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Two Compounds in the Old English and Old Norse Versions of the *Prose Phoenix*

The presence of Norse-derived terms in Old English texts, especially those written during the late tenth or eleventh centuries, is nothing extraordinary. It has been known for a long time that the similarity between the two languages and the close contact in Anglo-Saxon England between Old English and Old Norse speakers allowed for a significant impact of the latter on the former, even though its most interesting effects may not be visible until the early Middle English period.¹ However, when a late Old English text records two Norse-derived compounds which are also attested in an Old Norse version of the text things stop being so simple and further answers are needed. Such is the situation of OE *carlfugol* / ON *karlfugl* 'male bird' and OE *cwenfugol* / ON *kvennfugl* 'female bird', which are attested in the Old English and Old Norse versions of a text which Blake (1964) baptised as the *Prose Phoenix* on the basis of its similarity with the Old English poem known as *The Phoenix*. However, as noted by a recent commentator, the relationship between the Old English and Old Norse versions has been "all but ignored" in the last decades (Kabir 2001: 167), with the important exception of Yerkes's (1984) work. The present article

¹ For an analysis of the Norse-derived terms in Old English, see Hofmann (1955) and Peters (1981). I am currently working on a project aiming to update and supplement these studies.

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Abstract: This article attempts to throw some light on the presence of equivalent compounds (OE *carlfugol* / ON *karlfugl* 'male bird' and OE *cwenfugol* / ON *kvennfugl* 'female bird') in the Old English and Old Norse versions of a text which Blake (1964) baptised as the *Prose Phoenix* on the basis of its similarity with the Old English poem *The Phoenix*.

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aims at palliating (even if only partially) this situation and offering some tentative answers to the puzzle which these texts present scholars with.

1 The manuscript contexts of the texts

The Old English version of the *Prose Phoenix* is recorded in fols. 374v–77r of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 198, which belong to a section from the second half of the eleventh century written at Worcester (Ker 1990: no. 48); and fols. 166–68r of London, British Library, MS Cotton Vespasian D.xiv, a manuscript from the mid-twelfth century with southern (probably south-eastern, possibly Rochester or Canterbury) origin (Kitson 1992: 43 n. 116, Laing 1993: 83, with references, Treharne 2000: 31–34 and Irvine 2000: 48–54). The two manuscripts are not unrelated. The collection of texts in the Vespasian manuscript relies, at least partially, on that in the Corpus manuscript, their relationship being particularly clear as far as the texts belonging to Ælfric's First Series of *Catholic Homilies* are concerned (Irvine 2000: 49–50). In the Old English version, the narrative on the phoenix and its abode is incorporated into an anonymous homily on St John. The saint is taken by an angel to paradise, which is described as the dwelling-place of good souls waiting for Doomsday, angels and the phoenix. Kabir (2001: 171) specifies that the abode described in the text is an "interim paradise", which is neither the Garden of Eden nor heaven. The Corpus version incorporates a final allegorical interpretation of the text which is lacking from the Vespasian version, much in keeping with the tendency of the latter collection towards simplification and abridgement (Irvine 2000: 50).

The Old Norse version of the text is recorded on fol. 1r of Copenhagen, Arnamagnæan Institute, MS 764 4to, a manuscript written ca 1375 in Skagafjörður, Northern Iceland, "probably in or for the Benedictine convent at Reynistaður" (Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir 2004: 2, cp. 2000: 53–57); and on fols. 7–8r of Copenhagen, Arnamagnæan Institute, MS 194 8vo, a manuscript written in 1387 in western Iceland (Kålund 1908: ii and Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir 2004: 8). The account of the phoenix and its dwelling-place in the Old Norse texts is incorporated into encyclopaedic narratives. In AM 764 4to it appears after an explanation on Asia which is part of a brief description of the world; in its turn, the description of the world is incorporated

into the larger frame of the *aetatis mundi* or *ages of the world*, where biblical and non-biblical material are closely intertwined (Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir 2000 and 2004). In AM 194 8vo, the narrative on paradise and the phoenix is presented together with the pilgrimage itinerary of Abbot Nikulás Bergsson of Munkþverá in Eyjafjörðr, northern Iceland (d. 1159) (Kålund 1908: xix).² The account on the phoenix and paradise in AM 194 8vo is divided into two parts. The first part is introduced by “Hoc dicit Moyses de Paradiso” ‘thus says Moses about paradise’ (Kålund 1908: 1); this part is also found in AM 764 4to. The second part is introduced by “Hoc dicit Iohannes apostolus de Paradiso” ‘thus says John the Apostle about paradise’ (Kålund 1908: 5); this part, which explains how the phoenix is reborn out of its ashes (and records the compounds ON *karlfugl* and *kvennfugl*), is not included in AM 764 4to (Simek 1990: 164 and Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir 2004: 8). Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir (2000: 70 and 2004: 8) explains that, even though it is clearly not the case that the AM 764 4to account derives directly from that in AM 194 8vo because of the date of the manuscripts, the two accounts are likely to share a common source.³

2 Relationship between the Old English and Old Norse texts

While the existence of the Old English text seems to have passed generally unnoticed by scholars working primarily on the Old Norse texts (it is not mentioned by Kålund 1908, Simek 1990 or Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir 2000, 2004), the relationship between the two versions has received occasional attention from scholars focusing on Old English texts. The debate about their relationship is closely associated with the question of the origin of the Old English text. In an article on the contents of the Vespasian manuscript, Förster (1920: 64 and n. 1), who notices the existence of the Old Norse version in AM 194 8vo without further comment, suggests that the Old English *Prose Phoenix* is likely to be a translation of a lost Latin paraphrase of Lactantius’s *Carmen de ave phoenice*, the source of the Old English poem *The Phoenix*. Kabir

² On this trip and the identification of the pilgrim, see further Hill (1983, with references) and Simek (1990: 264–80).

³ For a list of the recent editions of the Old English and Old Norse versions, see Yerkes (1984: 24–25).

(2001: 169), who decides not to explore the relationship between the Old English and Old Norse versions in detail (but see below), rejects this hypothesis as “somewhat implausible” on the basis that it cannot satisfactorily account for “the many similarities of vocabulary and phrasing which exist between *The Phoenix* and the ‘Prose Phoenix’”. She (2001: 171) prefers to see instead the Old English prose text as the result of the author’s “unfettered reassembling of phrases, descriptive techniques and even ideas originally from *The Phoenix*” through memory.⁴ However, Förster’s suggestion cannot be so easily discarded: if the author of the hypothesised Latin reworking of Lactantius’s work was an Anglo-Saxon, both s/he and the Old English prose-author are likely to have known and have been influenced by the Old English poem.⁵ Furthermore, the existence of the Latin original would explain the presence of Latinate terms in the vernacular texts (see below); otherwise, they have to be understood as somewhat strange examples of code-switching.

The question that needs answering is, therefore, whether the Old English and Old Norse versions of the text could have arisen (at least partially) independently from each other on the basis of a shared (Latin) source or whether the similarities between them make this possibility untenable. Either option could account for the fact that both the Old English and the Old Norse texts have L *Radionsaltus* / *Radiansaltus* as the name of a “fæger wudeholt” / “fagr skogr” in paradise (cp. “wuduholt wynlic” in *The Phoenix* 34). Kabir (2001: 174) explains the term as “a garbled recollection of the L phrase *radians saltus*, ‘shining valley’, which could have been a phrase that had remained in the author’s mind because of its learned sound” (the Old English version in the Corpus manuscript does point out that such is the name “in bocum”). The *author* mentioned by Kabir could easily refer to the author of the Latin paraphrase hypothesised by Förster rather than to an author working in the vernacular, who could have maintained a learned term s/he found in his/her exemplar because of lack of understanding. The garbled term could, of course, also have developed at some stage in the transmission of the hypothesised Latin paraphrase.

Blake (1964: 97) supports the independent rendering of the two ver-

⁴ On the relationship between the *Prose Phoenix* and the Old English poem, see further Cook (1919: 128–32).

⁵ On other texts which are likely to have been influenced by the poem, see Kölbing (1877).

sions on the basis that there is not “sufficient correspondence between the vocabulary of *PP* [*Prose Phoenix*] and that of the ON versions”. He brings forward the fact that “where both OE MSS read *crystal*, both ON MSS have the Latinate form *kristallus*” as evidence in support of his argument. Blake’s refusal to see a connection between the texts is commented on by Grinda (1966: 413), who dismisses the importance of this difference by suggesting that the non-Latinate form in the Old English text could simply represent a later reworking of the text; and by Kabir (2001: 169), who, similarly, remarks that “the difference between these two renderings of ‘crystal’ is not as great as are their similarities, and [...] the overall verbal correspondences between the Old Norse and Old English versions are, in fact, quite remarkable”.

It is important, then, to establish whether the general lexical and syntactic similarities of the two versions are remarkable enough to support a direct derivation. As a way of establishing what one could expect from an Old English and an Old Norse text independently translated from a Latin source, the two vernacular versions of the *Prose Phoenix* (from the Vespasian and AM 194 8vo manuscripts, as edited by Warner 1917: 146–48 and Kålund 1908: 3–6, respectively) are here compared with the late Old English (or early Middle English) and Old Norse versions of the *Elucidarium sive Dialogus de summa totius christianae theologiae*, composed in the late eleventh century or early twelfth century by Honorius Augustodunensis (*Patrologia Latina*, hereafter PL, 172, cols. 1109–1176). There is no known relationship between the two translations of Honorius’s text (but see below).⁶ The earliest English rendering of the text can be found in Vespasian D.xiv, which includes two translated fragments (see Förster 1920: 63 and Handley 1985: 329); the fragment reproduced below belongs to Warner’s (1917: 145) Homily XLVI.⁷ The earliest manuscript recording the Old Norse version is Copenhagen, Arnamagnæan Institute, MS 674a 4to, from 1200 or earlier (Firchow 1992: x) and the text reproduced below has been copied from Firchow’s (1992: 42) edition.⁸ The Latin text can be found on cols. 1127–28 in PL 172.

⁶ Firchow (1992: vi) explains that it is not clear whether the translation into Old Norse would have been undertaken in Norway or in Iceland.

⁷ On the Old English version of the *Elucidarium* see further Hollis and Wright (1992: 77–86).

⁸ This text should not be confused with the Old Norse *Lucidarius*, a translation of a late-twelfth-century German work based on Honorius’s treatise (see Hansen 2000).

Prose Phoenix

PP.1

OE Neorxenewang is feowertig fedme herre þone Noes flod wæs.

ON Paradisus er XL milna hærrī en Noa flod vard.

PP.2

OE And hit hanged̥ betwonen heofone and eorðen wunderlice, swa hit se Eallwaldend gesceop.

ON Helder er hann i midio lopte iamnær himni ok iordu, swa sem hon var sett af gudi.

PP.3

OE And hit is eall efenlang and efenbrad.

ON Paradisus er qll iamlōng ok iambreid.

.....

PP.4

OE Sunne þær scined̥ seofen siðe brihtlycor þone on þissen earde.

ON Skinn sol þar vii hlutum biartari en i þessum heim.

.....

PP.5

OE And nan man ne wat hweðr hit is þe karlfugel þe cwenefugel, bute God ane.

ON Enn eingi madr veit hvort hann er karllfugl eda kvenfugl nema gud einn.

Elucidarium

E.1

L Ascendit solus?

OE Steah he ane into heofene?

ON Steig hann einn vpp til himins?

E.2

L Qui cum eo surrexerunt, cum eo etiam ascenderunt.

OE Ealle, þa þa of deaðe aræred wæren, astugen mid him.

ON Með honom stigo vpp þeir er með honom risv vpp af dauða.

E.3

L Qua forma ascendit?

OE On hwylcen heowe steah he up?

ON Með hverri asýn steig hann vpp?

E.4

L Usque ad nubes ea forma quam ante passionem habuit: susceptus autem a nubibus, ea qua in monte apparuit.

OE On þan heowe, þe he hæfde beforan his þrowunge, he steah up oð þa wolcnen, 7 þa þa he com bufen þan wolcnen, þa genam he swylc heow swylc he hæfde on þan munte Thabor.

ON Með slivk sem hann hafde fýrir pisl sina ok hann hafde a fialli þa er hann vitraðez postolon sinum.

Yerkes (1984: 25) argues in favour of the direct relationship between the two *Phoenix* versions because Latin, “with its un-Germanic *fadung*”, could not have given rise to “such syllable-by-syllable correspondence” as in the passages copied above, a view which he shares with Larsen (1942) and Grinda (1966). Yet, it should be noted that the translations of the *Elucidarium* (particularly E.1 and E.3) also achieve a high level of similarity.⁹ Admittedly, the preposition used to render the Latin ablative in E.3 is different in the two texts; however, different prepositions are also found in passages of the *Phoenix* versions which otherwise remain fairly close (e.g. PP.4). The *Elucidarium* translations are also separated by different syntactic structures (E.2 and E.4) and additions (E.4). Yet, the same could be said about PP.2, where the Old English text exhibits a subordinate clause in the active voice, while the subordinate clause in the Old Norse text is in the passive voice; and where the Old Norse text adds a reference to the fact that paradise is in the middle of the sky, equidistant from heaven and earth (not just between them). One should also notice some differences in the pronominal uses of the two *Phoenix* texts. On the one hand, as exemplified by PP.3, in the Old English version paradise is referred to as *hit*, a neuter form, while in the Old Norse version it is referred to as *hann*, a masculine form, probably because of the influence of the masculine ending in

⁹ The prepositional verb used to render *L ascendere* in the Old Norse version of E.1 is a loan-translation based on OE *stigan up* (Thors 1957: 393–94). Thors (1957: 394) explains that in Old East Norse texts the more common term to render the Latin verb is *upfara*, which is likely to be a loan-translation based on other West Germanic languages (cp. OHG *uffaran*).

Paradisus (OE *neorxnawang* 'paradise' is, however, also a masculine noun). Notably, the loanword ON *paradis* is a feminine noun (Cleasby and Vigfusson 1957: s.v. *paradis*; cp. Thors 1957: 446).¹⁰ On the other hand, both the Old English and the Old Norse versions refer to the *Phoenix* with masculine pronouns (*he/hann*, respectively);¹¹ however, in the context where the gender of the bird is discussed (PP.5), the Old Norse version sticks to its common pronominal choice, while the Old English version prefers a neuter pronoun, probably to emphasise the uncertainty surrounding the matter. It is therefore not absolutely clear that one vernacular text *must* be a translation of the other, even when Larsen's (1942: 84) argument against a direct relationship between the extant Old English and Old Norse manuscript witnesses is taken into consideration. After all, the two languages shared a common lexical stock and their syntactic differences could have been watered down by the influence of a Latin exemplar.

Nonetheless, despite the doubts which the comparison exercise has cast onto the vernacular direct translation hypothesis, the attestation of four compounds could, admittedly, make it very tempting. The compounds, as noted by Yerkes (1984), are OE *efenbrād* / ON *jafnbreiðr* 'as broad as long', OE *efenlang* / ON *jafnlangr* 'equally long', OE *carlfugol* / ON *karlfugl* 'male bird' and OE *cwenfugol* / ON *kvennfugl* 'female bird'.

2.1 The *efen-/jafn-* compounds

Even though it is interesting to see that the two vernacular versions have chosen compound adjectives in the same context (see above, PP.3), the possibility that they may have developed as independent translations of a Latin term/phrase cannot be discarded. Admittedly, as far as these compounds in particular are concerned, they may have been more common in Old Norse than in Old English: while OE *efenbrād* is only recorded in the *Prose Phoenix* and OE *efenlang* is only recorded in one more context (Riddle 44 in the Exeter Book; Krapp and Dobbie 1936: 204), Yerkes (1984: 25) points out that Cleasby and

¹⁰ The loanword in Old Swedish seems to have been a neuter noun, possibly suggesting the influence of continental West Germanic languages (cp. OHG *paradis(i)*; see Thors 1957: 446).

¹¹ Cp. *hē* in the Old English poem *The Phoenix* (e.g. ll. 142, 145, 148; Blake 1964: 48–49) and *hann* in the phoenix section of the Old Icelandic version of the *Physiologus* (Del Zotto Tozzoli 1992: 66). On the gender of the phoenix, see further Mermier (1989: 71) and Ausman (1995).

Vigfusson (1957: s.v. *jafn*) record two other contexts for ON *jafn-breidr* and half a dozen for ON *jafnlangr*. Yet, as Yerkes (1984: 25–26) himself notes, compounds with the determinant *efen-/jafn-* are not uncommon in either Old English (cp. DOE 1986–: s.v. *efen-*) or Old Norse texts.

2.2 The *carl-/karl-* and *cwen-/kvenn-* compounds

It has long been agreed that OE *carlfugol* and *cwenfugol* in the *Prose Phoenix* are likely to be Norse-derived terms (see e.g. Björkman 1900–02: 215, Carr 1939: 28, Grinda 1966: 413 and Yerkes 1984: 26–27). Indeed, the determinant in OE *carlfugol* is a clear pointer in the direction of Norse influence because the native equivalent is OE *ceorl* ‘layman, peasant, husband, man’. That the compound should be understood as a loan-blend and not as a hybrid new-formation fully attributable to the word-formation tendencies of Old English speakers is suggested by the fact that this compound type is not very common in Old or early Middle English (cp. OE *carlmann* ‘person of male gender’ in the E-text of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle s.a. 1086 < ON *karlmaðr*; Irvine 2004: 97). Old English texts only record four compounds with OE *ceorl* as the determinant and in three of the four cases OE *ceorl* is used as a term of social status rather than as an indicator of masculinity: OE *ceorlborn* ‘low-born, not noble’, *ceorlfolc* ‘common people’, *ceorlmann* ‘man with the rank of a ceorl’ and *ceorlstrang* ‘strong like a man’.¹² As far as OE *cwen*-compounds are concerned, OE *cwenfugol* can only be compared with OE *cwenhirde*, which glosses L *eunuchus* ‘eunuch’ in the tenth-century Aldredian glosses to the Lindisfarne Gospels (Skeat 1871–87: Mt 19.12). This comparison is not beyond doubt, though, because it may be the case that the determinant of the compound is actually OE *cwēn* ‘queen’, as suggested by Clark Hall (1960: s.v. *cwēn-hirde*; cf. DOE 1986–: s.v. *cwen-hyrde*). The written records suggest that, when they did not use a different term to differentiate gender (e.g. OE *bicce* ‘bitch’ vs OE *hund* ‘dog’, OE *wylf* ‘she-wolf’ vs OE *wulf*

¹² More common is the use of OE *wāpned-* to create compounds referring to the male sex, e.g. OE *wāpnedbearn* ‘male child’, *wāpnedcild* ‘male child’ and *wāpnedmann* ‘male, man’ (cp. Curzan 2003: 160). It is not clear whether the determinant refers to the fact that the person mentioned would use (or would be able to use in the future) weapons or whether it is an euphemistic reference to the male sexual organ (Sauer 1992: 349 and 392). Given that the term is not used to form compounds referring to male animals, the first meaning may have been at the front of the Anglo-Saxons’ mind, whatever its original meaning may have been.

'(he-)wolf'),¹³ English speakers preferred OE *wīf* 'woman, female' (and its Middle English reflex) to OE *cwene* to refer to a female being (see the list of compounds with OE/ME *wīf* as the determinant in Clark Hall 1960, Sauer 1985: 489 and 512, *MED* 1952–2001: s.v. *wīf*, n.2, sense 3, and Fell 2002: 202). Not surprisingly, *The Phoenix* has "God ana wat, / cyning almihtig hu his gecynde bið, / wifhades þe weres (ll. 355–57; Blake 1964: 54) as the equivalent text to PP.5.

Old Norse speakers seem to have been keener on ON *karl*- and *kvenn*-compounds, even though the compounds ON *karlfugl* and *kvennfugl* themselves do not appear to have been particularly common: ON *kvennfugl* does not seem to have been otherwise recorded, while ON *karlfugl* is only recorded once more, in a text with a Latinate background (viz. *Stjórn*; Unger 1862: 77 and 78; see Cleasby and Vigfusson 1957: s.vv. *karl-fugl* and *kvenn-fugl*; cf. Yerkes 1984: 27, who suggests that the terms are also attested in the *Postula sǫgur*).¹⁴ Despite the fact that the late date of Old Norse writings makes it hard to have access to records of ON *karl*- and *kvenn*-compounds from the late eleventh or early twelfth century, their presence can be noted in texts belonging to very different genres. ON *karlmaðr* appears, for instance, in (1) a Gotlandic runic inscription from ca 1100 (G 203; Snædal 2002: 78–80);¹⁵ (2) the mid-twelfth century poem known as *Háttalykill enn forni* (st. 38b; Jón Helgason and Holtsmark 1941: 31);¹⁶ and (3) the Christian Laws Section of *Grágás* (Finsen 1852: §1, pp. 6 and 7), which was compiled and approved between 1122 and 1133 (Dennis et al. 1980–2000: I, 5). The same section records as well ON *karldýrr* 'men's door (pl.)' (Finsen 1852: §§2 and 4, pp. 9 and 14), while a section dealing with miscellaneous articles records ON *karlklæði* 'men's clothing' and *kvennklæði* 'women's dress' (Finsen 1852: §254, pp. 203 and 204). The latter, like

¹³ The use of pronouns to create compounds indicative of gender did not develop until the Middle English period (see *MED* 1952–2001: s.v. *hē*, pron. 1, and *hē*, pron. 2).

¹⁴ Cp. ON *karldýr* 'male animal' and *kvenndýr* 'female animal' in *Stjórn* (Unger 1862: 71, 77, 94, etc.). Interestingly, ON *karlfugl* appears in the same chapter as a reference to the phoenix (i.e. ch. 23 in *Stjórn i*). However, even though Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir (2000: 106) explains that *Stjórn i* and AM MS 764 4to may both draw information from a translation of the *Stjórn iii* type, the two occurrences of the compound cannot be straightforwardly associated, especially given the common use of the superordinates ON *karldýr* and *kvenndýr*. After all, we need to remember that the information on the phoenix in *Stjórn* relies on *Speculum Historiale* and Isidore's *Etymologiae* (Astás 1991: 53–54; see Unger 1862: 74).

¹⁵ **kuinn(k)** in a Norwegian runic inscription, N 283, may represent the compound ON *kvenngrid* 'woman's inviolability' (Olsen et al. 1941–90: iv, 26–38, especially 33 and n. 2).

¹⁶ On the poem and its date, see Jón Helgason and Holtsmark (1941: 5–7).

most sections of *Grágás*, should be attributed to some time between 1117 and 1264 (Dennis et al. 1980–2000: I, 9–10). These attestations should be put into a wider picture: Yerkes (1984: 27) counts more than forty compounds with ON *karl*- and nearly eighty with ON *kvenn*- in Fritzner (1883–96).

In a nutshell, the possibility that ON *karlfugl* and *kvennfugl* in the context under consideration developed as nonce-words to render a Latin term/phrase cannot be discarded, while the possibility that the Old English compounds developed independently from Old Norse linguistic influence in Anglo-Saxon England seems less likely. One could argue that the compounds could have developed independently in Anglo-Scandinavian England; however, this suggestion still faces the problem of accounting for the almost total lack of equivalent compounds in other Old and early Middle English texts from the Scandinavianised areas.

3 Possible explanations

The results of the analysis conducted in the previous section leaves scholars with the picture of two vernacular versions, closely related (although it is not necessarily the case that one is a direct descendant of the other) and sharing specific lexical items. Given the presence of at least two Norse-derived compounds in the Old English version, Yerkes (1984) argues in favour of the primacy of the Norse text. This suggestion seems to be the easiest way to account for the evidence, but it faces several problems:

(3.a) It supposes the existence of an Old Norse version of the text which would have made its way to England by the second half of the eleventh century and which would have been transmitted either in writing or orally.¹⁷ This may not be a very serious problem because Norse religious literature may have been written down “well before 1150, and perhaps in the 11th century” (Kirby 1986: 33). Yet, the initial phases of vernacular literature writing (and the translation activities associated with it) are likely to have been dominated by the “basic liturgical books” (Kirby 1986: 34; cp. Turville-

¹⁷ Cp. Kabir (2001: 169), who, while arguing in favour of the primacy of the Old English version, suggests that the differences between the two vernacular versions should be attributed “not so much to the vagaries of written composition and scribal error as to the techniques of memorial composition and transmission”.

Petre 1953: 76) and the *Prose Phoenix* could hardly be included amongst them.

(3.b) The influence of Christian beliefs and texts generally follows the opposite direction, with English missionaries being sent to Scandinavia carrying books to do their job. While the role of English missionaries and clerics in other parts of Scandinavia can be established with more or less certainty (see Kirby 1986: 18–26, Abrams 1995 and Helle 2001: 180–82), their presence in Iceland is more difficult to track down. Scholars have been willing to accept for years that a certain Bjarnharðr *inn bókvísi* who was in Iceland *ca* 1020 was an Englishman, as suggested in *Hungrvaka* (Jón Helgason 1938: 80; see, for instance, Turville-Petre 1953: 71–72, Hreinn Benediktsson 1965: 37–38 and Kirby 1989: 26). However, Orri Vésteinnsson (2000: 20) has recently resisted the temptation of such identification; after all, as noted by this scholar, one needs to remember that a namesake of the cleric who was in Iceland *ca* 1050 is called *inn saxlenski* in the same source (Jón Helgason 1938: 81). Yet, even though it is not easy to identify English clerics in Iceland by their names, their presence during the eleventh century could be traced down through palaeography. Hreinn Benediktsson (1965: 34) points out that “the immediate ancestor of the Icelandic script must be the Latin miniscule writing as practised in England in the eleventh century”. Even though one may be tempted to associate the English features of the earliest Icelandic writing with the influence of English palaeography in Norway, Hreinn Benediktsson’s study (1965: 18–38) has shown that this line of argument is not fully tenable. Instead, direct contact with English writing is likely to have taken place, not so much during the phase of introduction of the Latin alphabet into Iceland, as during a later phase, which saw “its adaptation to the vernacular and the creation of a native orthography” (Hreinn Benediktsson 1965: 35).

(3.c) The account of the interim paradise presented in the *Prose Phoenix* is best placed in the English tradition. It is closely associated with that portrayed, not only in *The Phoenix* (on which see Kabir 2001: 160–64), but also (and mainly) in other late Old English texts, some of which are recorded in the Vespasian manuscript, e.g. the A version of *The Gospel of Nicodemus* (Kabir 2001: ch. 7; cf. Simek 1990: 164–69 and Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir 2000: 71–72, where the Norse version is not integrated into a clear native tradition). The problems mentioned under 3.b and 3.c, however, could be solved (at least partially) by suggesting that, while the hypothesised Latin original of the *Prose Phoenix*

would have been compiled in England, its initial translation could have been undertaken in Scandinavia. Yet, this suggestion would still face the problem presented under 3.a.

Given what is known about the literary situation in Scandinavia in the late eleventh century and early twelfth century and the relationship between Scandinavia and England, it is more plausible that, as suggested by most scholars, a text originating in England gave rise to an Old Norse version. Since the attestations of the Old Norse version of the *Prose Phoenix* are restricted to Icelandic manuscripts, it seems tempting to focus on Anglo-Icelandic relations. Needless to say, one cannot forget that after 1152, when Iceland was integrated in the archdiocese of Trondheim, a large amount of learned books is likely to have been transferred from Norway to Iceland and a manuscript recording our text could have been one of them. However, given that, as pointed out by Turville-Petre (1953: 140–41), Icelandic manuscripts record a larger proportion of early religious prose than those from Norway, it is difficult to gain a full understanding of the extent of the Norwegian influence.

Various explanations can be provided for the origin of the Norse-derived compounds attested in the Old English and Old Norse texts and the way in which an exemplar originating from England made its way to Iceland.

3.1 The compounds make their way from England to Iceland

As explained above, the compound type represented by OE *carlfugol* and *cwenfugol* is not common at all in Old English texts, nor do we have clear indications of it having become common in the dialectal areas associated with the settlement of the Scandinavian newcomers. From that perspective, even though the possibility that they may have developed in those dialectal areas cannot be fully discarded, it seems indeed difficult to sustain. It may, however, be the case that the compounds developed as a result of contact with people newly arrived from Scandinavia. From a numerical perspective, Cnut's reign (1017–35) may offer the best time-frame for the linguistic contact necessary for the development of the compounds. Indeed, during his reign Scandinavian influence can be seen in areas outside the Danelaw. It is with the arrival of this new wave of Scandinavians that Holman (1996: ch.1) associates the unexpected Scandinavian runic inscriptions in south-east England; similarly, Dance (2003: ch. 1) presents this as the most important

phase of Scandinavian settlement in the south-west midlands. Besides secular leaders, Cnut seems to have brought to England both Scandinavian and German religious men who had had contact with Scandinavia (Bergsagel 1980: 154 and Abrams 1995: 228). In addition to the return of English missionaries who had been trying to Christianise Scandinavia, such contacts between English religious houses and foreigners who originated from or had spent enough time in Scandinavia to learn Old Norse could provide a good milieu for the use in Old English of an otherwise uncommon compound type. The contact did not stop after Cnut's death, though. Good examples of the continuous contact with Scandinavia, which are particularly appropriate given the date of the attestation of the compounds, are the cases of Abbot Rudolph of Abingdon, who was appointed to his position *ca* 1050, seemingly, after having spent time in Iceland, where he left three of his accompanying monks (see Orri Vésteinsson 2000: 20–21 for the likelihood of the identification of the abbot with the Hróðólfr mentioned in the *Hungrvaka*; Jón Helgason 1938: 80–81); and Osmund, who, after acting as archbishop of Sweden, came to England and ended his life in Ely (before 1070), where he was buried (Abrams 1995: 234–35).

Having recreated a milieu where *fresh* contact with speakers of Old Norse could have given rise to the two loan-translations (on their appeal, see below), one needs to establish how these compounds could have made their way to Iceland in association with the *Prose Phoenix*. Various texts are suggestive of an Anglo-Icelandic contact during the twelfth and later centuries. Just a couple of early examples are presented below.¹⁸ On the hand, Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir (2000: 80–83) notes that the works by Honorius Augustodunensis best known in Iceland are those which are associated with his stay in England and hypothesises that, at least partially, this may be attributable to the contact which Iceland established with Lincoln during the twelfth century, the latter being an important centre for the conservation of Honorius's works and a centre where at least one Icelandic bishop (Þorlákr Þórhallsson; d. 1193) received some education (cp. Turville-Petre 1953: 139). On the other hand, Del Zotto Tozzoli (1992: 15–16 and 54) explains that a version of the *Physiologus* originating from England is likely to have been taken to Iceland by the twelfth century, as suggested by the presence of OE *gāt* 'goat' instead of the expected ON *geit* in the section on

¹⁸ For other possible examples, see, for instance, Fell (1972: 256 and 1981: 98–100) and Fjalldal (2005: 10–11).

the goat recorded in Reykjavik, Árni Magnússon Institute, MS 673 A II 4to (Del Zotto Tozzoli 1992: 80).¹⁹ Del Zotto Tozzoli accounts for the presence of the Old English loanword by hypothesising that the manuscript taken to Iceland may have had some Old English glosses (cp. Halldór Hermannsson 1938: 10 and 12). The latter example could also offer a way of explaining the presence of similar vocabulary in the Old English and Old Norse versions of the *Prose Phoenix* if one wants to argue in favour of the existence of a lost Latin text from which the Old English and Old Norse versions may derive.

3.2 The compounds make their way from Iceland to England

The association of the puzzle at hand with glosses and the Icelandic *Physiologus*, however, could also provide a possible, but less likely, explanation for the origin of OE *carlfugol* and *cwenfugol*. A *Prose Phoenix* text originating from England could have been taken to Iceland as part of a more general interest in animal-lore. The latter has left a trace in the Icelandic version of the *Physiologus*, a text which was used both in monastic schools and as source material for sermons addressed to wider audiences (Clark and McMunn 1989: 2–3). The *Prose Phoenix* text could have acquired some Old Norse glosses during its time in Iceland, as a result of being used as teaching/preaching material,²⁰ and some of the glosses could have been incorporated into the version of the text which is the source of the accounts in the Corpus and Vespasian manuscripts.

3.3 The appeal of the Norse-derived compounds

As explained above, whether the text taken to Scandinavia was written in Old English or Latin and whether the compounds were first used in association with the *Prose Phoenix* in English or Scandinavian soil are difficult questions for which one may never find definite answers. More interesting are the possible reasons for the incorporation of the Norse-derived compounds into the Old English text. Despite the scar-

¹⁹ The Icelandic version, however, does not coincide either with the Old or the Middle English versions. On the Old English *Physiologus*, which only has descriptions of the panther, the whale and a certain bird, see Squires (1988) and Rossi-Reder (1999). On the Middle English *Physiologus*, see Wirtjes (1991).

²⁰ On the vernacular glossing tradition in Medieval Iceland, see Raschellà (2001: 588–90).

city of attestations of this compound type, the compounds would have been fully intelligible to a late Anglo-Saxon audience: ON *kvenna* and OE *cwene* are cognates, while the Anglo-Saxon's familiarity with ON *karl* would have developed thanks to Norse-derived compounds such as OE *carlmann* (< ON *karlmaðr*) and OE *hūscarl* (< ON *húskarl* 'man-servant; a member of the king's body-guard') (see above, 2.b). The Norse word-formation patterns allowed for the opposition of two echoing compounds joined through their determinatum and alliteration, a stylistic feature much in the taste of an Anglo-Saxon audience (cp. Chapman 1995 and 1998). On the basis of the lexical attestations described above under 2.b, one is led to believe that fully native Old English word-formation patterns would not have been as satisfactory in this respect and this may have made the use of Norse-derived compounds all the more tempting. They are not compounds that may have easily come to the mind of an Old English speaker; yet, once s/he was led towards them, either by someone with *fresh* knowledge of Old Norse or by a gloss in his/her source, s/he would not have found their use particularly problematic.

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