THE IMAGE OF NORSE POETRY IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

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The conceptual world of Norse mythology was introduced into England in the seventeenth century through the works of English antiquarians in contact with Scandinavian scholars, but its impact beyond a small circle of septentrionalists, as they were known, appears to have been slight during that century. The line of continuity between the early medieval culture of the Germanic peoples in England and their seventeenth century descendants had been reduced to the barest thread of genealogical convention: Woden's name continued to feature in royal genealogies,[1] probably as a result of chroniclers' reliance on learned speculation rather than a continuing familiarity with the tradition which included him in the first place. The presence of the Germanic pantheon inscribed in the names of the days of the week in English was also the subject of occasional comment from Bede onwards,[2] and provided the basic structure of the first accounts of Saxon gods in the seventeenth century.[3] Right up until the late sixteenth century, however, the sources on Germanic religion available to the English were limited to Latin authors: Tacitus, Jordanes, Procopius, Adam of Bremen and Saxo grammaticus.[4] What English sources on the pre-Christian past of the Anglo-Saxon people existed could not have been read, as knowledge of Old English was rare until the latter half of the seventeenth century.[5]

William Camden (1586[6]) was apparently the first to connect material from Anglo-Saxon writers writing in Latin, such as Bede and Æþelweard, with descriptions of Scandinavian religious practices in the writings of Adam of Bremen, Dudo of St. Quentin, and Ditmar (Seaton: 1935, 244). Camden described the Germanic god Woden as "that false imagined God, and Father of the English Saxons" (1610: 241). His work was extended by Richard Verstegan who made a clear distinction between the northern gods and gods of the Classical world (1628: 80), under whose identities deities of other cultures were commonly subsumed.[7] Verstegan appears to have drawn on the *Historia Gentibus Septentrionalibus* of Olaus Magnus (Rome: 1555), a work that was only translated into English in 1658.

The first publication of Icelandic material in English consisted of translations of the work of Árngrímur Jónsson.[8] His *Crymogæa sive rerum Islandicarum libri tres* (1609) was translated from Latin and excerpted (along with Dithmar Blefken's account of his voyage to Iceland) in *Purchas his Pilgrimage* (1625).[9] Section III of Arngrim's work, entitled "Of their Politie, and Religion in old times", provides a brief survey of Norse gods presented with reference to better known Mediterranean deities,[10] though it is clear the author had to do some juggling of identities to properly represent the character of Óðinn (Purchas: 1625, XIII, 547):

> This Odinus, as aforesaid, for his notable knowledge in Devillish Magicke; whereby like another Mahomet, hee affected a Divinitie after his death, was reckoned among the number of the Gods: from whom at this day, Wednesday, is called Odens Dagur, the day of Odinus: whereupon peradventure, I shall not unaptly call Odin Mercurie, as Thor Jupiter. Yet the ancients honoured Odin in the place of Mars: and such as were slaine in the warres, they say were sacrificed to Odin.

The lack of comprehensive material about Saxon culture was the starting point of Richard Verstegan's 1628[11] study, entitled *A Restitution of decayed Intelligence in Antiquities, concerning the most Noble and Renowned English Nation.* In his preface he explains "The thing that first moued mee to take some paines in this studie was, the verie naturall affection which generally is in all men to here of the worthiness of their Ancestors, which they should indeed be as desirous to imitate, as delighted to vnderstand." He set out to distinguish the "Antiquitie of Englishmen" as opposed to the legacy of the "Brittans", and includes a chapter on "the antient manner of liuing of our Saxon ancestors" and "the idolls they adored while they were Pagans". But with a few

exceptions, the attitude of English scholars to Norse mythology in the seventeenth century was harsh, to say the least. In his comparative study of religions, Edward Herbert[12] described "Heathen gods, [as] not only meer men, but also some of the most vile". Even Verstegan (1628: 81) vents his disapprobation in a description of the idol Þórr: "This great reputed God being of more estimation than many of the rest of like sort, though of as little worth as any of the meanest of that rabble . . ." [13]

Verstegan included in his treatise engravings of various Norse gods, which are thought to have been inspired by illustrations in Olaus Magnus's work. Their quality excited some interest on the Continent in correspondence between the Danish scholars S. J. Stephanius and Ole Worm.[14] The personal contacts between scholars in England and on the Continent were clearly of critical importance to the transmission of Norse material to England, both through reports in letters and in the trading of books. Although the trade was predominantly one way, it was an English antiquarian, Sir Henry Spelman, who first proposed the derivation of the word 'rune' from the Old English word denoting a secret or hidden thing. Spelman's suggestion, communicated in a letter to Ole Worm in 1630, was taken up in Worm's influential work of 1636, *Antiquitates Danicae seu Litteratura Runica*.[15] In the second half of the century, during the revival of interest in Anglo-Saxon texts led by a group of English scholars at Oxford,[16] close contact was maintained with Scandinavian scholars, and some Scandinavian students, including Peder and Christian Worm, visited Oxford.[17] George Hickes, who in 1689 published the first Icelandic grammar in England,[18] was a correspondent of the Swedish scholar Johan Peringskjöld, as was William Nicolson, the first to teach Old English at Oxford.[19]

Spelman's contribution to the etymology of the word 'rune' was part of a general fascination, in England and on the Continent, with the nature and antiquity of runic writing and its association with Óðinn. Ole Worm maintained that all early medieval sources in Scandinavia were written in runes, and this notion was quickly accepted in England where the first printed texts of Norse poems were cast in runes following Worm's example (Seaton: 1935, 229). The first runic type was imported to England by the Dutch scholar, Franciscus Junius and acquired by the University of Oxford in 1677.[20] As well as making a valuable contribution to Anglo-Saxon studies, Junius was also an important influence on Norse studies, both during his employment and retirement in England (1621-42, 1646-51, 1674-77)[21], and in his period of residence in Holland (1642-6, 1651-1674). One of his students with whom he collaborated, Thomas Marshall, lived in Rotterdam after graduating from Oxford in 1650.[22] He later became Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford, and it is to this college that Junius retired to work in 1676. Robert Sheringham, who was educated and later taught at Cambridge, was another English septentrionalist who also spent time in Rotterdam in the 1650s. Marshall owned a manuscript of Snorri's *Edda*,[23] which he may have sent Sheringham from Holland.[24]

As knowledge of the language of Icelandic manuscripts was probably slight and confined to a very few people,[25] the most significant publication of the century, as far as English septentrionalists were concerned, was Peder Hansen Resen's editions of Snorri's *Edda* and the two poems *Vǫluspá* (published as *Philosophia Antiquissima*) and *Hávamál* (*Ethici Odini*) in 1665.[26] Sheringham was the first Englishman to make use of the new resource in his *De Anglorum Gentis Origine Disceptatio*, published in 1670.[27] In the following decade other Englishmen made use of Resen's work: Daniel Langhorne in his *Elenchus Antiquitatum Albionensium* (1673), particularly in the Appendix to his work that was published in 1674, and Aylett Sammes, who published *Britannia Antiqua Illustrata; or the Antiquities of Ancient Britain* in 1676, a work that is marked by eccentricity, particularly in the author's overriding aim of demonstrating the Phoenician origin of the British race. Nevertheless, Sammes' is the first substantial work in English to treat northern mythology. In 1676, Edward Stillingfleet[28] cited

Snorri's *Edda* as evidence for his theory that all peoples recognise one supreme deity (he quotes the first exchange of *Gylfaginning* where Alfǫðr is said to be the oldest of gods).

The subjects of runes and Óðinn's powers were central to both Sheringham's and Sammes's treatment of northern mythology. Both quote the Loddfáfnir stanzas of *Hávamál* (1670: 288ff. and 1676: 442ff.) and Sammes ties the use of runes to a Saxon context (1676: 442):

> These Runes our Ancestors set up against the Enemies, others they had otherwise prepared, which had the vertue to stop the course of Rivers and Tides, to raise and then allay Tempests, to give Winds, to cause Rain, to cure Diseases, to charm Agues, Head-ach . . and such like, the invention of all which Delusions (too frequently yet used) is attributed to WODEN, who is said, by these Arts, to have deprived one Rinda, a young Girl, of all her reason and senses.

Sheringham (1670: 239) describes the Æsir/Vanir war and the figures of Kvasir and Mímir in his Latin account, and Sammes treats them in English (1676: 435). Sammes added to these details about Óðinn's prophetic trances[29] and descriptions of minor deities (1676: 447ff.).

Sammes translated his quotations of the *Edda* straight from Sheringham's Latin work, rather than from Resen's edition,[30] and later writers too appear to have been dependent on Sheringham's work rather than Continental editions of Norse originals, even when they cite Snorri or his *Edda*.[31] This raises a number of questions about the environment in which antiquarians were working in the latter half of the seventeenth century in England, including the availability of books,[32] their familiarity with runic script,[33] and the level of their understanding of the Icelandic language.

Outside this rather small circle, some idea of the regard in which Norse gods were held can be gleaned from references made to them during the course of the century in an on-going debate about poetics, or more precisely, about the relative merits and pedigrees of rhymed as opposed to quantitative and later blank verse. Before medieval Norse texts were available in England, and before there was much knowledge of the character of the Scandinavian poetic tradition, Germanic gods and peoples were frequently associated with rhymed compositions. In this debate,[34] quantitative verse was associated with perfection ('true numbers') and rhyme was judged within the framework of classical Rhetoric as appropriate for an occasional ornament but not as a structural principle.[35] Along these lines, the train of thought seems to have passed from *barbarismus* to barbarian to Germanic culture in general.

Perhaps the most exuberant champion of quantitative verse was Thomas Campion, who in a pamphlet published in 1602,[36] complained that the "facilitie & popularity" of composing in rhyme had created "as many poets as hot summer flies" and he called on poets to follow the example of the Greeks and Romans in "the strict observation of poeticall numbers, so abandoning the childish titillation of riming" (1602: 4-5). He set about proving the superiority of quantitative metres by demonstrating their appropriateness to the English language in a series of examples interspersed with commentary.[37] His demonstration of 'Licentiate Iambicks' (1602: 12), for example, begins:

> Goe numbers boldly passe, stay not for ayde
> Of shifting rime, that easie flatterer
> Whose witchcraft can the ruder eares beguile;
> Let your smooth feete enur'd to purer arte
> True measures tread . . .
> You are those loftie numbers that reuiue
> Triumphs of Princes . . .
> He [Apollos] first taught number, and true harmonye,
> Nor is the lawrell his for rime bequeath'd,
> Call him with numerous accents paisd by arte
> He'le turne his glory from the sunny clymes,
> The North-bred wits alone to patronise. . .

Campion's extravagant treatise called forth a more level-headed and circumspect

appraisal of contemporary English poetry by Samuel Daniel the next year.[38] Daniel defends rhyme by arguing that it was the customary mode of versifying in many cultures[39] (1603: 6), including among the Danes and Saxons (1603: 9):

> The Sclauonian and Arabian tongs acquaint a great part of *Asia* and *Affrique* with it, the Muscouite, Polack, Hungarian, German, Italian, French, and Spaniard vse no other harmonie of words. The Irish, Briton, Scot, Dane, Saxon, English, and all the Inhabiters of this Iland, either haue hither brought, or here found the same in vse.

The debate continued throughout the century, but as the domain of contention shifted to the style of verse appropriate for dramatic works the rival styles swung around to rhymed versus blank verse. Rhyme was still viewed as originating within northern 'barbaric' culture,[40] but its history now included such eminent European writers that it was considered suitable for compositions in certain genres, such as heroic plays. While classical precedents could not be claimed for these works, an appeal was made to contemporary practice in Europe:

> Neither do the Spanish, French, Italian, or Germans acknowledge at all, or very rarely, any such kind of poesy as blank verse among them . . . all the French, Italian, and Spanish tragedies are generally writ in it [rhyme]; and sure the universal consent of the most civilized parts of the world ought in this, as it doth in other customs, to include the rest. [41]

Whereas quantitative verse had earlier been lauded for the control it exercised over poets it was now rhyme that was responsible for reining in 'the high-ranging spaniel' of poetic imagination.[42]

With access to the editions of P. H. Resen, the *Litteratura Runica* of Ole Worm, S. J. Stephanius's edition and preface to Saxo grammaticus and other learned Scandinavian works, Robert Sheringham was in a better position than his predecessors to describe the poetic art of the north. Sheringham discusses the value of the *Edda* at length (1670: 259-68 and 272-74), and clearly believed it to be very old.[43] Within a long account that appears to be derived in part from chapters 2 to 9 of *Ynglinga saga* Sheringham describes Óðinn's poetic facility (1670: 242):

> Tanta etiam Suada & eloquii dulcedine audientes demulcere poterat, ut ipsius dictis nullam non fidem adhiberent. Rhythmis etiam & carminibus inter loquendum crebro polatis miram sermoni gratiam conciliabat. Unde & ipse & complices ipsius Schialdri & poetae dicti.

The citation at the beginning of this section (237) is "Aliam de Wodeno narrationem ex Chronico Norwegico itidem antiquo desumam cujus Author ut ait Stephanius, Snorro Sturlæsonius putatur", presumably a reference to Stephanius's 1645 work, *Notæ Vberiores in Historicam Saxonis Grammatici*, and to *Heimskringla*.[44]

The word *rhythmus* is used on several other occasions in citations of learned authorities on Norse poetry (writing in Latin), and appears to simply mean verse.[45] In Resen's trilingual edition of the *Edda*, the word *kveðskapur* in Magnús Ólafsson's prologue is rendered in Latin as *res Rythmica* (Faulkes: 1977, A 1r), and translated by Sammes (1676: 431) into English as "Rhythmical writing". In Rúnólfr Jónsson's Icelandic-Latin glossary published by Hickes (1689: 114) the term *kveðlingur* is also translated as *rhythmus*. Perhaps the field of signification of this Latin word played some part in the popular misconception that traditional Norse poetry was rhymed.[46] It is clear from a later quotation in Sheringham that he regarded Stephanius as authoritative on this point[47] (1670: 284-5):

> Wodenum insuper ad Gothos ex Asia literas Runicas attulisse, Scaldorum patrem, artisque poëticae Gothis authorem suisse, multa suadent, illud perquam maxime, quod sermonem Runicum modosque loquendi Scaldorum veteres *Asamal*, id est, *sermonem Asianum* appellabant. . . . Stephanius in Præfatione ad Saxonem Grammaticum. *Linguam Danicam antiquam, cujus in rhithmis usus fuit, veteres appellarunt . . Asamal . . .*

Rather than opening the way forward to a better understanding of traditional Norse poetry, Sheringham's comprehensive work seems to have been used by later writers very selectively. Aylett Sammes (1676, 438), invoking Snorri's *Edda* as his authority, strengthens the association between rhyme and peoples of the North, although the source for his elaboration on poetic form is unclear:

> Woden (saith [the author of the Edda]) introduced the way of composing Verses in numbers, and such Rythms as are now used in the Teutonick dialect, differing in this point from all other Languages in the World whatsoever, for that the last words of the Verses answer to one another exactly in sound. And this he did with such pleasing cadences, that mixing them in his common discourse, he wonderfully allured the Hearers, and is reputed the Inventer of Poetry among the Saxons, and the Founder of that Tribe called Scalders, which, like the Bardi among the Britains, made it their business to set forth in Verses, and sing to the People the noble Actions of their Progenitors.

Sammes goes on to quote Tacitus and Saxo Grammaticus on the poetic customs of the Scandinavians (438-9) and prefaces a quotation of st. 142 of *Hávamál* with the following observations:

> This change of the use of the Characters, from plainly writing the sense of things to form mysterious Incantations, is, by some, attributed to WODEN, wherefore they call him in this sense Runhofdi, that is, the Inventer of the Run; But the Runick Character was long before this time, if we may believe the Edda, cited by Worm, which attributes the invention of it to the Gods, the delivery to one Fimbul, and the manner of Ingraving, that is the use of it in Magick, to Woden.[48]

Since on this point both learned antiquaries (writing in English) and tradition concurred, it is perhaps not surprising that the identification of Óðinn with rhyme gained hold. In his *Essay on Translated Verse* (1684), Lord Roscommon allowed himself considerable freedom in the depiction of Norse deities engaged in rhymed declamation:

> Of many faults Rhyme is (perhaps) the Cause,
> Too strict to Rhyme we slight more useful Laws.
> For That, in Greece or Rome, was never known,
> Till by Barbarian Deluges o'erflown,
> Subdu'd, undone, They did at last Obey,
> And change their own for their Invaders way.
> I grant that from some Mossie, Idol Oak
> In Double Rhymes our Thor and Woden spoke;
> And by Succession of Unlearned Times,
> As Bards began, so Munks rung on the Chimes.
> But now that Phæbus and the Sacred Nine,
> With all their Beams on our blest Islands shine,
> Why should not We their Ancient Rites restore,
> And be, what Rome or Athens were before?

Despite his earlier defence of rhyme in dramatic works, Dryden prevaricates in later works, and is much impressed by Roscommon's argument. Already in his defence of the essay *Of Dramatic Poetry* he had argued that rhyme was simply the taste of his age.[49] By 1678, he had written a play without rhyme, explaining in his preface –

> I have endeavoured in this play to follow the practice of the Ancients, who, as Mr. Rymer[50] has judiciously observed, are and ought to be our masters . . In my style I have professed to imitate the divine Shakespeare; which that I may perform more freely, I have disencumbered myself from rhyme. Not that I condemn my former way, but this is more proper to my present purpose.[51]

The second edition of Roscommon's essay (1685) was prefaced by a verse tribute from Dryden in which he developed Roscommon's argument. According to their version of literary history, the non-rhyming quantitative poetry of Greece and Rome had been superseded by rhymed composition, whose origin was attributed to the Germanic gods. The new fashion was given momentum by the practices of the medieval Church, which used rhyme in hymns and other compositions. Even though Renaissance writers had made rhymed poetry into an art form, it was still inferior to Classical verse, which these English writers thought it their mission to revive:

> Till barb'rous Nations and more barb'rous Times
> Debas'd the Majesty of Verse to Rhimes;
> Those rode at first: a kind of hobbling Prose:
> That limp'd a long, and tinckl'd in the close:
> But Italy reviving from the trance
> Of Vandal, Goth and Monkish ignorance,
> With pauses, cadence, and well vowell'd words,

And all the Graces a good Ear affords,
Made Rhyme an Art, and Dante's polished page
Restor'd a silver, not a golden Age:
Then Petrarch follow'd, and in him we see,
What Rhyme improv'd in all its height can be;
At best a pleasing sound, and fair barbarity.
The French pursu'd their steps; and Britain, last
In manly sweetness all the rest surpass'd.[52]

Other poets also deferred to Roscommon's authoritative account of the origin of rhyme in Western poetry, and a decade later the lines describing Óðinn and Þórr under the mossy oak were quoted by Sir Thomas Pope Blount in his substantial treatise on poetry, *De Re Poetica*.[53] It was not until a century later that the confusion of Saxon with Celtic mythology (and the confusion of attributing rhymed verse to Óðinn) was pointed out by Samuel Johnson in his appraisal of Roscommon's life and works.[54]

> The *Essay* [on Translated Verse], though generally excellent, is not without its faults. . . . he has confounded the British and Saxon mythology . . . The oak, as I think Gildon has observed, belonged to the British druids, and Thor and Woden were Saxon deities. Of the 'double rhymes',[55] which he so liberally supposes, he certainly had no knowledge.

Another writer on poetics, William Temple, demonstrated two rather different attitudes to medieval Scandinavian culture in his two essays "Of Heroick Vertue" and "Of Poetry" (1690). In the former, Temple (1690, 232) canvassed the idea that the "Runick Characters", invented by Óðinn and brought to the north by him, may have been more ancient than writing in Latin.[56] Following his quotation in Latin[57] of two stanzas from "that song or Epicedium of *Regner Ladbrog* which he composed in the Runick Language about eight hundred years ago" Temple finds himself unexpectedly impressed (1690, 235-6):

> I am deceived, if in this Sonnet, and a following Ode of *Scallogrim* . . . there be not a vein truly Poetical, and in its kind Pindarick, taking with it the allowance of the different Climats, Fashions, Opinions, and Languages of such distant Countries."

The same poem had also made an impression on Aylett Sammes who depicted Ragnarr "in as good Verses as Ale could inspire, hugging himself with the hopes of Full-pots in the World to come".

In his essay "Of Poetry", however, Temple assumed the received view of European literary history (1690, 312-5), describing "the cloud of ignorance . . coming from the north", obscuring learning and replacing the Classical art with rhymed verse: "as if true Poetry being dead, an Apparition of it walked about." His history of poetry leads him to propose a novel etymology for the word 'rhyme':

> With these Changes, the antient Poetry was wholly lost in all these Countries, and a new Sort grew up by degrees, which was called by a new Name of Rhymes, with an easy Change of the Gothick Word *Runes*, and not from the Greek, *Rhythmes*, as is vulgarly supposed.

His ingenuity in etymological derivation does not end there, and he goes on to explain the origin of the word 'wise' in 'Viises'.[58]

Temple described the the poetic form of medieval Scandinavian verse in some detail, apparently acknowledging the principle of alliteration and the ornamentation of kennings[59] (1690: 316):

> Of these Runes, there were in use among the Goths above a Hundred several sorts, some Composed in longer, some in shorter Lines, some equal and some others unequal, with many different Cadencies, Quantities, or Feet, which in the pronouncing, make many different sorts of Original or Natural Tunes. Some were Framed with Allusions of Words, or Consonance of Syllables, or of Letters either in the same Line or in the Dystick, or by alternate Succession and Resemblance, which made a sort of Gingle, that pleased the ruder Ears of that People.

He proposed that rhyme developed in this culture because of the great number of monsyllables in the language[60] and quickly supplanted older forms.

Whatever admiration he felt for Ragnar's *Death-Song* as poetry seems to have been dissipated by his examination of poetic form in the broad context of European

literary history, where eddic verse is given the status of unsophisticated, popular poetry[61] (1690, 318):

> The common Vein of the Gothick Runes was what is Termed *Dithyrambick*, and was of a raving or rambling sort of Wit or Invention, loose and flowing, with little Art or Confinement to any certain Measures or Rules. . . And such as it was, it served the turn, not only to please, but even to Charm the Ignorant and Barbarous Vulgar, where it was in Use.

He goes on to claim that the use of poetry for magical purposes was a late development, resorted to by inferior poets.[62] His examples of this kind of practice "to make Women kind or easy, and Men hard or invulnerable" are clearly derived from *Hávamál*: "as one of their most antient Runers affirms of himself and his own Atchievments, by Force of these Magical Arms" (1690, 320).

While the new material on northern antiquity may not have clarified the nature of traditional poetry, the matter of mythology was taken up with some enthusiasm by John Dryden, in his play *King Arthur, or, The British Worthy* (1691). A Christian King Arthur fights to subdue a heathen Saxon King, Oswald of Kent, who, as well as vying for the throne, is also Arthur's rival for the love of Emmeline, the beautiful, blind daughter of the Duke of Cornwall. In preparation for battle (which is to take place on St. George of Cappadocia's Day), Oswald and Osmond ("a Saxon Magician, and a Heathen") engage in pagan rituals.

Although there is much in this scene that is clearly fantastic, it shows the early impact of information about Norse mythology on English writers,[63] an influence that was further developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As well as depicting Woden as the ancestor of Hengist, Dryden calls him Father of Gods and men, who rides a 'hot courser' and has the power to decide a man's death or safety in battle. The Saxon deities are also attributed with the ability to cast spells and use runic rhymes to affect their victims. Dryden's association of Tanfan with the casting of lots probably shows his familiarity with Sheringham's work (1670: 333-6) or Sammes (1676: 450-1), though in his Dedication[64] he cites his sources as Bede, Bochart[65] and others.

More often at the turn of the eighteenth century, however, those devoted to uncovering England's Germanic heritage were the butt of jokes. In his 1699 play, *The Dispensary*, Samuel Garth lampoons antiquaries fond of septentrionalist works (canto iv, ll. 127ff.):

> Abandon'd Authors here a refuge meet,
> And from the World, to Dust and Worms retreat.
> Here Dregs and Sediment of Auctions reign,
> Refuse of Fairs, and Gleanings of Duck-Lane.
> And up these Walls much Gothic Lumber climbs,
> With Swiss Philosophy, and Runic Rhymes.

And some decades later, Alexander Pope names one Worm in his caricature of antiquarian dullness:[66]

> 'But who is he, in closet close y-pent,
> Of sober face, with learned dust besprent?'
> 'Right wel mine eyes arede the myster wight,
> On parchment scraps y-fed, and Wormius hight.
> To future ages may thy dulness last,
> As thou preserv'st the dulness of the past!'

George Hickes had promised "in the name of the Arctic Muses to all those now ignorant of [Icelandic] literature" that it would prove "no less ardently enjoyed than that knowledge of the classical humanities which they so much extol".[67] It was some time before this was to be realized.

[1] See Frank Edgar Farley, 1903, *Scandinavian Influences in the English Romantic Movement. Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature* 9. Cambridge, Mass, pp.15-17.

[2] *De Temporum Ratione* in *Bedae Opera De Temporibus*, ed. C. W Jones, 1943, Ithaca, pp. 212-3.

[3] See Richard Verstegan, 1628, *A Restitution of decayed Intelligence* . . . London, pp. 68ff.

[4] See Farley, 1903, 2 and Ethel Seaton 1935, *Literary Relations of England and Scandinavia in the Seventeenth Century.* Studies in Modern Languages and Literature. Oxford, p. 244.

[5] See J. A. W. Bennett, 1938, *The History of Old English and Old Norse Studies in England from the time of Junius till the end of the eighteenth century.* D. Phil. Thesis, Oxford. Chapter 1 surveys the use made of Anglo-Saxon sources by sixteenth century ecclesiastical and legal historians.

[6] Camden's *Britannia* was first published in Latin in 1586; it was translated into English by Philemon Holland and enlarged by the author in an edition of 1610.

[7] See, for example, Camden, 1610,135 and Herbert, 1663, 72 and 209.

[8] His *Brevis Commentarius de Islandia*, 1593, was reprinted with an English translation in Hakluyt's *Collections of Early Voyages*, 1599, London.

[9] Samuel Purchas, 1625, *Purchas his Pilgrimage, or Relations of the World and the Religions, observed in all Ages and Places Discovered* III. London. References are to Maclehose ed., 1906, *Purchas his Pilgrimage* I-XX. Glasgow.

[10] In a marginal note Purchas makes the connection between Norse and Saxon mythologies: "Odinus the same that Woden in our Saxon storie" (XIII, 547).

[11] Verstegan's book was first printed in Antwerp in 1605. Although born in London, Verstegan was of Flemish parentage and later lived in Antwerp (Bennett: 1938, 24).

[12] *De Religione Gentilium*, 1663, Amsterdam. Translated by William Lewis, 1705, *The Ancient Religion of the Gentiles, and Causes of their Errors Consider'd: The Mistakes and Failures of the Heathen Priests and Wise-Men, and their Notions of the Deity, and Matters of Divine Worship, are examin'd; With regard to their being altogether destitute of Divine Revelation.* London, p. 2.

[13] Note too the observation of Aylett Sammes: "What strange and monstrous Opinions the Saxons conceived of WODEN, may be gathered out of most of their Authors, who seldom mention his Name without some excessive Encomium of his Person . . . " *Antiquities of Ancient Britain*, 1676, London p. 435.

[14] See *Olai Wormii et ad eum . . . Epistolae*, 1751, Copenhagen, pp. 213, 214, 243.

[15] See further Seaton, 1935, 226-7. Worm in fact sent fifty copies of his book to Spelman's bookseller in 1638 (Bennett: 1938, 215).

[16] See David Fairer, 1986, "Anglo-Saxon Studies" in *The History of the University of Oxford.* V, 807-29, and Bennett's account of Anglo-Saxon studies at Cambridge, 1938, 11ff.

[17] See Seaton, 1935, 173-4 and Bennett, 1938, 24.

[18] The *Grammatica Islandica* of Rúnólfr Jónsson (published in Copenhagen in 1651) was published along with Hickes's own *Institutiones Grammatica Anglo-Saxonicae et Moeso-Gothicae.*

[19] See Farley, 1903, 10, Seaton, 1935, 193ff. and Bennett, 1938, 224-5.

[20] See Edward Rowe Mores, 1778, *A Dissertation upon English Typographical Founders and Founderies* quoted by Farley, 1903, 11. See also Bennett, 1938, 33.

[21] *Dictionary of National Biography*, X, 1115-6 and Bennett, 1938, 22ff.

[22] *Dictionary of National Biography*, XII, 1132-3, and Bennett, 1938, 33ff.

[23] Bodleian Library, MS Marshall 114, which appears to have been a copy of the Uppsala codex.

[24] In the preface to his 1670 work, *De Anglorum Gentis Origine Disceptatio*, Sheringham observed "Usus etiam sum *Edda Islandorum*, vetusto monumento, quam mihi insignis vir, & summus meus amicus Thomas Mareschallus S.T.D. ex Hollandia misit, de cujus antiquitate & authoritate multa a me suo loco dicuntur." Both Seaton (1935: 265) and Bennett (1938: 223), however, think that Sheringham was referring to a copy of Resen's edition of the *Edda* rather than the Icelandic manuscript here.

[25] See Bennett, 1938, 221ff, for a discussion of Icelandic learning among Junius and his colleages. Farley (1903: 214-7) has judged that even up until the nineteenth century, no Englishman apart from George Hickes had a thorough acquaintance with the language, though a small number appear to have understood it to some degree. See, for instance, Hickes's list of his students and their projects in his *Linguarum Veterum SeptentrionaliumThesaurus Grammatico-Criticus et Archaeologicus*, 1705, Oxford, I, iv.

[26] *Edda Islandorum, facta an. Chr. MCCXV, Islandicè, Danicè et Latinè edita*, 1665, Copenhagen. *Philosophia antiquissima . . . . dicta Volu-spa quae est pars Eddae Sæmundi, . . . Islandicè ac Latinè*, 1665, Copenhagen. *Ethica Odini, pars Eddae Sæmundi vocata Haavamaal, una cum . . . Runa Capitule . . . Islandicè et Latinè*, 1665, Copenhagen.

[27] Sheringham draws on a wide range of sources, including Pontanus, Worm, Stephanius and Messenius.

[28] *Defence of the Discourse concerning Idolatry*, pp. 157-60.

[29] "When he awaked, he would constantly aver he had been in foraign Countries, and had exact knowledge of what passed in them . . ." (1676: 438).

[30] Farley, 1903, 63 n.1, has shown that Sheringham's correction of Worm's runic text and his alteration of the Latin text had been copied by Sammes without comment.

[31] See again Farley, 1903, 64 n. 6 on William Temple's use of Sheringham's text.

[32] Although the editions of Resen were available in England a short time after their publication, they were probably always very scarce and may not have been much used (Farley: 1903, 219). The three volumes by Resen appear to have been donated to the Bodleian Library by Peder Worm, son of Ole, in the early 1670s (Seaton: 1935, 342-3).

[33] Despite the intrigue that they aroused, runic inscriptions could not be read by anyone in England in the early part of the century, and had to be sent to Scandinavian scholars to be deciphered (Seaton: 1935, 224 and 235).

[34] For a survey of the debate in the sixteenth century, see Russell Fraser, 1973, *The Dark Ages and the Age of Gold.* Princeton, pp. 306-11. Thomas Nashe, Sir Philip Sidney and at one time Edmund Spenser were averse to rhyme and subscribed to the theory that it was introduced into Europe by 'Goths and Huns'. In his note on the verse-form of *Paradise Lost*, John Milton called it "the invention of a barbarous age, to set off wretched matter and lame meter . . ." He saw himself setting an example "of ancient liberty recovered to heroic poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of rhyming."

[35] ". . . that Rhetoricall figure which we tearme *similiter desinentia*, and that being but *figura verbi*, ought (as *Tully* and all other Rhetoritians haue iudicially obseru'd) sparingly be vsd, least it should offend the eare with tedious affectation." Thomas Campion, 1602, *Observations in the Art of English Poesie.* London, p. 4. On the actual frequency and diversity of rhyme in Classical works, see Eva H. Guggenheimer, 1972, *Rhyme Effects and Rhyming Figures. A Comparative Study of Sound Repetition in the Classics with Emphasis on Latin Poetry.* The Hague and Paris.

[36] *Observations in the Art of English Poesie. Wherein it is demonstratively prooved, and by example confirmed, that the English toong will receive eight severall kinds of numbers, proper to itself, which are all in this book set forth, and were never before this time by any man attempted.*

[37] Despite its very different orientation, Campion's work is not unlike *Háttatal* in some respects, both works presumably drawing on the tradition of the *clavis metrica.* Campion dedicates his work to Lord Buckhurst, Lord High Treasurer of England, and gives the names of metres along with a description and example.

[38] *A Defence of Ryme: Against a Pamphlet entitled:* Observations in the Art of English Poesie. *Wherein is demonstratively proved, that Ryme is the fittest harmonie of words that comports with our Language.*

[39] Daniel (1603: 19) also defends the cultural heritage of the northern peoples of Europe, noting that the "laws and customes" of the "Gothes, Vandales and Langobards" had provided the basis for most of the constitutions of Christendom. A similar point is later made by Temple (1690: 226), who reassesses the legacy of the "savage Nations", expressing his doubts that the "Governments erected by them, and which have lasted so long in Europe, should have been framed by unthinking Men."

[40] "But when, by the inundation of the Goths and Vandals into Italy, new languages were brought in, and barbarously mingled with the Latin (of which the Italian, Spanish, French, and ours, made out of them and the Teutonic, are dialects), a new way of poesy was practised. . ." John Dryden, 1668, *Of Dramatic Poesy.* Reprinted in *Of Dramatic Poesy and Other Critical Essays.* ed. George Watson, 1962, I, 83-4.

[41] John Dryden, 1668, *Of Dramatic Poesy.* I, 83-4.

[42] "For imagination in a poet is a faculty so wild and lawless that like an high-ranging spaniel it must have clogs tied to it, lest it outrun the judgement." John Dryden, 1664, "To Roger, Earl of Orrery, prefixed to *The Rival Ladies.* Reprinted in *Of Dramatic Poesy and Other Critical Essays*, 1962, I, 8).

[43] Citations of the *Edda* are described "Ab Edda auspicior antiquissimo omnium monumentum" (1670: 234).

[44] *Heimskringla* was published in 1633 in a Danish translation by Hans Peder Claussøn and by Johan Peringskiöld (in Icelandic and Latin) in 1697. On the circulation of quotations without precise citation among septentrionalist scholars, see Anthony Faulkes, ed., 1977, *Two Versions of Snorra Edda from the 17th Century.* Reykjavík, I, 14ff.

[45] See, for example, Sheringham (1670: 260) "Ex veterum Rhythmis", and other instances on pp. 262-3. In medieval Latin, the terms *rithmi* and *rithmici versus* were used to denote accentual in contrast to quantitative verse (*metra*). As similarity of the terminal sounds was a common feature of accentual verse, *rithmus* came to have the sense of 'rime' (See the *OED* entry for 'rime'). 'Metre' is given as one of the senses of 'rhyme' in a 1565 Thesaurus (see *OED* entry on 'rhyme'), but the predominant meaning of the word in English in seventeenth-century citations is consonance of terminal sounds.

[46] In *Ynglinga saga* Snorri says of Óðinn "mælti hann allt hendingum, svá sem nú er þat kveðit, er skáldskapr heitir", a description that may have lost some definition during translation. The occurrence of rhyme in medieval Scandinavian

poetry, and its possible origins, are discussed by Hallvard Lie in several entries in *Kulturhistorisk Leksikon för Nordisk Middelalder.* See "Enderim" 3 (1958): 622-4, "Hrynhent" 7 (1962): 28-30,"Runhent" 14 (1969): 479-80, "Stavrim" 17(1972): 107-10 and "Knittel" 8 (1963): 583-6.

47 Sammes, 1676, 444 translates this passage, using the English word "Rithms" for *rhithmus*.

48 Sammes, 1676, 441. See also Sheringham, 1670, 286-7.

49 "All I can say is this, that it [rhymed composition] seems to have succeeded verse by the general consent of poets in all modern languages . . . [which] shews that it attained the end, which was to please. For I confess my chief endeavours are to delight the age in which I live." "A Defence of *An Essay Of Dramatic Poesy*", prefixed to *The Indian Emperor*, 1668, I, 115-16.

50 True to his name, the playwright Thomas Rymer did use rhyme in his dramatic compositions, but he argued for the restoration of classical precepts in his critical work, *Tragedies of the Last Age Considered*, 1678, to which Dryden here refers.

51 Preface to *All for Love*, 1678, I, 230-31.

52 Lord Roscommon, *Essay on Translated Verse*, 1684, second edition.

53 "How the Noble, and Ingenious Lord *Roscommon*, stood affected to *Rhyme*, appears by these following Lines . . . (Blount: 1694, 105-6).

54 "Roscommon" in *The Lives of the Poets*. London. Reference is to the text based on the 1783 four-volumed octavo edition published in 1905 by Birkbeck Hill, London, pp. 237.

55 See *OED* for seventeenth-century citations on the use of the terms "double" and "triple rhyme" meaning "rhyme involving two or three syllables respectively".

56 This idea had earlier been put forward by Olaus Magnus in his *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus*, 1555, translated into English in 1658, though it appears to go back to Snorri's *Edda* and the *Third Grammatical Treatise*. See Preben Meulengracht-Sørensen, 1989, "Moderen forløst af datterens skød" in *Medeltidens födelse*. Symposier på Krapperups Borg 1. Lund, pp. 263-75.

57 Temple attributes his text to Ole Worm's *Litteratura Runica*, 1636.

58 "Runes were properly the Name of the antient Gothick Letters or Characters, which were Invented first or Introduced by Odin . . . But because all the Writings, they had among them for many Ages, were in Verse, it came to be the common Name of all sorts of Poetry among the Goths, and the Writers or Composers of them, were called *Runers* or *Rymers*. They had likewise another name for them or for some sorts of them, which was *Vises* or *Wises*, and because the sages of that Nation, expressed the best of their Thoughts, and what Learning and Prudence they had, in these kind of Writings, they that succeeded best and with most Applause were termed Wise Men; . . ." (Temple: 1690, 315-6).

59 It was not until Hickes's *Thesaurus* in 1705 that a full acount of Norse poetic form was published in England (based on Ole Worm's survey of Norse metrical rules in *Litterature Runica*). See Bennett, 1938, 238.

60 "And because their Language was composed most of Monosyllables, and of so great Numbers, many must end in the same Sound; and another sort of Runes were made, with the Care and Study of ending two Lines, or each other of four Lines, with Words of the same Sound, which being the easiest, requiring less Art, and needing less Spirit (because a certain Chime in the Sounds supplied that Want, and pleased common Ears); this in time grew the most general among all the Gothick Colonies of Europe, and made Rhymes or Runes pass for the modern Poetry, in these parts of the World." (Temple: 1690, 316-7).

61 In noting that the Goths admired their poets just as much as poets were admired in "learned Nations", Temple (1690: 318) explains: "For among the Blind, he that has one Eye is a Prince."

62 "But as the true Flame of Poetry was rare among them . . . those Runers who could not raise Admiration by the spirit of their poetry, endeavoured to do it by another, which was that of Enchantments . . . [they] turned the use of them very much to Incantations and Charms . . ." (1690: 319-20).

63 See also *Prince Arthur, An Heroick Poem in Ten Books*, 1696, by Sir Richard Blackmore, in which Thor is described as living in Lapland's alps (Farley: 1905, 25).

64 "When I wrote it, seven Years ago, I employ'd some reading about it, to inform myself out of Beda, Bochartus, and other Authors concerning the Rites and Customs of the Heathen Saxons . . ." *Dedication to the Marquiss of Hallifax*. Reprinted in Montague Summers, ed., 1932, *Dryden. The Dramatic Works*. London, pp. 241-2.

65 Samuel Bochartus, 1646, *Geographica Sacra* I-II. Cadomi.

66 *The Dunciad* (1728-43). Reprinted in John Butt, ed., 1963, *The Poems of Alexander Pope*. London, book III, 185-90.

67 *Thesaurus*, 1705, I, iii.