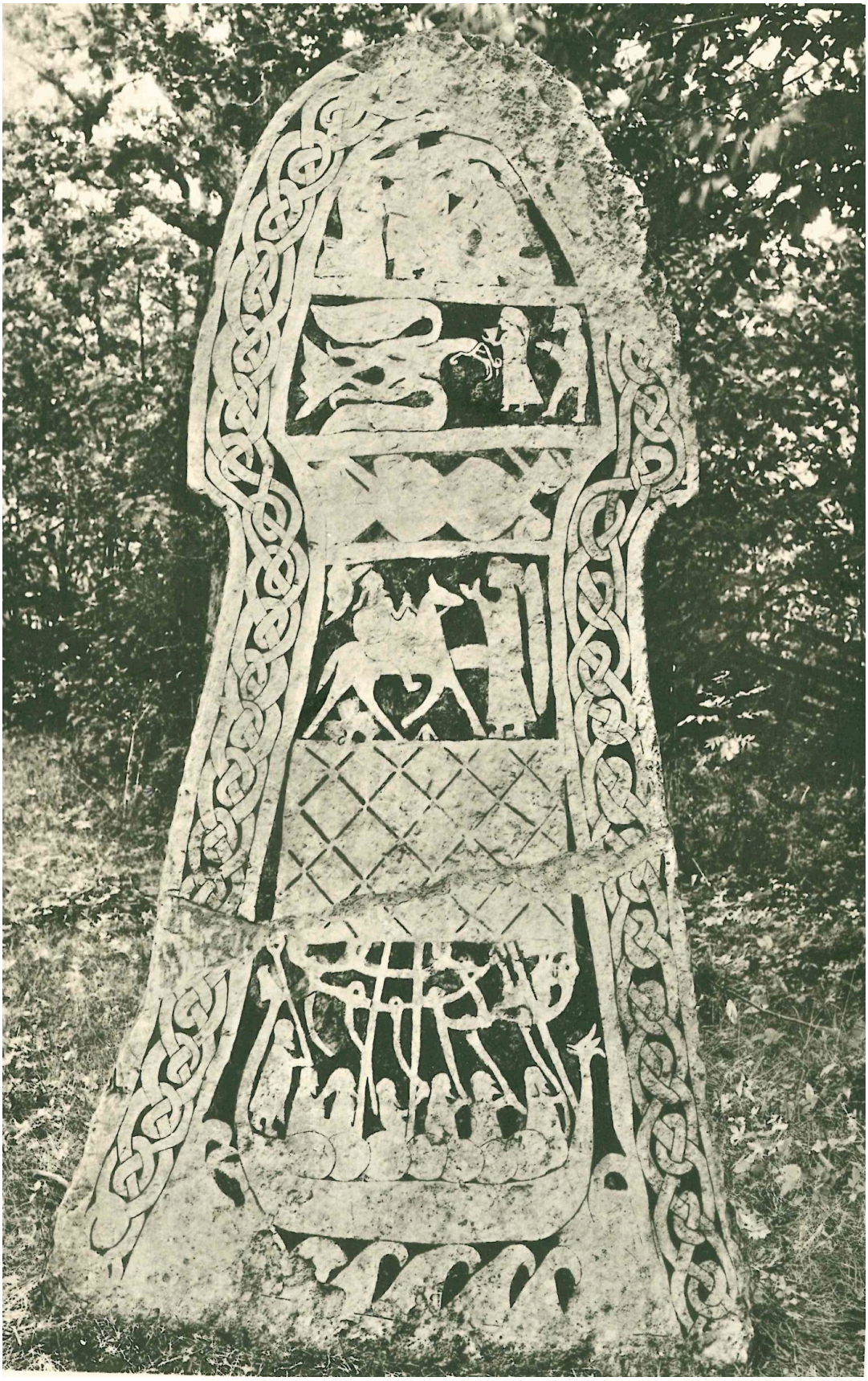


Figure 7: Lärbro Stora Hammars III picture stone; eighth–eleventh century CE, Gotland, Sweden.
Reproduced from Lindqvist, *Gotlands Bildsteine I* (1941), fig. 85.

Second panel from top depicts Óðinn in bird-form receiving the mead of poetry from Gunnlǫð.



Figure 8: Bronze belt fitting; 950–1000 CE, Uppåkra, Sweden.
© The Historical Museum at Lund University.

A zoomorphic figure in a winged suit (Vǫlundr?)



Figure 9: Metamorphic human-bird beakheads; *c.* 1170 CE, Church of St Mary the Virgin, Iffley, Oxfordshire.
Photograph by the author.



Figure 10: Franks Casket whalebone chest, front panel; *c.* 700 CE, Northumbria.
© Trustees of the British Museum.

(L) Weland hands a cup to Beadohild; (L/C) Ægil catches birds for Weland's wings; (R) the Magi present gifts to Christ.



Figure 11: Leeds 1ghj Ciii cross, shaft; tenth century CE, Leeds Parish Church, West Yorkshire.
© Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture, Durham University, photographers K.P. Dukes & D.J. Craig.

Weland with strapped-on wings; he grapples a female figure, possibly illustrating his rape of Beadohild.



Figure 12: Sherburn 3A cross fragment; late ninth–tenth century CE, Sherburn, East Yorkshire.
© Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture, Durham University, photographer Tom Middlemass.

Head of Weland with artificial bird-head, and part of female figure.



Figure 13: Gold solidus; sixth–early seventh century CE, Schweindorf, Saxony.
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Runic inscription WELADU, and figure with iconographic allusions to Wayland legend.



Figure 14: Etrusan bucchero olpe (detail); *c.* 630 BCE, Cerveteri, Italy.
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Daedalus and his wings, identified by Etruscan inscription TAITALE.

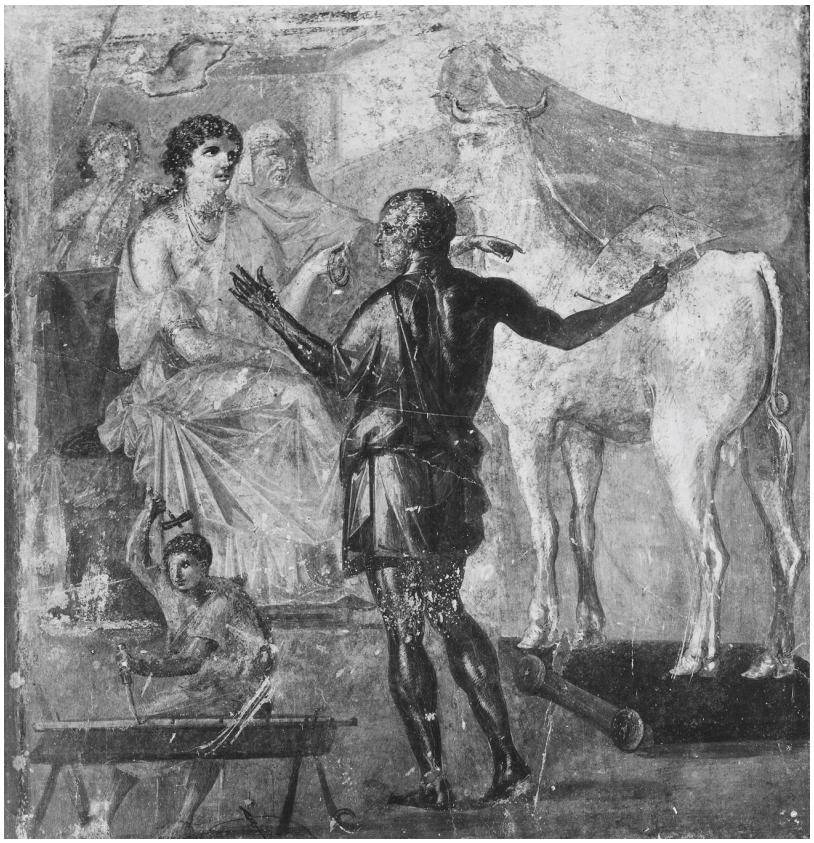


Figure 15: **Wall painting; first century CE, Pompeii, Casa dei Vettii V 15, 1.**
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Daedalus presents the mechanical cow to Pasiphaë; Icarus plays in foreground.



Figure 16: Wall painting; first century CE, Pompeii, Casa della Caccia Antica VII 4, 48.
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Daedalus presents the wooden cow to Pasiphaë.



Figure 17: Wall painting; first century CE, Pompeii, Casa del Cenacolo V 2, 10–11.
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Daedalus explains his plan to Pasiphaë using a model of his wooden cow.

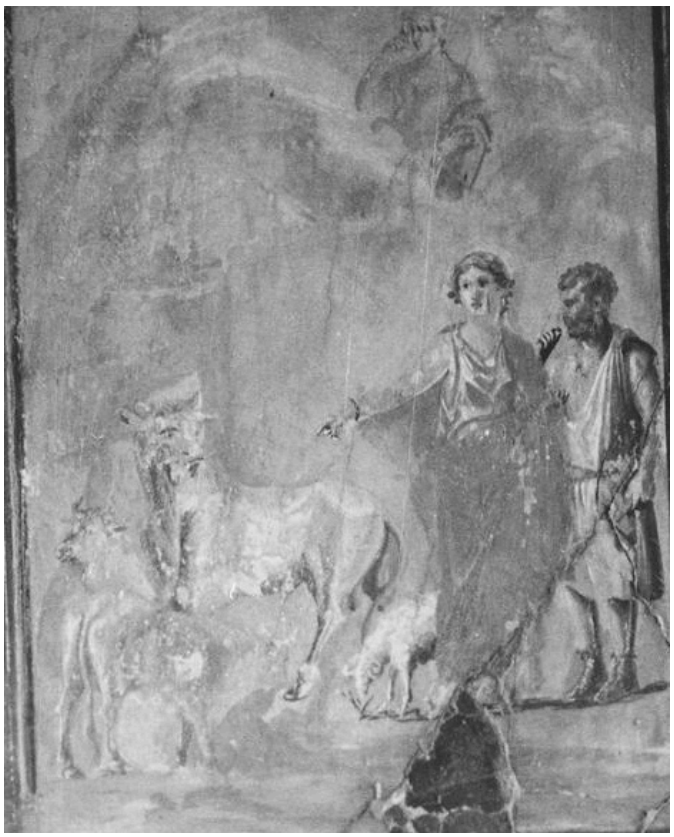


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Pasiphaë shows Daedalus the bull she is cursed to love.



Figure 19: Marble relief sculpture; second century CE, Palazzo Spada, Rome.
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Pasiphaë inspects the wooden cow in Daedalus' workshop.



Figure 20: Wooden cart (detail); *c.* 800 CE, Oseberg, Norway.
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Male figure surrounded by snakes (Gunnarr in the snake pit?)

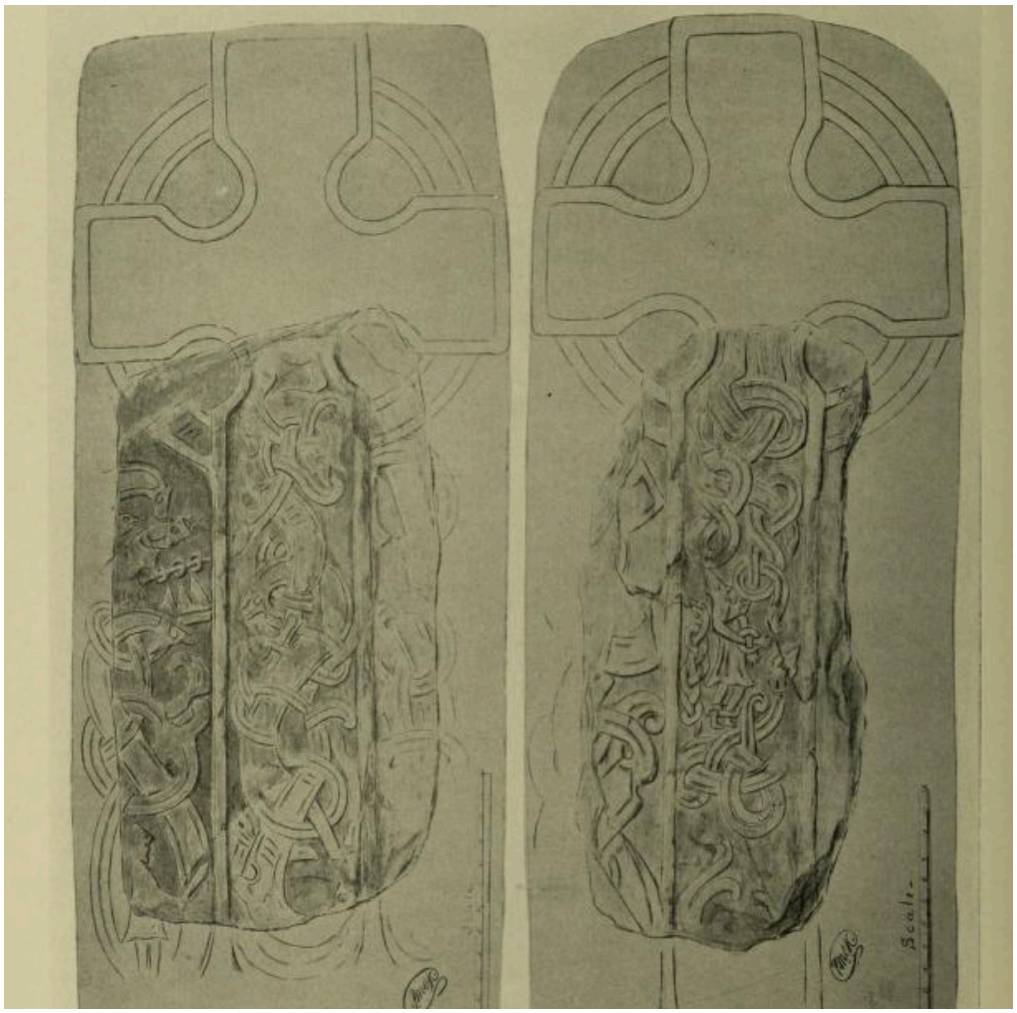


Figure 21: Andreas 121 (95) cross shaft fragment; ninth–tenth century CE, Andreas, Isle of Man.
Reproduced from P.M.C. Kermode, *Manx Crosses* (1907), plate XLV (facing p. 177).

(*L) Sigurðr roasts the heart of Fáfnir; (R) Gunnarr in the snake pit.*

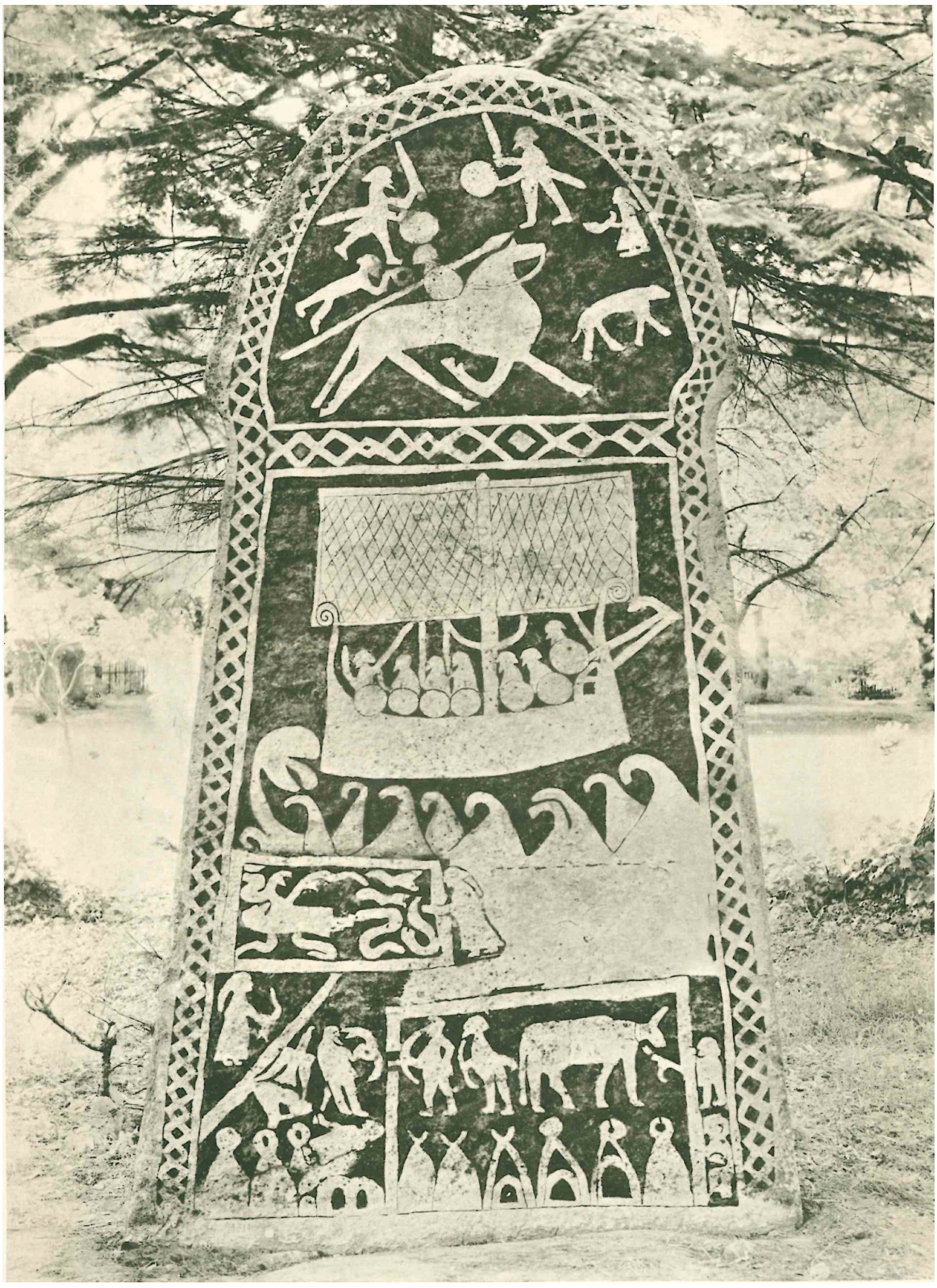


Figure 22: Klinte Hunninge I picture stone; ninth–tenth century CE, Gotland, Sweden.
Now in Gotlands museum, Visby. Reproduced from Lindqvist, *Gotlands Bildsteine I* (1941), fig. 128.

On the left edge of the main panel, a female figure reaches towards a figure in a snake pit (Guðrún giving a harp to Gunnarr?).



Figure 23: Red-figure calyx-krater; *c*. 400 BCE, Lucania, Italy.
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Medea escapes in a chariot drawn by serpents, leaving the bodies of her sons on an altar.



Figure 24: Red-figure volute krater (detail); *c.* 330 BCE, Apulia, Italy.
Now in Munich, Staatliche Antikensammlungen (inventory 3296 [J 810]).
© Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek München. Photograph by Renate Kühling.

Medea prepares to kill her son, who is standing on an altar (bottom left); in the palace above them, Creon finds Glauce dead.



Figure 25: Red-figure amphora; *c.* 330 BCE, Campania, Italy.
Paris, Cabinet des Medailles (inventory 876).
© Bibliothèque nationale de France/CNRS-Maison Archéologie & Ethnologi, photographer Serge Oboukhoff.

Medea prevents her second son from fleeing as the first son lies dead on an altar.



Figure 26: Red-figure amphora; 330–320 BCE, Campania, Italy.
Now in Musée du Louvre, Paris (inventory K 300). Photographer Bibi Saint-Pol. Public domain.

Medea kills her son in in front of a cultic statue, with her mantle worn as a sacrificial apron.

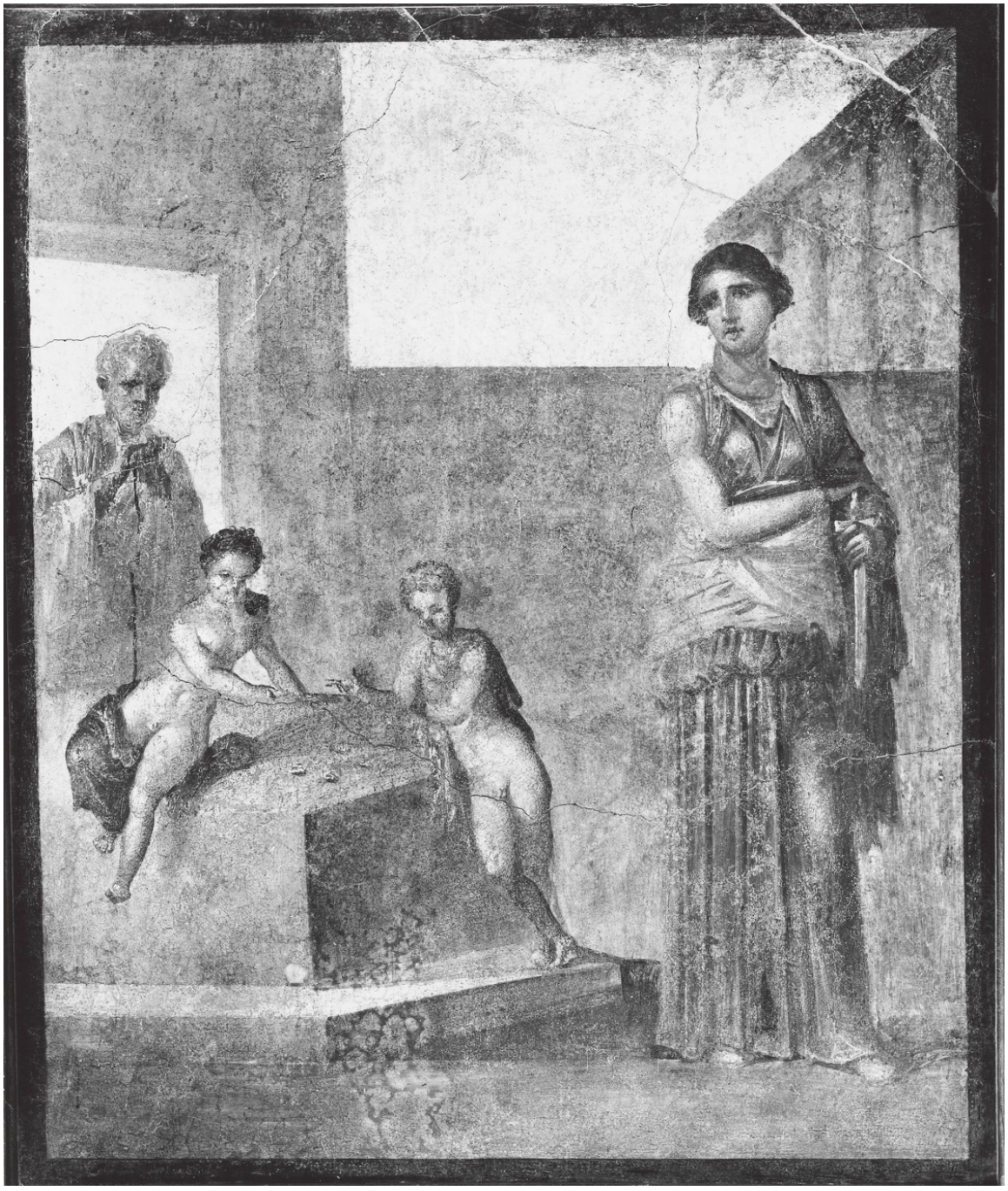


Figure 27: Wall painting; first century CE, Pompeii, Casa dei Dioscuri VI 9, 6.
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Medea's children play on an altar as she prepares to kill them.

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Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture: http://www.ascorpus.ac.uk
Digital LIMC (Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologicae Classicae): https://weblimc.org/page/home
Jacoby Online (Felix Jacoby, *Die Fragmente der Greichischen Historiker*): https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/cluster/Jacoby%20Online
Lexicon of Greek Personal Names: http://www.lgpn.ox.ac.uk
MOMFER: A Search Engine of Thompson's Motif-Index of Folk Literature: https://momfer.meertens.knaw.nl
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The Electronic Sawyer: Online Catalogue of Anglo-Saxon Charters: https://esawyer.lib.cam.ac.uk/about/index.html