Wayland Smith: A Cultural Historical Biography

Isobel Rennie Robertson

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of Leeds

Institute for Medieval Studies

September 2020

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

Acknowledgements

With thanks to Alaric Hall and Julia Barrow for their supervision, Louise Rennie for her proofreading efforts, and Witt Womack for his research assistance and moral support.

Abstract

Wayland the Smith appears in art and literature from across early medieval north-western Europe, but much of this material has not been used to its fullest potential. Assessing all of the Wayland material together, across disciplines, illuminates different themes and motifs, shedding light both on the figure of Wayland and on various aspects of medieval society. Wayland appears as a smith, a murderer, a rapist, and an outsider, but these different facets have not received equal attention. This thesis places the focus on the name and image of Wayland in those surviving sources which are most firmly identified as depicting the legendary smith. It concentrates on how he changed between cultures and across the centuries in medieval north-western Europe. Studies of Wayland have often focused on the ritual and magical properties of the smith, but recent archaeological evidence has demonstrated the complex role of smiths in early medieval societies, and a cross-disciplinary study of Wayland material shows how he was adapted to fit changing ideas about craftsmen. Less attention has been paid in scholarship to Wayland's roles as a murderer and a rapist, but the surviving sources have the potential to reveal a great deal about early medieval attitudes to these crimes. Finally, while Wayland's connections to the supernatural have been well-studied, broadening this into a consideration of how he was presented as an outsider allows fragmentary sources to reveal patterns of continuity and change in attitudes to foreigners, slaves, the supernatural, and more.

Contents

Introduction

Wayland the Smith was a figure well known across medieval Europe. His story was told in England and Iceland, his image appears on eighth- to tenth-century artwork from across northern Europe, and his name survived in French poetry of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[1] Two surviving texts tell the story of his captivity and dramatic escape through the use of flight, while he appears as a winged figure on carved stones, and other elements of his story appear in art and literature from across the medieval world and throughout the Middle Ages. He is referred to as a smith in many of these instances, whether outright or through the use of metalworking tools as identifying motifs. His identity as a smith has, in some ways, come to define him, particularly for modern audiences. In English, he is today usually known as Wayland the Smith; in German he is Wieland der Schmied.[2] He is known, both in modern literature and medieval legend, for the wondrous items he crafts, and for his links to blacksmithing. The figure of the smith said to haunt the ancient Wayland's Smithy in Oxfordshire is one of the best-known manifestations of Wayland in the modern world.

However, just because Wayland has always been identified as a smith does not mean that he has only ever been a smith; the rich source material that tells his story and preserves his name makes that very clear. Wayland was known to medieval audiences as a peerless metalworker and craftsman, but he had a character and identity that stretched far beyond his metalworking activities. Similar themes and motifs appear again and again in association with his identity as a metalworker, building a sparse but tantalisingly coherent picture of how medieval audiences viewed the figure of Wayland the Smith. It is these separate facets of Wayland's identity that will be studied in this thesis.

[1] Note on names: the Old English forms of proper names will be used for figures from Wayland's story, Beadohild and Niðhad, while the modern English 'Wayland' will be used for the smith himself.
[2] G. B. Depping, *Wayland the Smith: A Dissertation on a Tradition of the Middle Ages. With Additions by S. W. Singer* (London: William Pickering, 1847).

They have been divided into Smith, Murderer, Rapist, and Outsider, but it will quickly become clear that these many strands of Wayland's identity are all tangled together. He cannot be defined as any one of these things alone without risk of losing his story's depth and meaning – not even as Wayland the Smith. The power of using Wayland's name comes not only from the well-known quality of his metalwork, but from the other qualities and connotations that clustered around him.

The study of Wayland's identity is very different from the most-studied issue regarding the figure of Wayland: the question of where the Wayland story came from, which has baffled many historians and folklorists for centuries. Even the prologue of *Þiðreks saga*, a medieval text where Wayland's story was retold, considered this question. Already, says this text, which was probably written in the thirteenth century, stories of Wayland were known in Scandinavia before this 'new' German version was imported. But how had the story of Wayland reached Scandinavia? Where had it come from before that? Although these questions will not be the focus of this thesis, it is important to consider them, and acknowledge a variety of possible answers. Sculptural evidence tells us that the story dated to at least the eighth century in Sweden, and may well have been told for centuries before that. The tale of Wayland had also reached England by the eighth century, as evidenced by the famous Franks Casket. Had it been imported by Scandinavian travellers and settlers, or had the English brought it across the Channel themselves, carried from their own ancestral homeland? The presence of a similar story in high medieval Germany would suggest the latter interpretation.[3] The story of Wayland, in one form or another, may have been common to the early Germanic-speaking groups of the Migration period. A recent article by Marijane Osborn has gathered the evidence that links Wayland's story to Worms, Germany; her work is only the latest example of a series of attempts to pin Wayland down to a specific location.[4]

[3] That the Wayland story was known in early medieval Germany is hinted at by his mention in the Latin poem *Waltharius*; the prologue of *Þiðreks saga* tells us that the story was probably still known in Germany in the twelfth century and perhaps even later.

[4] Marijane Osborn, 'A New Suggestion About *Weland be wurman* in *Deor*', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 118 (2019), 157-76.

The similarities between the story of Wayland and the Greek tale of Daedalus have been noted since at least the fourteenth century.[5] Like Daedalus, Wayland is a master craftsman imprisoned on an island by a king who wishes to exploit his skills.[6] Even more like Daedalus, Wayland builds wings to effect his escape. It is not impossible that the early medieval people of England and Scandinavia knew this story; connections with the Roman world were strong, and the story appeared in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which was certainly influential in the later Middle Ages. There is no firm evidence, however, that the story of Daedalus was known in Scandinavia as early as the eighth century, and the similarities may be coincidental, or drawn from stories that were older still.

Other studies of the Wayland story have concluded that it was drawn from the myths of the Sami, the indigenous people of northern Scandinavia.[7] This is not a surprising conclusion; the prose introduction to *Vǫlundarkviða*, one of the two key Wayland texts, refers to him as a Sami, and traces of Sami tradition and religious belief arguably pervade *Vǫlundarkviða.* A Sami origin, however, does little to explain how the story arrived in England or Germany. There was certainly a great deal of cultural exchange between the Norse and the Sami, but the widespread nature of the Wayland story suggests that at least its key components originated on the Norse side of this relationship. His tale, as it developed in Scandinavia, may have been influenced by Sami tradition, but this was probably not its ultimate origin.

The thorough and far-ranging commentary on the *Poetic Edda*, of which *Vǫlundarkviða* is a part, suggests a number of other possible origins.[8] It may have been a central Asian story, spread north

[5] The Icelandic term *valandur hús* and its use as a word for 'labyrinth', suggesting a connection between Wayland (Icelandic *Vǫlundr*) and Daedelus is discussed by Rudolf Simek, 'Völundarhús - Domus Daedali Labyrinths in Old Norse Manuscripts', *NOWELE. North-Western European Language Evolution*, 21 (1993), 323-368.

[6] Depping, *Wayland the Smith*, p. LXIX; *Kommentar zu den Liedern der Edda, Vol. 3: Götterlieder*, ed. by Klaus von See, Beatrice La Farge, Eve Picard and Katja Schulz (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 2000), p. 84; Marilyn Dunn, *The Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons, c.597 - c.700: Discourses of Life, Death and Afterlife* (London: Continuum, 2009).

[7] *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, eds. Philip Pulsiano and Kirsten Wolf (Garland: New York, 1993), p. 711.

[8] Von See, La Farge, Picard, and Schulz, *Kommentar zu den Liedern der Edda, Vol. 3,* p. 84.

and west by succeeding waves of horsemen; a story with motifs similar to those found in *Vǫlundarkviða* has been identified in Japan, although once again this suggestion fails to explain how the story spread all the way to England so quickly. More likely is the probability that Wayland was a hero shared by the early Germanic-speaking people of northern Europe. As they spread out during the Migration Period, each group took their own version of the Wayland story with them, while continuing to exchange versions through long-distance contacts with other Germanic-speaking groups. This is the model which best accounts for the wide distribution of Wayland material across north-western Europe; it cannot be proven as the truth of Wayland's origins, but it seems most likely that the various regions all developed their own version of the story which drew upon an ancient, perhaps already long-forgotten, tale.

A great deal of attention has been devoted to attempts to reconstruct this 'original' tale. Such a focus on what can never be known, however, risks overlooking and undervaluing the evidence which does survive. Besides, it is possible that there was never a single Wayland story, merely a variety of similar tales. When the narrative is prioritised above the figure of Wayland himself, much is missed. The name of Wayland appears in dozens of texts from across northern Europe throughout the Middle Ages, making him one of the best attested literary figures of the early medieval period - and yet many of these references have been barely studied, perhaps because they offer no insights into this imagined 'original' story. This is an unfortunate undervaluing of the power that the name 'Wayland' had for medieval audiences. The association of his name with any item he had supposedly crafted would embed a text in an entire network of cultural references and connotations, not to mention making the item's quality extremely clear. Wayland was not, of course, ever a real person, so it is impossible to write a true 'biography', but there is still a great deal of scope to consider him as an individual, rather than only as a protagonist. Interest in the origins of his name perhaps offers

an alternative approach to the question of Wayland's origin; the question of where his name originated has been tackled by Robert Nedoma and Marijane Osborn, among others.[9]

The surviving Wayland material provides a rich source for understanding attitudes to smiths, and other groups, in medieval Europe; it is rather more complex, however, than imagining that the Wayland story presents a straightforward image of how medieval smiths were perceived. The sheer complexity of Wayland's narrative, and the many identities he assumes, offers a great deal of potential insight into the minds of the people who told, heard, and thought about his story. It is important to study his identity as a smith alongside his other identities, in order to see how these facets of his character interact with each other. This approach to the Wayland material has rarely been used, as more attention has been paid to the narrative than to Wayland as an individual, but it offers an excellent case study for examining how ideas about smiths fitted into a wide range of other ideas, cultural values, and moral standards. Wayland's violence and aggression, also key elements of his identity, are certainly linked to his identity as a smith, but not in a straightforward sense that implies *all* medieval smiths were viewed as violent and aggressive.[10] The associations between the different themes and motifs that cluster around Wayland are far more complex than that. Separating out the different strands and studying them individually, as will be done in this thesis, allows the Wayland material to be used in varied ways. This approach is perhaps most similar to James Paz's recent examination of Wayland through the lens of thing theory, in which he focuses on Wayland as a craftsman, rather than a hero or protagonist.[11] However, Paz only briefly touches on the different facets of Wayland's identity, leaving a great deal of scope to consider the other characteristics and connotations of the name *Wayland*.

---

[9] Robert Nedoma, 'The Legend of Wayland in *Deor*,' *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, 38 (1990), 129 – 208, p. 129; Osborn, 'A New Suggestion About Weland', p. 167.

[10] Duncan Wright discusses the trope of contradictory, aggressive metalworkers. 'Crafters of Kingship: Smiths, Elite Powers, and Gender in Early Medieval Europe', *Medieval Archaeology*, 63 (2019), 271-97.

[11] James Paz, 'Beowulf as Wayland's Work': Thinking, Feeling, Making', in *Dating Beowulf: Studies in Intimacy*, ed. by Daniel C. Remein and Erica Weaver (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), pp. 73-94.

The importance of a smith's name is otherwise well attested in medieval studies, albeit in archaeology rather than literary studies. Swords displaying the name *Ulfberht* have been found all over Europe, from Norway to Russia, with a number found in the Baltic region.[12] Thought to date from the ninth century, these swords were of exceptionally high quality - perhaps the highest quality weapons produced in Western Europe since the Roman Empire. The name suggests a Frankish smith, but the swords are found almost entirely outside the area of Frankish influence; this may reflect the broader lack of Carolingian-era swords found within Francia, or it may indicate that this particular swordsmith operated elsewhere. Regardless of this man's precise origins, the repeated use of a personal name on swords suggests that the identity of the smith was considered to be important. A high-status weapon should be made by a high-status smith. Even more interestingly, these Ulfberht swords continued to be produced for a period of roughly three centuries. Clearly, no individual craftsman can have lived for so long: it seems that the name itself came to signify a certain quality of weapon, even once the smith himself was long dead. Similarly, the name of Wayland as a signifier of high-quality arms and armour may have persisted even as ideas about his story changed, or the tale was even forgotten. It is therefore important to focus on the figure of Wayland the Smith himself, rather than directing all our attention to the narrative sources and the possible origins of the story they tell.

Wayland, of course, is a legendary smith, while Ulfberht was presumably, originally at least, a real smith. This distinction between legendary and real is an important one which will be repeated throughout this thesis. Numerous commentators have taken Wayland's identity as a smith as an indication of how real smiths were viewed during the Middle Ages. If Wayland was supernatural and frightening, the argument goes, then medieval people must have seen *all* smiths as supernatural and

[12] Simon Coupland, 'Carolingian Arms and Armor in the Ninth Century', *Viator*, 21 (1990), 29-50; Hilda Ellis Davidson, *The Sword in Anglo-Saxon England: Its Archaeology and Literature* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1962) , p. 46; Anne Stalsberg, 'Ulfberht Revisited: A Classification', in *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West: Proceedings of the Fifteenth Viking Congress*, ed. by John Sheehan and Donnchadh Ó Corráin (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010), pp. 450-64.

frightening, albeit perhaps to a lesser degree. Wayland, however, is *not* a real smith, and almost certainly never was. The reputation of Ulfberht may have survived a single man's lifetime, but the use of his name depended on the legacy of a real man or, at the very least, the real, material objects which bear his name. The swords and goblets created by Wayland, on the other hand, are as legendary as the smith himself. We therefore cannot assume that conclusions drawn about Wayland can be neatly applied to *all* of the smiths who lived and worked in medieval Europe. However, the Ulfberht swords provide an excellent case study of how much the name of a single smith can reveal about smiths and metalworking; the Wayland material offers an even richer case study yet has not previously been used in this way.

The sheer scale of the time period that the Wayland material covers also opens opportunities for comparison and the potential to identify differences in details which might otherwise have escaped notice. What it meant to be a smith certainly changed across the Middle Ages. The importance of changing attitudes to smiths for the figure of Wayland is particularly highlighted by his post-medieval development; while post-medieval versions of Wayland's story will not be discussed in this thesis, it is important to note that the figure of Wayland has continued to appear in art and literature. It was not only smiths that changed during the Middle Ages, however. Attitudes to rape and women's bodies, the role of queens, the right to vengeance, relationships with other ethnic groups, and the practice of slavery are just some of the topics whose change can be examined through the use of Wayland's story. No single narrative, whether or not it was 'original', could reveal changes over time in such a detailed way. Of course, the evidence is sparse enough that some differences may sometimes have been the result of causes other than gradual change over time, but the Wayland material still offers valuable information for a wide range of different fields within Medieval Studies. It illustrates how stories were both shaped by and demonstrative of what different groups and societies valued, and how the same figure of a smith, borrowed from old stories, could be turned to a wide range of purposes. Producing a 'biography' of Wayland Smith

offers a way to bring together these disparate sources, allowing conclusions to be drawn about how medieval audiences viewed this complex figure.

A useful starting point for examining this idea of Wayland as representing cultural norms and values as they changed over time is an essay by Maria Sachiko Cecire.[13] While she examines modern representations of Wayland, rather than medieval depictions, this essay introduces a variety of different ways that Wayland has been used in literature. She demonstrates how modern interpretations of Wayland, including those of Walter Scott and Rudyard Kipling, portrayed him as a craftsman and working class man (although in Kipling's version, he is a god fallen to the role of farrier), far removed from the aristocrats who would have used the arms and armour he made. In these instances, the story of Wayland's revenge has vanished, with only his identity as a smith surviving. The selected examples demonstrate how much representations of Wayland depend on contemporary ideas about what it means to be a smith. A famous smith of the ninth century would have been entirely different from a famous smith of the nineteenth or early twentieth century, even though many of the tools and techniques may have changed very little. In the same way, the variety of Wayland portrayals across medieval Europe will have shifted to reflect the attitudes of the societies that produced each specific version. The smith on the Franks Casket belonged to a different world than that of the smiths of the twelfth-century *chansons de geste*, with centuries of time and hundreds of miles separating them. Even across all this distance, however, the figure of Wayland could still be used in meaningful ways. This ambiguous, mysterious smith, with his many character facets, could be adapted to fit a wide range of contexts and circumstances. The changes undergone by Wayland during the Middle Ages might not have been as substantial as those which turned him into an industrial-era blacksmith, but they should not be discounted. The changes in Wayland's

[13] Maria Sachiko Cecire, 'Ban Welondes: Wayland Smith in Popular Culture', in *Anglo-Saxon Culture and the Modern Imagination*, ed. by David Clark and Nicholas Perkins (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2010), pp. 201-18.

representation, and in the balance of his different identities, can suggest a great deal about the different societies which have chosen to tell his story.

Previous studies have brought all of the medieval Wayland material together, most notably the *Dissertation*, by Depping. Viewing the material together, rather than dividing it by source type or region of origin, reveals that there is more to it than the repetition of Wayland's name. In fact, on the art sources, his name does not appear at all. Wayland tends to appear in association with clusters of identifiers or motifs, images or story details which both identify this particular character and hint at what different people found to be important about his story. The tools of a smith appear on the Ardre Stone, the Franks Casket, and the Yorkshire sculptures that depict Wayland, while descriptions of his metalworking exploits are common to a number of the literary sources. His wings are depicted on the Yorkshire stones and the Ardre Stone, and are described in *Þiðreks saga*, one of the two surviving Wayland narratives. These recurring motifs show that Wayland was identified through his role as a smith, but also through other motifs. It is important to consider, however, that there may be other sources which were intended to depict Wayland but, so far, cannot be firmly identified as such due to the lack of multiple motifs. Some of these possible Wayland sources will be discussed below, after the more positively identified Wayland sources; for example, the winged figure known as the Uppåkra Man may well depict Wayland, but such winged figures are not unknown elsewhere in prehistoric Scandinavian art. If modern scholars cannot identify Wayland without multiple motifs, would medieval audiences also have needed additional information in order to know that these depictions were of Wayland? It is possible that some surviving objects lack their original contexts which would have identified them more firmly as a particular legendary figure. Without further information, we must rely on the clusters of motifs which have come to identify the figure of Wayland in both art and literature.

Similarly, Wayland is often found surrounded by a constellation of repeated associated characters. The king, the princess, the murdered princes, and Wayland's son are all found repeatedly in sources.

While aspects of the story change, these characters remain key. It seems that the relationship between these characters was a powerful and well-known one. Wayland's story therefore depends not just on his own identity in isolation, but on his identity as it is developed in relation to others. It is obvious to say that he cannot be a rapist or murderer without a victim - but he also cannot be a medieval smith without an aristocratic patron. His relationship with his son is also a key aspect of Wayland's identity. The other characters who appear in Wayland's story are therefore as deserving of consideration as Wayland himself; his relationships with them illuminate the various facets of his identity far more fully than the sparse direct descriptions of the smith. Studying them as part of Wayland's biography adds depth to the study of Wayland himself.

Wayland's name and, when identified as him through the use of relevant motifs, his image, act as a type of literary or artistic shorthand. The phrase 'Wayland's Work' reveals a great deal about both the object it describes and the nature of each text which contains the phrase. Wayland's appearance in art provides links to a range of themes and ideas, illuminating contextual details that might otherwise have remained unseen. The richness of his story offered medieval artists and writers a deep pool of connotations to draw upon, while the wide-ranging nature of the surviving source material provides modern scholars with an unusually abundant collection of insights into how medieval audiences viewed this single legendary figure. Questions are raised regarding morality, gender identity, the role of outsiders, and the relationship between the mundane and the magical, among others. Few people appear in early medieval literature as frequently as Wayland the Smith, with his continued appearances throughout the Middle Ages indicating just how important he was. This range of different uses over time, and across Europe, allows for a study of his links to different motifs and characters, presenting a fuller picture of how this legendary character was understood than any single source would be capable of. By seeing how individual sources use Wayland - and how they do not - it is possible to illuminate how medieval audiences understood not just smiths, but also murderers, rapists, kings and queens, foreigners, and slaves. Wayland's story may only offer hints about each of these groups of people, but the richness and range of the source material

provides connections between themes in a way that is rarely identifiable in medieval sources. In some ways, therefore, this study is a group biography or a cultural biography rather than a study of an individual: Wayland was never real, but the people who told his story certainly were. Through this strange figure and his story, they expressed ideas about their own cultures, as well as relationships to other cultures (whether real or imagined) and to the past.

This thesis will explore these connections and motifs in four thematic chapters, focusing on Wayland's craft activities, his murder of two princes, his rape of a princess, and his status as an outsider. Each of these chapters will examine all of the relevant source material in the context of both the overarching chapter theme and a number of interconnected themes and motifs. The complex nature of Wayland's identity means that cross-referencing will often be necessary, but this fourfold division provides the most convenient way to separate out the different strands of his portrayal in medieval sources. Before these thematic chapters, the relevant source material will be laid out in chronological order, according to the estimated production date of each source as it currently survives; where the date of original composition is different, this will be specified. The information presented for each source is not identical; the section for each source focuses on the details which are most relevant for this thesis. The intention is not to provide a full analysis or provenance of each source, but rather to introduce them in enough depth to allow a discussion of their contents in relation to the figure of Wayland. The wide variety of this material means that it has often been examined by specialists in one language, medium or culture, who focus on this 'primary' source and treat other material as supporting evidence. Studying it all together, on an even footing, allows for consideration of broader themes, and positions Wayland more appropriately as a figure whose story was popular across a broad geographical area, over many centuries. Working in so many disciplines and languages poses unique challenges, but it also gives new life to under-used sources, and appreciates that even the smallest detail of a medieval item can offer a wealth of information about the people who created and used it.

The Story of Wayland

We have no way of knowing how many versions of Wayland's story may once have existed. Today, only two versions survive, preserved in the Old Norse texts *Vǫlundarkviða* and *Þiðreks saga*. They tell the same core story – the tale of Wayland's captivity, revenge, and escape – although with substantial differences in the details. The history of these stories and the details of their manuscripts will be explained in the subsequent Sources section, but a summary of each story is provided here for context and for easy reference.

In *Vǫlundarkviða*, Wayland and his brothers live, apparently alone, in a valley called Ulfdale, until they find three women who seem able to change shape from bird to human. The three women stay with the brothers for nine years. After that time, the women fly away again, leaving the men bereft. Wayland's brothers decide to go after their swan-wives, and strap on their skis and disappear. Wayland, however, decides to stay in his home. Alone, he hunts bears and crafts golden rings, planning to gift them to his swan-maiden when she returns. Unfortunately for Wayland, his metalworking skill and his solitude has become known to King Niðhad, and the greedy king wants to take Wayland's gold for himself. Under cover of night, he sends men in to capture Wayland and steal his precious golden rings, as well as his sword. To stop the furious Wayland from fighting back, Niðhad's wife suggests that they cut the sinews in his legs, leaving him paralysed. This is done, and Wayland is then imprisoned on an island and forced to produce valuable items for the king.

Wayland has no intention of meekly accepting his fate, however, and he begins a campaign of vicious revenge. When the king's two sons come to visit him, Wayland lays a plot to kill them in secret. He transforms their skulls into drinking-cups and their bones and teeth into other valuable items for the king, who has no idea where his sons have gone. When the king's daughter visits Wayland, he takes the final part of his revenge. He 'bemuses her with beer' and then flies away from

the island, leaving the pregnant princess behind. Flying past Niðhad's stronghold, he reveals his deeds to the heartbroken king, then disappears, too fast for any man to shoot down from the sky.

In *Þiðreks saga*, Wayland is given rather more backstory, partly due to the nature of the text, which spans many generations. Wayland is the son of Wade, a giant, who is himself the son of King Vilkinus and a sea-monster who can take the form of a woman. The young Wayland is taken by his father to apprentice with metalworking dwarfs, but when his father dies and is unable to fulfil the terms of the apprenticeship contract, the dwarfs turn on Wayland. In an attempt to defend himself, he kills them. He then seizes all their treasure and tools, and flees in a hollow log. He is found by men of King Niðhad's court, and is offered work. It is not long before his metalworking skills are recognized, and he finds himself in a contest with Amilias, the king's smith. Wayland's spectacular sword, Mimung, easily cuts through Amilias's armour, killing him, and leaving Wayland as the king's smith.

Wayland's story takes a turn for the worse when Niðhad rides to battle and realizes he has left behind the magical stone which guarantees his victory. He offers his daughter and half his kingdom to any man who can fetch it for him - and it is Wayland who rides the distance at an incredible speed, returning with the stone. Unfortunately, he is stopped by the king's seneschal, who attempts to take the stone from him. Wayland kills the seneschal, and is then punished with banishment. Furious at being denied what is rightfully his, Wayland refuses to accept his punishment, and instead attempts to poison the princess, who is warned by her magical knife. For his crimes, Wayland is taken captive by the king, and has his hamstrings cut so that he cannot escape. He has no choice but to remain at Niðhad's court and work metal for him.

However, as in *Vǫlundarkviða*, Wayland does not accept this fate. He plots to have the king's sons visit him in secret. Once again, he kills them and transforms their bones into a variety of wonderful objects to decorate their father's table. When the princess comes to him with a broken ring, Wayland impregnates her before building a pair of wings. In this story, however, the princess declares her love for Wayland before she leaves, and he refers to her as his bride. He also receives

the help of his brother, Egil, who assists him in building a flying machine. Wayland once again declares the truth of his deeds to the king as he flies away. The *Þiðreks saga* version, however, does not stop there. The king dies, leaving the throne to his one remaining son, who pardons Wayland and allows him to marry the princess. Wayland and his wife, with their young son, leave for Wayland's home country. Here, they raise their son, Widia, who goes on to become a leading hero later in the saga.

Similarities and Differences

It is clear even from such a hurried retelling of these versions that they present the same fundamental story. Paralysed and imprisoned, Wayland uses his skills to construct wings (or perhaps to shift shape). Before he escapes, he takes revenge by transforming the king's sons into the very items so coveted, and by impregnating the king's daughter. The elements that remain the same are the nature of Wayland's revenge and the skill which allows him to escape.

The rest of the story, however, differs substantially. How important are those differences? It has been suggested that the initial part of *Vǫlundarkviða*, the swan-maiden story, was originally an entirely different narrative that gradually became attached to Wayland's story due to the similar theme of flight.[14] The earlier part of the *Þiðreks saga* story may also be a later addition; the text has a strange introductory section partway through which suggests two narratives patched together. Wayland's brother, Egil, appears in both texts, although at opposite ends of the story. The princess's broken ring is common to both, although in *Vǫlundarkviða* it has the additional distinction of having been crafted by Wayland for his swan-maiden wife. Perhaps the biggest difference is the tone of the ending: one ends with a bereft, childless king mourning his losses, while the other ends with the young king forgiving Wayland and allowing the marriage of his sister. It is possible that *Vǫlundarkviða* once contained such an ending; there is nothing in the text to make it impossible, but

[14] George T. Gillespie, *A Catalogue of Persons Named in German Heroic Literature: 700-1600* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), p. 143. See also John McKinnell, 'The Context of *Vǫlundarkviða*', *Saga-Book of the Viking Society*, 24 (1996), 1-27, p. 17.

there is also no evidence that it ever existed. Without *Þiðreks saga*, there would be no reason to think that Wayland ever returned. Other differences and similarities, both large and small, are best addressed in the context of more specific themes.

Sources

1: The Franks Casket

1a: Source Name

Known most commonly as the Franks Casket, this whalebone casket is named after the collector Augustus Franks. It is sometimes also known as the Auzon Casket, after the town in France where it was discovered.

1b: Date of Production

The Franks Casket is usually dated to the eighth century, based on its artistic style and the language used in its carvings. Although Scandinavian influence and a later date have been suggested, the eighth century is now almost universally accepted as the most likely origin for the casket.[15]

1c: Purpose

Although it may have been based on an earlier object, the Franks Casket is most likely an original collection of images, which may themselves be original compositions. No earlier examples of the Wayland scene survive in Anglo-Saxon England, although it is possible that they existed on less durable materials. The purpose of the Franks Casket is unknown: it may have functioned as a reliquary, or may have been intended for a private owner to hold jewellery or other precious objects.[16] Sarah Semple has identified it as an object intended for a king, while other commentators

[15] Leslie Webster, 'The Iconographic Programme of the Franks Casket', in *Northumbria's Golden Age*, ed. by Jane Hawkes and Susan Mills (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton, 1999), pp. 227-46, p. 229; Abels, Richard, 'What has Weland to do with Christ? The Franks Casket & the Acculturation of Christianity in Early Anglo-Saxon England', *Speculum*, 84 (2009), 549-81, p. 551. For the arguments regarding a later date, see Dunn, *The Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons*, pp. 66-67. See J. Campbell for the difficulties of dating ivories (and by extension, whalebone), 'Anglo-Saxon Ivories', in *The Anglo-Saxons*, ed. by James Campbell (London: Penguin, 1982), pp. 196-7.

[16] Webster, 'The Iconographic Programme of the Franks Casket', p. 246.

have judged that it was most likely created in a monastic context and perhaps gifted to a monastery in France; these two suggestions are not incompatible.[17]

1d: Place of Origin

The Franks Casket is almost unanimously judged to have originated in Northumbria, again based on its style and language.[18]

1e: Provenance

The casket was found in the town of Auzon (Haute-Loire, France) during the nineteenth century, when it was in the hands of a private owner. How it arrived there is unclear, although it may have been a gift to a nearby church, perhaps as early as the Anglo-Saxon period.[19] Its history between creation and discovery is unknown.

1f: Description

Made from whalebone, the Franks Casket was probably inspired by continental ivory caskets. Its material and form fit it into a broader tradition of Anglo-Saxon bone and ivory sculpture.[20] Each side of the casket is covered with figurative carvings, which include scenes from Christian and Classical traditions, as well as episodes from Germanic tradition. Writing also appears, in both Latin and Old English, using both the Latin and runic alphabets.[21] Wayland appears in a panel on the left of the casket's front side, alongside a panel showing the Adoration of the Magi. The back of the casket, a single large panel, depicts the sacking of the Temple in Jerusalem by Titus. One side panel shows Romulus and Remus suckled by the she-wolf. The remaining side panel is far more difficult to interpret and has been much debated. A mysterious inscription contains the unknown word 'Hos',

---

[17] Sarah Semple, *Perceptions of the Prehistoric in Anglo-Saxon England: Religion, Ritual, and Rulership in the Landscape* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 157; Webster, 'The Iconographic Programme of the Franks Casket', p. 245; Lang, 'Imagery', p. 251.
[18] Webster, 'The Iconographic Programme of the Franks Casket' p. 229.
[19] Webster, 'The Iconographic Programme of the Franks Casket' p. 229.
[20] Ian Riddler, 'The Archaeology of the Anglo-Saxon Whale' in *The Maritime World of the Anglo-Saxons*, ed. by Stacy S. Klein, William Schipper, and Shannon Lewis-Simpson (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2014), pp. 337-52; Campbell, 'Anglo-Saxon Ivories', pp. 196-7.
[21] Webster, 'The Iconographic Programme of the Franks Casket', p. 230.

which may refer to the name of one of the figures depicted, or may be a different part of whichever story is shown here.[22] The top of the casket, which is equally lavishly decorated as all the sides, shows an archer who seems to be defending a building. He is labelled 'ægili', which may be a reference to Egill from Norse myth, who also appears as Wayland's brother in *Þiðreks saga*.[23]

The Wayland panel shows Wayland in the process of taking his revenge. The smith stands over his forge, with a headless body, presumably one of the king's murdered sons, visible behind his legs. He grips what appears to be a head or skull in a pair of tongs while with his other hand, he reaches over the anvil to offer a cup to a female figure, who reaches back towards him. She is assumed to be the king's daughter, Beadohild. Another female figure stands behind her, and has been the subject of much debate – is she Beadohild's handmaiden, a second representation of Beadohild herself, Wayland's swan-maiden wife, or some other female figure otherwise unknown to us?[24] To the right of the panel, a smaller figure catches a bird. This is perhaps Egill, catching geese to use their feathers for Wayland's wings, as in *Þiðreks saga*, or it is perhaps intended to represent the princes, before their murder.[25]

[22] Lilla Kopár, *Gods and Settlers: The Iconography of Norse Mythology in Anglo-Scandinavian Sculpture* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), p. 7.
[23] McKinnell, 'The Context of *Vǫlundarkviða*', p. 15; Webster, 'The Iconographic Programme of the Franks Casket', p. 235.
[24] Kaaren Grimstad, 'The Revenge of Volundr', in *Edda: A Collection of Essays*, ed. by Robert Glendinning and Haraldur Bessason (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1983), pp. 187-203, p. 189; Lilla Kopár, *Gods and Settlers*, p. 21.
[25] Alec McGuire and Ann Clark, *The Leeds Crosses* (Leeds: Leeds City Museums, 1987), p. 38. An alternative suggestion is that this represents one of the princes, at an earlier moment in time; *Þiðreks saga* has the two boys visit Wayland while their father thinks they are out hunting. Kopár, *Gods and Settlers*, p. 9.

1: The Franks Casket. Image by John W. Schulze - Flickr: Franks Casket front, CC BY 2.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=24268847

1g: Key Points of Interest

Of particular interest in the study of the Franks Casket is the way it combines languages and alphabets in an unusual and cryptic way.[26] A riddle on the front side of the casket plays on the nature of the casket as an item made from bone, and the choice of languages on the other sides may continue this enjoyment of puzzles and riddles. The complexity of this language use, combined with the varied selection of images, situates Wayland and Beadohild in an extremely rich artistic and textual context, despite the early date of the source, and introduces the web of allusions and connotations which clung to Wayland throughout the Middle Ages.

Fisc flodu ahof on fergenberig;
Warþ gasric grorn, þær he on greut giswom.

[26] Webster, 'The Iconographic Programme of the Franks Casket', p. 223; Catherine Karkov, 'The Franks Casket Speaks Back: The Bones of the Past, the Becoming of England', in *Postcolonising the Medieval Image*, ed. by C. E. Karkov and E. Frojmovic (London: Routledge, 2017), pp. 37-61, p. 53.

Hronæs ban.[27]

Numerous theories have been advanced as to the overall theme of the Franks Casket images, and the possible reasons behind the choice of this combination of motifs. Examples include the theme of gift-giving, exile, and kingship.[28] Mothers and sons also play a prominent role on some panels of the casket, as will be discussed below, in 'Wayland the Rapist'.

2: The Ardre Stone

2a: Source Name

While I will refer to this stone as simply 'the Ardre Stone', it is most commonly known as Ardre VIII, to distinguish it from other carved stones found at the same site.

2b: Date Produced

This stone was probably carved sometime around the year 800.[29] Buisson, in the most detailed monograph on Ardre VIII, dates the stone to the second half of the eighth century.[30]

2c: Place of Origin

It was found in the church at Ardre, Gotland, Sweden.

2d: Provenance

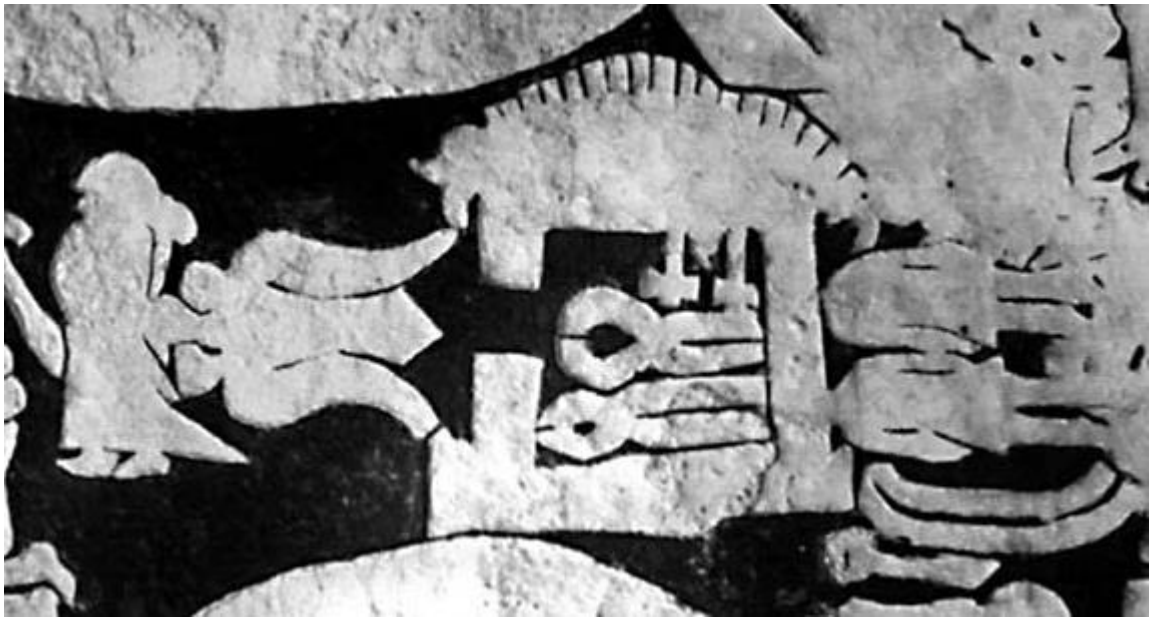
This carved limestone slab was one of a number found during a church restoration in the summer of 1900. The remains of an older church were discovered beneath the floor, with a number of picture- and runestones embedded in the floor of this earlier, eleventh- or twelfth-century church. Many of

[27] *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*, ed. by Elliott van Kirk Dobbie (London: Routledge, 1942), *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, Vol 6, p. 116.
[28] Abels, 'What has Weland to do with Christ?' p. 550; Webster, 'The Iconographic Programme of the Franks Casket', p. 283.
[29] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers*, p. 17.
[30] Ludwig Buisson, *Der Bildstein Ardre VIII auf Gotland: Göttermythen, Heldensagen und Jenseitsglaube der Germanen im 8. Jahrhundert n. Chr.* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976), p. 13.

the other stones are contemporary with this older church, although Ardre VIII is significantly older than the surrounding building.[31]

2e: Description

The Wayland section of the Ardre Stone shows an elevation view of a building, topped by a curved roof. To the right of the building lie two decapitated bodies, and within the building are two shapes usually interpreted as pliers or other metalworking tools. It is this detail which leads to the identification of the building as a smithy. To the left, a winged figure flies out of a door or window in the side of the building, either pushing or grasping a woman. There is not enough detail to identify this figure as a winged man rather than a bird.



2: Ardre VIII. Image from http://www.franks-casket.de/english/appendix04.html, Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1737617

[31] Þórgunnur Snædal, 'Ailikn's Wagon and Óðinn's Warriors: The Pictures on the Gotlandic Ardre Monuments', in *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West: Proceedings of the Fifteenth Viking Congress*, ed. by John Sheehan and Donnchadh Ó Corráin (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010), pp. 441-9, p. 441; Buisson, *Der Bildstein Ardre VIII*, p. 13.

2f: Key Points of Interest

Lilla Kopár has identified a number of other comparable Scandinavian images and suggests that they were part of a widespread tradition of such bird-man depictions. Such depictions, she argues, might have spread to England on other, more portable materials, such as tapestries.[32] This would explain how very similar motifs appeared later in North-East England; the Anglo-Scandinavian carvers were not necessarily familiar with monuments such as the Ardre Stone, but had encountered these motifs on other artworks.

3: *Waldere*

3a: Source Name

Although these poem fragments contain no hint of a title, they are usually known as *Waldere*, based on the use of the name *Waltharius* for a similar poem in Latin (discussed below).

3b: Date Produced

The manuscript fragments are dated to the tenth century.[33]

3c: Date of Origin

There is no indication of how long the poem circulated before the creation of the manuscript. If, as Dennis Kratz suggests, the version of the story presented in *Waldere* is earlier than that in *Waltharius*, the poem might have originated in the eighth century.[34]

[32] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers*, p. 17; Richard N. Bailey, *Viking Age Sculpture in Northern England* (London: William Collins, 1980), p. 106.
[33] Paul Beekman Taylor, '*Vǫlundarkviða, Þrymskviða*, and the Function of Myth', *Neophilogus*, 78 (1994), 263-81, p. 265. The hand is dated to roughly 1000. Hill, *Old English Minor Heroic Poems* (Durham: Durham and St Andrews Medieval Texts, 1983), p. 4.
[34] *Waltharius and Ruodlib*, ed. and trans. by Dennis M. Kratz, Volume 13, Series A, Garland Library of Medieval Literature (New York: Garland Publishing, 1984), xxiv.

3d: Place of Origin

The use of Old English and an Anglo-Saxon minuscule hand suggest that the manuscript originated in England; based on the dialect, Wessex is the most likely area of origin.[35]

3e: Provenance

What survives of the work is preserved in two leaves, found in the Royal Library of Copenhagen in 1860.[36]

3f: Description

While only part of *Waldere* survives, it is thought to tell a similar story to that found in *Waltharius*: the story of Walter of Aquitaine and his escape from Attila. Only sixty lines remain of what must once have been a substantial poem.[37]

In *Waldere*, Wayland appears as the creator of a splendid sword. A number of commentators have noted how similar this reference is to those found in *Beowulf* and *Waltharius*, seeing it as an indication of a common West Germanic tradition reflected in both works.[38] The mention of Wayland comes during what appears to be a speech by Hildegund (the fragment starts abruptly, so the context is unclear) as she encourages her betrothed, Waldere, in his fight against the men trying to rob them of their gold. This sword protects him even when other weapons have failed him; it is the best of its kind.[39]

The relevant Wayland sections are as follows:

---

[35] *The Old English Epic of Waldere*, ed. and trans. by Jonathan B. Himes (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), p. 4.
[36] *The Old English Epic of Waldere*, p. 4
[37] *The Old English Epic of Waldere*, p. 5.
[38] Roberta Frank notes that Wayland is mentioned by three different Old English poets (in *Beowulf, Deor*, and *Waldere*), and suggests that only the Goths Ermanaric and Theodoric are mentioned in as many surviving Old English poems. Roberta Frank, 'Germanic Legend in Old English Literature', in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. by Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 88-106, p. 92.
[39] *The Old English Epic of Waldere*, p. 9.

Fragment 1:

... Hyrde hyne georne.
Huru Weland geworc ne geswiceð
Monna ænigum ðara ðe Mimming can
Heardne gehealdan. Oft æt hilde gedreas
Swatfag ond sweordwund sec æfter oðrum.[40]

Fragment 2:

... [me]ce bæteran
Buton ðam anum ðe ic eac hafa
On stanfate stille gehided
Ic wat þæt i[t] ðohte Ðeodric Widian
Selfum onsendon ond eac sinc micel,
Maðma mid ði mece, monig oðres mid him
Golde gegirwan. Iulean genam,
Þæs ðe hine of nearwum, Niðhades mæg,
Welandes bearn, Widia ut forlet;
Ðurh fifela ge[w]eald forð onette.[41]

4: *Deor*

4a: Source Name

This poem has no title in the manuscript but is today usually referred to as *Deor*, the name (in most readings of the text) of the fictional poet who narrates it.

[40] ... Forged it in earnest./ Indeed, the work of Weland fails not / Any man who can handle Mimming, / A hard blade to hold. Often at battle it felled / Soldiers, spattered and sword-wounded, one after another. *The Old English Epic of Waldere*, pp. 78-79, Fragment 1, lines 1-5.

[41] ... [sword] edge better / But the one I've also had /In a stone-fastened scabbard, still and hidden. / I know that Ðeodric meant it for Widia, / To send on himself, and also cinched gems, much / Marvelous of that make with it, many other blades / Girded in gold. Long ago he took the loan / To escape the narrows. Niðhad's kinsman, / Weland's son Widia, let him out; / Through fiends' fells and wilds, he sped on forth. *The Old English Epic of Waldere*, pp. 80-81, Fragment 2, lines 1-10.

4b: Date Produced

Deor is found in the Exeter Book, dated to the second half of the tenth century (folio 100a-100b).[42]

4c: Date of Origin

The composition date of *Deor* remains uncertain. Suggestions have ranged from the fifth century to the second half of the tenth century, which is the widely accepted date of the Exeter Book itself.[43] *Deor* might indicate evidence of an English version of the Wayland story that predates the influence of Scandinavian versions such as *Vǫlundarkviða*.[44]

4d: Place of Origin

Deor certainly originated in England, although the precise area is not known.

4e: Description

Deor recounts the sufferings of a variety of characters, all of whom are thought to originate in Germanic legend.[45] The first stanza discusses the experiences of Wayland in captivity, while the second focuses on Beadohild and her suffering when she discovered that she was pregnant. The two characters are therefore discussed in parallel, although they are never explicitly connected: neither is named in the other's stanza.[46] Each of the subsequent five stanzas discusses the tribulations of a different figure.

The relevant stanzas are as follows:

> Welund him be wurman wræces cunnade,
> anhydig eorl, earfoþa dreag,
> hæfde him to gesiþþe sorge ond longaþ

[42] *The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry: An Edition of Exeter Dean and Chapter MS 3501, Vol 1: Texts,* ed by Bernard J. Muir (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1994), p. 1.
[43] *Deor*, ed. by Kemp Malone (London: Methuen's Old English Library, 1933; this edition Exeter: University of Exeter, 1977), p. 3.
[44] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers*, p. 5; Kemp, *Deor*, p. 5.
[45] Robert Nedoma, 'The Legend of Wayland in *Deor*', *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, 38 (1990), 129-208, p. 129.
[46] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers*, p. 6.

wintercealde præce, wean oft onfond
siþþan hine Niðhad on nede legde,
swoncre seonobende, on syllan monn.
Þæs ofereode; þisses swa mæg.
Beadohilde ne wæs hyre broþra deaþ
on sefan swa sár swa hyre sylfre þing,
þæt heo gearolice ongieten hæfde
þæt heo eacen þæs; æfre ne meahte
þriste geþencan hu ymb þæt sceolde.
Þæs ofereode; þisses swa mæg.[47]

4f: Key Points of Interest

In terms of form, the alliterative long lines of *Deor* are characteristic of Old English poetry. Its division into short sections like modern stanzas, divided by a refrain, is far more unusual. The scribe went to great pains to mark out the separation of the sections, suggesting that they are not only unusual but also important to the understanding of the poem.[48] The punctuation marking perhaps hints at a link between the two stanzas, otherwise not explicitly connected; the use of marginal crosses to illustrate the beginning of a new section is not introduced until the third stanza.[49] *Deor* might reflect the Latin lyric *consolatio* form rather than any traditional Old English poetic form, an association which is strengthened by the appearance of Wayland in the Old English translation of the *Consolation of Philosophy*, and perhaps also by the similar stoic sentiments expressed in both works.

[47] *Deor*, ed. by Malone, pp. 23-34, lines 1-13. 'Weland experienced exile among his damascened work, / the resolute warrior endured hardships, / had sorrow and longing for companions, / winter-cold exile; he often found woe, / after Nithad laid constraints upon him, / supple sinew-bonds on the better man. / That passed away; so can this. / Beadohild was not as pained in heart about / the death of her brothers as she was about her own state, / that she had clearly perceived / that she was with child; she could never / think unflinchingly about how that must turn out. / That passed away; so can this'. *Deor*, trans by Robert E. Bjork, in *Old English Shorter Poems, Volume II, Wisdom and Lyric* (Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, 2014). Note: *be wurman* may be related to Wayland's pattern-welded swords, or may refer to a snake motif otherwise lost from the story.
[48] Joyce Hill, *Old English Minor Heroic Poems,* p. 15.
[49] Hill, *Old English Minor Heroic Poems*, p. 15.

The phrase *be wurman* has been much discussed; it may refer to the snakelike designs of pattern-welded swords, to the place-name Worms, or to some now-lost serpent motif in the Wayland story.[50]

5: The Leeds Cross Shaft

5a: Source Name

Although this sculpted shaft was not necessarily a cross shaft originally, it is today displayed in the form of a cross and is therefore known as the Leeds Cross Shaft.

5b: Date Produced

The fragments of the shaft are thought, based on stylistic evidence, to date from the tenth century.[51]

5c: Place of Origin

The sandstone was probably quarried in West Yorkshire, making it relatively local to Leeds.[52] The iconography of the fragments may link the cross shaft to a series of other sculptures which are thought to have originated from sculpture workshops in Leeds and Ilkley, possibly connected to episcopal estates, such as the estate centred on Otley, near Leeds.[53]

5d: Provenance

The various fragments which now make up the cross shaft were discovered in the fabric of St Peter's Church in Leeds during a nineteenth-century reconstruction of the medieval church. Unfortunately, not much is known about St Peter's Church, or Leeds itself, before the high Middle Ages. The Saxon church was most likely replaced in the late eleventh or early twelfth century; that high medieval

---

[50] Davidson, *The Sword in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 132; Osborn, 'A New Suggestion About *Weland be wurman*', p. 159.
[51] Elizabeth Coatsworth, *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture*, *Volume VIII, West Yorkshire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press/British Academy, 2008), p. 200.
[52] Coatsworth, *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture*, p. 200.
[53] Elizabeth Coatsworth, 'The Cross in the West Riding of Yorkshire', in *The Place of the Cross in Anglo-Saxon England,* ed. by Catherine E. Karkov, Sarah Larratt Keefer, and Karen Louise Jolly (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006), pp. 14-28, p. 17; Rev. G.F. Brown, 'The Ancient Sculptured Shaft in the Parish Church at Leeds', *Journal of the Archaeological Association*, 41 (1885), 131-43, p. 142; Coatsworth, *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture*, p. 201.

church was destroyed by fire and replaced at some point during the later Middle Ages. It is not clear at what point during this history the cross was fragmented and re-used.[54] Although the pieces are now displayed in St Peter's as a cross, the cross head is not original to the sculpture; it may instead have been an obelisk or pillar.[55] The shaft may once have served as a grave marker; regardless of its precise purpose, it seems likely that it was publicly situated, probably in the vicinity of the church.[56]

5e: Description

The Wayland figure appears near the base of the cross shaft, in the centre of its own panel. A number of scattered items, identified as smiths' tools, occupy the bottom of the panel. Above these items is the main figure, a man who wears wings strapped to his body in a complicated interlace pattern. It is this combination of wings and smith's tools which has led to the identification of the figure as Wayland. Above Wayland is the most debated part of the image. A female figure lies horizontally above Wayland's outstretched arms. He appears to grip her dress with one hand and her long hair with the other. Her identity is not clear; is this Beadohild, depicted as part of a kidnapping which does not appear in surviving versions of the story, or in a figurative representation of her rape? Or is it Wayland's swan-maiden flying away from him, as in *Vǫlundarkviða*?[57]

[54] Brown, 'The Ancient Sculptured Shaft', p. 131.
[55] Bailey, *Viking Age Sculpture*, p. 23.
[56] Brown, 'The Ancient Sculptured Shaft', p. 141.
[57] Klein, 'The Non-Coherence of the Franks Casket: Reading Text, Image, and Design on an Early Anglo-Saxon Artifact', *Viator*, 45 (2014), 17-54, p. 30.

3: The Leeds Cross Shaft. Image by Alaric Hall - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0,

https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=78098429

5f: Key Points of Interest

A very similar image appears on a number of other Yorkshire fragments. A second Leeds stone shows part of a similar winged figure, while stones from Sherburn and Bedale also seem to be roughly the same design. They are all quite close in terms of design, but various differences in style suggest that they are not simple copies of each other.[58] They may instead all originate from the same sculptural tradition. Although they are probably all Wayland, their fragmentary nature means that they cannot stand alone as sources - without the metalworking tools as additional identifiers, it is possible that they were once from non-Wayland scenes, only coincidentally the same as the Leeds Cross.

6: Wayland's Smithy

6a: Source Name

This prehistoric burial mound in Oxfordshire is known today as Wayland's Smithy. The source which confirms the early medieval form of this name, *welandes smidðan*, is a tenth-century charter, Sawyer 564.[59]

6b: Date Produced

The charter is dated to AD 955, during the reign of King Eadred.[60]

6c: Possible Date of Origin

The age of the name is uncertain. It might date from the earliest stages of settlement, or from only shortly before the creation of the charter. Sarah Semple has suggested that the eighth century was the period when such mythical or legendary names became attached to points in the English

[58] Bailey, *Viking Age Sculpture*, p. 104.
[59] London, British Library, Cotton Claudius B. VI, fols 40v-41r.
[60] H.R. Ellis Davidson, 'Weland the Smith', *Folklore*, 16 (1958), 145-59, p. 149.

landscape, but this may simply be the time when place names are first recorded.[61] The mound itself is far older than the name, dating from between 3,400 and 3,200 BC.[62]

6d: Place of Origin

The mound is located in Oxfordshire, near the village of Ashbury, in England.

6e: Description

A boundary clause in the charter refers to *welandes smidðan.* The Smithy itself is a prehistoric long barrow burial mound, situated on the Ridgeway that cuts through Oxfordshire and Berkshire. The mound is a short distance (roughly a mile) from White Horse hill and the nearby Iron Age hill fort of Uffington Castle.

6f: Key Points of Interest

The location is still known as Wayland's Smithy today; this modern version of the name has been recorded since at least the eighteenth century.[63]

7: The Old English *Consolation of Philosophy*

7a: Source Name

This Old English translation of *The Consolation of Philosophy*, a Latin text by Boethius, is variously known as *The Old English Boethius* or simply as *The Consolation of Philosophy*.

7b: Date Produced

Two versions of this Old English translation of Boethius's *The Consolation of Philosophy* survive: one is entirely a prose translation, while the other supplies verse translations of passages which in the

[61] Semple, *Perceptions of the Prehistoric*, p. 6.
[62] Alasdair Whittle, Alex Bayliss, and Michael Wysocki, 'Once in a Lifetime: The Date of the Wayland's Smithy Long Barrow', *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, 17 (2007), 103-121, p. 114. The mound is unusually late in date for its type; the nearby Haddenham mound, comparable in style, dates from the second half of the thirty-seventh century, or the first half of the thirty-sixth.
[63] Cecire, 'Ban Welondes', p. 206.

Latin are in verse.[64] Both texts can be dated to between 885 and the mid-tenth century, with a place of origin in the kingdom of Wessex. Each of the two versions today survives in a single medieval manuscript, although other copies are known to have existed.[65] The earliest surviving manuscript containing the prosimetrical version (British Library Cotton Otho A.vi), dates from the mid tenth century, while the manuscript which contains the prose-only version probably dates from the late eleventh or early twelfth century.[66]

7c: Date of Origin

The Old English translation seems almost certainly to have been written in the context of Alfred's court, fitting it into a wider medieval tradition of connections between court culture and classical learning.[67] The original *Consolation of Philosophy* was written in roughly 525 by Boethius, previously a consul and Master of the Offices under Theodoric, King of the Ostrogoths (reigned 511-526). Boethius fell from favour after accusations of treason, and *De Consolatione Philosophiae* was written while he was in prison, awaiting execution.[68]

7d: Place of Origin

England; more specifically Wessex, and a royal court context.

7e: Key Points of Interest

Wayland is used in the Old English text as a substitution for Fabricius, a consul from the early Roman Republic.[69] The choice of Wayland as an alternative may perhaps be a play on the name Fabricius,

---

[64] *The Old English Boethius*, ed. by Malcolm Godden and Susan Irvine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), Vol. 1, p.8.
[65] *The Old English Boethius*, Vol. 1, p. 8.
[66] *The Old English Boethius*, Vol 1, pp. 12 and 18.
[67] Susan Irvine, 'Wrestling with Hercules: King Alfred and the Classical Past', in *Court Culture in the Early Middle Ages: The Proceedings of the First Alcuin Conference*, ed. by Catherine Cubitt (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), pp. 171-88, p. 171.
[68] *The Old English Boethius*, Vol. 1, p. 3.
[69] Abels, *Alfred the Great*, p. 234; Leonard Neidorf, 'Germanic Legend, Scribal Errors, and Cultural Change', in The Dating of Beowulf: A Reassessment, ed. by Leonard Neidorf (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2014), pp. 37-57, p. 55.

which sounds similar to the Latin *faber*, smith.[70] There is no known reference to Fabricius in Old English; it may be that his story was largely unknown to an English audience, and so it was decided to replace him with someone more familiar. It is also possible, however, that Wayland was seen as a thematically appropriate alternative. Fabricius, an early Roman consul, was known for his austerity and incorruptibility; he famously rejected gifts and bribes.[71] Given the associations of Wayland's story with greed, it is possible that the translator of the *Consolation of Philosophy* saw the two figures as offering similar lessons.

This passage of *The Old English Consolation of Philosophy* is also notable for the use it makes of the *ubi sunt*' formula, which is found in the work of many medieval Latin poets.[72] Not only does this phrase link Wayland to a broader tradition of Latin poetry (perhaps paralleling his mention in *Waltharius*), but it is often used to express the transitory nature of temporal existence. The *ubi sunt* phrase therefore adds emphasis to the question about the whereabouts of the bones, whether Fabricius' or Wayland's. The connotations of this phrase choice make it clear that the passage is a meditation on the transitoriness of life, rather than a speculation about the location of a famous figure's grave.

7f: Description

The Wayland text is as follows:

[Hwær] sint nu þæs foremeran and þæs wisan goldsmiðes ban Welondes? (Forþi ic cwæð þæs wisan forþy þam cræftegan ne mæg næfre his cræft losigan ne hine mon ne mæg þonne eð on him geniman ðe mon mæg þa sunnan awendan of hiere stede.) Hwær sint nu þæs Welondes ban, oððe hwa wat nu hwær hi wæron? (Oððe hwær is nu se foremæra and se ærda Romwara heretoga se wæs haten Brutus, oðre naman Cassius?)[73]

---

[70] Nedoma, 'The Legend of Wayland in *Deor*', p. 133.
[71] *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. by Simon Hornblower, Antony Spawforth, and Esther Eidinow, 4th edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 566.
[72] James W. Bright, 'The ubi sunt formula', *Modern Language Notes*, 8 (1893), 94; Claudia Di Sciacca, 'The Ubi Sunt Motif and the Soul-and-Body Legend in Old English Homilies: Sources and Relationships', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 105 (2006), 365-88.
[73] 'Where now are the bones of the famous and wise goldsmith Weland? (I said wise because the craftsman can never lose his skill nor can it easily be taken from him any more than the sun can be moved from its place). Where now are the bones of Weland, or who knows now where they were? Or where is now the famous and

Hwær sint nu þæs wisan Welandes ban,
þæs goldsmiðes, þe wæs geo mærost?
Forðy ic cwæð þæs wisan Welandes ban,
forþy ængum ne mæg eorðbuendra
se cræft losian þe him Crist onlænð.
Ne maeg mon æfre þy eð ænne wræccan
his cræftes beniman, þe mon oncerran mæg
sunnan onswifan and þisne swiftan rodor
of his rihtryne rinca ænig.
Hwa wat nu þæs wisan Welandes ban
on hwelcum hlæwa hrusan þeccan?
Hwær is nu se rica Roman wita
and se aroda, þe we ymb sprecað,
hiora heretoga, se gehaten wæs
mid þæm burgwarum Brutus nemned?[74]

8: *Beowulf*

8a: Source Name

This Old English poem has gone by a number of names, as the manuscript contains no title, but today it is known as *Beowulf*.

8b: Date Produced

Preserved in the manuscript British Library, Cotton, Vitellius A XV, *Beowulf* is in the second of the manuscript's two codices, known as the Nowell Codex.[75] The manuscript was damaged in the fire

resolute consul of the Romans who was called Brutus, and by a second name Cassius?' *The Old English Boethius*, Chapter 19, lines 16-21; translation p. 30.

[74] 'Where now are the bones of wise Weland, the goldsmith, who was previously very famous? I said the bones of wise Weland because the skill which Christ grants to any earth-dweller cannot be lost by him. Nor can anyone ever deprive a wretch of his skill more easily than any man can divert and turn aside the sun and this swift firmament from its correct course. Who now knows in which mound the bones of wise Weland cover the earthen floor? Where is now the powerful and resolute Roman councillor whom we speak about, their consul, who among the citizens was called by the name of Brutus?' *The Old English Boethius*, C Text, Metre 10, lines 33-47; translation p. 125-6.

[75] Andy Orchard, *A Critical Companion to Beowulf* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003), p. 12.

that destroyed part of the Cotton collection in October 1731, and is now preserved as individual leaves each mounted separately. The *Beowulf* text is the work of two different scribes, with one hand dated to the early eleventh century, and the other to the late tenth century. The manuscript is therefore usually assigned a date of the tenth/eleventh century. David Dumville prefers to date the manuscript pre-1016, while others, including Kevin Kiernan, have argued that it may date from the reign of King Cnut (1016-35).[76]

8c: Date of Origin

The origin of the *Beowulf* poem itself is even more heavily debated than the age of the manuscript. Suggestions have spanned everything from a written form in existence before 750, to an original composition at the time the manuscript was created, as late as the eleventh century.[77]

8d: Place of Origin

England.

8e: Description

Wayland's name appears in *Beowulf* during a speech made by the hero, Beowulf, just before he leaves to fight the mother of the monstrous Grendel. In this speech, Beowulf requests that his mail byrnie, left to him by Hrædla (thought to be his grandfather), be given to his uncle and lord Hygelac in the event of Beowulf's death.[78] As part of this speech, he mentions that the mail-coat is 'Wayland's work'. The speech comes at the end of one section of the poem, with the reference to Wayland in the very last line of the speech. It is therefore at a key point, and perhaps comes at a moment when the audience or reader would have been able to pause and reflect on the material just delivered.

---

[76] Orchard, *A Critical Companion to Beowulf*, p. 20.
[77] Orchard, *A Critical Companion to Beowulf*, p. 39.
[78] *Klaeber's Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg*, ed. by R.D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork, and John D. Niles, 4th edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), p. 469.

The relevant text is as follows:

Onsend Higelace, /gif mec hild nime,
beaduscruda betst / þæt mine breost wereð,
hrægla selest; / þæt is Hrædlan laf,
Welandes geweorc. / Gæð a wyrd swa hio scel.[79]

8f: Key Points of Interest

Scholarship on *Beowulf* has not paid much attention to this particular line. The mention of Wayland has been compared to the similar mentions in *Waldere* and *Waltharius*, but has otherwise remained largely undiscussed.[80]

9: *Waltharius*

9a: Source Name

This Latin epic poem is usually known as *Waltharius*, after its protagonist. It has also been known as *Gautier à la main forte*.

9b: Date Produced

Waltharius survives in six manuscripts and a further fragment. The earliest dates from the final quarter of the tenth century.[81]

[79] Send to Higelac, if I am taken by battle, / The best of battle-shrouds, the one that protects my breast, / choicest of garments, that is Hraethel's relic, / Wayland's work. Fate always goes as she must. *Klaeber's Beowulf*, lines 452-5.
[80] Davidson, 'Weland the Smith', p. 157.
[81] Rachel Stone, 'Waltharius and Carolingian Morality: Satire and Lay Values', *Early Medieval Europe,* 21 (2013), pp. 50-70, p. 55.

9c: Date of Origin

The poem is thought to have been composed in the ninth or tenth century. A variety of possible authors have been suggested, some of whom may have been copyists rather than original authors.[82]

9d: Place of Origin

Waltharius probably originated in what is now Germany; it was certainly created somewhere in the Frankish world.[83] The prologue suggests composition by a monk for an audience of monks, which is supported by the use of Latin, although the content is more in the style of a secular epic. *Waltharius* was once linked with the monastery of St Gall, although this connection is no longer considered certain.[84]

9e: Description

The poem tells the story of the hero Walter of Aquitaine and his escape from the court of Attila the Hun, where he was held captive. As Walter travels home, along with his betrothed, Hildegund, carrying treasure seized from the Huns, he is stopped by a group of armed men. Rather than hand over his stolen treasure, Walter decides to stand and fight, even though the group includes one of his closest friends. During the battle, Walter is almost killed, but his mail-coat, described as *Wielandia fabrica*, saves his life. The origins of this mail-coat are not made clear; it is possible that Walter took it from the Huns or perhaps received it through his own family connections.

The relevant lines are as follows:

Et nisi duratis Wielandia fabrica giris

---

[82] *Waltharius and Ruodlib*, p. xiii; Jan M. Ziolkowski, 'Of Arms and the (Germ)man: Literary and Material Culture in the *Waltharius*, in *The Long Morning of Medieval Europe: New Directions in Early Medieval Studies*, ed. by Jennifer R. Davis and Michael McCormick (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 193-208; p. 193.
[83] Ziolkowski, 'Of Arms and the (Ger)man', p. 193.
[84] Alexandra Hennesey Olsen, 'Formulaic Tradition and the Latin Waltharius', in *Heroic Poetry in the Anglo-Saxon Period: Studies in Honour of Jess B. Bessinger*, Jr. (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1993), pp. 265-82, p. 266; *Waltharius and Ruodlib*, p. xiii.

Obstaret, spisso penetraverit ilia ligno.[85]

9f: Key Points of Interest

The parallel to *Beowulf* has been noticed and suggested as a possible indication that *Waltharius* draws more on Germanic heroic tradition than on the Classical models its language might suggest. Little has otherwise been done with this reference, however; it is another example of an underutilised mention of Wayland, which has the possibility to illuminate far more detail than a common link to a pan-Germanic tradition.[86] Jan M. Ziolkowski considered this reference in terms of what it may contribute to the discussion of just how familiar the *Waltharius* poet was with contemporary arms and armour.[87]

10: *Birth of the Knight of the Swan*

Note: There are too many references to Wayland in French literature for all of them to be discussed in detail. This text, which contains three references to Wayland, is included as an illustration of the provenance, dating, and scholarship regarding the *chansons de geste*.

10a: Source Name

The Birth of the Knight of the Swan (*La Naissance du Chevalier au Cygne*). This poem is the first part of the Crusade Cycle and is categorised as a *chanson de geste*.

10b: Date Produced

Ten manuscript copies of *The Birth of the Knight of the Swan* date from the thirteenth century, with another copy from the fourteenth.[88]

---

[85] 'And if the work of Weland with its hardened cercles were not in the way, he would have pierced his loins with the thick wood.' *Waltharius,* ed and trans by Abram Ring (Leuven: Peeters, 2016), lines 965-6.
[86] Olsen, 'Formulaic Tradition and the Latin *Waltharius*', p. 266.
[87] Jan M. Ziolkowski, 'Of Arms and the (Ger)man', p. 207.
[88] Simon John, 'Godfrey of Bouillon and the Swan Knight', in *Crusading and Warfare in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Simon John and Nicholas Morton (Ashgate: Farnham, 2014), pp. 129-42, p. 134.

10c: Date of Origin

The poem was almost certainly composed in the twelfth century. It was probably written later than the rest of the Crusade Cycle, although it now forms the first part of the cycle.[89]

10d: Place of Origin

North-eastern France, most likely Picardy.[90]

10e: Description

In the first reference, Wayland is mentioned as the brother of 'Dionises', who is presumably connected to the Greek Dionysus, but in this poem appears only as the smith of a wonderful sword.[91] In a second reference to Wayland, the poet says that he does not know if a certain spear-head was made by Wayland, but that it was such fine work that Wayland could indeed have been its maker.[92]

11: *Vǫlundarkviða*

11a: Source Name

This poem is almost always called *Vǫlundarkviða*, although it has also been referred to as *The Lay of Vǫlundr*.

11b: Date Produced

The Codex Regius manuscript (or *Konungsbók* in Icelandic), which contains *Vǫlundarkviða* and numerous other Eddic poems, is dated on paleographic grounds to the second half of the thirteenth century.[93]

---

[89] W.R.J. Barron, 'Versions and Texts of the *Naissance du Chevalier au Cygne*,' *Romania*, 356 (1968), 481-538, p. 487.
[90] John, 'Godfrey of Bouillon and the Swan Knight', p. 136.
[91] *La Naissance du Le Chevalier au Cygne*, lines 2341-2.
[92] *La Naissance du Le Chevalier au Cygne,* line 140.
[93] Le Roy Andrews, 'The Criteria For Dating the Eddic Poems', *PMLA*, 42 (Dec 1927), 1044-54, p. 1045. The Codex Regius is GKS 2365 4º in the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies.

11c: Date of Origin

Suggested composition dates vary from 700-1200, although both the earliest and latest dates in this range have largely been rejected by modern scholars.[94] Many scholars are inclined to assign an earlier date to *Vǫlundarkviða* than *Þiðrekssaga*, seeing it as closer to a pre-Christian mythological tradition; *Vǫlundarkviða* is certainly the older of the two, but the distance between the composition of the two texts is not clear.[95]

11d: Place of Origin

The Codex Regius manuscript was certainly copied in Iceland, although much of its content may predate the settlement of Iceland. Theories as to the origin of *Vǫlundarkviða* vary, but one of the most widely accepted suggestions is that it came to Iceland via Norse settlement in England, as evidenced by English-influenced vocabulary and the known presence of the Wayland story in England.[96] Even those sceptical of this possibility generally consider *Vǫlundarkviða* to reflect a certain level of West Germanic influence, whether English or Old Saxon.[97] The Codex Regius manuscript was written in Iceland around 1270.[98]

11e: Key Points of Interest

Vǫlundarkviða contains traces of thematic links to other stories in the Codex Regius but appears to be an independent composition, and is usually studied as such. The positioning of *Vǫlundarkviða*

---

[94] Terry Gunnell, 'Eddic Poetry' in *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture*, ed. Rory McTurk (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 82-100, p.94; Joseph Harris, 'Eddic Poetry', in *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature: A Critical Guide*, ed. by Carol J. Clover and John Lindow (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), pp. 68-156, pp. 75-76 and p.93.

[95] Philip Pulsiano and Kirsten Wolf (eds), *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Garland, 1993), p.711; Susanne Kramarz-Bein, '*Þiðreks saga* in the Context of Old Norwegian Literature,' in *Francia et Germania: Studies in Strengleikar and Þiðreks saga af Bern*, ed. by Karl G. Johansson and Rune Flaten (Oslo: Novus Forlag, 2012), pp. 251-64.

[96] McKinnell, 'The Context of *Vǫlundarkviða*', p.4; Alaric Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England: Matters of Belief, Health, Gender and Identity* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007), p. 39.

[97] Harris, 'Eddic Poetry', p. 103.

[98] Gunnell, 'Eddic Poetry', p. 93.

within the collection has attracted particular attention, as it is between the poems about gods and those about heroes.[99]

12: *Þiðreks saga*

12a: Source Name

The saga as a whole is known as *Þiðreks saga af Bern*. In this thesis, it will always be shortened to *Þiðreks saga*. The Wayland episode is known as *Velents þáttr smiðs*.[100]

12b: Date Produced

The oldest surviving manuscript containing *Þiðreks saga* was produced c. 1300 (Royal Library, Stockholm, Perg. fol. nr. 4 (Mb)). Two seventeenth-century manuscripts preserve different redactions, presumably based on now-lost manuscripts (Copenhagen, Arnamagnæan Institute, AM 178 fol. (A) and Copenhagen, Arnamagnæan Institute, AM 177 fol. (B)).[101]

12c: Date of Origin

Þiðreks saga is thought to draw on sources considerably older than the text itself, although it is still usually judged to be a later version of the story than that found in *Vǫlundarkviða*.[102]

12d: Place of Origin

A prologue explicitly refers to a German origin, and also refers to the telling of these stories, including the story of Wayland, by Danes and Swedes. Based on this prologue and on a variety of literary and historical details present in the text (particularly the forms of the names), two main theories have arisen to explain the origins of *Þiðreks saga*. The first, known as the Norwegian hypothesis, suggests that German oral material was gathered by merchants in Bergen and compiled

---

[99] Gunnell, 'Eddic Poetry', p. 85.
[100] *Þiðreks saga* quotations in this thesis will be drawn from *Þiðreks saga af Bern*, ed. by Guðni Jónsson (Reykjavík: Íslendingasagnaútgáfan, 1954).
[101] Stefka Georgieva Eriksen and Karl G. Johansson, 'Francia et Germania - Translations and the Europeanisation of Old Norse Narratives', in *Francia et Germania: Studies in Strengleikar and Þiðreks saga af Bern*, ed. by Karl G. Johansson and Rune Flaten (Oslo: Novus Forlag, 2012), pp. 9-52, p. 23.
[102] Eriksen and Johansson, 'Francia and Germania', p. 13.

into a Norse written text. The second, known as the German hypothesis, argues that the material was initially written in German, either as a series of narratives or as a compilation of pre-existing texts.[103] In this latter situation, the earliest Scandinavian versions of *Þiðreks saga* would therefore have been translations rather than original compositions. Regardless of the exact process, it seems most likely that *Þiðreks saga* was produced at the court of the Norwegian king Hakon IV.[104]

Possible Sources

These sources are not the only items that have been identified as depicting Wayland. However, they are the only items currently widely acknowledged as showing Wayland the Smith in a way that is at least reasonably comparable to the narrative sources. There are some other potential Wayland depictions, or items connected to Wayland, which will *not* be discussed in this work. The use of Wayland as a personal name will also not be discussed; while there is documentary evidence for the existence of numerous early medieval Waylands, they are not considered relevant to the study of the legendary smith.

The Alskog Stone

Sigmund Oehrl has identified a stone from Alskog as depicting the story of Wayland; he identifies a goldsmith making rings, a bird costume, a decapitated body, and a group of women beside a lake, perhaps representing the first part of *Vǫlundarkviða.*[105] However, Oehrl's conclusions depend on a very detailed and close reading of the stone, which is little studied. The collection of motifs may tell Wayland's story, or they may tell another story entirely. The question of the 'decapitated' body is particularly difficult; Oehrl himself admits that there is a 'stump' of a head, and it is perhaps a

[103] Eriksen and Johansson, 'Francia and Germania', p. 23.
[104] *The Saga of Thidrek of Bern*, trans by Edward R. Haymes (New York: Garland, 1988), p xx.
[105] Sigmund Oehrl, 'Wieland der Schmied auf dem Kistenstein von Alskog kyrka und dem Runenstein Ardre kyrka III. Zur particelen Neulesung und Interpretation zweier gotländischer Bildsteine', *Analecta Septentrionalia,* 65 (2009), 540-66.

hairless figure rather than a decapitated one. Further study may well reveal this to be a depiction of Wayland, which could have interesting consequences for the study of his story as a whole, but for now it will not be included in this survey of source material.

The Uppåkra Man

This late tenth- or early eleventh-century small copper alloy figure of a winged man, found at Uppåkra, has been identified as Wayland.[106] This identification is particularly due to small marks on its wing which may represent blood drops, perhaps based on the story in *Þiðreks saga* that Egil is forced to shoot at his brother, but merely pierces the blood-filled bladder held beneath Wayland's wing. However, depictions of bird-men are not especially rare in Viking period art. This figure may represent Odin in his eagle form, Loki in Freyja's feather-cloak, or another mythological or legendary character entirely. Without further contextual details, it is impossible to say whether this represents the winged Wayland or another winged figure.[107] It does, at least, demonstrate how depictions of Wayland drew on a broader tradition of such bird-men images.

The Weladu Solidus

An East Frisian gold solidus, probably from c. 600 AD, this coin bears a runic inscription interpreted as reading *weladu*.[108] No other evidence survives of Wayland's name being spelt in this way, or of a similar word change taking place in other Old English words, although Raymond Page notes that a similar change of form would not be exceptionally unusual in Old Norse or Old English, and Duncan Wright suggests it represents a feminized form of the Wayland name.[109] However, even if this inscription was intended to read 'Wayland', there is no evidence that it refers to the legendary Wayland rather than a moneyer named Wayland. Nothing else on the coin indicates a connection to

[106] Michaela Helmbrecht, 'A Winged Figure from Uppakra', *Fornvännen*, 2012 (107), 171-8.
[107] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers*, pp. 16-17.
[108] R. Page, 'The Runic Solidus of Schweindorf, Ostfriesland, and Related Runic Solidi', *Medieval Archaeology*, 12 (1968), 12-25; Stephen Pollington, Lindsay Kerr, and Brett Hammond, *Wayland's Work: Anglo-Saxon Art, Myth, and Material Culture, 4th-7th Century* (Ely: Anglo-Saxon Books, 2001), p. 126.
[109] Page, 'The Runic Solidus', p. 126; Wright, 'Crafters of Kingship', p. 275.

any known Wayland story; furthermore, Wayland's name does not appear on any other artistic sources, even the Franks Casket, which has many other explanatory inscriptions, suggesting that Wayland was often identified through visual motifs rather than requiring his name to be used. This solidus therefore, most likely, if it depicts a real Wayland, is perhaps a moneyer who happened to have this not-uncommon name, or perhaps a king or other leader who was commemorated on the coin.

Welandes stocc

A tenth-century charter that mentions *welandes stocc* near Princes Risborough may also refer to a place-name associated with Wayland.[110] However, this place-name no longer exists, and nothing else is known of it.

Lärbro St Hammars III

This picture stone has some similarities with the Ardre Stone, and may also depict Wayland.[111] However, in the absence of any metalworking motifs, it is more likely to depict a dead hero travelling to Valhalla with Odin and a valkyrie.[112]

Additional Sources: Formulaic References

Wayland's name also appears in dozens of other texts, mostly from France but also from northern Europe. In almost all of these texts, he is referred to only fleetingly. As such, only a few of these references will be discussed in any detail in this thesis, but it is worth presenting them here as a body of material. Most were collected by Depping in his *Dissertation on Wayland the Smith*, although some of his selections are found only in post-medieval manuscripts and collections. A

[110] Davidson, 'Weland the Smith', p. 149.
[111] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers*, p. 18.
[112] McGuire and Clark, *The Leeds Crosses*, p. 37.

comprehensive and more recent list of Wayland's appearance in the French *chansons de geste* can be found in André Moisan's work, where over twenty attestations of Wayland's name are listed.[113]

Most references to Wayland are 'formulaic', focusing on his work as a smith. Formulaic references, also known as allusive references, are repeated (or closely echoed) phrases found in traditional poetry and storytelling.[114] They are often used as building blocks by singers and performers, providing useful material with which to compose pieces during performance.[115] They are both memory aids and helpful elements in the creation of entirely new stories. They are particularly helpful in the construction of poetic work, where the possession of multiple phrases already appropriate to the meter can make composition much easier. Studies of traditional oral societies have suggested that such formulaic references make up a large proportion of oral performances, and perhaps even form the majority of content in many performances.[116]

There are a number of different types of formulaic references. These include repeated formulaic phrases, such as those found in Homeric poetry, and classical metrical formulae, where entire episodes are constructed of familiar metrical patterns, used as templates. There are also 'formulaic concepts', which are not necessarily metrically patterned; references to Wayland fit more neatly into this category than into the category of metrical formulae.[117] This is unsurprising given the variety of languages in which references to Wayland appear. Formulaic references can also be repeated phrases used in specific contexts to signal a certain aspect or element of the story; the fairy-tale opening "Once upon a time..." is a famous example.[118] They can also appear in more subtle ways,

---

[113] André Moisan, *Répertoire des Noms Propres de personnes et de lieux cités dans le Chansons de Geste françaises et les oeuvres étrangères dérivées*, Vol. 1 (Geneva: Droz, 1986).
[114] Anita R. Riedinger, 'The Formulaic Style in the Old English Riddles', *Studia Neophilologica*, 76 (2004), 30-43, p. 30.
[115] Francis P. Magoun Jr, 'The Oral-Formulaic Character of Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poetry', p. 189.
[116] Examples of such studies include Bruce A. Beatie, 'Patterns of Myth in Medieval Narrative', *Symposium*, 25 (1971), 101-22.
[117] Riedinger, 'The Formulaic Style in the Old English Riddles', p. 30.
[118] On the tradition of formulaic introductions, see Karl Reichl, 'Heroic Epic Poetry in the Middle Ages', *The Cambridge Companion to the Epic*, ed. by Catherine Bates (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 55-75, p. 56.

often recognisable as a formula only with close study. Heroes, for example, might frequently be introduced in similar ways, even if their names and the choice of adjectives varies. Such formulaic introductions were certainly present in medieval German and Norse traditions.[119]

The seminal literature produced on formulaic references has focused on famous studies of Yugoslav poets in the 1950's, and the ways in which this research was used by classicists to illuminate the oral origins of Homeric poetry.[120] Similar approaches have also been used for the study of medieval literature.[121] Written texts are, of course, by their very nature *not* oral, but this does not mean that all traces of oral composition techniques have been erased, nor that such techniques provide no assistance in written composition.[122] Formulaic references suggest not only oral origins for many written texts, but also suggest networks of influence that mirror networks of oral transmission.[123] Troubadour poetry and Eddic verse are just two areas which have attracted such analysis.[124]

It is interesting to note that these references to Wayland appear in multiple languages, including Old English, Middle High German, Old French, and Latin. Such a wide variety suggests that the Wayland formula served a purpose beyond its usefulness as a metrical filler. Some phrases appear regularly within the poetry of one language because they are conveniently metrically balanced to suit many purposes. References to Wayland, however, seem to be based more on the desire to express a

---

[119] Reichl, 'Heroic Epic Poetry in the Middle Ages', p. 56; Eleazar M. Meletinsky, 'Commonplaces and Other Elements of Folkloric Style', in *Structure and Meaning in Old Norse Literature: New Approaches to Textual Analysis and Literary Criticism*, ed. by John Lindow, Lars Lönnroth, and Gerd Wolfgang Weber (Odense: Odense University Press, 1986), pp. 15-31, p. 16.
[120] See in particular Albert Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), which discusses the work of Milman Parry, Lord's predecessor.
[121] *The Singer of Tales* also includes chapters on the possible medieval applications of Lord's and Parry's work. Also see Beatie, 'Patterns of Myth in Medieval Narrative', p. 109.
[122] Michael Schulte, 'Literacy in the Looking Glass: Vedic and Skaldic Verse and the Two Modes of Oral Transmission', *Scripta Islandica*, 59 (2008), 181-200, p. 193; John Miles Foley, 'Verbal Marketplaces and the Oral Literate Continuum', in *Along the Oral-Written Continuum: Types of Texts, Relations and their Implications*, ed. by Slavica Ranković, Leidulf Melve and Else Mundal, Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy, 20 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), pp. 17-37, p. 21; Gísli Sigirðsson, 'Orality, Harnessed: How to Read Written Sagas From an Oral Culture?', in *Oral Art Forms and their Passage into Writing*, ed. by Mundal and Wellendorf, pp. 19-28, p. 19; John Miles Foley, 'Oral Tradition into Textuality', in *Texts, Textuality: Textual Instability, Theory, and Interpretation*, ed. by Philip Cohen (New York: Garland, 1997), pp. 1-24, pp. 7 and 11.
[123] Brian Murdoch, 'Heroic Verse', in *German Literature of the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Brian Murdoch (Woodbridge: Camden House, 2004), pp. 121-138, p. 122.
[124] Harris, 'Eddic Poetry', p. 112.

particular idea or theme than on the desire to construct a well-balanced line. His continued appearance in end-rhyme French poetry, as opposed to alliterative Old English or German poetry, further reinforces this: Wayland references clearly had a value far beyond their utility in any one poetic style.[125] It therefore seems reasonable to assume that Wayland's name was used so frequently for other reasons, and that he had some significance to the poets who continued to refer to him, rather than being simply a convenient alliterative phrase in Old English.[126] This does not guarantee, of course, that every poet who used the name "Wayland" was aware of any associated story (whether that found in *Vǫlundarkviða* or *Þiðrekssaga*, or elsewhere), but it does suggest that his name had strong enough connotations to remain a valuable description. To describe an item as "Wayland's Work" clearly meant something significant to the poets who chose to include this phrase in their work.[127] The variety of items associated with Wayland also suggests a rich underlying tradition; his name is not merely associated with the famous sword Mimung, or even merely with arms and armour.

In medieval literature, formulaic references are associated most closely with texts thought to derive from oral styles. This includes, as mentioned, Eddic verse and troubadour poetry, but it also includes other types of work. Most early Old English and Old High German poetry, for example, is assumed to have its roots in oral performances.[128] The case is similar in medieval Ireland where, despite a long history of literacy, the influence of oral patterns is still detected in much written material.[129] However, formulaic references are not restricted to oral material. Repetition and the use of set phrases aid in written composition as well, and much medieval writing shows traces of formulaic

[125] See a general discussion of this change in Norbert Voorwinden, 'Latin Words, German Thoughts - Germanic Words, Latin Thoughts, the Merging of Two Traditions', in *Latin Culture and Medieval Germanic Europe: Proceedings of the First Germania Latina Conference* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1992), pp. 113-128, p. 114.
[126] Donald Scragg, 'The Nature of Old English Verse', in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. by Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 55-70, p. 67.
[127] Kaaren Grimstad, 'The Revenge of Volundr', p. 194.
[128] See Murdoch, 'Heroic Verse', p. 121 for a discussion of the probability that an Old High German oral poetry tradition existed, including the suggestion that Wayland featured in that tradition.
[129] Doris Edel (ed), *Cultural Identity and Cultural Integration: Ireland and Europe in the Early Middle Ages,* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1995); Elva Johnston, *Literacy and Identity in Early Medieval Ireland* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2013).

style even if it was composed on paper rather than orally; annals provide one leading example.[130] The presence of formulaic references may, in many cases, suggest a deliberate adoption of 'oral' style, rather than proving that a given work originated in a performance context before being written down.[131] Techniques inspired by oral poetry may also have served to add the authority of age to new, written compositions.[132] In a poetic context in particular, formulaic phrases do not lose their value, even if writing removes some of the pressure for instantaneous composition. It is also important to bear in mind the performative aspect inherent in many texts; the existence of a written version of a poem does not mean that it ceased to be performed aloud.[133]

Formulaic references can, at first, appear to undermine the creativity and skill of an individual poet. But in their very repetitiveness, they illustrate a great deal about the skill required to create epic poems such as *Beowulf*, whether orally or in writing. Like the references to Wayland, such formulaic allusions often draw upon a complex web of underlying folklore and pre-existing literature, much of which is opaque to modern readers.[134] A well-placed formulaic reference calls up, in just a few words, an entire secondary story, encouraging the listener or reader to view the current story in the light of another, perhaps more familiar, story. Many of the great heroes of the early Middle Ages today survive only as passing references in the few texts we have remaining. The presence of repeated references also allows us to identify networks of relationships and common traditions. The closer the similarity between two uses of a reference, the more likely that they drew on a common source text or oral tradition.[135] Studies of *Beowulf*, for example, have revealed possible similarities to

[130] Walter Ong, *The Technologizing of the Word*, 3rd edition (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 41.
[131] For the concept of 'oral-formulaic rhetoric' as a deliberate written technique, see Alain Renoir, 'Oral-Formulaic Tradition and the Affective Interpretation of Early Germanic Verse', in *Germania: Comparative Studies in the Old Germanic Languages and Literatures*, ed. by Daniel G. Calder and T. Craig Christy (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1988), pp. 113-26, p. 117.
[132] Renoir, 'Oral-Formulaic Tradition', p. 116.
[133] Foley, 'Oral Tradition into Textuality', p. 7.
[134] Frank, 'Germanic Legend in Old English Literature', p. 97.
[135] Craig R. Davis, *Beowulf and the Demise of Germanic Legend in England* (New York: Garland, 1996), p. 85.

Middle High German texts as well as to Old English. This does not necessarily mean that *Beowulf* inspired these poems, or vice versa, but it does suggest roots in similar traditions.[136]

But what can such studies of formulaic references contribute to the field of medieval literature more broadly? As mentioned, the study of formulaic references assists in studies of the transmission of both literary traditions and individual texts. It illustrates the relationship between oral and literate modes of communication. It also has the potential to illuminate assumptions, bodies of knowledge, and cultural values underlying texts. These formulaic references are our only evidence that Wayland was a known figure in French literature, yet they indicate continuity from earlier Wayland material. Without a study of these references, this evidence of continuity would have gone unnoticed, as there is no known French narrative about Wayland. Possibly, there was no Wayland story known in France at all, and references to Wayland represent bilingual connections to German or Scandinavian literary traditions, or perhaps Latin texts (such as *Waltharius*) spread the story to France.

Interest in formulaic references in early and high medieval literature has focused largely on formulae which suggest oral origins.[137] These formulae include, in particular, repeated phrase patterns, formulaic introductions, and other linguistic building blocks which a trained and experienced poet could use to quickly compose poems and stories during a performance. *Beowulf* in particular has been analysed in great depth, with one study estimating that up to seventy-four percent of the poem's text is paralleled in other Old English or Middle High German texts.[138] The aim of such studies on Northern European material has often been to prove a text's pre-literate (perhaps pre-Christian) origins or to suggest the existence of common 'Germanic' traditions. However, other studies have also treated the phenomenon of written formulaic references more carefully. Work on

---

[136] Heide Estes, *Anglo-Saxon Literary Landscapes: Ecotheory and the Environmental Imagination* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017), p. 76; Francis P. Magoun, 'The Oral-Formulaic Character of Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poetry,' in *An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism*, ed. by Lewis E. Nicholson (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963), pp. 189-222, p. 195.
[137] Michael Schulte, 'Literacy in the Looking Glass', p. 191.
[138] Magoun, 'The Oral-Formulaic Character of Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poetry', p. 195; see also Graham D. Caie, '*Ealdgesegena worn:* What the Old English *Beowulf* Teaches Us About Oral Forms', in *Oral Art Forms and their Passage into Writing*, ed. by Mundal and Wellendorf, pp. 109-20, p. 110.

Old English literature, for example, has looked at the possibility that fragmentary or allusive evidence may prove the continued transmission of Anglo-Saxon legends long after Christianisation.[139]

The study of Wayland-specific formulae has been largely neglected. Some studies have commented on the frequent recurrence of Wayland in Old English and Middle High German literature. Klaeber, for example, commented that, 'in Old Germanic literature, ascription of a weapon or armour to Weland was conclusive proof of its superior workmanship and venerable associations'.[140] Analysis has not gone much further, however, and little attention has been paid to the body of material as a whole.

[139] Davis, *Beowulf and the Demise of Germanic Legend*, p. 85.
[140] Klaeber's *Beowulf*, note to line 455.

Chapter 1: Wayland the Smith

Although there are many facets of Wayland's identity, as he appears in the surviving sources, if only one facet of his identity could be chosen as the most important, it would have to be that of the smith, whether blacksmith or goldsmith. So closely linked is Wayland with his craft as a superior metalworker that he is often known in modern English simply as *Wayland Smith*, and in German as *Wieland der Schmied*. This name is seen as sufficient to identify the legendary figure from any other figure known by the name 'Wayland'. It seems that the creators of medieval Wayland material had a similar view; he appears in many sources only (or primarily) as the creator of wonderful swords, life-saving mail-coats, and other metal items requiring exceptional skill to make.[141] The repeated formulaic phrase 'Wayland's work' shows how closely associated he was with the metalwork he created - no other explanation of his identity was required. It is in his role as a smith, too, that he has most attracted the attention of modern writers and scholars, from children's authors to academics.[142] In a scholarly context, the figure of Wayland Smith frequently appears in discussions of the role of smiths in folklore and religious beliefs, whereas his story is unlikely to appear in modern studies of the other themes which will be discussed in later chapters. This does not necessarily reflect the entire picture of medieval approaches to Wayland, but it does show that this facet of Wayland's identity was powerful and influential enough to affect post-medieval depictions of him.

The full story of Wayland, however, as told in *Vǫlundarkviða* and *Þiðreks saga*, makes it clear that there was far more to this mysterious figure than the items he created, even though they formed much of his legacy. The narratives that built up around him show the importance of many different themes and ideas. His role as a smith is a key part of his story, to be sure, but it is not the only part. This chapter will consider how the Wayland sources depict him as a craftsman, particularly a

[141] He makes the sword Mimmung in *Vǫlundarkviða* and *Þiðreks saga*, and this seems to be what he is best-known for, as swords also appear in the French sources, but he is the maker of a mail-coat in *Waldere* and *Beowulf*, and a golden goblet in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Vita Merlini*. *Life of Merlin*, Geoffrey of Monmouth, ed. and trans. by Basil Clarke (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1973), line 235.
[142] Cecire, 'Ban Welondes'; Paz, '*Beowulf* as Wayland's Work'.

metalworker, and how these representations correspond to the surviving evidence for medieval smiths. It is important to note that the Old English and Old Norse words for 'smith' (*smiþ* and *smiðr* respectively) do not refer specifically to metalworking, but to any form of craft activity, and Wayland is depicted as engaging in craft activities other than metalworking. However, he seems to have been best known for his metalwork creations, and it is smiths of iron and gold who are best represented both in the documentary and archaeological record. Wayland was most likely known to medieval audiences as a skilled craftsman rather than only a smith, but it was for his high-status smithing of swords, armour, and gold that he was best known. This chapter will therefore focus on metalworking activity, although other crafts will also be considered.

It would be impossible to discuss Wayland in his role as a smith without mentioning the contributions of Mircea Eliade (1907-1986), a Romanian historian and philosopher. For decades, his work has dominated the study of smiths in anthropology, folklore, and pre-modern narratives, and many of his theories have been adopted by academics in unquestioning ways.[143] His book *The Forge and the Crucible*, published in French in 1956 and translated into English in 1962, has deeply

[143] See, for example, Randi Haaland on the use of iron for 'ritual objects' and on the 'magic and rituals of the smith', 'Technology, Transformation and Symbolism: Ethnographic Perspectives on European Iron Working,' *Norwegian Archaeological Review*, 37 (2004), 1-19; Randi Barndon on the fertility powers of smiths, 'Myth and Metallurgy: Some Cross-Cultural Reflections on Smiths', in *Old Norse Religion in Long-Term Perspectives: Origins, Changes and Interactions,* ed. by Anders Andrén, Kristina Jennbert & Catharina Raudvere (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2006), pp. 99-103; Richard L. Dieterle on the potential Neolithic heritage of dwarf craftsmen as descended from megalith builders, 'The Metallurgical Code of the '*Vǫlundarkviða* and its Theoretical Import', *History of Religions*, 27 (1987), 1-31 (also discussed in von See, La Farge, Picard, and Schulz, *Kommentar zu den Liedern der Edda, Vol 3: Götterlieder*, p.83.); Lydia Carstens, 'Might and Magic: the Smith in Old Norse Literature', in *Goldsmith Mysteries: Archaeological, Pictorial and Documentary Evidence from the 1st Millennium AD in Northern Europe*, ed. by Alexandra Pesch and Ruth Blankenfeldt (Neumunster: Wachholtz-Verlag, 2012) pp. 243-269. The note on Wayland in *Klaeber's Beowulf* sums up this attitude; it refers to early smiths as 'embodying at first the semi-sacred power and danger of metallurgy as it impressed the people of prehistory'. In contrast, see Roger Jørgensen, who argues that there is no way of knowing whether medieval European smiths were sacred, 'The Iron Age Blacksmith, Simply a Craftsman?', in *Everyday Products in the Middle Ages: Crafts, Consumption and the Individual in Northern Europe c. AD 800-1600*, ed. by Gitte Hansen, Steven P. Ashby, and Irene Baug (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2015), pp. 300-18; Alaric Hall says that there is 'precious little evidence that smithing was seen as inherently supernatural', *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 33; Martin Jezek suggests that smiths were unlikely to be seen as sacred once metalworking was no longer rare, 'The Disappearance of European Smiths' Burials', *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, 25 (2015), 121-43, p. 132. Further examples of Eliade-inspired ideas, and their problems, are given in Wright, 'Crafters of Kingship', p. 271.

influenced the study of metalworkers, and has shaped academic consideration of Wayland.[144] The basic argument of *The Forge and the Crucible* is that the transformational nature of ironworking, using fire to turn 'earth' (in the form of iron ore) into metal led to a near-universal understanding of smiths as sacred, priestly figures, particularly in the earliest period of iron production. It was these semi-magical craftsmen who formed the background for the growth of alchemy in the Middle Ages, thanks to a belief in the transformational powers attached to metal, including gold. In *The Forge and the Crucible*, Eliade develops a chronology of 'magical' ironworking, tracing it as far back as the use of meteorites by the earliest ironworkers.[145] He sees metalworking as an important element of prehistoric religion, and places smith gods alongside agriculture and storm gods as the chief deities of many pre-modern religions.[146] Links are also made between prehistoric blacksmiths and the mystery cults of the ancient world, and shamanistic initiations in northern Europe.[147] In Eliade's chronology, these early religious beliefs laid the foundation for a system of taboos and magic connected to iron, and he argues that many of these traditions persisted until the end of the Middle Ages. He gives examples regarding mining rites in the Middle Ages (including cleansing, meditation, fasting, and prayer), and folklore that ascribes to iron the power to ward off demons, or the evil eye.[148] Fundamentally, Eliade argues that the importance of iron for both farming tools and weapons gave it an 'ambivalent' character, both revered and feared, which extended to the figure of the blacksmith, himself both hated and admired.[149] He therefore identifies ironworking as a 'superhuman' act, an assertion which he supports through ethnographic examples, and the role of magical weapons in European folklore and mythology.[150] Succeeding generations of scholars have taken Eliade's theories, drawn mostly from anthropological studies, as evidence that such a concept

[144] Mircea Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible: The Origins and Structures of Alchemy*, trans. by Stephen Corrin, 2nd edn (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).
[145] Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible*, p. 23.
[146] Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible*, p. 29.
[147] Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible*, pp. 26, 73, and 84.
[148] Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible*, pp. 26 and 58.
[149] Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible*, pp. 26 and 29.
[150] Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible*, pp. 29 and 85.

of the 'sacred smith' existed in Iron Age north-western Europe, and that the figure of Wayland was born from such a tradition.[151]

The story of the imprisoned smith's revenge and escape does, at first sight, provide an excellent illustration of a number of Eliade's ideas. Wayland's treatment of the prince's bodies echoes other stories attached to initiation rituals: through his actions, the boys are killed, and metaphorically reborn in a new form. This kind of story has been identified as echoing boy-to-man initiation rituals, which Eliade claims smiths are often associated with.[152] Wayland's impregnation of the princess likewise recalls the fertility rites performed by smiths in other parts of the world, explained by Eliade as drawing on the smith's unique ability to create iron from Mother Earth, and the sexual potency of the combination of elements in a creative metalworking act.[153] Eliade argued that an early religious concept of the earth as mother led to a 'sexualisation of the mineral world'.[154] This in turn tied the blacksmith to ideas of fertility and the creation of life, which Eliade claims led to the association of smiths with 'motifs of ritual union and blood sacrifice'.[155] Based on these elements of his story, Haaland, Barndon and others have used Wayland as evidence to suggest that Eliade's theories can indeed by applied to prehistoric north-western Europe - and that the traces of such ideas lingered on into the art, literature, and folk beliefs of the Middle Ages. The story of Wayland, where the smith both ends life and creates a new life, does seem to fit Eliade's theories perfectly.

There are, however, many reasons to doubt whether the early medieval people of Scandinavia and England did have such a concept of a 'sacred smith'. Using Eliade's ideas comes with the usual caveats of applying anthropological models to past cultures, particularly given the lack of medieval evidence for attitudes to smiths. The concept of 'universals' in the study of human cultures is

---

[151] Thomas Birch provides an excellent example of this, in his use of ethnographic parallels to examine the movement of iron, 'Living on the Edge: Making and Moving Iron From the 'Outside' in Anglo-Saxon England', *Landscape History*, 31 (2011), 5-23, p. 5; Jørgensen discusses how examples of African and Asian smiths as social outsiders have influenced studies of medieval smiths, 'The Iron Age Blacksmith', p. 310.
[152] Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible*, pp. 102 and 108. See also Grimstad, 'The Revenge of Volundr', p. 203.
[153] Haaland, 'Technology, Transformation and Symbolism', p. 2; Barndon, 'Myth and Metallurgy', p. 102.
[154] Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible*, p. 26.
[155] Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible*, p. 31.

increasingly rejected, and the association between pre-modern European cultures and modern non-Western cultures is increasingly considered to be patronising; colonialist, and inaccurate.[156] Assuming that non-Western cultures are somehow 'frozen' in a 'primitive' state, while Western cultures have developed, is at best unhelpful and misleading. Scholars have debated the issue of attitudes to prehistoric and medieval European smiths for decades, and Wayland is frequently pulled into the argument as evidence for the applicability of Eliade's ideas. The main problem in establishing any kind of conclusion is the lack of appropriate evidence. Named smiths are rare in the literature of the Germanic-speaking early medieval world, apart from Wayland and Regin, another legendary Norse smith.[157] Smiths do appear in some legal texts, and some artwork, but much of the evidence dates from the later medieval period, and is therefore of dubious benefit when studying attitudes to smiths in the early medieval period. The difficulties of projecting late medieval evidence onto an earlier period is even more pronounced given that theories of sacred smiths require such attitudes to date at least to the Iron Age. If it is difficult to use late medieval evidence to study the earlier Middle Ages, it is even more difficult to use it in prehistoric contexts, given the vast cultural shifts which took place over this considerable length of time.[158] With a lack of other examples, it is difficult to assess medieval attitudes to metalworkers. There is little evidence to contradict the interpretation of Eliade's ideas, even though he offered little evidence except the story of Wayland, and some later medieval folk-customs, to demonstrate the presence of these beliefs in north-

[156] Ny Björn Gustafsson, 'Beyond Wayland- Thoughts on Early Medieval Metal Workshops in Scandinavia', *Historical Metallurgy*, 45 (2011), 20-31, p. 21; Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 21 and 33; Arnved Nedkvitne, 'Beyond Historical Anthropology in the Study of Medieval Mentalities', *Scandinavian Journal of History,* 25 (2010), 27-51, p. 28.

[157] For more on Regin, see Davidson, 'Weland the Smith', p. 154; Carstens 'Might and Magic', pp. 243 and 249; Barndon, 'Myth and Metallurgy', pp. 100-1; Grimstad, 'The Revenge of Volundr', p. 203. Regin appears on at least two northern English stone sculptures, at Halton Cross and Kirby Hall. The similarities between these and the Wayland sculptures were noted as early as 1885 by the Rev. G.F. Brown; see also James T. Lang, 'Sigurd and Weland in Pre-Conquest Carving from Northern England', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 48 (1976), 83-94, p. 90; Katherine Holman, *The Northern Conquest: Vikings in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Signal Books, 2007), p. 135.

[158] See Roger Jørgensen, 'The Social and Material Context of the Iron Age Blacksmith in North Norway', *Acta Borealia*, 29 (2012), 1-34, p. 13 for more information on metalworking tools in Iron Age graves. Gustafsson, 'Beyond Wayland', p. 21 considers some of the possible differences between Iron Age and early medieval metalworkers.

western Europe. It is worth remembering that studies of Wayland have often been coloured by Eliade's ideas, without always prompting a re-consideration of whether these ideas are in fact applicable to the story of Wayland; Eliade's ideas seem to be discussed far more often than *The Forge and the Crucible* is cited, suggesting that the concept of the 'sacred smith' has taken on a life of its own. What is required is both a closer examination of the available evidence, and a deeper consideration of how the Wayland story - as it survives in all known sources - correlates with what we know about attitudes to smiths.[159]

It has become increasingly clear that, in the absence of rich documentary evidence, the best tool for understanding medieval and prehistoric attitudes to metalworkers is the archaeological traces left by such metalworking. While the Wayland solidus is the only known metal item bearing the name of Wayland, and the site known as Wayland's Smithy was never a real forge, archaeological evidence remains valuable for telling us more about how medieval people understood the figure of Wayland. First and foremost, it makes up a substantial portion of surviving evidence for life and culture in the early Middle Ages, particularly in Scandinavia. The use of archaeology also allows direct engagement with metalworking products and metalworking tools themselves, rather than relying on descriptions provided by those who were not themselves metalworkers and were often separated from their subjects by a considerable length of time. Metalworkers and metalworking did not attract a great deal of attention in medieval written texts, and were often referred to only obliquely.

Where did smiths live and work? How well were they integrated into their communities? Were their activities purely practical, or did they integrate elements of ritual? These questions have the potential to shed a great deal of light on medieval understandings of the story of Wayland, but they can only be answered through the use of archaeological, rather than literary or documentary, sources. Archaeological evidence has its own problems, but often makes up for deficiencies in a

[159] For a further discussion of early medieval smiths, see Duncan Wright, 'Crafters of Kingship: Smiths, Elite Power, and Gender in Early Medieval Europe', *Medieval Archaeology*, 63 (2019), 271-97.

written record which pays little attention to metalworking and metalworkers.[160] Thankfully, both England and the Scandinavian countries have progressive and permissive attitudes to metal-detecting, which in recent years has provided substantial and richly detailed evidence for the nature of prehistoric and early medieval metalworking. This has allowed archaeologists to build up a better picture than ever before of how metalworkers fitted into local communities and broader social structures.[161] Evidence can also be gathered from settlement archaeology, from the archaeology of aristocratic sites, and from chance finds of metalwork. The evidence for metalworking is increasingly approached as a topic of study in its own right, rather than a side note to excavations considered primarily of interest for other reasons.[162] Recent publications have focused solely on the archaeology of Scandinavian goldsmiths, for example, while a number of Anglo-Saxon smelting sites have been excavated primarily due to an interest in iron production.[163] This recently available material has enabled archaeologists to ask new questions about metalworking. Studies have arisen about production contexts, tool analysis, and the accumulation and distribution of production waste, as well as considering the finished products themselves. While the archaeology of medieval Germanic metalwork still has under-studied areas, such as the lack of work on metals such as lead and copper-

[160] Johan Callmer, 'Wayland: An Essay on Craft Production in the Early and High Middle Ages in Scandinavia', in *Centrality-Regionality: The Social Structure of Southern Sweden during the Iron Age*, ed. by Lars Larsson and Birgitta Hårdh, Almqvist& Wiksell, Lund (2003) pp. 337-361; see also the discussion in Gustafsson, 'Beyond Wayland'.

[161] This has been widely discussed in both Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian contexts. See, for example, Av Magnus Lindberg and Maria Lingström, 'Systematisk metalldetektering', *Fornvännen*, 111 (2016), 118-126; Jostein Gundersen, Josephine M. Rasmussen, Ragnar Orten Lie, 'Private Metal Detecting and Archaeology in Norway', in *Open Archaeology*, 2 (2016), 160-170; Jane F. Kershaw, 'The Distribution of the "Winchester" Style in Late Saxon England: Metalwork Finds From the Danelaw', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 15 (2008) pp. 254-69, p. 255; John Newman, 'Exceptional Finds, Exceptional Sites? Barham and Coddenham, Suffolk', in *Markets in Early Medieval Europe: Trading and 'Productive' Sites, 650-850*, ed. by Tim Pestell and Katharina Ulmschneider (Macclesfield, Cheshire: Windgather Press, 2003), pp. 97-109, p. 97; Lars Jørgensen, 'Manor and Market at Lake Tissø in the Sixth to Eleventh Centuries: the Danish "Productive"' Sites', in *Markets in Early Medieval Europe,* pp. 175-207, p. 176.

[162] Gustafsson, 'Beyond Wayland'.

[163] See Alexandra Pesch and Ruth Blankenfeldt (eds), *Goldsmith Mysteries: Archaeological, Pictorial and Documentary Evidence from the 1st Millennium AD in Northern Europe* (Neumunster: Wachholtz-Verlag, 2012); D. Coggins, K.J. Fairless, and C.E. Batey, 'Simy Folds: An Early Medieval Settlement Site in Upper Teesdale, Co. Durham', *Medieval Archaeology*, 27 (1983), 1-26; William Wall, 'Middle Saxon Iron Smelting near Bonehills Farm, Wittering, Cambridgeshire', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 17 (2011), 87-100; Jeremy Haslam, L. Biek, and R.F. Tylecote, 'A Middle Saxon Iron Smelting Site at Ramsbury, Wiltshire,' *Medieval Archaeology*, 24 (1980), 1-68.

alloys, in contrast to the work on gold and iron, it now offers a wealth of material for understanding the world and craft of a medieval metalsmith in north-west Europe.[164]

There is a lack of complete syntheses of this material; this is at least in part due to the slow nature of publication of excavation reports, but the situation is gradually changing, and a number of relatively recent publications have examined archaeological material connected to early medieval metalworking. Much of the evidence, however, is found in site reports rather than overview texts. Bringing it all together allows for the creation of a much fuller picture of how smiths were viewed all across medieval Europe. Archaeological evidence is, however, fraught with problems, intrinsic to the nature of the material. Hunting for traces of metalworking activity can be frustrating and fruitless. Apart from the constant erosion and destruction of archaeological material, much of the potential evidence may have been destroyed by the very people who created and used it.[165] Many furnaces may have been destroyed after a single use, for example, whether for practical or ritual reasons. Other metalworking processes are entirely transient; cold working of gold leaves little to no trace in the archaeological record, while techniques such as the use of beeswax models are hypothesised but not directly visible.[166] The known existence of a Roman portable furnace also suggests the possibility of non-permanent forging sites, which would leave far less of a trace.[167] Archaeologists of early medieval metalwork are therefore often left looking for faint traces of possible metalworking activity. The evidence for metalworking on a particular site is often tiny, easily missed and easily lost, such as the small drops of gold found in the workshop at Bäckby.[168] Even a smith's tools, seemingly a

---

[164] Unn Pederson , 'Leadworking in Viking-Age Norway', in *Viking Worlds: Things, Spaces and Tourism*, ed. by Marianne Hem Eriksen, Unn Pederson, Bernt Rundberget, Irmelin Axelsen, Heidi Lund Berg (Oxbow Books, Oxford, 2014), pp. 179-94, p. 183; Catherine Hills, 'Work-Boxes or Reliquaries? Small Copper-Alloy Containers in Seventh-Century Anglo-Saxon Graves', in *Studies in Early Anglo-Saxon Art and Archaeology: Papers in Honour of Martin G. Welch*, ed. by Stuart Brookes, Sue Harrington, Andrew Reynolds, BAR British Series 527 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2011), pp. 14-19.

[165] Haaland, 'Technology, Transformation, and Symbolism', p. 14.

[166] Ny Björn Gustafsson, 'Beeswax in Metalworking in Viking Period Gotland', *Fornvännen*, 111 (2016), 97-101.

[167] Iris Aufderhaar, 'What Would a Goldsmith's Workshop Look Like In Theory?', in *Goldsmith Mysteries*, ed. by Alexandra Pesch and Ruth Blankenfeldt, pp. 87-98, 90.

[168] Kristina Lamm, 'Helgö as a Goldsmiths' Workshop in Migration Period Sweden,' in Pesch and Blankenfeldt, pp. 143-55, p. 144.

clear sign of metalworking activity, are difficult to interpret. With little variation in style and use over centuries, they are often hard to date without appropriate contexts.[169] Even their presence in graves of the correct period is contentious as evidence for metalworking practice, as will be discussed below. Tools are not the only finds that present such difficulties of interpretation; waste products from metalworking sites are also notoriously difficult to date.[170]

In terms of chronology, the following sections primarily focused on evidence from between the early fifth and the eleventh century. It is during these centuries that the Wayland story seems to have developed and spread across Europe. While *Þiðreks saga* and *Vǫlundarkviða* were not written down until slightly later, the stories they record almost certainly originated in these centuries (and, in the case of *Vǫlundarkviða*, perhaps the text itself). This is, of course, a wide sweep of time, during which metalworking technology most likely changed a great deal. With so many gaps in the evidence, and so many difficulties with dating archaeological remains, it is hard to establish a detailed chronology, although developments and changes can be seen as part of a broader picture. Thoughts and ideas can, of course, change independently of material culture, but the archaeological evidence from these places and times provides us with at least a small window into medieval ideas about metalworking and metalworkers.

The evidence presented here will focus particularly on ironsmithing and goldsmithing. This is because almost every reference to Wayland's work specifies either weaponry or gold. Therefore, while silver is predominant in other literary sources, and while many other metals are found in archaeological material, they will not feature prominently in this chapter. It seems likely that gold- and weapon-smithing were the activities of choice for Wayland due to the prestige associated with such crafts. This thesis may thus present a less full picture of metalworking in general, with little

[169] Jørgensen, 'The Iron Age Blacksmith', p. 102.
[170] Coggins, Fairless, and Batey, 'Simy Folds', p. 18.

attention paid to metals such as silver, lead, and copper, but it will hopefully create a deeper understanding of how Wayland and his craft were perceived.

Wayland the Smith in *Vǫlundarkviða*

In both the narrative sources, quite a lot of attention is paid to the items which Wayland produces, particularly the metalwork items. In *Vǫlundarkviða*, Wayland begins his metalworking activities after he is deserted by the swan-maiden, and begins making gold rings which he hopes she will return for.[171] Described as red-gold, with gems, these rings introduce the kind of valuable metalwork which Wayland specialises in, and help to launch the second part of the story.[172] It is while Wayland is making these rings that Niðhad learns he is alone in Wolfdale and comes with a group of men to capture him. Wayland has made seven hundred rings, a rather large number for a single craftsman, and strung them on a rope in his hall. Interestingly, Wayland is described as 'prince of elves' at the point when he wakes and notices one of the rings is gone, misleading him into believing that his wife has returned. Is this a comment on his sharp senses, perhaps? Or a hint that his prodigious metalworking is due to a skill slightly more than human?[173]

Upon waking him, Niðhad demands that the bound Wayland tell him where he obtained so much gold.[174] The question is never answered - where did Wayland obtain so much gold, if even the king of the area did not know of its existence? Like Eliade's smith, Wayland perhaps has unusual abilities to

---

[171] Hann sló gull rautt / við gim fastan, / lukði hann alla / lindbauga vel. / Svá beið hann sinnar liós[s]ar kvánar, / ef ánom koma gerði. 'He beat red gold round the firm-set gem, he closed all rings well for the linden rope. So he waited for his radiant wife, if she should return to him. *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 6.

[172] These rings play an important role in the narrative, which will be discussed further in Chapter 3. The details of their creation are discussed at length by Leif Einarson, 'Artisanal Revenge in *Völundarkviða*: Völundr's Creations in the Spatial Relations of the Poem', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 114 (2015), 1-31, p. 11.

[173] For more on this line, see Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 41 and 42. Wayland as an elf will be discussed further in 'Wayland the Outsider'.

[174] Hvar gaztu, Vǫlundr / - vísi álfa! - / vára aura / í Úlfdǫlom? 'Where, Vǫlundr, did you get - you master of elves! - wealth of ours in Wolfdales? *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 14.

detect and extract precious metals from the earth.[175] He does not divulge his secrets to Niðhad, and perhaps the desire to control this gold source is one of the reasons Niðhad captures him. Wayland's skills as a smith are important, but this unusual ability to obtain precious metals is perhaps even more important, as gold was a deeply valuable commodity in early medieval Europe.[176]

At this point, Wayland makes an interesting response to Niðhad's questions about gold. He ignores the direct line of questioning, and instead responds that his family was a greater treasure, when they were all together.[177] This foreshadows the revenge he will take on Niðhad: in exchange for the gold he craves so dearly, Niðhad will forfeit his true greatest treasure, his family. It is made clear that Wayland himself values family more than gold, but Niðhad does not respond to this comment, and does not seem to notice Wayland's threats. In fact, it is Niðhad's wife who identifies Wayland as a threat, even bound and imprisoned.

The stolen ring is given to the princess, Beadohild, and the king himself wears the sword he has taken from Wayland.[178] These two items are discussed a second time shortly afterwards, as Wayland thinks back over the wrong that has been done to him.[179] He works sleeplessly to make precious new things for Niðhad, but his focus is on these two lost items, rather than on all the wondrous new things he can create. He is making his value to Niðhad very clear, and no doubt this parallels the

---

[175] Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible*, p. 53

[176] Elizabeth Coatsworth and Michael Pinder, *The Art of the Anglo-Saxon Goldsmith: Fine Metalwork in Anglo-Saxon England: Its Practice and Practitioners* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2002), p. 7; Régine Le Jan, 'Frankish Giving of Arms and Rituals of Power: Continuity and Change in the Carolingian Period', in *Rituals of Power: From Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Frans Theuws and Janet L. Nelson (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp. 281-310, p. 289; Estes, *Anglo-Saxon Literary Landscapes*, p. 152.

[177] Man ek at vér meiri / mæti áttom, / er vér heil hiú / heima vórom. 'I remember that we owned a greater treasure when we were a whole family in our home. *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 15.

[178] Niðuðr konungr gaf dóttur sinni Bǫðvildi gull[h]ring þann er hann tók af bastino at Vǫlundar, en hann siálfr bar sverðit er Vǫlundr átti. 'King Niðuðr gave his daughter Bǫðvildr the gold ring that he took off the rope at Vǫlundr's house, while he himself wore the sword that belonged to Vǫlundr. *Vǫlundarkviða*, between stanzas 16 and 17.

[179] Skínn Niðaði / [skyggt] sverð á linda, / þat er ek hvesta / sem ek hagast kunna, / sem ek herðak / sem mér hoegst þótti…. Nú berr Bǫðvildr / brúðar minnar- / biðka ek þess bót - / bauga rauða. 'There shines for Niðuðr the [burnished] sword at his belt that I made sharp with all the skill I knew, and I hardened as seemed to me surest… Now Bǫðvildr is wearing - I shall know no redress for this - my bride's red rings.' *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 18.

section in Þiðreks saga where the king has Wayland's tendons cut and finds himself very happy with this new arrangement, with Wayland forced to serve him.[180]

Wayland's metalworking continues to hold a central place in the narrative as the story of his revenge begins. The two princes visit his island in order to see 'the riches', and beg to see the gold and jewels in Wayland's coffer. The poem hints at what is to come: when Wayland opens the chests to display the treasures within, the text says 'open lay evil'.[181] He then bribes the boys to come again the next day, alone, by promising to gift them some of the treasure; they are clearly as greedy for gold as their father. Once the boys are dead, Wayland begins his revenge of exchanging Niðhad's family for precious treasure. He turns the skulls into silver cups, makes the eyes into precious gems, and turns the teeth into brooches.[182] The transformation of the eyes in particular seems improbable, if not downright impossible, suggesting metalworking skills beyond what is humanly achievable. Wayland repeats the details of these achievements in his final speech at the end of the poem, telling Niðhad exactly what he has gained and lost. Wayland's work here is craft of a level that is not possible for a normal, human smith, no matter how skilled.

Next, Beadohild breaks her ring - presumably the same as the one stolen from Wayland at the beginning of the tale - and comes to Wayland to have it fixed. He promises that he can mend the break so that it is even better than it was before.[183] No mention is made of how she broke the ring, but Beadohild seems keen to have it repaired in such a way that her parents will never know it was

[180] *Vǫlundarkviða*, between stanzas 17 and 18; *Þiðreks saga*, section 72. It is worth noting that, in both texts, Wayland's production of wonderful things for Niðuðr is explicitly linked with the cutting of his sinews.
[181] Opin var illúð, / er þeir í sá. 'Open lay evil, as they looked in'. *Vǫlundarkviða,* stanza 21. This line will be discussed further in the next chapter, as will the role played by greed in the murder of the two boys.
[182] En þær skálae, /er und skǫrom vóro, / sveip hann útan silfri, / seldi Níðaði. / En ór augom / iarknasteina / sendi hann kunnigri / kono Niðaðar. / En ór tǫnnom / tveggia þeira / sló hann brióstkringlor, / sendi Bǫðvildi. 'But/and from those bowls, that were beneath the bobbed hair, he enclosed in silver, gave them to Níðuðr. And from the eyes pure gems he sent to the wise wife of Níðuðr. And from the teeth of the two of them he forged brooches, sent them to Bǫðvildr.' *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 25.
[183] Ek boeti svá / brest á gulli, / at feðr þínom / fegri þikkir, / ok moeðr þinni / miklo betri, / ok siálfri þér / at sama hófi. 'I shall so mend the break in the gold that to your father it will seem even fairer, and to your mother much better, and to yourself as fine as before.' *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 27.

broken.[184] It is while she is visiting Wayland for this purpose that he gives her beer and impregnates her. The motif of the stolen ring seems to have tied Beadohild to Wayland all the way through the text.

Wayland's metalworking therefore forms a thread throughout the story. It is how he reacts to his wife's disappearance, it is why Niðhad captures him, it is how he lures all of the king's children to their unpleasant fates, and it is how he takes his revenge on Niðhad, by turning the princes into precious objects. While he works in bone as well as metal, it is his swords and his goldwork that form the backbone of the narrative. Clearly, Wayland has a special ability to obtain and work gold, but he does not share the greed of Niðhad's family: he values his family more, and uses his revenge as an opportunity to teach Niðhad a bitter lesson about the true value of treasure. Wayland works with precious metals and jewels all the way through *Vǫlundarkviða,* but he creates treasure rather than taking it. He is jealous at the capture of his sword and ring, but refers to the precious ring as belonging to his 'bride' rather than himself (see note 157, above), and makes no apparent effort to reclaim the sword as part of his revenge.[185] He counteracts Niðhad's revenge with an almost savage generosity and inhuman skill; his crafted creations are both the cause of his downfall and the instrument of his revenge.

Wayland the Smith in *Þiðreks saga*

In *Þiðreks saga*, there is far more space to detail Wayland's metalworking achievements, and a number of episodes explore his exceptional skills. At the very beginning of the story, Wayland is sent off to train as a smith because his father, Vadi, 'wanted him to accomplish something'.[186] He becomes apprentice to the famous smith Mimir, but after three years, he is so unhappy with the

[184] This hint of her attempt to keep secrets from her parents is discussed further in 'Wayland the Rapist'.
[185] This is in contrast to his continued possession of the sword Mimung in *Þiðreks saga*, discussed in the next section.
[186] Vaði vill, at hann nemi íþrótt nokkura*, Þiðreks saga,* section 57.

bullying by a fellow apprentice, Sigurd, that he leaves and returns home.[187] After a year in his home country, Wayland travels to apprentice with the dwarfs, who are impressed with his abilities and want him to stay on for a second year of work. Wayland's father does not trust them, but agrees nonetheless, because of everything they can teach his son.[188] However, the dwarfs then regret handing over so much gold in exchange for another year with Wayland, and threaten to kill him if Vadi does not return in time. As Wayland becomes more and more skilled, the dwarfs grow jealous of his abilities and plot to murder him. Wayland's metalworking skills are therefore acquired in a situation which is both violent and outside the world of normal humans.[189]

Once he has killed the dwarfs and escaped, the first item that Wayland makes is not actually metal. Instead, he hollows out a tree trunk and adds glass to make a vessel that he then uses to sail down the river, away from the dwarfs' mountain and out into the sea.[190] It is of such high quality that the men who find it are amazed, demonstrating Wayland's impressive skill across a range of materials.[191] Similarly, he soon creates an impressive statue of a man he believes to have stolen his tools, as he does not know the man's name and so is unable to accuse him. The statue is so lifelike that the king addresses it, believing it to be the nobleman Regin, and so identifies the thief. Wayland's skill is therefore clearly not limited to metalworking, even though that was the implied focus of his

---

[187] This is typical of *Þiðreks saga*, which frequently ties together different stories from Germanic legend through this type of subtle mention.

[188] *Þiðreks saga*, section 59.

[189] The dwarfs will be discussed further in Chapter 4, while this violent context will be discussed in Chapter 2.

[190] Hann gengr á árbakkann ok sér, hvar stendr eitt mikit tré, ok þat fellir hann til jarðar. Síðan bular hann í sundr tréit ok holar innan, ok þann hlut, er mjóri var ok til limanna horfði, lætr hann í koma tól sín ok fé sitt, ok þar, sem digrari var tréit, lætr hann í vist sína ok drykk, ok sjálfr ferr hann þar í ok lykr svá fast ok þétt, at einskis konar skal honum granda. Ok fyrir gluggana, er á váru trénu, þá setr hann gler, ok svá var um gert, at hann má þat frá taka, þegar hann vill, ok þá er fyrir var glerit, þá kom þar eigi inn heldr vatnit en þar, sem heilt var tréit. 'He went to the bank of the river and saw a large tree standing there. He felled it to the ground. Then he split it apart and hollowed out inside the part that was narrower and was turned toward the branches. He loaded his tools and his treasure into that part, and where the tree was thicker he put in his provisions and drink, and then he got in himself and closed it up so fast and watertight that nothing could harm him. He put glass over the window that was formed in the tree. This glass was fashioned so that he could remove it when he wished. While the glass was in place, no water could come in as long as the tree was in one piece.' *Þiðreks saga*, section 61.

[191] Þeir finna, at tréit er telgt undarliga vel, ok því hyggja þeir, at þat mun vera féhirzla, með því at svá er þungt ok vel um gert. 'They saw that the tree was carved wondrously well and thought it might be some kind of treasure chest because it was so heavy and well made.' *Þiðreks saga*, section 62.

education.[192] He seems to have mastered a number of crafts related to the creation of precious or beautiful objects.

After a year in the king's service, Wayland gets the job of caring for the king's knives. When he drops one in the sea while cleaning it, he makes a replacement that is so sharp it cuts straight through the king's bread and into the table beneath.[193] Wayland gives the credit for this amazing knife to the king's smith, Amilias, who is happy to take it, but the king soon discerns the truth and realises that Wayland forged the knife. Wayland and Amilias enter a smithing contest, which involves Wayland crafting a sword while Amilias forges a suit of armour. The contest ends violently, with Wayland's sword slicing through Amilias's armour.[194] It is at this point that Wayland has begun to demonstrate his skill with the making of weapons which identifies him in so many other sources. Both the fine gold detailing of this sword's hilt and the unparalleled sharpness of its blade are described.[195] Wayland's process for testing and improving the blade is described in some detail; he entirely remakes the first blade, filing it down and feeding the metal filings to birds, then re-smelting the iron from the droppings to make an even better sword. He then tests the blade and repeats the whole process over again.[196] Hilda Ellis Davidson has suggested that this reflects actual swordsmithing practices, as it is a technique discussed elsewhere in medieval sources.[197] This story of Wayland's swordsmithing might therefore be based on true stories of master swordsmiths, placing Wayland among an elite group of metalworkers. Wayland pretends to give this splendid sword to the king, but the weapon he hands over is actually a replica; he keeps the real Mimung for himself. He later

[192] The precise details of the dwarfs' teaching are not discussed; perhaps they instructed him in materials other than metal as well.
[193] Konungr tekr einn kníf, er lá fyrir honum, ok sneið með einn similieshleif, ok beit í sundr hleifinn ok svá mikit af borðinu sem knífrinn tók. Konunginum þótti undarligt, hví þetta járn mátti svá hvasst verða, ok mælti til Velents: "Hverr mun gert hafa þenna kníf?" 'The king took a knife that lay before him and cut into a loaf of fine bread, and it cut the load apart and as much of the table as the knife touched. The king thought it amazing that the iron was so sharp, and he said to Velent: "Who could have made this knife?" *Þiðreks saga*, stanza 64.
[194] *Þiðreks saga,* section 68.
[195] þá hefir Velent gert eitt sverð, skyggt ok merkt gulli, ok hjaltat fagrt. 'Velent had made a sword, brightly polished, marked with gold, and possessing a beautiful hilt-boss.' *Þiðreks saga*, section 67.
[196] *Þiðreks saga*, section 67.
[197] Davidson, *The Sword in Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 160-1.

gives this sword to his son, Widia.[198] He also makes a suit of armour to leave for his son, although this is not mentioned until later, when Wayland speaks to the princess before flying away, and asks her to give that armour to their son.[199]

The text then re-introduces Wayland as 'the famous smith', in what seems like a switch to a different source text. It says that 'Velent is so famous in the northern half of the world that there is no higher praise of workmanship than to say that it was Velent's skill that made it', a quotation which reinforces the idea of Wayland's smithing as the most important aspect of his identity.[200] It also mentions that Wayland forged 'all kinds of treasures from gold and silver and from any material that could be forged', reinforcing Wayland's ability to work with different materials, as already established in *Þiðreks saga*.[201] The story of Wayland's falling out with the king immediately follows this, succeeded by the episode where he attempts to poison the princess.[202] As a punishment, Wayland's sinews are cut, in what seems like a complete reversal of fortune from his time as a famous smith.[203] But the king offers to keep providing his now-captive smith with gold and silver, seemingly very happy with this arrangement.

Compared to *Vǫlundarkviða*, the royal family are not presented as so gold-hungry. Niðhad himself is clearly enthusiastic to have the treasures created by Wayland, but the introduction of a crime and

---

[198] Nú tekr Velent sverð ok mælir svá at honum: "Son minn, sverð þetta heitir Mímungr. Haf ok njót vel. Sjálfr gerða ek þetta sverð, ok þér til handa hefi ek varðveitt, ok þat væntir mik, at bíti þér sverðit, ef þú ert eigi ættleri." 'Velent took a sword and spoke thus to him: "My son, this sword is called Mimung. Keep and use it well. I made this sword myself, and I give it into your safekeeping. I expect that it will cut well for you, if you are not a disgrace to the family."' In the same section of the text, Wayland gives his son mail breeches, a byrnie, and a helmet decorated with a serpent. *Þiðreks saga*, section 81.

[199] En þat skaltu segja honum, ef ek finn hann eigi, at ek hefi gert honum vápn, ok hefi ek þar hirt, sem vatn gengr inn, en vindr út. 'You shall tell him, if I never see him, that I have made him armour, and I have hidden it where the water goes in and the wind goes out'. *Þiðreks saga*, section 76. This motif of the aarmour left for the son by a supernatural lover is discussed by Matthieu Boyd in 'The Ring, the Sword, the Fancy Dress, and the Posthumous Child: Background to the Element of Heroic Biography in Marie de France's *Yonec*', *Romance Quarterly,* 55 (2008), 205-230.

[200] Velent er svá frægr um alla norðrhálfu heimsins, at svá þykkjast allir menn mega mest lofa hans hagleik, at hverja þá smíð, er betr er ger en annat smíði, at sá er Völundr at hagleik, er gert hefir. *Þiðreks saga*, section 69.

[201] Hann smíðar konungi alls kyns gersimar af gulli ok silfri ok af hverjum hlut, er smíða má. *Þiðreks saga*, section 69.

[202] *Þiðreks saga* sections 70 and 71.

[203] *Þiðreks saga* section 72.

punishment makes the imprisonment more about justice than about a desire for gold. Similarly, the princes are lured to Wayland's workshop by the promise of forged arrows rather than a coffer of gold and jewels.[204] They are still attracted by his skills, but they are not as greedy as their counterparts in *Vǫlundarkviða*. Beadohild still comes to him with a gold ring, but there is no backstory to suggest it was stolen from Wayland in the first place.[205]

The items made by Wayland from the prince's bodies are similar to those in *Vǫlundarkviða*: he turns their skulls into gold and silver cups, their shoulder and hip bones into gold and silver ale-ladles, and the rest of their bones into knife handles, flutes, keys and candlesticks.[206] It is worth noting that all of these objects are all rather more achievable by a real smith than precious stones made from eyes. The items in *Þiðreks saga* are both more detailed and more realistic. When Wayland tells the king what he has done, he skims over the details of how he treated the princes' bodies, unlike the repeated descriptions in *Vǫlundarkviða*, suggesting that it is less noteworthy than the fact of their death.[207]

It is also important to note that the construction of Wayland's flying machine is described in *Þiðreks saga*, unlike in *Vǫlundarkviða*, where it is unclear whether he has a flying machine, is able to shift shape and fly by himself, or flies by some other means. In *Þiðreks saga*, Wayland has his brother

---

[204] *Þiðreks saga*, section 73. The boys ask Wayland to forge him arrows, but he refuses to do so unless they return the next day, following his very specific instructions, which will be discussed further in 'Wayland the Rapist'.

[205] *Þiðreks saga*, section 74.

[206] Nú tekr Velent sveinana ok skefr allt holdit af beinunum, ok síðan tekr hann þeira hausa ok býr gulli ok silfri ok gerir af tvau mikil borðker, ok af herðarblöðum gerir hann öleysla ok af mjaðmarbeinum þeira ok býr gulli ok silfri. Af sumum beinum þeira gerir hann knífahefti, en af sumum bláspípur, af sumum lykla, en af sumum kertistikur, er standa skulu á konungs borði. Ok af hverju þeira beini gerir hann nokkut til borðbúnaðar, ok þetta væri stórar gersimar, ef eigi væri með svá stórum svikum ok flærðum sem var. 'Then Velent took the boys and scraped all the flesh from the bones. After that he took the skulls and brought gold and silver and made two large drinking cups. From the shoulder blades and the hip bones he made ale-ladles and covered them with gold and silver. He made knife handles from some of the bones, and from some he made flutes, and from some keys, and from some he made candlesticks to stand on the king's table. He made something for the king's table from every bone, and they would have been great treasures if they had not been made with such falsehood and deceit.' *Þiðreks saga*, section 73.

[207] Þar fyrir drap ek syni þína báða tvá, ok þar bera vitni um þín borðker. Þar eru þeira hausar fyrir innan, ok í allan þinn inn bezta borðbúnað lét ek þeira bein, ok vil ek ekki leynast fyrir þér um þat mál. 'For that I killed both of your sons, and your cups bear witness to that. Their skulls are inside them and all of your best tableware is made with their bones, and I do not wish to hide it from you.' *Þiðreks saga*, section 78.

collect feathers, and then turns them into artificial bird wings.[208] This will be discussed further in 'Wayland the Outsider', but is worthy of note here as a final example of the wondrous items created by Wayland. Indeed, the *Þiðreks saga* story ends with a description of Wayland's metalworking: "Velent remained in Sjoland a long time and was famous throughout the northern half of the world for his skillfulness and his craft."[209] The story of Wayland's metalworking therefore both opens and closes his episode in *Þiðreks saga*: it provides the backbone of his story and links together the different events, albeit less cohesively than the ring and sword motifs of *Vǫlundarkviða*.

Wayland the Smith in *The Consolation of Philosophy*

The mention of Wayland in *The Old English Boethius* is very different from his other appearances in Old English literature, with no sword or mail-coat, but it still focuses on Wayland's role as a smith.[210] Even more interestingly, it considers how Wayland is remembered as a smith, with this aspect of memory one of the text's focal points. Not only is Wayland referred to as a smith in the text, but he appears as a substitution for the Ancient Roman hero Fabricius, who was a little-known figure in early medieval northern Europe.[211] The most likely reason for the choice to use Wayland as an Old English alternative is probably not because he and Fabricius were seen as similar in some way, but purely because of the similarity between the name 'Fabricius' and the Latin word *faber*, 'smith'.[212] The author of *The Old English Boethius* therefore drew a series of connections from Fabricius to

[208] Nú gerir Velent einn flygil, en þá er gerr var, þá er því líkast sem fjaðrhamr væri fleginn af grip eða af gambr eða af þeim fugl, er strúz heitir. 'Velent made a flying apparatus, and when it was finished it was almost as if it were the winged haunch of a vulture or of the bird called ostrich.', *Þiðreks saga,* section 77.
[209] [N]ú Velent í Sjólandi langa ævi ok víðfrægr um alla norðrhálfu heimsins at hagleik ok vélum öllum. *Þiðreks saga*, section 79.
[210] *þæs wisan goldsmiðes,* 'the wise goldsmith', *The Old English Boethius,* Chapter 19, 16-21 (22); the same words are used in the verse version, although they are split between lines 33 and 34. For the full text, refer back to the Introduction to the Sources section.
[211] I have so far been unable to find any reference to Fabricius in Old English. He is not listed in the Harley Glossary.
[212] Nedoma, 'The Legend of Wayland in *Deor*', p. 133.

faber, and from there to Wayland. For Wayland to be the *faber* chosen for a role in the text suggests that he was seen predominantly as a smith, and perhaps as *the* smith, the greatest of his craft.[213]

The focus of the text's discussion of Wayland is firmly on his craft and skill as a metalworker. Craft more broadly is a major theme in The Old English Boethius, making Wayland an even more suitable topic for discussion; as *Vǫlundarkviða* and especially *Þiðreks saga* show, Wayland was a skilled craftsman beyond his metalworking abilities. In terms of his role as a goldsmith, he is not simply a skilled metalworker, but the *most* skilled. This skill, in the eyes of the *Boethius* translator, makes Wayland worthy of remembrance, even if everything else about him, including the location of his bones, is forgotten. His memory will live on both through stories of his craft and through the objects themselves, which will continue to exist long after Wayland is dead. No other aspects of Wayland's identity are mentioned; his story is not even hinted at, so there is no consideration of him as a murderer, rapist, outsider, or anything else. He exists in this text only as a skillful smith – but, importantly, as a smith who represents a bygone time.[214] This facet of his identity is, it seems, the one which the author considers most worthy of remembrance. Wayland's smithing skills distinguish him from everyone else who has been forgotten over time. His fame has outlived all transient earthly things – his creations, and even his bones, are long gone, but the memory of his skill remains.

A reference to Wayland's bones does, however, hint at a link to another surviving piece of Wayland evidence: Wayland's Smithy. The choice of the name 'Smithy' rather than 'tomb' suggests that it was never thought of as the location of Wayland's bones, but it still demonstrates an association between Wayland and these ancient places of the dead. Considering the links to Wayland's Smithy also reminds us of the role played by bones in Wayland's own story: he turns the bones of the dead princes into marvelous metal objects. Covered in gold and silver, the bones of these princes, murdered in Wayland's smithy, will live on in a way that Wayland's lost bones will not. He cannot

[213] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers*, p. 21. Kopár suggests that the Franks Casket and *Deor* also use Wayland as 'an exemplum of skill, wisdom and endurance'.
[214] Neidorf, 'Germanic Legend, Scribal Errors, and Cultural Change'. The role of Wayland as representative of the past will be considered in 'Wayland the Outsider'.

use his skill to preserve his own bones, and so they will be forgotten, in contrast to the prized metalwork items produced by him. While the swords and mail-coats found in other early medieval poems might not have been made from bones, they still reflect the idea that Wayland's fame will live on through memory of his work rather than through memory of the man himself, or veneration of his tomb.

The Old English Boethius refers to Wayland specifically as a goldsmith, which is in contrast to the other Old English texts which view him as the crafter of arms and armour.[215] The two crafts are significantly different in the skills and equipment they require; some smiths may have practised both arts, but it is likely that many specialized in one or the other.[216] Associating Wayland with gold work removes him from the martial contexts presented by the other texts, which is perhaps more fitting for a contemplative work like *The Consolation of Philosophy*. This is a particularly interesting choice, however, given that Wayland is replacing a heroic figure. Perhaps the translator specifically wished to avoid connotations of Wayland's own violent story, or perhaps the intent was to focus on the transient nature of earthly wealth, symbolized by gold, compared to the enduring memory and legacy left by Wayland's skill. The wealthy men who coveted Wayland's golden constructions are long since gone and forgotten, but the memory of Wayland's craft still lingers. The association of Wayland specifically with treasure and gold is supported by the treasure focus of the Franks Casket, and Niðhad's interest in gold in *Vǫlundarkviða*.

Using Wayland in this context emphasizes how he was not just well known as a smith, but how he was the best-known smith. He is the most obvious *faber*, and he is the best example of metalworking craft. This echoes the passages in *Vǫlundarkviða* and *Þiðreks saga* that describe him as the most famous metalworker across the northern world. It is important to bear this in mind when considering Wayland's identity as a smith. He is *a* murderer, among many, and just one of many

[215] The prominence of Wayland as a goldsmith is discussed in Von See, et al, *Kommentar*. In Gillespie's *Catalogue*, he specifically mentions Wayland as a 'goldsmith in *Consolation of Philosophy*.'
[216] Coatsworth and Pinder, *The Art of the Anglo-Saxon Goldsmith*, p. 2; Hinton, 'Anglo-Saxon Smiths and Myths', p. 10.

slaves, Sami, and even elves. As a smith, however, he is one of only a handful who can be considered to be the best. It is this degree of distinction which makes his identity as a smith even more important than it might first appear.

Beowulf and *Waltharius*: The Mail-Coat

It is immediately apparent from each of the formulaic references, and even more so when they are viewed as a whole, that Wayland was associated with metalwork of the highest possible quality. In all of the Wayland sources, the work produced by him is highly valued and in the possession of those who could afford the best. Two of these examples are mail-coats, found in *Beowulf* and *Waltharius*.[217] Beowulf's mail-coat once belonged to his grandfather, a king, and is to be left to his uncle, also a king. Beowulf himself will, later in the poem, become a king. It is interesting to note that Beowulf's sword, which fails him, is not described as being made by Wayland, perhaps in a deliberate contrast between the qualities of the two items. If Wayland had made the sword, would it not have failed Beowulf? Certainly, in *Waltharius*, the high quality of the mail-coat saves Walter's life. Neither of these Wayland-crafted items fails their user, and each seems to be associated with wealth and quality, as well as with warriors of great skill.

Military equipment was, of course, vitally important to the early medieval cultures of north-western Europe. Weapons and armour had both practical and symbolic functions for the military elite who dominated society, and were so highly valued that they were often preserved as heirlooms for generations or, in earlier periods, placed in graves.[218] Such items were hugely expensive and required a great deal of skill to produce, making them the exclusive preserve of royalty and

[217] Please refer back to the Introduction to the Sources section for the relevant sections of the texts.
[218] Swords were arguably the most important item for a metalsmith to make. See David Hinton, *A Smith in Lindsey: The Anglo-Saxon Grave at Tattershall Thorpe, Lincolnshire* (London: The Society for Medieval Archaeology, 2000), p. 105.

aristocracy.[219] The Ackham Wold sword, for example, may have included gold and ivory elements, making it expensive and time-consuming to produce, and marking it out as an item of both value and beauty.[220] A mail-coat like those described as 'Wayland's work' would have taken many hours of skilled, laborious work to craft each individual ring. It is unsurprising that such important items also acquired symbolic and perhaps almost religious significance.[221] Body armour, such as helmets and mail coats, seems to have been particularly personal, and may have signified identity and status even more substantially than weapons.[222] The difficulty of archaeological survival means that not as much is known about mail-coats as about swords, but they were clearly important in both England and Scandinavia.

The presence of metalwork created by other, explicitly supernatural, smiths in *Beowulf* shows just how important such metalwork was. Wiglaf's sword is described as being made by 'entish (giant) smiths', suggesting that Wayland was not the only smith to occupy a key place in the Anglo-Saxon poetic imagination.[223] The mention of Wayland's mail-coat in *Beowulf* also indicated the dual purposes that such an item held: function and display. Beowulf describes it not as a mail-shirt but as a battle-shirt (*beadu-scrud*), making its purpose a key part of its description and identity.[224] This is not an item described in terms of its material or construction, but rather in terms of how it will be used. The material and construction of the item is only indicated through inference from its purpose and its maker's fame as a metalworker.[225] Its description comes not during a battle scene, however,

---

[219] Examples of the importance of metalwork to elite culture, and the high skill level of smiths, can be found in Carly Hilts, 'Secrets of the Staffordshire Hoard: Skills of the Saxon Smiths Revealed', *Current Archaeology*, 297 (2014), pp.12-15, p. 12 and David A. Hinton, *The Alfred Jewel and Other Late Anglo-Saxon Decorated Metalwork* (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 2008).

[220] Barry Ager and Brian Gilmour, 'A Pattern-Welded Anglo-Saxon Sword from Acklam Wold, North Yorkshire', *The Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 60 (1988), 13-24, pp. 13-15.

[221] Peter S. Baker, *Honour, Exchange and Violence in Beowulf* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2013), pp. 38 and 59.

[222] John Hines, '*Beowulf* and Archaeology: Revisited', *Aedificia Nova: Studies in Honor of Rosemary Cramp*, ed. by Catherine E. Karkov and Helen Damico (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2008), pp. 165-74, p.96. Customs of *heriots* and the inheritance of arms and armour will be further discussed later in this chapter.

[223] *Beowulf,* lines 1677-98.

[224] A more precise translation might be 'the best of apparel for battle-wear'. Caroline Brady, 'Weapons in *Beowulf*: An Analysis of the Nominal Compounds and the Poet's Use of Them', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 8 (1979), 79-141, pp. 113-16.

[225] Ziolkowski, 'Of Arms and the (Ger)man', p. 204.

but in a moment of relative peace as Beowulf prepares for battle. Attention is therefore called to the shirt not only as a military item but as an object of art and symbol of status.[226] The phrase further indicates an item of great value, either for its protective abilities or due to its creation by Wayland.[227] The fact that Wayland is the only smith named in the poem implies that he was particularly well known in his own right, either as an especially notable smith or because of the legends clustered around him.

In *Waltharius*, by comparison, the byrnie is described in terms of its mail rings and appears in the context of a battle, when it protects Walter.[228] This mention therefore links Wayland both to ideas of battle and warfare, as well as to concepts of wealth, social structure, and inheritance.[229] It also places the focus on its material and construction, rather than its function. As in *The Old English Boethius*, this is a comment on Wayland's skill as a smith. Seeing the item in use, however, places Wayland firmly in the milieu of a warrior aristocracy, dependent on such armour and arms to maintain their positions of power. Such people would have wanted not merely smiths, but the best smiths, because their lives and their livelihoods could depend on the quality of items such as mail-coats. This is a very different type of metalworking to the goldsmithing hinted at by *The Old English Boethius*, but it belongs to a similar world of kings and warriors.[230]

Waldere and the *Chanson d'Antioche*: The Sword

While these two mail-coats appear in well-known texts, it is his swords for which Wayland is most famous. Swords play a key role in both *Þiðreks saga* and *Vǫlundarkviða*, and the formulaic references continue this pattern. In *Waldere*, the hero carries the sword Mimung, which has been

[226] George Clark, 'Beowulf's Armour', *ELH*, 32 (1965), 409-41, p. 414.
[227] Clark, 'Beowulf's Armour', p. 420.
[228] *Waltharius*, line 965.
[229] Clark, 'Beowulf's Armour', pp. 420 and 431.
[230] These references possibly also link Wayland to a pre-Christian world; these associations with the past will be discussed further in 'Wayland the Outsider'.

owned by a number of great heroes, including the famous Theodoric the Great. It is able to save Walter when other weapons have failed. It is described as *golde gegirwan* (girded in gold), suggesting a valuable and beautifully made weapon.[231] Once again, therefore, Wayland seems to be closely associated with metalwork items of high quality and great value.

Similar references to arms and armour as made by Wayland persist in the French tradition, although they are not so strictly formulaic as those found in Old English. A particularly interesting reference is found in the *Chanson D'Antioche*, where the construction process of a sword made by Wayland is discussed. The text says that this sword, named Twice-Tempered, took Wayland a year to finish, during which time he tempered it twice.[232] The description of this extended process is rather similar to that described in *Þiðreks saga*, where Wayland files down and re-smelts the blade multiple times. Even the testing process (slashing a tree trunk in half all the way to the ground) brings to mind the rather more gruesome test in *Þiðreks saga* (slashing a rival smith in half all the way to the ground), as well as Wayland's testing of the sword against logs floating in the river.[233] It might therefore draw on an older Wayland story, which developed into two different tales, or it might reflect broader ideas about how the greatest of smiths were likely to produce their work. In either case, it clearly shows that the items made by Wayland were exemplars of his skill, and would have been high-quality and valuable.

Like the language of the 'Wayland's work' phrase, the French sources place the focus firmly on Wayland's metalworking abilities, although some other aspects of their material will be discussed in the 'Wayland the Outsider' chapter.[234] This might simply reflect the way that the Wayland tradition

---

[231] *The Old English Epic of Waldere*, p. 107. Swords made by Wayland also appear in *Raoul de Cambrai*, ed. and trans. by Sarah Kay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), line 314; *Le Chevalerie D'Ogier de Danemarche*, ed. by Mario Eusebi (Milan/Varese: Istituto Editoriale Cisalpino, 1963), lines 1684, 9614, and 10596; *Fierabras: chanson de geste du XIIe siècle*, ed. by Parc Le Person (Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 2003) and far more; see Moisan, *Répertoire des Noms Propres* for a more complete list.

[232] *The Chanson D'Antioche: An Old-French Account of the First Crusade,* trans. by Susan B. Edgington and Carol Sweetenham (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), p. 203.

[233] *Þiðreks saga*, section 67.

[234] See 'Wayland as Outsider in the Other Literary Sources'.

developed in France, or it might be that Wayland's prowess as a smith was always seen as the most important aspect of his identity. He seems to have been most closely connected to swords of splendid quality, which might be described as the finest in the world, or associated with a range of ancient and medieval heroes. Even more than mail-coats, swords were valued in the early medieval world both as important weapons and as symbols of martial and aristocratic power. There is no object which could more clearly link Wayland with medieval elites and their power structures. The detailed descriptions given to swords made by Wayland make this importance clear. It certainly took impressive skill to make a good pattern-welded sword, as well as a considerable investment of time; a twentieth-century experiment found that a smith took 43 hours just to make the blade.[235] The most elaborate and high-quality swords, such as the Ackham Wold sword, would have taken even more time and expertise to create.[236] Swords emphasized power and status, and were almost certainly the most important weapon in Anglo-Saxon England.[237] They seem to have had particular importance as gifts, as a tool for lords to reward their followers, and to mark out powerful nobles through the appearance and quality of their weapons.[238] Such was the value of pattern-welded swordmaking that it may have been a closely guarded skill, known only to small groups of smiths.[239]

These are not the only sources where Mimung appears: the sword came to be well-known in north-western European legend, and can be found in a number of texts, independent of Wayland.[240] Wayland is described as the maker of Mimung as late as the fourteenth-century *Horn Childe and Maiden Rimnild*, showing the persistence of the association between them, even if elsewhere

---

[235] Davidson, *The Sword in Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 17 and 28; Heinrich Härke, 'The Circulation of Weapons in Anglo-Saxon Society', in *Rituals of Power: From Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Frans Theuws and Janet L. Nelson (Brill: Leiden, 2000) pp. 377-400, p. 390.
[236] Ager and Gilmour, 'A Pattern-Welded Anglo-Saxon Sword'.
[237] Esther A. Cameron, *Sheaths and Scabbards in England AD 400-1100*, BAR British Series 301 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2000), p. 34; Hinton, *The Alfred Jewel*, p. 51.
[238] Svante Fischer, Jean Soulat, and Teodora Linton Fischer, 'Sword Parts and their Depositional Contexts: Symbols in Migration and Merovingian Period Martial Society', *Fornvännen,* 108 (2013), 109-22, p. 109; Le Jan, 'Frankish Giving of Arms', p. 291.
[239] David Hinton, 'Anglo-Saxon Smiths and Myths', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library,* 80 (1998), 4-21, p. 15; Davidson, *The Sword in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 34.
[240] *Waldere* is the earliest known text to feature Mimung. *The Old English Epic of Waldere*, p. 101.

Mimung had taken on a life independent of its creator. As already mentioned, Mimung plays a key role in *Þiðreks saga*, first as Wayland's creation, and then as the sword carried by Widia. Individual swords certainly could acquire a great deal of importance in the early Middle Ages; by the time a sword was placed in a grave, it could be over a hundred years old, with its own stories and reputation.[241] Mimung is not the only named sword to be created by Wayland, but it seems to have been particularly closely associated with him.

The focus on richly decorated swords might also reflect the interest of many of these texts in a partly-imagined 'heroic' past. During the early Middle Ages, swords gradually came to use less precious metal, perhaps due to the rising prestige of land ownership as a sign of prestige; lords now rewarded their followers with land rather than arms and armour, while displaying their own wealth and power in different ways.[242] Jonathan Himes wrote in his edition of *Waldere* that 'pattern-welded swords are part of the poetic nostalgia from the Heroic Age'.[243] While Wayland's swords are not specifically described as pattern-welded, their rich decoration and association with kings and heroes ties them to this nostalgia and places Wayland in this 'heroic' context.[244] The descriptions of Wayland's metalwork items therefore not only links Wayland to kings and warriors, but also places him in a distant, almost imaginary time in the past.

---

[241] Andrew Reynolds and Sarah Semple, 'Anglo-Saxon Non-Funerary Weapon Deposition', in *Studies in Early Anglo-Saxon Art and Archaeology: Papers in Honour of Martin G. Welch*, ed. by Stuart Brookes, Sue Harrington, Andrew Reynolds, BAR British Series 527 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2011) pp. 40-48, p. 43; Himes, *The Old English Epic of Waldere,* p. 104.

[242] Hinton, *The Alfred Jewel*, p. 61.

[243] Himes, *The Old English Epic of Waldere*, p. 104.

[244] The mention of serpents in *Deor* may hint at pattern-welded blades, although, as noted in the Introduction, it has a number of alternative interpretations. The use of snake metaphors to describe swords appears in a letter of Cassiodorus. Davidson, 'Weland the Smith', p. 158; Pollington, *Wayland's Work*, p. 271. A sword in *Beowulf* is also described as *wyrmfah,* 'serpent-patterned', line 1698.

The Franks Casket, the Leeds Cross Shaft, and the Ardre Stone

Wayland's craftsmanship also plays a significant role in the visual sources which depict elements of his story. It seems that, as in the written sources, his identity as a smith was the most important element to include, as all of the images firmly identified as showing Wayland have some reference to his crafting skills.[245] The Franks Casket image focuses heavily on Wayland's identity as a craftsman, showing him at work by his anvil, with tongs in his hand. The small details that hover around him seem to be other metalworking or crafting tools, including a hammer. He is therefore portrayed in action as a smith, as well as being surrounded by the symbols of his trade. Interestingly, the anvil is positioned in between Wayland and Beadohild, in one of the most prominent spots in the scene. Wayland's metalworking activities are therefore clearly being identified as a key part of his story. On the far right, the man catching birds may be a reference to Egil's help in building Wayland's wings, as presented in *Þiðreks saga*, which is perhaps another reminder of Wayland's impressive crafting ability.[246]

The 'whale's bone' riddle which surrounds the front of the casket may also be a reference to Wayland's crafting skills.[247] Just like the bones of the whale were turned into this precious object, so were the bones of the princes turned into treasures for their father, the king. The riddle seems to be making a conscious comment on this similarity, again foregrounding Wayland's craft skills, with a hint at his violent and murderous nature. Treasure and gift-giving are both possible themes of the Franks Casket as a whole, but the reliance of these themes on the underlying figure of the craftsman has been often overlooked.[248] These networks of aristocratic gift-exchange depended on skilled smiths like Wayland creating the necessary precious objects. The pairing with the Magi scene may

[245] This is perhaps largely due to modern scholarship. Images such as the bronze flying man discussed in Additional Sources may also represent Wayland, but can only be differentiated from more generic winged man images through the use of motifs specific to the Wayland story. It is possible that other medieval depictions of Wayland did not contain metalworking motifs. However, with three surviving images referring to Wayland's metalworking skills, it was clearly an important part of such depictions.
[246] McGuire and Clark, *The Leeds Crosses*, p. 38.
[247] Karkov, 'The Franks Casket Speaks Back', p. 9.
[248] Abels, 'What has Weland to do with Christ?', p. 550; Lang, 'The Imagery of the Franks Casket', p. 248.

also indicate a focus on precious objects, which is another way that the viewer is reminded of the wonderful items created by Wayland in his role as a smith.[249] Like the interest in craft presented in *The Old English Boethius*, the Franks Casket focuses on a Wayland who is first and foremost a craftsman.

Crafting tools also appear on the Leeds Cross Shaft; they are one of the details which led to the figure's identification as Wayland.[250] Unfortunately, the stone is very weathered, and the items are difficult to make out, but they seem to be small floating tools, arranged beneath the winged figure. Below Wayland's feet are what seem to be pincers and a hammer, as well as what might be a pair of bellows or an anvil wedge. On the Leeds Museum version of the stone, these details have been identified more positively as anvil wedges or bellows, and a pair of pincers.[251] The inclusion of such tools seems to have been a deliberate way of identifying the figure as a craftsman, perhaps specifically a metalworker.[252] Robert Nedoma suggests that they are 'a personification of the craftsman by means of symbols.'[253] Wayland does not have to be shown in action as a smith if these motifs are present to identify his craft.

The smithy building on the Ardre Stone also seems to contain pincers, presumably as a way of showing its function.[254] The identification of the building in the Ardre Stone image as a smithy makes it clear both that this story is about Wayland and that his metalworking skills made up a substantial part of his identity. The parallel between the pincers and the headless bodies that lie above them also demonstrates a link between Wayland's metalworking and his murder of the princes, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. This is an echo of the associations made on the Franks Casket, where the body lies beneath the anvil, and in *Vǫlundarkviða*, where the bodies are

[249] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers,* p. 9.
[250] Bailey, *Viking Age Sculpture in Northern England*, p. 104.
[251] McGuire and Clark, *The Leeds Crosses*, pp. 11 and 25.
[252] It is important to note that many 'metalworking' tools might also have been used for other craft activities, such as wood or bone carving. Jørgensen, 'The Social and Material Context of the Iron Age Blacksmith in North Norway', p. 17.
[253] Nedoma, 'The Legend of Wayland in *Deor*,' p. 132.
[254] McGuire and Clark, *The Leeds Crosses*, p. 37.

buried beneath the forge.[255] Clearly, even when Wayland was being presented in terms of his murderous activities, the importance of his role as a metalworker did not disappear.

The Smith and the King

In a society that depended on the giving and receiving of gifts as a key preserver of social order, fine metalwork was of high value to elites, encouraging close connections between aristocratic leaders and smiths.[256] Many smiths may have been bound to individual kings; even those who were free to travel in search of work may have found few patrons apart from a few elite leaders. The highest-quality metalwork required a patron who had need of such objects, either for display or for gift-giving, and who had access to the valuable raw materials used in their creation.[257] The golden goblets and fine swords created by Wayland would not have been purchased or commissioned by anyone below the very highest levels of early medieval society. The story of Wayland makes his relationship to a king even more obvious, as it is his capture by Niðhad that forms the basis of the story. Niðhad uses his power as king, and lord of numerous armed men, to seize Wayland in *Vǫlundarkviða*, and to take advantage of his metalworking abilities. In *Þiðreks saga*, Wayland is a servant to the king before revealing his skill at metalworking, and in both versions Wayland takes his revenge on the king's family after his maiming and imprisonment. It therefore seems that the relationship between the smith and the king was a key part of the Wayland tradition. Without the role of the king, Wayland's story could not have taken the same form.

[255] *Undir fen fiǫturs / foetr um lagði*, 'beneath the mud of the forge-well laid their feet.' *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 25.
[256] Lotte Hedegear, *Iron Age Myth and Materiality: An Archaeology of Scandinavia AD 400-1000* (Oxford: Routledge, 2001), p. 139; Hinton, 'Anglo-Saxon Smiths and Myths', p. 9; Haaland, 'Technology, Transformation, and Symbolism', p. 12; Callmer, 'Wayland', p. 337.
[257] Härke, 'The Circulation of Weapons in Anglo-Saxon Society', p. 390.

The importance of Niðhad, and his role as a king, has been noted in particular with reference to the Franks Casket.[258] With other panels on the casket featuring Romulus and Remus and the destruction of Jerusalem, it is possible that the Franks Casket was intended as a comment on kingship, and perhaps even as a gift for a king. The inclusion of Wayland's story therefore indicates that his relationship to a king was seen as a fundamental part of his tale. While it is likely that the connections between the Franks Casket scenes are more subtle than this, and Niðhad does not himself actually appear on the Franks Casket, it is a useful reminder of how important kingship is in Wayland's story. The parallel between Wayland's captivity at the hands of the king is also a close parallel to that found in *Grimnismál*, where Oðinn is captured and tortured by a king, before taking his revenge and escaping.[259] This parallel may again suggest that the element of imprisonment by a king was a fundamental part of the story.

The relationship between kings and smiths has been well studied, and a variety of different forms of evidence can reveal the links between metalworkers and their royal patrons. A possible archaeological example of these connections between kings and smiths has been identified at Lake Tissø, a site in West Zealand.[260] This manor site, located on the shore of the lake, appears to have been used for ritual rather than productive purposes, with a high concentration of pagan religious objects, little sign of agriculture, rich metalwork finds, and a large hall.[261] Interestingly, the surviving horse bones at the site are larger than those usually found at Danish farm complexes, encouraging an interpretation of Tissø as the power centre of a king or chieftain and his mounted warriors. It may, therefore, have been a royal estate, perhaps just one of many visited seasonally by a peripatetic ruler.[262] Over the roughly 350 years that the Tissø site was in use, beginning near the end

[258] Webster, 'The Iconographic Programme of the Franks Casket', p. 233; Klein, 'The Non-Coherence of the Franks Casket', p. 33.
[259] Davidson, 'The Smith and the Goddess: Two Figures on the Franks Casket from Auzon', in *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 3 (1969), 216-26, p. 218; Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 46.
[260] Jørgensen, 'Manor and Market at Lake Tissø; see also Duncan Wright, 'Tasting Misery Among Snakes: The Situation of Smiths in Anglo-Saxon Settlements', *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology*, 20 (2010), 131-6, p. 133 for a brief summary of the Tissø site in comparison to similar Anglo-Saxon royal sites.
[261] Jørgensen, 'Manor and Market at Lake Tissø'.
[262] Jørgensen, 'Manor and Market at Lake Tissø'.

of the seventh century, the complex went through a number of changes, growing in size and then contracting again. Throughout these changes, however, the smithy remained on the periphery of the complex, moving north and then south again to retain its place on the northern boundary limit.[263] This placed the smithy both within the orbit of the possible royal centre, and in a somewhat liminal position between the royal complex and the surrounding area. It suggests a desire to control metalworkers and their output, but also to keep them somewhat separate from the hall itself, whether for practical or symbolic reasons. A similar relationship between aristocratic estate and smithy may have been present at the site of Lejre, where a very active smithy was located close to a hall complex that probably made up the centre of an aristocratic residence.[264]

A similar pattern of relationships between smiths and kings can be identified in early medieval England. Documentary evidence suggests that smiths were often found on royal or aristocratic sites, which would imply at least a certain degree of control by their patrons.[265] This is supported by the high quality of surviving metal artefacts, which seem likely to be the product of royal or aristocratic patronage.[266] There is also a known relationship between woodland areas (where a lot of smelting and smithing activity took place) and royal hunting estates, meaning that even sites which appear at first sight to be geographically marginal may, in fact, have had links to royal estates.[267] This is closely tied to the question of whether smiths were socially marginal, while also raising the possibility of an alternative model of metalworking location to that found in urban centres. Some smelting sites also

[263] Jørgensen, 'Manor and Market at Lake Tissø, p. 196.
[264] Helena Hamerow, *Early Medieval Settlements: The Archaeology of Rural Communities in Northwest Europe, 400 - 900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 163.
[265] Hinton, 'Anglo-Saxon Smiths and Myths', p. 9; Wright, 'Tasting Misery Among Snakes', p. 31; Torsten Capelle, 'An Insight into the Goldsmith's Workshop', in *Goldsmith Mysteries: Archaeological, Pictorial and Documentary Evidence from the 1st Millennium AD in Northern Europe*, ed. by Alexandra Pesch and Ruth Blankenfeldt (Neumunster: Wachholtz-Verlag, 2012), pp. 17-27, p. 17.
[266] Pollington, *Wayland's Work*, p.45. There is, of course, a question of survival: high-quality metal objects would be more likely to be carefully preserved, while lesser-quality items might be re-used as scrap metal.
[267] Della Hooke, 'The Woodland Landscape of Early Medieval England', in *Place-Names, Language and the Anglo-Saxon Landscape*, ed. by Nicholas J. Higham and Martin J. Ryan (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011) pp. 143-174, p. 163. The question of whether smiths were or were not marginalised will be discussed later in this chapter. There is also the question of whether woodland sites appear to have been used for smithing more than urban sites simply because urban evidence is likely to have been lost, or to lie beneath existing buildings.

appear to have been located on royal estates. One possible example is Ramsbury, although this identification is not certain.[268] A number of major metalwork hoards have been found in areas associated with royal estates, raising the possibility that large quantities of metal were created and hoarded within the local area.[269] The famous smith's burial at Tattershall Thorpe was also perhaps located on a royal estate, although the evidence for this is not certain.[270] Unlike the uncertain 'smiths' graves' of Scandinavia, the functional toolkit and scrap metal of the Tattershall Thorpe grave point very firmly to a practising smith.[271] Interpretation of the site has divided opinion: is it a marginal location, chosen for the burial of a social outcast, or is it the centre of a royal estate, an appropriate site for the burial of a valued craftworker?[272] It seems highly likely that this smith was employed by someone aristocratic, or even royal, if only because of the expense of gold, but the link between this employment situation and the nature of the burial is uncertain.

Yeavering, a major Anglo-Saxon royal site in Northumbria, was thought by its original excavators to show no signs of metalwork whatsoever. It was noted how this contrasted with contemporary royal sites in Ireland and Wales, which typically produce wealths of metalwork.[273] Later excavations, however, revealed that a prehistoric henge on the edge of the royal complex had been reused as a smithing site, suggesting both royal connections and a marginal social status.[274] Such prehistoric sites are often associated with ritual activity in the early Middle Ages, as well as occupying a position between past and present which suggests the possibility of identification with other liminal positions.[275] It is interesting to note how similar this is to the site of Lake Tissø, mentioned above. At both sites, a central aristocratic complex is combined with a peripheral smithy. Both the use of the henge at Yeavering and the rich pagan metalwork at Lake Tissø also provide opportunities to

[268] Wall, 'Middle Saxon Iron Smelting', p. 98.
[269] One possible example is the Staffordshire Hoard; see Sam Moorhead, Roger Bland, Dan Pett, 'Hoarding in Ancient Britain', *Current Archaeology*, 248 (2010), 12-15, p. 15.
[270] Hinton, *A Smith in Lindsey*, p. 103 and 104.
[271] Hinton, *A Smith in Lindsey*, p. 105. Scandinavian 'smith's graves' will be discussed below.
[272] Pollington, *Wayland's Work*, p. 130; Wright, 'Tasting Misery Among Snakes', p. 132.
[273] Hinton, 'Anglo-Saxon Smiths and Myths', p. 8.
[274] Wright, 'Tasting Misery Among Snakes', p. 133.
[275] Semple, *Perceptions of the Prehistoric in Anglo-Saxon England,* p. 230.

consider these sites in the context of Eliade's arguments regarding the ritual nature of smiths. There are, of course, also examples of smithing at non-aristocratic sites, such as Simy Folds in County Durham.[276] In many of these cases, the smithing or smelting site is thoroughly embedded in a centre of habitation. Possibly, some smiths did carry out their work in isolated rural areas, particularly when engaged in iron smelting, but there were certainly many smiths based in areas that would be very difficult to describe as marginal. Lake Tissø and Yeavering both show how smiths could be connected to major aristocratic sites, even if these sites might have been occupied only seasonally.

The metalwork objects from Sutton Hoo, perhaps the most famous archaeological site from early medieval England, also demonstrate the links between smiths and kings. Although the identity of the person buried at Sutton Hoo is not certain, it is almost definitely the burial site of a king, judging by the scale of the mound, the wealth of the grave goods and the effort taken to lift a ship from the river to the burial site. No evidence of metalworking production has been identified at Sutton Hoo, and the origin of the precious metal items found there is unclear, and diverse, but it is possible that some were created specifically as grave goods, or were at the very least made by smiths working for the king who was buried. Who those smiths were, and whether they worked for this king on a single commission or as their sole patron, is also unclear.[277] The descriptions of Wayland's work in the various sources suggests that he may have been expected to create similarly fine metalwork objects for Niðhad.

The Wayland material also links smiths to kings in more subtle ways. In his choice to leave his mail-shirt to Hygelac, Beowulf connects Wayland's work to systems of inheritance and dynastic structures. Inheritance strategies were often used in Anglo-Saxon England as a tool for consolidating or exploring kinship bonds, to the extent that bequeathed goods can sometimes be viewed less as

[276] Dawn M. Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw: Its Social Structure, C.800-1100* (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), p. 33. For more on Simy Folds, see Coggins, Fairless, and Batey, 'Simy Folds'.
[277] Hinton, 'Anglo-Saxon Smiths and Myths', p. 11.

personal property and more as symbols of status and power, both individual and dynastic.[278] The choice of a mail shirt as a gift left to his lord on death suggests that Beowulf may be hinting at the Anglo-Saxon custom of heriot. From '*here-geatu*', war-gear, this payment seems to have been a development of a Germanic custom requiring a king to provide arms to a retainer as a symbol of his military service and noble status. Upon the death of the arms-bearer, these arms would be returned to the lord, along with a payment of gold or silver.[279] Eventually, English law came to require a payment of military equipment to a lord upon the death of any man of thegnly rank or higher.[280] A similar link between lordship and military gifts is also seen at the end of *Beowulf*, when Wiglaf criticises Beowulf's other followers for failing to properly defend their lord with the arms and armour that he had given them.[281] Military equipment, including swords, shields, spears, and helmets, certainly formed something of a 'badge of rank' in Anglo-Saxon society, and it is therefore not surprising that such items played a significant role both in inheritance and in literature such as *Beowulf*.[282] The role of byrnies or mail-shirts, however, is less clear. The five earliest Anglo-Saxon wills to record heriot payments do not mention byrnies, and they are also rare in tenth-century heriot payments. This might be because they were not such significant items as swords, which seem to have had particular importance as symbols of lordship relationships, or it might suggest that they were not a required or expected item until a later period.[283] However, byrnies are also rare in burial evidence, so it is possible that they were especially valuable, or were associated more closely with dynastic inheritance.[284]

---

[278] Linda Tollerton, *Wills and Will-Making in Anglo-Saxon England* (York: York Medieval Press, 2011), pp. 3 and 188-9.
[279] Nicholas Brooks, *Communities and Warfare, 700-1400* (London: Hambledon Press, 2000), p. 139; Tollerton, *Wills and Will-Making in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 190-1
[280] Brooks, *Communities and Warfare*, p. 139.
[281] Brooks, *Communities and Warfare*, p. 158.
[282] Brooks, *Communities and Warfare*, p. 141.
[283] Tollerton, *Wills and Will-Making in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 195.
[284] Brooks, *Communities and Warfare*, p. 153. There is also the problem of limited survival, and the disappearance of English furnished burials after c. 700.

Beowulf's dedication of his mail-shirt to Hygelac carries connotations of dynastic inheritance as well as being a death-gift to his lord; Hygelac is Beowulf's uncle, and the shirt seems to have been the possession of Hrædla (or Hrethel), probably Beowulf's grandfather and Hygelac's father.[285] This exemplifies the importance such 'dynastic treasures' could have as inherited symbols of lineage.[286] Beowulf's is not the only such dynastic gift to have ties to a great figure from the past; the *ætheling* Æthelstan bequeathed to his brother a sword which was said to have belonged to King Offa.[287] In Beowulf's case, the initial bequest of the byrnie may have been an attempt to keep such a treasure in the family despite Hygelac's lack of sons.[288] The link to inheritance is particularly interesting, given the impact that Wayland's actions have on Níðudr's dynasty, particularly in *Vǫlundarkviða*, where Niðhad seems to be left with no sons. A talented smith like Wayland can provide treasures that a royal family will hand down for generations – or, if poorly treated, he can end that same family, denying them the opportunity to pass their ill-gotten treasures to their descendants.

A pattern of inheritance can also be identified in *Waldere* and the Walter story, although it focuses on lordship rather than kinship. The sword Mimung was made by Wayland for his son Widia, who passed it onto his lord Theodoric, who then gave it to Walter. This pattern of transmission may also illustrate the connection between weapons and lordship, and the importance of both lordly generosity and the system of gift-exchange.[289] Skilled smiths occupied a key position in this system, even if they are not always the most visible figures in literature, which tends to focus on kings and warriors, rather than craftsmen. Archaeology helps to illuminate the shadowy figure of the smith, reminding us just how close smiths might have been to the kings who employed them.

---

[285] Brooks, *Communities and Warfare*, p. 152.
[286] Michael D.C. Drout, 'Blood and Deeds: The Inheritance System in *Beowulf*', *Studies in Philology*, 104 (2007), 199-226, p. 210; Cameron, *Sheaths and Scabbards in England*, p. 34.
[287] Tollerton, *Wills and Will-Making in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 195. For more on the refitting and inheritance of swords in Old English literature, see Cameron, *Sheaths and Scabbards*, p. 34.
[288] Drout, 'Blood and Deeds', p. 214.
[289] Leslie Webster, 'Ideal and Reality: Versions of Treasure in the Early Anglo-Saxon World', in *Treasure in the Medieval West*, ed. by Elizabeth M. Tyler (York: York Medieval Press, 2000), pp. 49-60, p. 58; Clark, 'Beowulf's Armour', p. 431. This account of Mimung's ownership contrasts with the events presented in *Þiðreks saga*, where Widia is presumably still in possession of his sword when he rides into the lake and disappears.

The Smith on the Island

In *Vǫlundarkviða*, Wayland is imprisoned on an island near the king's court.[290] It is this island from which he must escape, using his wings to carry him across the surrounding water. In *Þiðreks saga*, his prison is not specified as being on an island, although references to the king's sons being thought lost at the seashore suggest that it is still near the coast.[291] Furthermore, Wayland's association with sea-creatures, particularly in *Þiðreks saga* (as will be discussed in 'Wayland the Outsider') hints that water played a significant role in his story. Hilda Ellis Davidson also identified an island in Denmark that may have been named after Wayland.[292] Whether early medieval smiths were likely to work on islands is unfortunately a difficult question to answer. Whether smiths worked in central places or in liminal locations, however, has been much more widely studied.[293] This question was hinted at in the previous section, considering how smiths were connected to kings. Studying the locations of smithy sites beyond those found at key royal locations such as Yeavering allows us to consider whether smiths really would have worked in marginal, isolated places like Wayland's island.

Unfortunately, the first hurdle in the interpretation of smithy evidence is identifying it at all, as metalworking sites are surprisingly elusive, given the richness of surviving metalwork evidence. The pattern of where metalworking took place, whether central or marginal, is therefore still greatly debated, meaning that it is difficult to assess how marginal smithies – and their smiths – were in

[290] Settr í hólm einn er þa var fyrir lande, er het Sævarstaðr, 'He was placed on an island off the coast there, which was called Seastead'`. *Vǫlundarkviða*, between stanzas 17 and 18.
[291] Nú leiðist öllum at leita þeira lengr, ok þykkir konungi þat líkligast, at þeir munu fara í skóg ok munu dýr grandat þeim hafa eða sjór hafi grandat þeim, ef þeir hafa í fjöru gengit. 'They left off searching any longer, and it seemed most likely to the king that they had gone into the forest and an animal must have injured them, or if they had gone to the shore that the sea had injured them'. *Þiðreks saga*, section 73.
[292] Davidson, *The Sword in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 146.
[293] Birch, 'Living on the Edge'; Andrew J. Welton, 'Encounters with Iron: An Archaeometallurgical Reassessment of Early Anglo-Saxon Spearheads and Knives', *Archaeological Journal*, 173 (2006), 206-44; Wright, 'Tasting Misery Among Snakes'; Christopher Prescott, 'Symbolic Metallurgy: Assessing Early Metallurgic Processes in a Periphery', in *Form, Function and Context: Material Culture Studies in Scandinavian Archaeology*, ed. by Deborah Olausson & Helle Vankilde (Lund: Institute of Archaeology, 2000), pp. 213-26; Hinton, 'Anglo-Saxon Smiths and Myths', pp. 14-15.

early medieval England and Scandinavia. It has frequently been suggested that central places (proto-urban nuclear settlements in prehistoric and early medieval Scandinavia) would be the natural sites for metalworking activity to take place in a Scandinavian context.[294] Such locations would have provided surplus material for the creation of prestige items, and a correlation between craft activity and urbanisation has frequently been noted.[295] Jewellery creation certainly seems to have been closely connected to such central places, and metalwork moulds have most frequently been found in urban, semi-urban, or proto-urban contexts.[296] At Gudme, a migration-period site occupied between 200 and 600 AD, more than 6,000 metal items have been found, and over 20,000 at Uppåkra.[297] Interestingly, despite this wealth, Gudme seems to have been comprised mostly of farmsteads rather than large aristocratic centres, suggesting that such craftwork centres could take multiple forms.[298] The processes behind the production of items at such centres remains frustratingly difficult to identify, however. Did entire crafting processes take place at each site (Gudme has evidence of slag pits), or were raw materials imported and then transformed into finished objects?[299] Wayland might have been unusual as much for his isolation from other metalworkers as for his isolation from society, if all the various stages of metal production usually took place at a single site.[300]

The interest in central places as metalworking centres connects to the concept of 'productive sites', areas of relatively intensive production and trading in what might otherwise be considered rural,

---

[294] Alexandra Pesch and Ruth Blankenfeldt, 'Some Ancient Mysteries on the Subject of Goldsmiths', in *Goldsmith Mysteries,* ed. by Alexandra Pesch and Ruth Blankenfeldt, pp. 11-14, p. 13; Alexandra Pesch, 'The Goldsmith, His Apprentice and the Gods: A Fairy Tale', in Pesch and Blankenfeldt, pp. 37-48, p. 39.
[295] Callmer, 'Wayland: An Essay on Craft Production', p. 337; Søren M. Sindbæk, 'Crafting Networks in Viking Towns', *Medieval and Modern Matters*, 4 (2013), 119-132, p. 119. A number of English examples are discussed in various essays in *Markets in Early Medieval Europe: Trading and 'Productive' Sites, 650-850*, ed. by Tim Pestell and Katharina Ulmschneider (Macclesfield, Cheshire: Windgather Press, 2003), including David Griffiths, 'Markets and "Productive" Sites: A View From Western Britain'', pp. 62-72, Katharina Ulmschneider, 'Markets Around the Solent: Unravelling a "Productive" Site on the Isle of Wight', pp. 73-83, and Newman, 'Exceptional Finds, Exceptional Sites?', pp. 97-109.
[296] Capelle, 'An Insight into the Goldsmith's Workshop', p. 21.
[297] Theron Douglas Price, *Ancient Scandinavia: An Archaeological History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 267 and 271.
[298] Hamerow, *Early Medieval Settlements*, p. 157-60.
[299] Price, *Ancient Scandinavia*, p. 271.
[300] It is possible that this pattern is, at least in part, due to large, concentrated sites being more archaeologically visible.

isolated landscapes.[301] This model allows for more detailed categorisation of site types, acknowledging that metalworking activity could be concentrated not just in early towns, but also at landing or trading places, at specialised production sites, within ordinary towns or villages, and, as has already been discussed, at aristocratic centres of power.[302] Productive sites are a particularly interesting concept in archaeological terms, because they suggest the possibility of seasonal or temporary productive sites, which would have an appearance in the archaeological record very different from sites used permanently over a long period of time. Such temporary sites may have vanished from sight very shortly after use. One example is Helgö in Lake Mälar, where jewellery was perhaps produced on a seasonal basis, and which has been used as an example by which to identify other early Viking-Age open-air workshops.[303] Another example is Bäckby, west of the Mälaren valley, which has also been identified as a temporary workshop, with moulds and crucibles suggesting skilled gold working.[304]

It is therefore unlikely that the majority of smiths in early medieval England and Scandinavia worked in places quite as marginal as Wayland's island. Scandinavian archaeology does, however, reveal a few hints that the marginal, mysterious smith of *The Forge and the Crucible* may have been present in Iron-Age and medieval Scandinavia. High densities of metalwork objects, dating from the Viking Age, have been found at a number of Sami sacrificial sites, and there appears to be a correlation between metalwork deposits and lakeshore sites. This connection has been suggested as echoing the bog deposits from modern-day Denmark and Sweden, where substantial quantities of metalwork items were deposited.[305] While not revealing any information about the status of smiths themselves, this does suggest a possible view of metalwork as somehow connected to transitional, liminal places

[301] Katharina Ulmschneider and Tim Pestell, 'Introduction: Early Medieval Markets and "Productive" Sites', in Markets in *Early Medieval Europe: Trading and 'Productive' Sites, 650-850,* ed. by Tim Pestell and Katharina Ulmschneider (Macclesfield, Cheshire: Windgather Press, 2003), pp. 1-10, p. 1.
[302] Jørgensen, 'Manor and market at Lake Tissø, p. 175.
[303] Capelle, 'An Insight into the Goldsmith's Workshop', p. 20; Lamm, 'Helgö as a Goldsmiths' Workshop'.
[304] Lamm, 'Helgö as a Goldsmiths' Workshop,' p. 144. Surviving droplets of gold within crucibles at Bäckby indicate that goldworking took place on the site.
[305] Julie Lund, 'Living Places or Animated Objects? Sami Sacrificial Places with Metal Objects and Their South Scandinavian Parallels', *Acta Borealia*, 32 (2015), 20-39, pp. 21-25.

in the landscape. Iron slag has been found in cemeteries from southern Finland and central Sweden, perhaps suggesting a connection between metalworking and concepts of death.[306] Iron slag, carbon dated to the Iron Age, has also been found in a number of pits beneath the church at Hurdal, Akershus County, in eastern Norway.[307] Both of these examples have attracted the attention of archaeologists as potential evidence for ritualistic metalworking.

The idea of smiths working in liminal spaces, redolent of ritual practices, was therefore not entirely absent from early medieval north-western Europe. However, it seems that the majority of metalworking activity was entirely functional in nature, and likely to take place in locations which either allowed for numerous metalworkers to gather and work together, or provided opportunities for import and export.[308] Such sites might still have been located at a distance from habitation centres for reasons of safety, although separating out the various elements of metalworking would have reduced safety concerns; gold working, for instance, could take place in a residential area with very little risk. The idea of a smith working on an island, as Wayland does, was probably rare, but the idea of a smith working in a relatively isolated area, a short distance from a royal centre, was probably less unusual. The idea of Wayland working on an island did appear again in French tradition, however, and will be discussed further in 'Wayland the Outsider: Wayland as Outsider in the Other Literary Sources'.

[306] Sheppherd, 'The Ritual Significance of Slag in Finnish Iron Age Burials', *Fennoscandia archaeologica*, 14 (1997), 13-22, p. 13. This might reflect the connection already made between Wayland and death, in discussion of the decision to name an ancient burial mound 'Wayland's Smithy'.
[307] Jostein Bergstøl, 'Iron Technology and Magic in Iron Age Norway', in *Metals and Society: Papers From a Session Held at the European Association of Archaeologists Sixth Annual Meeting in Lisbon 2000*, ed. by Barbara S. Ottaway and Emma C. Wager, BAR International Series 1061 (2002), p. 77-82, p. 77.
[308] Birch, 'Living on the Edge'.

The Smith in the Wilderness

His island smithy, however, is not the only place where Wayland works. In *Vǫlundarkviða*, he begins his smithing when he creates hundreds of rings at his home in a place called *Wolfdale*.[309] There is little provided in the way of description, but the name hints at wilderness, or at least a place outside main centres of habitation. There is also no mention of any other nearby residents when Niðhad's men march on Wolfdale. In *Þiðreks saga*, Wayland learns smithing from dwarfs who live in a mountain, which is almost certain to have been imagined as lying a long way from population centres.[310] Wayland has to travel some distance down the river from the mountain before he comes to King Niðhad's court. Unlike Wayland's island, which keeps him isolated but close to the king, these locations are presented as completely outside patterns of settlement. Wayland is not on the edge of a town, or outside the walls of a palace. However, this Wolfdale also seems to be home to Wayland and his family, while the dwarfs reside in their mountain as well as working there. Whether early medieval smiths lived and worked in such wild, isolated places is difficult to know. Archaeological evidence suggests that smelters at least might work far outside the bounds of settlements, but that most smithing activity was actually likely to take place close to villages and farmsteads. This makes sense, as it would allow for easier access both to raw materials and finished goods. The fire risks of smithing, however, as well as the noise, smells, and general unpleasantness of a forge, might have encouraged medieval people to place heavy metalworking at some distance from areas of everyday use. Wilderness locations also offered closer proximity to the necessary raw materials, especially charcoal.

Such a peripheral pattern can be identified in the village of Vorbasse in Southern Denmark, which was in existence from the first to the eleventh centuries. In all the occupation levels studied,

---

[309] *Þeir kvómo í Úlfdali ok gerðo sér þar hús.* 'They came to Wolfdales and made themselves a house there'. *Vǫlundarkviða,* Prologue; *einn Vǫlundr / sat í Úlfdǫlom*. 'Vǫlundr alone stayed in Wolfdales'. *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 7.

[310] Ingunn Holm, 'A Cultural Landscape Beyond the Infield/Outfield Categories: An Example from Eastern Norway', *Norwegian Archaeological Review*, 35 (2002), 67-80, p. 68.

smelting forges were found outside the fencing, possibly to reduce fire risk, while blacksmithing outbuildings were found in association with high-status longhouses.[311] In general, it appears that the majority of smithing sites (or at least the majority of blacksmithing sites) were located in small communities or on farmsteads. This pattern is especially apparent in Iceland, where the dispersed nature of settlement made a smithy a requirement for any large farmstead, but it seems to have also been present in the rest of Scandinavia.[312] It is possible to trace this link between rural habitation and smithing activity right back to the Iron Age; most surviving forge-stones from this period have been found in centres of habitation.[313] There are examples of Iron Age smithies on farmsteads, as well, such as that at Torstop Vesterby, west of Copenhagen, where evidence of gold and iron working were found, alongside evidence of other crafts, including textile working.[314] A number of case studies from the Migration Period and Viking Period suggest that such a pattern continued into, and indeed throughout, the Middle Ages.[315] A particularly notable example is that of the Migration-period workshop at Skeke, in Uppland, Sweden, which was the first complete excavation and reconstruction of a goldsmith's workshop in Sweden.[316] The hearth found at Skeke was very different to that found at the productive site of Helgö, perhaps suggesting the existence of diverse practices. Skeke was most likely a permanent workshop, and may reflect the technology that was used on such manor sites rather than the methods employed by itinerant smiths. This point is an important one to consider: different types of smith, with different forms of employment (or degrees of freedom) might also have worked in varying ways. It is possible that no single model of forge location existed across early medieval north-western Europe.

---

[311] Price, *Ancient Scandinavia*, p. 264.
[312] Capelle, 'An Insight into the Goldsmith's Workshop', p. 23.
[313] Jørgensen, 'The Social and Material Context of the Iron Age Blacksmith', p. 13.
[314] Morten Axboe, 'Late Roman and Migration Period Sites in Southern Scandinavia with Archaeological Evidence of the Activity of Gold and Silver Smiths', in *Goldsmith Mysteries,* ed. by Alexandra Pesch and Ruth Blankenfeldt, pp. 123-142, p. 132.
[315] Ny Björn Gustafsson, 'In the Wake of the Hoards: Glimpses of Non-Ferrous Metalworking through the Finds of the Gotland Hoard Projects', *Fornvännen*, 108 (2013), 1-11, p. 6.
[316] Eva Hjärthner-Holder, 'The Metal Workshop at Skeke in Uppland, Sweden', in *Goldsmith Mysteries*, ed. by Alexandra Pesch and Ruth Blankenfeldt, pp. 157-68.

Place-names have also been used alongside archaeological evidence to study the position of the smith in both the landscape and the social hierarchy. About twenty Gotland parishes, for example, have place-names of the *Smiss* type, referring to a smith's farm.[317] Stefan Brink has also highlighted the frequency of *Smedby* place names in association with clusters of estate-related place-names. His research suggests that a smithy was a key component of most Viking-Age manors and farms.[318] Smithies may also have been built directly on or alongside farms; it was undoubtedly possible for farmers to effectively carry out basic smithing tasks alongside other agricultural duties. This appears to have been the case at least in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Scandinavia, when documentary evidence is more plentiful.[319] Later examples do not, of course, prove the existence of an older practice, but they do suggest that smithing could be balanced with other activities.

While early medieval England offers more in the way of documentary evidence than contemporary Scandinavia, archaeological evidence of metalworking is so sparse as to make interpretation difficult. Anglo-Saxon settlement is notoriously difficult to locate in the landscape, and metalworking activity is no exception.[320] Evidence for the earlier period, when the Wayland story seems to have been already well-known in England, is scarce. This may perhaps be a result of excavation patterns rather than a genuine lack of evidence, but it is particularly notable in the drop in ironworking evidence compared to the Roman period.[321] This scarcity of evidence makes it difficult to assess whether early Anglo-Saxon smiths occupied the marginal position that Eliade's theories would suggest.

[317] Gustafsson, 'In the Wake of the Hoards', p. 6.
[318] Stefan Brink, 'Naming the Land', in *The Viking World*, ed. by Stefan Brink and Neil Price (Routledge, Oxford and New York, 2008) pp. 57-66.
[319] Callmer, 'Wayland: An Essay on Craft Production', p. 339.
[320] John Blair, 'Exploring Anglo-Saxon Settlement: In Search of the Origins of the English Village', *Current Archaeology*, 291 (2014), 12-21; Birch, 'Living on the Edge', p. 5; Wright, 'Tasting Misery Among Snakes', p. 228.
[321] Helena Hamerow, *Rural Settlements and Society in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 2; Birch, 'Living on the Edge', p. 5; Wall, 'Middle Saxon Iron Smelting', p. 89.

One connection that can be developed is the link between metalworking activity and woodland environments.[322] This suggests a relationship between at least iron smelting and places outside the settlement, whether for the practical reason of easily accessible wood supplies, or for the type of ritual reasons suggested by Eliade. It is important to remember, however, that Anglo-Saxon woods were not the wildernesses we might imagine; they were important resources, used by local communities for firewood, hunting, gathering honey, and more.[323] This does not mean that a link between smithing and rural locations should be entirely discounted. The smelting forge at Ramsbury was dug into a natural hillside terrace, in what appears to have been an environment with little other human intervention.[324] While other Anglo-Saxon smelting sites often lack any evidence of permanent structures, with post-holes more likely to indicate windbreaks than complete buildings, Ramsbury appears to have been the location of a rather more substantial construction.[325] Deposits of animal bones suggest that this building may have been inhabited by workers at the site, offering the possibility of metalworkers not just working but also living in such isolated places. A number of smelting sites also show continuity throughout the Anglo-Saxon period, suggesting that, in some places at least, the association of smelting with rural areas continued.[326] Some of these smelting sites also contain potential evidence of smithing activity, such as the presence of anvils or possible smithing forges.[327] It therefore seems likely that at least some smiths carried out work in what might be viewed as geographically marginal areas. One key example, identified by Duncan Wright, is the presence of metalworking on Glastonbury Tor, dating from the sixth century; the isolated and inhospitable nature of the site makes it likely that there was some ceremonial or ritual reason to choose it as a metalworking location.[328] The archaeological evidence of smithing and smelting can

[322] Wall, 'Middle Saxon Iron Smelting', p. 97; Welton, 'Encounters with Iron', p. 229; Birch, 'Living on the Edge', p. 18.
[323] Hooke, 'The Woodland Landscape of Early Medieval England'.
[324] Haslam, Biek, and Tylecote, 'A Middle Saxon Iron Smelting Site'.
[325] Bonehills farm offers a contrast: Wall, 'Middle Saxon Iron Smelting'.
[326] The Bonehills Farm site is an example of this. See Wall, 'Middle Saxon Iron Smelting'.
[327] Haslam, Biek, and Tylecote, 'A Middle Saxon Iron Smelting Site', pp. 6 and 7.
[328] Wright, 'Crafters of Kingship', p. 279.

often be hard to distinguish, so it is possible that even more smelting sites than currently realised were also smithing sites.[329]

This does not, however, mean that all smiths worked in isolated, rural areas, away from centres of population. As already discussed, Scandinavian evidence suggests that smithing was often associated with farmsteads, and was a relatively common part of rural life. While evidence for this is not yet quite so clear-cut in early medieval England, there are some examples of possible smithing activity in areas of rural habitation. Some of these have previously been assumed to show Scandinavian occupation, but they may also reflect native tradition which developed in parallel with Scandinavian traditions, rather than being imported.[330] A key example is Simy Folds in Upper Teesdale, County Durham, where evidence for iron smelting and smithing was found within a group of buildings and yards. The metalwork activity on the site was in fact so intensive as to be considered semi-industrial, although domestic tasks were also carried out on the site. Such intensive levels of smithing activity have increasingly been recognised in urban Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Scandinavian sites; Simy Folds suggest that similar developments could also be found in rural areas.[331] There is therefore evidence for both marginal smith figures and for smithing as an everyday activity, embedded within the community. As in Scandinavia, a number of English place-names suggest the presence of smiths in manor and homestead settlements.[332]

For the late Anglo-Saxon period, there is more evidence of where metalworking took place. A number of urban smithies have been identified, and they appear to have been the predominant locations for late Anglo-Saxon metalworking.[333] One example is the York Minster site, where, by the tenth century, an area of smithing activity was present within the town.[334] An urban focus makes

[329] Coggins, Fairless, and Batey, 'Simy Folds', p. 19.
[330] Coggins, Fairless, and Batey, 'Simy Folds', p. 25.
[331] Coggins, Fairless, and Batey, 'Simy Folds', p. 20.
[332] Pollington, *Wayland's Work*, p. 130; Hinton, 'Anglo-Saxon Smiths and Myths', p. 9.
[333] Coatsworth and Pinder, *The Art of the Anglo-Saxon Goldsmith*, p. 22; Wall, 'Middle Saxon Iron Smelting', p. 98.
[334] Hinton*, A Smith in Lindsey,* p. 134.

sense; towns had become the centre of royal and aristocratic power, they were trading hubs (for both raw materials and finished products) and urban smiths no doubt had a better chance of making a living from everyday metalworking tasks. A similar urban concentration can be found for many crafts during the Middle Ages. Moneyers, at least some of whom were also goldsmiths, were closely associated with towns from the eighth century onwards, particularly coastal emporia.[335] These urban areas mirror the central places and productive sites found in the Scandinavian archaeological record, while the shift towards towns parallels the Scandinavian development of urban craft quarters. Not all later Anglo-Saxon smithies were urban, however; rural smithies have been excavated at Wharram Percy and Gauber, North Yorkshire, although such locations seem to have been outnumbered by urban sites.[336] This seems reasonable; while the majority of metalwork produced for sale would be best produced in areas with excellent transport and trade networks, it would make sense for farms to produce and repair their own metal items. In areas which lacked towns or emporia, such farm smelting and forging sites might also have filled the needs of the local population.

It is therefore not clear that Eliade's theory of an isolated, marginalised smith can be applied to Anglo-Saxon England at all. Certainly, by the late Anglo-Saxon period, smiths worked primarily in urban or semi-urban contexts and were an integral part of most communities. Evidence for earlier periods remains hazy, but suggests that at least some smiths were based at the heart of royal estates, small communities, and rural farmsteads, even if other smiths worked in isolated areas. Possibly, the dispersed nature of early Anglo-Saxon settlement meant that smithing activity was carried out on a small scale when necessary, leaving very little archaeological record.[337] The general model appears to have been that of rural smelting, close to the necessary raw materials, with finished iron then transported to other sites for working.[338] However, it is not clear whether this

[335] Rory Naismith, *Money and Power in Anglo-Saxon England: The Southern English Kingdoms 757 - 865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 129.
[336] Birch, 'Living on the Edge', p. 8.
[337] Birch, 'Living on the Edge', p. 8.
[338] Wall, 'Middle Saxon Iron Smelting', p. 98.

model was applicable to all areas of the country; alternative systems may have been in place for urban centres and royal estates, for example. Thomas Birch has suggested adopting Scandinavian terms for such a model, referring to the *innmark* (the area of occupation, whatever its nature) and the *utmark* (the periphery).[339] In this model, Eliade's ideas of the smith as a transformational, marginal figure, placed outside the usual bounds of society, can still be applied to the activity of smelting. Even sites like Yeavering and Lake Tissø, where the smithy was only a short distance from the hall, still observe the distinction of *innmark* and *utmark*, albeit on a small scale.

Smelting therefore was associated with areas beyond the boundaries of settlement, both for practical reasons such as fire risk, and for perceived reasons attached to transformation and social construction of identity.[340] The use of bog iron, thought to have been common in the Anglo-Saxon period, also suggests associations between ironworking and wild, marginal places.[341] The archaeological evidence suggests that smiths were not geographically marginal, but that does not necessarily remove all possibility of associations with ritual metalworking or social marginality. Work like Wayland's production of gold rings could easily have been carried out safely in the centre of a settlement, but he chooses to work alone, perhaps for ritual reasons. In contrast, his swordsmithing in *Þiðreks saga* seems to take place close to the king's court – close enough that he must hide the evidence of his trickery, in case someone visits unexpectedly – until after his dispute with the king. His isolation in *Þiðreks saga*, therefore, seems very much to be a case of punishment rather than a desire to keep smiths separate from the rest of the population. The importance of the mountain location for the dwarfs, as an indicator of their otherness, and as a symbol of Wayland's transition from a boy to a man, will be discussed in 'Wayland the Outsider'.[342]

[339] Birch, 'Living on the Edge', p. 9.
[340] Price, *Ancient Scandinavia*, p. 264; Birch, 'Living on the Edge, p. 14.
[341] Davidson, *The Sword in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 17.
[342] See 'Wayland the Outsider: Giants, Valkyries, and Dwarfs'.

The Smith as Symbol

Wayland's smithy and the objects he produces are not the only important aspect of his presentation as a smith in the surviving sources. His tools are also important; they do not receive a great deal of description in the written sources but, as already mentioned, they appear on all three of the artistic sources. It is interesting that the artists who created these three images chose to identify Wayland through a variety of motifs, including wings and headless bodies, but it is the metalworking tools which appear on all three images. Clearly, these tools were important symbols of Wayland's identity as a craftsman. Their use specifically as motifs, rather than items in Wayland's hands, emphasises their symbolic role; even when Wayland is not depicted as actively using a tool, they are representative of his identity.[343]

This symbolic importance of tools is even more interesting in light of the prevalence of tools in Iron Age and medieval graves across north-western Europe. While the precise reason that they were chosen as grave-goods is unclear, they were clearly items which signified something important about the deceased, whether their profession, as in the case of the Tattershall Thorpe smith's grave, or some other element of their identity. The Wayland material suggests that images of tools could fulfil a similar role to the actual artefacts left in early medieval graves. Burial evidence has proven to be particularly valuable in Scandinavian archaeology, not just for the study of metal objects, but for the study of metalworking itself. This is due to the frequent appearance of blacksmiths' tools in Scandinavian graves.[344] The presence of these tools offers an insight into metalworking processes and techniques, as well as the social position of the blacksmith. For example, such items are often found alongside high-status objects, implying that blacksmiths often enjoyed a high social status. The frequent occurrence of foreign objects in so-called smith graves also suggests a high social status, or

[343] As previously mentioned, it is possible that other sources were intended to depict Wayland, but the lack of tools or other crafting motifs makes it more difficult for modern viewers to identify.

[344] A notable example is the Byggland grave, first excavated in 1944. Although interpretations have changed over time, it is still largely accepted as a blacksmith's grave, alongside a number of later burials placed in the same barrow. See Frans-Arne Stylegar, 'Byggland i Morgedal - smedgrav, eller?', *Fornvännen*, 109 (2014) 90-100.

possibly a high level of mobility among blacksmiths.[345] On the other hand, a number of these graves are placed on the edge of, or outside, cemeteries, supporting the idea of the smith as a figure somewhat outside the community.[346]

There are, however, a number of problems inherent in the use of 'blacksmith graves' as evidence. Firstly, the lack of change in blacksmithing tools over the centuries means that the dating of such tools can be very difficult without appropriate contextual material, which is not always present in a mortuary context.[347] Graves with only tools are therefore difficult to date, while tools present in graves may have been used by the deceased or inherited from much earlier generations. It is also possible that many items interpreted as tools for metalworking were in fact intended for use on wood or bone, as the appearance of these items can be very similar, or even identical.[348] Furthermore, there is the substantial problem that similar 'smiths' tools' are also found in female and child or infant burials; while women may have been early medieval smiths, such a thing was almost certainly rare, and the presence of smiths' tools in children's graves is even more suggestive that these items were not individual possessions.[349] Were they symbolic items rather than the tools used by a smith on a daily basis? How many of these so-called smith's graves might not contain a smith at all? It is entirely possible that such graves should be viewed as elite burials rather than indicating the presence of craftsmen.[350] With between 10-20% of Northern Norwegian Iron Age graves containing blacksmith's tools, there is the possibility that these tools were relevant to a far

[345] Jørgensen, 'The Social and Material Context of the Iron Age Blacksmith', p. 14, p. 2; Jezek, 'The Disappearance of European Smiths' Burials', p. 121. One example of a high-status 'smith's grave', found at Jæren in the county of Rogaland, Norway, is described in Siv Kristoffersen, 'Brooches, Bracteates and a Goldsmith's Grave', in Pesch and Blankenfeldt, pp. 169-76.
[346] Jezek, 'The Disappearance of European Smiths' Burials', p. 121.
[347] Jørgensen, 'The Iron Age Blacksmith', p. 102; Jørgensen, 'The Social and Material Context of the Iron Age Blacksmith', p. 17. One exception is the Byggland grave, mentioned above, where the presence of a number of graves, with varying grave goods, allowed for the construction of a more detailed stratigraphy than is often possible. Stylegar, 'Byggland i Morgedal', p. 100.
[348] Jørgensen, 'The Social and Material Context of the Iron Age Blacksmith', p. 17.
[349] Jezek, 'The Disappearance of European Smiths' Burials', p. 122; Capelle, 'An Insight into the Goldsmith's Workshop', p. 22.
[350] Jezek, 'The Disappearance of European Smiths' Burials', p. 122.

broader group of people than might have used them in metalworking activities.[351] It is also worth remembering that such tools were important and perhaps even valuable; many actual, everyday blacksmiths' tools may have been inherited by an apprentice or son rather than being buried alongside a deceased smith.

This idea of smiths' tools as social symbols rather than merely functional items has a great deal of relevance to their use on Wayland images. Here, they are identifying him not only as a smith but as the central figure of a particular story, through the way the tools are associated with other, surrounding motifs. Metalworking tools, wings, and a headless body combine to present a clear picture of Wayland's story. The tools found in graves might similarly have interacted with other goods to present a fuller picture of the grave's occupant, whether or not such items indicated a professional smith. This idea is possibly reflected in *Þiðreks saga*, where Widia's coat of arms is a hammer and anvil, even though he refuses to take on his father's profession, and instead becomes one of Thiðrek's knights.[352] For Widia, the tools of a smith clearly continue to identify him, even though he is not himself a smith, and seems to be disdainful of his father's work. The hammer and anvil showed his parentage and the source of his father's fame, just as tools placed in a grave may have indicated family connections or social status more than individual occupations.

The lack of tools in the written sources, as opposed to the artistic sources, might also illustrate the different concerns and interests of the people who produced these sources. Those who produced and read or heard the literary sources were most likely not craftsmen themselves, and might have had minimal interest in crafting tools and processes. The artistic sources, however, were created by carvers of stone and bone, who would no doubt have been familiar with tools like those used by Wayland. If they lived or worked in a craft quarter or productive site, as discussed above, then they might also have been familiar with the working processes of various kinds of metalworkers.

---

[351] Jørgensen, 'The Social and Material Context of the Iron Age Blacksmith', p. 14.

[352] Þetta merki er svart ok af hvítum steini hamarr ok töng ok steði. 'The standard was black and had hammer and tongs and an anvil painted on it in white.' *Þiðreks saga*, section 330.

Moreover, Wayland worked at least in bone as well as metal, and his activities in *Þiðreks saga* involve several types of material. The Franks Casket in particular is self-consciously interested in craft, with its 'whale's bone' riddle commenting on its own material nature as a crafted object.[353] The depiction of Wayland as a craftsman in action, surrounded by the tools of his trade, shows how important his craft was to his perceived identity, at least in the eyes of the fellow craftspeople who made this casket.

Changing Stories: Wayland the Moneyer and Wayland the Farrier

The details of Wayland's metalworking therefore suggest that it is not quite appropriate to equate him with the blacksmiths who smelted iron in the woods of early medieval England, or the goldsmiths who worked in the small rural farms of Iron Age Denmark. He was surely closer to the supremely talented goldsmiths of Sutton Hoo - about whom next to nothing is known beyond the wonderful objects which survive as testament to their skill. Without the memory of his metalworking abilities, would the story of Wayland similarly have faded into oblivion? It does seem that his metalworking skills were a key defining feature of his identity in the minds of medieval audiences. But this does not mean that he was seen only as a metalworker; many early medieval metalworkers were also farmers, warriors, landowners, or experts in other crafts as well, and Wayland may have been no exception.[354] If anything, his identity was even more complex and multi-faceted than those of the real-life smiths who appear fleetingly in documentary sources.

If it is not the focus of the story, then why does Wayland need to be a smith at all - and why is this a facet of his identity that clung to his story and his name for centuries? In *Þiðreks saga*, he crafts all kinds of different items, yet in the French sources and it the post-medieval world, he was

[353] The Franks Casket is also an item which contained metalworking elements - at the least a hinge, and perhaps other decorative details in metal and precious stones. Klein, 'The Non-Coherence of the Franks Casket', p. 20.
[354] Haaland, 'Technology, Transformation, and Symbolism', p. 14; Gustafsson, 'In the Wake of the Hoards', p. 6; Callmer, 'Wayland', p. 339; Price, *Ancient Scandinavia*, p. 267.

remembered almost solely for his metalwork creations, whether arms and armour, or the shoeing of horses. Why was he not remembered as a bone-worker, who turned the skeletons of the king's sons into the finest combs and decorative caskets ever seen? It is possible that Eliade's theories hold some weight here - that smiths were viewed as somehow different, as somehow more deserving of a place in legend, alongside great kings and heroes. Other craftspeople were ordinary; metalworkers were extraordinary. It is also possible, though, that Wayland's identity as a smith was important precisely because smiths were both deeply ordinary and fascinatingly exotic. Almost everyone in early medieval Europe would surely have known a smith of some sort - they were necessary for the fixing of ploughs, the shoeing of horses, and dozens of other mundane tasks required in an agricultural society. At the same time, the noise and fire risk of metalworking, particularly smelting, meant that much of the work went on outside the community, away from sight.[355] It might have been easy to gradually ascribe mysterious properties to the activities of these otherwise ordinary people, even if they were never quite ostracised or rejected. Then there were the finest pieces of metalwork - pattern-welded swords and gold belt-buckles - which often travelled considerable distances, highly valued as part of long-distance networks of trade and gift-giving.[356] Such high-quality items, rare and valuable, and originating in distant places, might have been seen as exotic and almost magical by the local people in their final destinations, potentially hundreds of miles from production sites.

This dual nature of the profession of the smith offers powerful storytelling possibilities, perhaps broader than those provided by other occupations, which were either more mundane or considerably rarer. A smith is easy to remember: everyone would have known one and quite possibly had a personal relationship with one. At the same time, however, it is likely that few people knew what actually happened in a smith's forge, and so there was space for mystery and even magic

[355] Pollington, *Wayland's Work*, p. 134; Price, *Ancient Scandinavia*, p. 264. See William Wall, 'Middle Saxon Iron Smelting near Bonehills Farm, Wittering, Cambridgeshire', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 17 (20110), 87-100, p. 98 for evidence regarding Anglo-Saxon smelting in urban contexts.
[356] Pollington, *Wayland's Work,* p. 55; Hedeager, 'Scandinavia Before the Viking Age', p. 15.

in popular imaginations of smiths. It cannot be coincidence that one of the most widespread European folktales is that of the smith and the Devil.[357] Like this widespread, ancient story, the tale of Wayland mingles mystery and the mundane through its choice of a smith as the central character. Perhaps, like Eliade argues, this is because the smiths have the power to transform and mutate metals - and, through association, the power to transform other humans. Or perhaps it is because, in early medieval north-western Europe, smiths were both at the heart of the community and lingering on its fringes, the perfect tools for offering commentary on what these communities chose to include and exclude. In other words, the figure of the smith was perfectly positioned as a focus for examining the cultural values and priorities of early medieval Europe.

As a smith, Wayland's identity was particularly easy to translate across centuries and countries. As definitions of the archetypal smith changed, so did the figure of Wayland. In the earliest sources, he is the smith of peerless weapons and gold drinking cups – the items which were vital for the 'heroic' culture presented in literary texts.[358] In the items created by fellow craftsmen, he is a working smith, defined by his tools and his anvil. By the seventeenth century in England, however, as a very different culture saw a smith as a village blacksmith rather than the craftsman to kings, Wayland had become a secretive farrier, shoeing horses away from human view.[359] Along the way, his legend no doubt underwent many other changes. The Wayland solidus, although it cannot be proven to refer to *the* Wayland, suggests that it could be an acceptable name for a moneyer, already reflecting a very different idea about what constituted an archetypal smith in people's imagination, and perhaps showing how such ideas were affected by early urbanization.[360]

---

[357] Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible*, p. 29.
[358] Reichl, 'Heroic Epic Poetry in the Middle Ages', p. 57; Hines, '*Beowulf* and Archaeology: Revisited'; Timothy Reuter, '"You Can't Take It With You": Testaments, Hoards and Movable Wealth in Europe, 600-1100,' in *Treasure in the Medieval West*, ed. by Elizabeth M. Tyler (York: York Medieval Press, 2000), pp. 11-24, p. 13; Clark 'Beowulf's Armour', p. 409; Brooks, *Communities and Warfare*, p. 143.
[359] Depping, *Wayland the Smith*, p. xxxv.
[360] Pollington, *Wayland's Work*, p. 126.

Studying Wayland as a smith therefore shows not just how medieval audiences thought about Wayland, but how medieval audiences thought about smiths. The many versions and details of his story offer a more subtle view of smiths than the frequently-asked question of whether they were socially marginal. Wayland's story shows us how people's ideas of smiths could fluctuate and adapt, and how the figure of the smith could incorporate a wide range of roles and relationships. Wayland is both the king's prized smith and his greatest enemy, both a prince and too lowly to marry a princess, both a peerless goldsmith and a shoer of horses. Even in single texts, he works with gold, bone, and swords, spanning a wider range of crafts than was probably usual, given the very different skills and materials required. The constant defining of Wayland as a smith seems intended not to mark him out as identical to any smith known to medieval audiences, but as *the* smith, an archetypal figure both familiar and alien, a blank space to explore other interests and values. The familiarity of the smith's role made him knowable and understandable, but at the same time hinted at secrets and mysteries. His work for kings and princes allowed him to straddle social boundaries, providing the perfect tool for examining such boundaries, while the association of smiths with strange places and spaces outside everyday society allowed the figure of Wayland to skirt social norms and push the limits of acceptable behaviour.

Chapter 2: Wayland the Murderer

Unlike the many references to 'Wayland the Smith', there are no known medieval sources which refer to 'Wayland the Murderer', and few modern scholars have used the term.[361] Nevertheless, the killings which Wayland commits make up a significant part of his story, and seem to have played a major role in how he was understood by medieval audiences. The murder of the two princes is referred to in a number of sources, both Scandinavian and English, as well as appearing in artistic representations, suggesting that it was a widely known part of the Wayland story across multiple traditions. Indeed, it could be argued that Wayland's revenge, including the murders, *is* his story. Without the tale of his imprisonment and subsequent revenge, it is possible that Wayland's reputation as a smith, and the fame of his name, would have died out much sooner. This is demonstrated in the French material, where even Wayland's reputation as a great smith was not enough to sustain the use of his name into the later Middle Ages, and it gradually disappeared from epic poetry. Without the full context of Wayland's life and experiences - without the story attached to his identity - the knowledge of his great metalworking achievements alone was not enough to preserve his name as an important narrative element. Accordingly, the murder of the princes has attracted a reasonable amount of scholarly interest, although not as much as the idea of Wayland as a 'sacred smith', and a variety of interpretations. Richard Bailey identified the killing as one of the three key motifs present on the Ardre Stone, these three being the headless sons, the fleeing winged Wayland, and the raped daughter.[362] It has been associated with other, similar, events in early medieval literature and historical writing, including Guthrun's revenge, the story of Alboin,

[361] A particularly notable example is James Paz, who discusses the unlikeable and unpleasant aspects of Wayland's character and story. Paz, '*Beowulf* as Wayland's Work', pp. 84–85.
[362] Bailey, *Viking Age Sculpture in Northern England*, p. 106.

Cunimund and Rosamond as told by Paul the Deacon, and the murder of Attila's sons as it appears in a number of texts.[363]

The story of the murder is this: Wayland, angry at the way he has been treated by Niðhad, lures the king's two young sons into his smithy. There, he kills them, beheads them, and transforms their bodies (specifically their bones) into a variety of wondrous objects. The versions told in *Þiðreks saga* and *Vǫlundarkviða* largely agree with each other, while reference is made to the murder in *Deor*, and headless bodies appear on the Franks Casket and the Ardre Stone. It seems that the tale of how Wayland murdered the two princes was reasonably cohesive across a range of traditions. However, attitudes to this act did not necessarily remain the same, and the context of Wayland's revenge subtly shifts between versions.

What is not clear is whether medieval Scandinavian and English audiences would have viewed Wayland's actions as a justifiable but tragic revenge killing, as a brutal and unjustified killing, or as something in between. The descriptions of how he treats the boys' bodies are detailed and gruesome, but also demonstrate his almost superhuman metalworking skills. Wayland is an ambiguous figure throughout his story, but the murder episode demonstrates this even more strongly than any other part of his tale. How would it have been received by medieval audiences? This chapter will examine the presentation of the murder in the various Wayland sources, highlight some key themes, and then look at how contemporary legal texts judged similar crimes. Finally, the question of morality will be considered, in making a judgement about whether Wayland's actions would have been viewed as moral.

When discussing morality, there is of course one important question which must be answered: what is morality? It is a concept which is both straightforward and complex; it is so entrenched in

[363] For a discussion of the parallels with Guthrun's revenge, see *Medieval Folklore: An Encyclopedia of Myths, Legends, Tales, Beliefs and Customs*, ed. by Carl Lindahl, John McNamara and John Lindow (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 2000). For the Paul the Deacon story, see Pollington, Kerr and Hammond, *Wayland's Work*, p. 125. The parallels with the deaths of Attila's sons later in the Codex Regius is discussed in Gunnell, 'Eddic Poetry', p. 85, and it is also worth remembering that Attila's sons are killed by Widia, Wayland's son, later in *Þiðreks saga*.

everyday life as to be unnoticeable, but it can also have subtly different interpretations depending on context. The discussion in this chapter will draw on the definition of morality established by Didier Fassin and Monica Heintz in two key texts studying the anthropology of morality. Both these texts establish morality as a culturally-bound understanding of right and wrong as experienced on an everyday and even instinctive basis.[364] They therefore distinguish it from ethics, which by their definition is concerned rather with the philosophy of morality.[365] It is important to note that what is 'moral' in any given society can often not be justified by common sense; it is entirely culturally based. Morality combines norms, values, and emotions into gradations of right and wrong that govern social actions.[366]

The second question is how morality can be studied, particularly in the context of a society which is no longer available for observation. It can be assumed that all human actions are based on moral assumptions to a certain degree, although identifying the moral concept behind a specific behavior can be difficult.[367] Literature and law texts come closest to providing us with information on what was accepted or rejected in early medieval north-western European societies, allowing us to draw conclusions as to the moral understandings behind the behaviour presented in such texts. This is why legal texts will be used as a tool for examining Wayland's actions from a different angle to the non-judgemental storytelling of the narrative sources. Historical anthropology is a complex and much-debated discipline; anthropology depends on first-person experiences and careful questioning of members of a given society, both of which are clearly impossible in a historical context.[368] Despite the prominence of violence in literary and documentary sources from the Middle Ages, there is a

---

[364] Didier Fassin, 'Introduction: Toward a Critical Moral Anthropology,' in *A Companion to Moral Anthropology*, ed. by Didier Fassin (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 1-18, p. 5.; Monica Heintz, 'Introduction: Why There Should Be an Anthropology of Moralities', in *The Anthropology of Moralities*, ed. by Monica Heintz (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), pp.1-19, p. 3.
[365] Fassin, 'Introduction', p.6.; Heintz, 'Introduction', p.4.
[366] Fassin, 'Introduction', p.4.
[367] Fassin, 'Introduction', p.5.
[368] Nedkvitne, 'Beyond Historical Anthropology; Baker, *Honour, Exchange and Violence in Beowulf*, p. 54; Richard Fletcher, *Bloodfeud: Murder and Revenge in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 8.

lack of explicit commentary on how medieval audiences thought about violence, in contrast to anthropological studies of living societies. Clear conclusions are therefore difficult, but the richness of the Wayland material provides an excellent opportunity to examine this issue from multiple angles through the use of Wayland as a focal point across multiple contexts.

Studies of violence in the early Middle Ages have often considered the role of Christianity, and debated whether a religious change led to a societal change in the acceptability of violence. Christianity, even in this early period, was ostensibly a religion of peace, but legal and documentary evidence suggests that the arrival of Christianity did not have any immediate effect on levels of violence, and that the influence may in fact have been the other way around: that the violent societies of northern and western Europe made Christianity more violent.[369] While almost all of the surviving Wayland material dates very firmly from the Christian period, the Ardre Stone shows that, at least in Scandinavia, Wayland's stories were definitely told before the Christianization of the region, and so it is relevant to consider whether Christian and non-Christian audiences might have viewed his violent actions through different lenses.[370] The legal texts which will be considered in the most depth all date from Christian periods, and presumably reflect contemporary Christian views (at least in theory; the caveats of using such legal evidence will be discussed below). It can therefore be assumed that the discussion of how Christianity influenced attitudes to Wayland's story is largely irrelevant, and will be considered only briefly. This is not to say that Christianity did not influence storytelling and artistic choices in early medieval Europe, only that this influence is difficult to detect in the specific case of Wayland. For the most part, Wayland's story is one told by Christian people in a Christian context, and almost all the evidence which might tell us how people would have viewed his actions is from a similarly Christian background. This is in contrast to the multiple descriptions of

[369] Guy Halsall, *Warfare & Society in the Barbarian West, 450-900* (Oxford: Taylor and Francis, 2003), p. 4; James C. Russel, *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity: A Sociohistorical Approach to Religious Transformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 40; Dorothy Whitelock, *The Audience of Beowulf* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951, repr. 1967), p. 13; Fletcher, *Bloodfeud*, p. 119.
[370] See Introduction to Sources for more detail of the dating of the Ardre Stone.

Wayland as 'pagan', based on the fact that his story pre-dated widespread conversion to Christianity.[371] At least in part, this is based on assumptions that *Vǫlundarkviða* was pagan in origin.[372] Whether Wayland's story took a different form before the influence of Christianity is a question that cannot be answered. It certainly predated the arrival of Christianity in at least Scandinavia, but the Ardre Stone does not provide enough detail to tell us how, and even if, the story changed.

Once again, Wayland's identity as a murderer does not stand alone; it is inextricable from the other facets of his identity. The links between his crimes of murder and rape are immediately clear, but other connections are just as strong. Eliade's discussions of metalworkers once again have a role to play, as Eliade argued that smiths have often been seen as intrinsically violent, or at best ambiguous, as they create both agricultural, life-giving tools and weapons of war.[373] The possible connections between Wayland's role as a metalworker and the violence of his revenge will be discussed, while the relationship between smiths and kings is also relevant to Wayland's murder of the two princes.[374] In Wayland's own justification of his crimes, he mentions both the king's injustices and his crippling, meaning that the element of Wayland's disability is also relevant.[375] Finally, the ways in which Wayland is presented as an outsider or 'other' also have a bearing on how his violence should be understood, and this will be discussed in the context of a literary trope known as 'the Dark Figure'.

---

[371] Paz, '*Beowulf* as Wayland's Work', p. 87; Kopár, *Gods and Settlers*, p. 3; Lang, 'Sigurd and Weland in Pre-Conquest Carving', p. 90.

[372] Richard North, *Pagan Words and Christian Meanings* (Amsterdam 1991), p. 11; Ármann Jakobsson, 'The Extreme Emotional Life of Volundr the Elf', *Scandinavian Studies*, 78 (2006), 227–54, p. 227; John Lindow, 'Mythology and Mythography', in *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature: A Critical Guide*, ed. by Carol J. Clover and John Lindow (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), pp. 21-67, p. 31. For example, 'Weland has sinister associations for a Christian audience. Weland implies the sinister turbulence of a pagan and chaotic world', Clark, 'Beowulf's Armour', p. 420.

[373] Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible*, pp. 26 and 29.

[374] Connections between early medieval smiths and kings were discussed in more detail in 'Wayland the Smith: The Smith and the King'. James Paz discusses kings and smiths in relation to Beowulf, in '*Beowulf* as Wayland's Work', while Duncan Wright considers the archaeological evidence for the relationship between early medieval smiths and kings in 'Crafters of Kingship'.

[375] *Þiðreks saga*, section 78.

Murder in *Vǫlundarkviða*

In *Vǫlundarkviða*, Wayland's killing of the two princes comes a little over halfway through the narrative, marking the switch from his previous passive behaviour to active revenge.[376] His potentially violent nature is hinted at earlier in the text, however, in two different ways. The first of these is his skill as a hunter; when he is captured and bound by Niðhad's men, who creep up on him in secret, he is asleep on the skin of a bear he has killed himself.[377] The choice of a bear hints at Norse stories of berserkers, who were notoriously violent and unpredictable, while his decision to sleep on the skin suggests associations with shamanic spirit journeys. Both of these possible aspects of Wayland's character will be discussed in more detail in 'Wayland the Outsider'. The sheer physical strength to kill a bear, however - not to mention the cunning, experience, and courage - hints at what Wayland is capable of. He is never, in any of the surviving sources, described as a warrior, but his strength is clearly displayed through this inclusion of a single detail in *Vǫlundarkviða*. The second point when Wayland's capacity for violence is indicated comes shortly after his capture by Niðhad's men. The queen notes that 'His teeth are tempted when the sword is in his sight', and suggests that he should be crippled so that he cannot seize back his stolen possessions or take revenge on the king for the theft.[378] Her suggestion is followed, and Wayland has the sinews in the backs of his knees cut before his imprisonment on an island. The fact that the queen, who is described as *kunnig* (wise, cunning) recognises Wayland's potential to take a violent revenge suggests that she already sees him as something more dangerous than a mere blacksmith.[379] The reference specifically to his teeth once

[376] This change in the story perhaps reflects its disjointed nature, with the two sections possibly originating in different traditions. The issue of Wayland's passivity will be discussed further in the next chapter.
[377] Gekk brúnni bero / [biart] hold steikia… Sat á berfialli… Sat hann svá lengi / at hann sofnaði. 'Went to roast [bright] flesh from the brown she-bear… Sat on the bear-skin… He sat so long that he fell asleep.' *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanzas 10, 11, and 12.
[378] Tenn hánom teygiaz / er hánom er tét sverð… Ámon ero augo / ormi þeim enom frána. / Sniðið ér hann / sina magni. 'His teeth are tempted when the sword is displayed in his sight… His eyes remind one of the glittering serpent. Cut from him the strength of his sinews.' *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 17.
[379] The word *kunnig* is used in stanzas 16, 30, and 35.

again suggests a wild, untamed violence; he is perhaps not unlike the bear he has killed. Niðhad's men have already crept in and bound him in his sleep, but even with the ties that keep him trapped, his captors are still afraid of him.

The upcoming murder is hinted at when the boys first come to visit Wayland and peer into the chest of golden objects. The phrase 'open lay evil' is both foreboding and, potentially, critical of Wayland's actions.[380] The words used to describe the boys constantly reinforce their youth, perhaps indicating their vulnerability, or adding a further criticism of Wayland's actions, given that the killing of children does not seem to have been an acceptable revenge action anywhere in medieval Europe.[381] The murder itself is clearly planned out by Wayland in advance: he tells the boys to go home and come back alone the next day, and it is then that he kills them. The actual murder is not described in detail, with no more information than that Wayland kills the boys while they are looking in the chest. He cuts off their heads, but it is not made clear whether this is the method by which he kills them, or something that he does after they are dead.[382] He places their bodies under the forge, and then begins the transformation of the skulls. As already discussed, he turns the skulls into drinking cups, the eyes into gemstones, and the teeth into brooches. Unlike in *Þiðreks saga*, no mention is made of any further dismembering.

No further reference is made to the murders for a few more stanzas, until Niðhad laments what has happened to him, declaring his sadness at the death of his sons. He says that he has 'no more joy' and that his head is 'icy'.[383] It seems that, by now, he knows that his sons are not merely missing, but dead, although there is no explanation of how he came by this knowledge. When he sees Wayland,

---

[380] Snemma kallað[i] / seggr [á] annan, / bróðir á bróður: / 'Gǫngom baug siá!' / Kómo til kisto, / krǫfðo lukla – / opin var illúð, / er þeir í lito. 'Early one youth called to the other, brother to brother: 'Let's go and see the rings!' Came to the coffer, called for the keys – open lay evil, as they looked in.' *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 23 and 24.

[381] Drifo ungrir tveir / á dyr siá, 'Two boys raced to gaze on the riches', *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 20, with *ungr* emphasizing their youth. See Theodore M. Andersson and William Ian Miller, *Law and Literature in Medieval Iceland* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1989), p. 47.

[382] Sneið af hǫfuð, 'Cut off the heads', *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 25.

[383] Vaki ek ávalt / vilialauss. / Sofna ek minnzt / sízt mína sono dauða. / Kell mik í hǫfuð. 'I lie awake ceaselessly, without joy. I sleep not at all since my sons died. My head is icy.' *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 31.

who is in the process of escaping, he asks him what became of the boys, apparently at last realizing who was responsible for the demise of his sons.[384] Wayland takes this opportunity to give a detailed and bloodthirsty recounting of how he killed the boys and dismembered their bodies; he tells Niðhad to 'go to the smithy, the one that you built, there you will find bellows spattered with blood', and then he repeats the lines detailing what became of the skulls, eyes, and teeth.[385] These gruesome details, directly reusing the words that appear earlier as narrative rather than speech, do not reveal any sense of shame, or imply that Wayland regrets acting in such a way. When Niðhad reacts to the news with grief, Wayland's response is to laugh and fly away, still displaying no remorse as he disappears.[386]

Murder in *Þiðreks saga*

In *Þiðreks saga*, Wayland's killing of the princes is not his first act of violence, although it is arguably the first which could be described as murder. The theme of violent retribution begins early in the story, during Wayland's second apprenticeship, when his dwarf masters grow jealous of his skill and threaten to cut off his head if his father does not come for him in time.[387] Wayland, guessing that his father is dead, takes the sword that Wade left for him and kills the dwarfs himself, securing his own safety and obtaining the dwarfs' treasure.[388] The way the dwarfs are presented as jealous and

[384] 'Seg þu mér þat, Vǫlundr / — vísi álfa!— / af heilom hvat varð / húnom mínom?' 'Tell me this, Vǫlundr — you master of elves! — what became of my thriving young cubs?' *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 32.
[385] *'Gakk þú til smiðio, / þeirar er þú gørðir, / þar fiðr þú belgi / blóði stokna', Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 34; the description of what happened to the boys continues into stanza 35.
[386] Hlæiandi Vǫlundr / hófz at lopti, / en ókátr Níðuðr / sat þá epter. 'Laughing Vǫlundr lifted himself to the sky, while, mirthless, Níðuðr stayed sitting below.' *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 38.
[387] Ok nú iðrast dvergarnir, er þeir skulu svá dýrt kaupa hans þjónustu. Nú mæla þeir við Vaða risa ok segja svá, ef hann kemr eigi í réttan stefnudag eftir syni sínum, at þá skulu þeir í leyfi höfuð hans af höggva. 'And now the dwarfs regretted that they had bought his services so dearly. They now told the giant Vadi that, if he did not come on the appointed day for his son, they would have his head cut off.' *Þiðreks saga*, section 59.
[388] Gengr Velent upp á bergit ok hefir sverð undir skauti nökkvit ok lætr þá eigi sjá, gengr at þeim, er honum var nærri, ok höggr banahögg, ok því næst drepr hann báða þá. Nú gengr Velent inn í bergit ok tekr tól þeira öll ok allt gull ok silfr, er hann má við fara. 'Velent went up on the mountain and he held the sword under the flap of his cloak and did not let it be seen. He went toward them, and when he was near enough he struck a deathblow and killed them both. Then Velent went into the mountain and took all of their tools and all the gold and silver he could carry.', *Þiðreks saga*, section 61.

vicious suggests that this is an act of self-defence, rather than aggression, on the part of Wayland, who at this point in the story is still very young. This is perhaps a parallel to the deaths of the princes later in the text; Wayland's head is saved because his father took actions to protect him against vengeful smiths, but Niðhad does not take such good care of his sons. Unwittingly, the king seems to have stumbled into a contract similar to the one that Wade had with the dwarfs: access to metalworking skills and knowledge in exchange for the potential sacrifice of his sons' heads.

Wayland's story then does not contain any further violent episodes until quite some time after he arrives at Niðhad's court, where his repair of a knife leads to him being challenged to a contest of metalworking skill by the king's smith, Amilias.[389] Wayland is to make a sword, Amilias a suit of armour, and they will test whose work is the finest - with the loser to forfeit his head to the other.[390] Amilias is boastful and skillful but cannot live up to his claims, and does not have Wayland's abilities. As the inferior craftsman, he dies during the testing of his armour, when Wayland strikes his sword straight through the helmet.[391] It does not seem that any of the spectators consider this killing to be murder; it followed the agreed-upon rules of the contest, and Wayland won fairly, thanks to his superior skill. Amilias is also described by the king as 'both skillful and evil', suggesting that Amilias would not have hesitated to kill Wayland had the contest ended in a different result.[392] Once again, it seems that Wayland's violence was an act of self-defence.

The next episode of violence comes when Wayland collects Niðhad's magical victory stone for him, in exchange for which he has been promised the princess and half of Niðhad's kingdom. The king's steward challenges Wayland for the stone and, significantly, attacks Wayland first. Wayland acts in self-defence and kills the steward, splitting his helmet and head with the sword Mimung, in the

[389] The contest takes place in section 68.
[390] The terms are established in section 64.
[391] Nú þrýstir Velent svá fast sverðinu ok dregr við, at sundr nam hjálminn ok höfuðit ok brynjuna ok búkinn allt til beltisstaðar, ok lýkr svá lífdögum Amilias. 'Velent thrust so hard with the sword and struck so that it split the helmet and the head, the byrnie and the body all the way down to the belt, and thus ended the days of Amilias's life.' *Þiðreks saga*, section 68.
[392] þú átt at skipta við hagan mann ok illan í sér. Far nú ok smíða ok freista þín. '"You are dealing with a man who is both skillful and evil. Go now to the smithy and save yourself."' *Þiðreks saga*, section 67.

same way that he killed Amilias.[393] He is punished with exile for this crime, as the king is furious at the death of his steward, but the way the killing is described in the text emphasises the element of self-defence. Wayland argues this himself, in his final escape speech, where he lists the wrongs done to him by the king.[394] Wayland may be a killer several times over, but he is not yet a murderer.

The build-up to the killing of the princes begins when they visit Wayland in his smithy. Spotting an opportunity, he asks the boys to come again the next day, requesting that they walk backwards through the snow as his condition for making them something without their father's permission.[395] Like the greedy princes of *Vǫlundarkviða*, they agree, keen to avail themselves of some of Wayland's treasures. When they return the next day, Wayland kills them (no further details of the killing are given) and buries their bodies beneath the bellows.[396] People come to question Wayland about the boys' whereabouts, but he shows them the tracks leading away from his forge, and no one questions him further.[397] This detail makes the premeditated nature of the crime very clear, indicating how Wayland uses his cunning to present a façade of innocence. No one suspects him of killing the princes, even as their bodies lie buried under his forge. People search for the boys, but find nothing, and eventually assume that the princes had an accident while hunting, or at the seashore.

---

[393] Takið nú, mínir menn, ok bregðið sverðum, ok skal hann nú láta sigrsteininn ok þar með lífit." Nú sækja þeir at honum, en hann bregðr sverði sínu Mímungi ok höggr til sjálfs dróttsetans á hjálminn ok í sundr höfuðit, svá at hann fell dauðr á jörð. '"Attack now, my men, and draw your swords. He shall give up the victory stone and along with it his life." Then they attacked him and he drew his sword Mimung and struck at the steward himself, striking his helmet and his head in two, so that he fell dead to the ground.' *Þiðreks saga*, section 70.

[394] En þú gerðir mik útlægan ok friðlausan fyrir þat, at ek varða hendr mínar ok drap ek þann, er mik vildi fyrri drepa. 'You made me an outlaw because I protected myself and killed the man who wanted to kill me.' *Þiðreks saga*, section 78.

[395] Velent mælir, at þeir skulu ganga öfgir til smiðjunnar, þegar snjór væri nýfallinn. 'Velent said that they should walk backwards to the smithy, just after the snow had fallen fresh.' *Þiðreks saga*, section 73.

[396] Velent lætr ok sik þá ekki til dvelja. Nú lætr Velent aftr hurðina sem fastast, en síðan drepr hann sveininn hvárntveggja ok skýtr undir smiðbelgi sína í gröf eina djúpa. 'Velent did not make them wait for him. He quickly closed the door fast and then he killed both of the king's sons and dug a deep grave under the bellows.' *Þiðreks saga*, section 73.

[397] Nú er komit til Velents ok spurt, ef þeir hefði þar komit. Velent sagði, at þeir kómu þar ok í brott gengu þeir heðan, ok sjá kvaðst hann þá á leiðinni, er þeir gengu heim til konungshallar. 'They went to Velent and asked him if the boys had come to him. Velent said that they had come there and had gone away again; that one could see on the path how they had gone back to the king's hall.' *Þiðreks saga*, section 73.

The revenge element of this killing is made clear in *Þiðreks saga*: 'But Velent [Wayland] had remembered the dishonour and shame that had been done him, because he was not lacking in cruelty, and he was harsh in nature. And now he thought he had avenged himself somewhat, whether or not he ever gained more revenge.'[398] The description of Wayland as 'cruel' and 'harsh' is key; adding these details of his personality suggests that another person, less cruel and harsh, might not have taken this route. He acts because of his 'dishonour' and 'shame', but also because of his own nature and his own tendency towards violence.[399]

As in *Vǫlundarkviða*, Wayland then goes on to transform the boys' bodies into a variety of precious objects. Exactly as in *Vǫlundarkviða*, he uses silver and gold to transform their skills into lavish drinking cups. The Wayland of *Þiðreks saga* does not exclusively focus on their skulls, however; he turns their shoulder and hip bones into gold and silver ale ladles, and their other bones into knife handles, flutes, keys, and candlesticks, until there is nothing left.[400] Here, the focus is placed on bones in general, with no mention of the transformation of the eyes into jewels; all of these items are finely crafted, but not as improbable as the eye-jewels of *Vǫlundarkviða*. All of the items created from the boys' bones are then sent to the king's table, and the text said that they would have been fine indeed, if not for the 'deceit' with which they were made.[401] This emphasis on Wayland's

[398] En Velent hafði hugsat þá svívirðing ok skömm, er honum var ger, fyrir því at eigi skorti grimmleikinn með honum, enda váru allöpr tilbrigðin. Ok þóttist hann nú hafa hefnt sín nokkut, nær sem meir verðr eða eigi. *Þiðreks saga*, section 73.

[399] This description also has connotations for Wayland's treatment of Beadohild, which forms the second part of his revenge and will be discussed in the next chapter.

[400] Nú tekr Velent sveinana ok skefr allt holdit af beinunum, ok síðan tekr hann þeira hausa ok býr gulli ok silfri ok gerir af tvau mikil borðker, ok af herðarblöðum gerir hann öleysla ok af mjaðmarbeinum þeira ok býr gulli ok silfri. Af sumum beinum þeira gerir hann knífahefti, en af sumum bláspípur, af sumum lykla, en af sumum kertistikur, er standa skulu á konungs borði. 'Then Velent took the boys and scraped all the flesh from the bones. After that he took the skulls and brought gold and silver and made two large drinking cups. From the shoulder blades and the hip bones he made ale-ladles and covered them with gold and silver. He made knife handles from some of the bones, and from some he made flutes, and from some keys, and from some he made candlesticks to stand on the king's table.' *Þiðreks saga*, section 73.

[401] Ok af hverju þeira beini gerir hann nokkut til borðbúnaðar, ok þetta væri stórar gersimar, ef eigi væri með svá stórum svikum ok flærðum sem var. 'He made something for the king's table from every bone, and they would have been great treasures if they had not been made with such falsehood and deceit.' *Þiðreks saga*, section 73.

dishonesty and secrecy builds upon the cunning which has so far allowed him to escape discovery. All his actions are not just violent and unpleasant, but deliberately deceitful.

In his final speech to Niðhad before flying away, Wayland again links revenge to his killing of the princes.[402] Unlike *Vǫlundarkviða,* the text does not here echo the phrasing used to describe the precious objects earlier on. It does still make it clear that Wayland killed the boys as an act of revenge on their father, in return for his own mistreatment. They have not been killed in response to anything they themselves did wrong, but purely because of their father's treatment of Wayland. The sudden revelation of the truth also emphasizes even further how Wayland used secrecy and deceit to hide what happened to the princes: until now, Niðhad has not even suspected him of such a terrible crime.

At the very end of the *Þiðreks saga*, the new King Otvin forgives Wayland for his misdeeds and allows him to return and marry Beadohild.[403] This has interesting implications for the killing of the princes - does it imply that Wayland's actions were justified, and that Niðhad was the one in the wrong? Does it show that Otvin is grateful to the person who removed his potential rivals for the kingship? That he is willing to overlook Wayland's crimes for the sake of Beadohild and her child? Or is it simply the saga-writer's decision to ignore the darkness of Wayland's crimes, so that the story can have a happy ending? *Þiðreks saga* may show an attempt to fit a tale of revenge into the mould of a romance. Its details do, however, still point to the conclusion that Wayland was a murderer.

[402] Þú tókt sinur ok skart í sundr í báðum fótum mínum. Þar fyrir drap ek syni þína báða tvá, ok þar bera vitni um þín borðker. Þar eru þeira hausar fyrir innan, ok í allan þinn inn bezta borðbúnað lét ek þeira bein, ok vil ek ekki leynast fyrir þér um þat mál. 'You took the sinews and cut them apart in both of my feet. For that I killed both of your sons, and your cups bear witness to that. Their skulls are inside them and all of your best tableware is made with their bones, and I do not wish to hide it from you.' *Þiðreks saga*, section 78.

[403] Konungr vill sættast við Velent ok sel honum grið til viðmælis. Velent ferr í Jútland, ok er þar vel við honum tekit, ok giftir Otvin konungr honum systur sína ok býðr honum þar at vera, ef hann vill. 'The king wished to settle with Velent and granted him truce to negotiate. Velent traveled to Jutland and was warmly welcomed. King Otvin gave him his sister and offered to let him live there if he wished.' *Þiðreks saga*, stanza 79.

Murder in *Deor*

The murder of the two princes is referred to in *Deor*, which corroborates a number of details from the narrative sources, but little detail is given; the poem instead comments on Beadohild's emotional reaction to both aspects of Wayland's revenge.[404] It is not mentioned at all in Wayland's stanza, where the focus is placed firmly on his suffering and mistreatment, rather than on his actions. His cut sinews are hinted at, however, and in *Þiðreks saga* this crippling is given by Wayland as a direct cause of his decision to kill the boys.[405] *Deor* might therefore be implicitly commenting on Wayland's violent revenge through its choice of which of his misfortunes to mention.

It is only in the Beadohild stanza of *Deor* that the murder of the princes is explicitly mentioned. Here, the narrator says that Beadohild was not as grieved by her brothers' deaths as by the discovery of her own pregnancy.[406] This clearly shows that the tradition of the two dead boys was known by the author of *Deor*, supporting the Franks Casket (discussed next) as evidence that the story of the murder circulated in Anglo-Saxon England as well as in Scandinavia.[407] The inclusion of the murder in *Deor* also shows that it was seen as part of Wayland's revenge, alongside the rape (or seduction) of the princess.[408] Beadohild's greater concern for her own problem perhaps supports the suggestion made in *Vǫlundarkviða* that Niðhad's immediate family do not much care about each other, and do not appreciate what a gift it is to have a family at all, unlike Wayland, who misses his departed family.[409]

---

[404] Refer back to the Introduction to the Sources section for the full text of the relevant section.
[405] *Þú tókt sinur ok skart í sundr í báðum fótum mínum. Þar fyrir drap ek syni þína báða tvá, ok þar bera vitni um þín borðker.* 'You took the sinews and cut them apart in both of my feet. For that I killed both of your sons, and your cups bear witness to that.' *Þiðreks saga*, section 78.
[406] *Beadohilde ne wæs / hyre broþra deaþ / on sefan swa sár / swa hyre sylfre þing*, *Deor,* lines 8 and 9.
[407] *Klaeber's Beowulf,* notes to line 455: 'Evidence that the striking story of Weland's captivity and bloody revenge told in the Eddic *Vǫlundarkviða* (and in a later, expanded, and somewhat diluted form in *Ðiðreks saga*) was known to the Anglo-Saxons is furnished by the allusions in the first two strophes of *Deor* and the carving on the front of the Franks Casket'; this is also discussed in *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encylopedia*, eds. Phillip Pulsiano and Kirsten Wolf, p. 711.
[408] Corinne Saunders, *Rape and Ravishment in the Literature of Medieval England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001), p. 46.
[409] The role of family in Wayland's story, particularly in *Vǫlundarkviða*, will be discussed further in the next chapter.

The way the murder is referred to in *Deor* positions it as secondary in importance to Beadohild's pregnancy. The killing of the princes has already happened, and the story has moved on, in a similar way to how the murder is depicted on the Franks Casket.[410] This approach shows that not only were both parts of Wayland's revenge important, but that the murder seems to have been a common part of a broader Wayland tradition, apparently well enough known that it could be alluded to briefly. Its appearance in the Beadohild stanza, rather than the Wayland stanza, means that the connection between the princes and Wayland is only implied, rather than explicitly stated: the audience are expected to already know that it was Wayland who caused the deaths of Beadohild's brothers as well as her pregnancy. The two episodes are part of a single story, not complete until both acts have occurred. The refrain, *þæs ofereode þisses swa mæg*, does implicitly make a link between the two stanzas: Wayland resolves the situation of the first stanza through his revenge, which leads to the situation presented in the second stanza.

No further detail is provided in *Deor* on what happened to the boys' bodies, or whether they were turned into precious objects, as in the narrative sources. The focus is entirely on the state of mind of both Wayland and Beadohild, rather than on their actions or reactions. Accordingly, it is difficult to assess the moral implications of Wayland's murder of the princes. Even the word *deaþ* is vague, carrying no particular connotations of violence or blame.[411] *Deor* therefore gives the impression that, while the murder of the princes was an important part of Wayland's story, it was not the most important, and it was certainly not the climax; his story is not complete until the rape of Beadohild has been discussed. The murder element was well enough known that it could be referred to obliquely, but it did not make up the central part of Wayland's story, or his identity. Interestingly, *Deor* also does not mention Wayland's identity as a smith; it focuses almost entirely on his

[410] McGuire and Clark, *The Leeds Crosses*, p. 38.
[411] J.R. Clark Hall, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, fourth edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1894/1960), p. 83; *dēaþ* in *Dictionary of Old English: A to I* online, ed. Angus Cameron, Ashley Crandell Amos, Antonette diPaolo Healey et al. (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English Project, 2018).

mistreatment and his relationship with Beadohild, which is why it will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.

Murder on the Visual Sources

None of the visual Wayland sources depict the act of murder itself, which is in keeping with the written sources, none of which describe how Wayland killed the princes. The aftermath of the killing, however, is shown on both the Ardre Stone and the Franks Casket, through the use of the headless body motif.[412] On the Ardre Stone, two headless bodies lie beside the building usually interpreted as Wayland's smithy, while Wayland himself flies out of a window on the opposite wall.[413] The area around the two bodies is weathered and faded, meaning that the details are indistinct, but the bodies themselves are still clear and unmistakable. They are distinctly headless, with the building wall occupying the space where their heads should be, supporting the description in *Vǫlundarkviða* and *Þiðreks saga* of the bodies buried beneath (or close to) the forge. Given the multi-layered nature of the Ardre Stone depictions, it is possible that this layout of motifs was intended to show the bodies buried underneath the body of the forge itself, or perhaps simply close to it.

The two bodies on the Ardre Stone are parallelled by two large metalworking tools within the building, on the other side of the dividing wall. This visual repetition is perhaps an indication of how the smith's tools were used to transform the missing heads into new objects inside the smithy. The tool shapes, which almost echo the outlines of bodies with heads, certainly suggest some connection between the headless bodies outside the smithy and the activities symbolically represented inside the smithy. It implies that the maker of this carving saw Wayland's identity as a smith as highly

[412] The theme of decapitation will be discussed in greater detail below.
[413] Bailey, *Viking Age Sculpture*, p. 105; Kopár, Gods and Settlers, p. 17; McGuire and Clark, *The Leeds Crosses*, p. 37. Mc Guire and Clark also note the 'storylike' quality of the Ardre Stone, and how this arguably makes it closer to the Franks Casket than to the Yorkshire Wayland stones (p. 38).

relevant to the story of how he killed the princes. It would have been possible to identify Wayland as a smith without creating such clear visual links to the two headless bodies.

The Franks Casket similarly depicts a headless body, although in this instance it lies behind Wayland and beneath the anvil.[414] It is partly hidden by Wayland's legs, although what is visible is enough to confirm the lack of head. Interestingly, the legs of this body are bent in a way that is not dissimilar to Wayland's own pose, perhaps symbolising the link between Wayland's cut sinews and his revenge taken out on the princes.[415] Alternatively, the position of the legs might have been intended to indicate the presence of two bodies, as on the Ardre Stone, although only one torso is visible. The perspective and restricted space of the Franks Casket depiction would certainly have made it difficult to show both the princes at once in any other way. It is possible that the item held by Wayland in his pincers is a skull, or part of a skull, but the lack of detail makes it impossible to know this for certain.[416] Showing Wayland as a metalworker, with the headless body by his feet, both confirms his identity and once again suggests a link between his identity as a craftsman and his killing of the princes. The body itself seems to be naked. Stark lines on the torso presumably indicate ribs, which is a reminder both of Wayland's use of the princes' bones, and of the nature of the Franks Casket itself, as an item made of whalebone.[417] It is this focus on bone which might encourage the interpretation that Wayland is depicted as working on a piece of skull. The bony nature of the corpse is in striking contrast to the thickly draped fabric of the princess, whose skirts overlap with the corpse's feet. The physical proximity indicates her connection to the dead boy, but the strong contrast might indicate that her story is one of new life, rather than death. Once again, a clear visual link has been created between Wayland's metalworking activities and the corpses of the princes. This may be because Wayland's transformation of the bodies is the most significant part of this

[414] Klein, 'The Non-Coherence of the Franks Casket', p. 32; McGuire and Clark, *The Leeds Crosses*, p. 38.
[415] The possible link between the bent leg of Wayland and his laming was pointed out by Coatsworth and Pinder, *The Art of the Anglo-Saxon Goldsmith*, p. 32.
[416] Klein, 'The Non-Coherence of the Franks Casket', p. 33.
[417] Karkov, 'The Franks Casket Speaks Back', pp. 14-15.

episode, and the true climax of the murder, or it may be because of a deeper link between metalworkers and violence, like that argued for by Eliade.

It is in discussion of these visual sources that the possible influence of Christianity on the story of Wayland is most relevant. The Ardre Stone, with its clear image of two bodies, was located on a site that later became a church. The Leeds Cross, which has no such bodies, was erected at a site that was probably already a church. Both items had similar afterlives, finding themselves built into the fabric of later churches. Regardless of whether they originated in Christian or non-Christian contexts, they suffered almost identical fates. The headless bodies, however, are the only key motif omitted from the Leeds Cross version of the image, which still contains Wayland's wings, his metalworking tools, and the figure of Beadohild. Could this indicate that an Anglo-Scandinavian Christian audience, while still enjoying and valuing the story of Wayland, did not think that a depiction of his violent acts was appropriate for a religious setting? His firm grasp on Beadohild suggests that the rape episode had not been erased from the set of appropriate elements, while the Franks Casket and *Deor* tell us that the story of the murdered princes was certainly known in England. The omission of the bodies on the Leeds Cross might have been a decision based purely on lack of space; the existence of a stone sculpture depicting the beheading of Regin suggests that such an element was not considered outright unacceptable on sculpture in or around churches.[418] However, it is still a tantalising difference, and shows how Wayland's story could be adapted for different contexts depending on which motifs were chosen to represent him.

Wayland's Smithy and Murder

A final piece of Wayland material which can be analysed here is Wayland's Smithy. There is, of course, no reference to dead princes in the charter which records this name, and the burial mound

[418] Halstead, 'The Stone Sculpture of Anglo-Scandinavian Yorkshire', p. 13; McGuire and Clark, *The Leeds Crosses*, p. 46.

itself has no obvious connections to Wayland's story. On the surface, this name tells us nothing more than the fact that Wayland was viewed as a smith. However, it is a burial mound, and as such a place connected with death. The Anglo-Saxons certainly built burial mounds themselves, and so it seems likely that they identified Wayland's Smithy as a place of the dead.[419] The choice of the name 'Smithy' is therefore particularly interesting, given that the sources seem to agree Wayland disposed of the boys' bodies beneath his forge.[420] As both the Franks Casket and the Ardre Stone show, Wayland's smithy therefore became not just a workshop but a tomb. The choice of the name 'Wayland's Smithy' was perhaps a comment on this second function of Wayland's workshop. Once again, it displays a clear link between Wayland's identity as a smith and his identity as a killer. By linking the place where he created with the place where he killed, Wayland's Smithy fits firmly into the other traditions that identified Wayland's forge as the place where he killed the princes and buried their bodies. In *Þiðreks saga*, Wayland is referred to as 'Velent the smith' right before he kills the two princes, even though he is usually called simply 'Velent' in the saga.[421] Like so many other details across the wide range of Wayland material, including Wayland's Smithy, this detail continues the association between metalworking and murder.

The existence of great burial mounds such as Sutton Hoo, rare though they are, shows another angle of the relationship between metalwork and death. For many fine pieces of metalwork, a tomb might have been their final destination.[422] Whether or not such items were created specifically as grave goods, they would have been associated both with the burials of kings and with the most skilled of smiths. Many people may have encountered the work of the greatest smiths only in mortuary contexts, so perhaps Wayland's creations from the boys' bodies could be seen as gruesomely

---

[419] Semple, *Perceptions of the Prehistoric*, pp. 5 and 158.
[420] *Vǫlundarkviða,* stanza 25; *Þiðreks saga*, section 73.
[421] *...biðja nú Velent smíða. Velent lætr ok sik þá ekki til dvelja. Nú lætr Velent aftr hurðina sem fastast, en síðan drepr hann sveininn hvárntveggja.* '… they waited for Velent the smith. Velent did not make them wait for him. He quickly closed the door fast and then he killed both of the king's sons'. *Þiðreks saga*, section 73.
[422] Semple, *Perceptions of the Prehistoric in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 178 on the association between ancient burial mounds and treasure. Wayland and the sword Mimung were associated with a burial mound in the Faroese ballad *Risin í Holmgörðum*, recorded in the nineteenth century. Gillespie, *A Catalogue of Persons Named in German Heroic Literature,* p. 142.

paralleling this relationship between death and metalwork. This link may be more obvious to modern observers than to contemporaries, due to the survival contexts of fine metal objects, and a lack of knowledge about their existence prior to their deposition in graves, but this aspect of the Wayland's Smithy name should not be discounted.

Ritual Murder? Eliade, Metalworkers, and Initiation

As mentioned above, Wayland's violent treatment of the princes has attracted attention in relation to Eliade's suggestions that ancient smiths were seen as intrinsically violent. Eliade saw this violence as often associated with smiths' additional role as initiators, especially for young men, and provided examples from around the world.[423] Kaaren Grimstad and Richard L. Dieterle both suggested initiatory elements in the story of Wayland, with a particular focus on the way in which Wayland breaks up the boys' bodies into separate parts, most importantly the removal of the heads.[424] Such initiation events, particularly shamanic initiations, have been recorded by many anthropologists as containing aspects of violence and mutilation which are potentially relevant to Wayland's story.[425] The potential dual nature of metal tools to both create and destroy, and the 'evil' that medieval audiences may have therefore seen as innate to metalwork, has been discussed in an Old Norse context by Lydia Carstens, Richard L. Dieterle, and Paul Beekman Taylor, among others.[426] Further investigation is required, however, to ascertain whether Eliade's theories really are applicable to the story of Wayland, and whether his actions do indeed represent a ritual killing rather than the type of revenge killing found more commonly in Old Norse literature.

---

[423] Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible*, p. 102.
[424] Grimstad, 'The Revenge of Volundr', p. 202, and Dieterle, 'The Metallurgical Code of the *Vǫlundarkviða*', p. 11.
[425] Grimstad in particular discusses the entire story of Wayland as initiatory in structure. The shamanic elements of Wayland's identity will be examined further in 'Wayland the Outsider: Giants, Valkyries and Dwarfs'.
[426] Carstens, 'Might and Magic', p. 252; Dieterle, 'The Metallurgical Code of the *Vǫlundarkviða*, p. 11; Taylor, '*Vǫlundarkviða*, *Þrymskviða*, and the Function of Myth', p. 263.

The dismembering of the bodies and their subsequent transformation into precious objects does suggest something more complex than a straightforward revenge killing, even a particularly lurid revenge killing. Mutilation was not uncommon in the medieval world, and harsh treatment of already-dead bodies was common throughout the Middle Ages.[427] Wayland's revenge, while given a strange twist through *how* he treated the bodies, was therefore not necessarily entirely out of place in Old Norse or Old English literature. Particularly in *Vǫlundarkviða*, however, the quasi-magical way in which he transforms the bodies is not paralleled in other sources. Skull-cups do appear elsewhere in early medieval literature, but the transformation of eyes into precious gems is unique.[428] Wayland's own physical suffering and transformation may indicate that he is undergoing an initiation of his own, while simultaneously initiating the two boys.[429] The story can certainly be viewed as supporting Eliade's arguments, and indeed he drew on the tale of Wayland as evidence.[430]

However, while initiatory elements can be identified in the story, it is unlikely that they were the focus of Wayland's story by the Middle Ages - if, indeed, they ever were. Eliade's other examples come from many different areas of the world, and lack direct relevance to the early Middle Ages in north-western Europe. The closest is an Ava- Samoyade shaman; a Sami influence on Wayland's story is possible but uncertain, and even in the case of heavy Sami influence, the story would be separated from the initiation of this shaman by thousands of miles and many centuries.[431] There is little in either *Þiðreks saga* or *Vǫlundarkviða* themselves to suggest that the murder of the boys is a representation of an ancient initiation theme. Indeed, any initiatory themes are more likely to relate to the suffering and transformation of Wayland himself. Eliade's influence is still visible in the ways that this murder episode has been treated, but it is important to view Wayland's murderous revenge

---

[427] Baker, *Honour, Exchange and Violence in Beowulf*, p. 5; Preben Meulengracht Sørensen, *The Unmanly Man: Concepts of Defamation in Early Northern Society*, trans. by Joan Turville-Peter (Odense: Odense University Press, 1983), p. 81; Hilda Ellis Davidson, 'Human Sacrifice in the Late Pagan Period in North Western Europe', in *The Age of Sutton Hoo*, ed. by M. Carver (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1992), pp. 331-40, p. 332.
[428] Parallels to the skull cups will be discussed below.
[429] Grimstad, 'The Revenge of Volundr', p. 203.
[430] Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible*, p. 106.
[431] Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible*, p. 84. The question of Sami influences on *Vǫlundarkviða* will be discussed in Chapter 4.

alongside contemporary texts as well as alongside ethnological accounts of initiatory smiths. His actions are certainly bloody and violent - but so are many other Old Norse stories. He may make unusual use of their bodies, but such mutilation and re-use of body parts is also not infrequent in contemporary literature. The ways in which Wayland transforms the bodies may serve less to mark him as an initiator than to demonstrate his incredible skill as a craftsman, and to create a darkly ironic revenge on the king who craves gold at the expense of his own family.

Decapitation

When considering the details of how Wayland treats the bodies of the two boys, one detail stands out in the medieval material. It is notable that almost all the sources which refer to or depict the murders of the boys (with the exception of *Deor*) concentrate on the aspect of their decapitation. *Vǫlundarkviða* makes much of what becomes of their skulls, and both the Ardre Stone and the Franks Casket depict the headless bodies. Even in *Þiðreks saga*, which describes how many of the boys' bones are used, the heads have a particular importance, and the skull-cups are described first. In a discussion of a story already mentioned, that of King Alboin of the Lombards and the skull of King Cunimund, Stephen Pollington suggests that skulls were viewed as symbolizing total victory.[432] To drink from an enemy's skull therefore demonstrates the transfer of power from one king to another. The same is suggested by John Edward Damon, who says that 'a king's severed head represented an important symbol for both victor and vanquished'.[433] The boys may not be kings, but they are the sons of kings, and their heads were surely thought to contain at least a shadow of that symbolism. But why would Wayland want Niðhad to drink from the skulls of his own children? What power is transferred?

[432] Pollington, *Wayland's Work*, p. 125.
[433] John Edward Damon, 'Desecto Capite Perfido: Bodily Fragmentation and Reciprocal Violence in Anglo-Saxon England', *Exemplaria,* 13 (2001), 399-432, p. 413.

The decapitation of captives and the display of severed heads was certainly known to the Anglo-Saxons as a practice. John Edward Damon identifies a number of key examples, particularly focusing on kings who may have been beheaded and dismembered after death.[434] Early Germanic groups may have practised decapitation as a religious ritual, and decapitated animals have certainly been found at both Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon burial sites.[435] Even Christian Anglo-Saxons in later periods certainly knew of decapitation as an active practice; it may have been especially associated with their Celtic neighbours in Wales, or it may have originated in ancient cults of Woden or Odin.[436] Regardless, it is clear from texts like *Judith* and *Beowulf*, as well as Wayland's story, that the advent of Christianity did not destroy a fascination with dismemberment and the human head, particularly royal heads.[437] Wayland's decision to remove the boys' heads and turn them into cups is perhaps a statement regarding the nature of his power. He is no warrior or king; his power is in his cunning and his skill.[438] While it may traditionally have been the victor who drank out of the skull-cup, here the victor is the one who is able to produce such a cup without detection. The king believes that the cups he drinks from are symbols of his dominance over Wayland, but in fact they are symbols of Wayland's dominance over him. This is made clear when Wayland dramatically reveals the truth at the height of his power, during his final escape.

---

[434] Damon, 'Desecto Capite Perfido'. See also Alan Thacker, 'Membra Disjecta: The Division of the Body and the Diffusion of the Cult', in *Oswald: Northumbrian King to European Saint*, ed. Clare Stancliffe and Eric Cambridge (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1995), 97-127.

[435] Rosemary Cramp, 'The Changing Image, Divine and Human, in Anglo-Saxon Art', in *Aedificia Nova: Studies in Honor of Rosemary Cramp*, ed. by Catherine E. Karkov and Helen Damico (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2008), pp. 3-32, p. 6; Howard Williams, 'An Ideology of Transformation: Cremation Rites and Animal Sacrifice in Early Anglo-Saxon England', in *The Archaeology of Shamanism*, ed. by Neil Price (Routledge: London, 2001), pp. 193-212, p. 201; Fletcher, *Bloodfeud*, p. 54; Neil Price, 'Mythic Acts: Material Narratives of the Dead in Viking Age Scandinavia', in *More Than Mythology: Narratives, Ritual Practices and Regional Distribution in Pre-Christian Scandinavian Religions*, ed. by Catharina Raudvere and Jens Peter Schjødt (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2012), pp. 13-46, p. 15; Davidson, 'Human Sacrifice in the Late Pagan Period in North Western Europe', p. 331.

[436] Damon, 'Desecto Capite Perfido', pp. 405 and 408.

[437] Damon, 'Desecto Capite Perfido', p. 402; Daniel Donoghue, *Old English Literature: A Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), p. 40.

[438] This is supported by the epithets of wisdom and skill used to describe him in *The Old English Boethius* and the narrative sources.

Decapitation may also have been associated with ethnic others and outsiders; as mentioned, it seems to have been particularly associated with Celtic peoples and with the pagan past. *Beowulf* introduces a sword made by giants as the weapon which is used to kill Grendel. As Grendel's head is then removed as a trophy, the detail of this giant-made sword adds decapitation to a complex web of allusions including Tubal-Cain and the giant descendants of Cain.[439] Wayland is not specifically mentioned in relation to this episode of the poem, but as a figure who is often positioned as an outsider and a semi-supernatural figure, he fits well into these ideas of the strange and ancient creatures associated with decapitated bodies. This might indicate either that Wayland was directly associated with decapitation, or that he was part of a supernatural-historic milieu seen as associated with decapitation.

The specific choice of eyes and teeth in *Vǫlundarkviða* add an extra layer of meaning to this focus on the skulls. These are the only body parts mentioned, unlike the longer list of bones found in *Þiðreks saga.* Eyes and teeth are, of course, a powerful symbol of revenge: an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.[440] While *Vǫlundarkviða* may have had its earliest roots in pre-Christian stories, the poem as it stands was composed and written in a firmly Christian society, and it would not be unexpected to find such a Biblical motif to depict revenge. Eyes and teeth have been discussed as fulfilling a similar purpose in *Waltharius,* suggesting that this concept had existed in the literature of north-western Europe for a long time before *Vǫlundarkviða* was written.[441] Even more explicitly, this concept clearly existed in texts written by people who knew of Wayland's story. If this interpretation is correct, Wayland's treatment of the bodies – and his description of this treatment – would be a clear

[439] Andy Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the Beowulf Manuscript* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1985), p. 66; Marie Padgett Hamilton, 'The Religious Principle in *Beowulf*', in *An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism*, ed. by Lewis E. Nicholson (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963), pp. 105-136, p. 10.
[440] Leviticus 24:20; Exodus 21:24; Dennis Kratz, *Waltharius and Ruodlib*, p. xxii.
[441] Dennis Kratz suggests that the choice of eyes, hands and feet as the body parts removed at the end of Waltharius 'allows us to regard the wounds suffered by the men as symbolic punishments for yielding to temptation', referring to Exodus 21:24 and Mark 9:42-48. If this symbolism is accepted as referring to temptation, the choice of eyes and teeth as symbolism for revenge in *Vǫlundarkviða* seems just as deliberate. *Waltharius and Ruodlib.* See also Shami Ghosh, *Writing the Barbarian Past: Studies in Early Medieval Historical Narrative* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), p. 167.

declaration of his vengeance, whether to Niðhad or to the audience of the poem. This is not a killing for the sake of violence, but a calculated act of revenge, and the choice to focus on the princes' heads makes this clear throughout the surviving Wayland sources.

Morality and Murder: Early Medieval Attitudes to Murder

A study of Wayland's identity as killer, as distinct from the other facets of his identity, allows for a deeper exploration of whether medieval audiences viewed him as more of a hero or a villain; modern scholars have often positioned him as a 'tragic hero', but such an interpretation is far from clear-cut.[442] Was his revenge a justified reaction to his cruel treatment by an exploitative and greedy king? Or was it a needlessly cruel act perpetrated on two innocent boys? Nothing can be assumed. As already discussed, what is 'moral' cannot be assumed to remain constant between different societies: what seems obviously right or wrong to modern readers was not necessarily so for those who first heard Wayland's story in Old Norse or Old English.

The moral attitudes expressed in Old Norse literature have been well studied, although *Vǫlundarkviða* and, in particular, *Þiðreks saga*, have not attracted much attention in terms of the moral norms they imply.[443] The general consensus is that Old Norse literature, particularly saga literature, does not often pass explicit moral judgement, and may even have been deliberately ambivalent to encourage debate over the issues discussed.[444] The 'morality' that does appear in such texts is often based less on ideas of 'right' and 'wrong' than on concepts of personal honour or

---

[442] See, for example, reference to Wayland's 'suffering' in Hill, *Old English Minor Heroic Poems*, p. 16; Kopár, *Gods and Settlers*, p. 22; Klein, 'The Non-Coherence of the Franks Casket', p. 34. Reference is made Níðuðr's 'cruelty' by, among others, Rosemary Cramp, 'The Northumbrian Identity', in *Northumbria's Golden Age*, ed. by Jane Hawkes and Susan Mills (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton, 1999) pp. 1-11, p. 6; Webster, 'The Iconographic Programme of the Franks Casket', p. 233.

[443] *Þiðreks saga* is, in general, very under-studied.

[444] Svavr Hrafn Svavarsson, 'Honour and Shame: Comparing Medieval Iceland and Ancient Greece', in *Gripla XX: Nordic Civilisation in the Medieval World*, ed. by Vésteinn Ólason (Reykjavik: Arní Magnusson Institute, 2009), pp. 241-256; Carstens, 'Might and Magic', p. 252; see David Clark, *Gender, Violence, and the Past in Edda and Saga* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 165 for the idea of sagas as intended to provoke debate.

dishonour, ideas which may be difficult for modern readers to grasp, but which seem to have occupied a significant role in Old Norse society.[445] To an early medieval audience, then, would Wayland's actions have seemed 'moral', or perhaps more appropriately, 'honourable'? To paraphrase the words of Vilhjálmur Árnason, would the deaths of the two princes have been seen as a tragic result of circumstances outside Wayland's control, or as a heinous crime?[446]

It is generally accepted that violence was common in the Old Norse, Anglo-Saxon, and medieval Germanic worlds; indeed, it would be difficult to argue that violent activity was not a part of everyday life in any of these societies, and it often plays a prominent role in popular depictions of the early medieval world.[447] The Eddaic poems are certainly full of violence and vengeance in various forms, and *Vǫlundarkviða* is no exception in this regard.[448] However, it must be remembered that violence in both societies was, to an extent, governed by accepted norms and responses, and so its existence did not necessarily indicate anarchy and chaos. Violence often functioned as a social institution, rather than the anti-social behaviour it tends to be seen as in most modern societies.[449] It is therefore important to examine Wayland's actions not in a vacuum but in terms of contemporary medieval attitudes to violence, in order to see how they fit into social concepts of acceptable and unacceptable violence. There are no immediately apparent indicators in either *Vǫlundarkviða* or *Þiðreks saga* to signal whether Wayland's revenge was appropriate within this system of partially managed violence; no character makes direct comment on the issue, and Wayland does not face any sort of judgement or punishment which might indicate the acceptability of his actions. However, it is

[445] A discussion of the roles of similar concepts in murder cases in the twentieth-century USA is provided in Leonard Beeghley, *Homicide: A Sociological Explanation* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), p. 27.
[446] Vilhjálmur Árnason 'An Ethos in Transformation: Conflicting Values in the Sagas', in *Gripla XX: Nordic Civilisation in the Medieval World*, ed. by Vésteinn Ólason (Reykjavik: Arní Magnusson Institute, 2009), pp. 217-40, p. 222.
[447] Guy Halsall, 'An Introductory Survey', in *Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West*, ed. by Guy Halsall (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998), pp. 1-46, p. 3.
[448] Clark, *Gender, Violence, and the Past*, p. 17.
[449] Halsall, 'An Introductory Survey', p. 11.

possible to search for traces of such moral judgement in surviving sources which record laws and customs regarding violence and homicide, slavery, rape, and suffering and mistreatment.

The question of violence in Icelandic saga literature has been studied in considerable detail. The consensus is that saga evidence suggests people in medieval Iceland were reasonably accepting of the validity of revenge killing, or were at least willing to see it depicted without condemnation in fiction.[450] Blood vengeance and extended feuds appear in many sagas as apparently legitimate responses to insult or injury, either in the heat of the moment, or as a calculated act months or even years later.[451] Similarly, literature and chronicle evidence has been suggested as indicative of a culture of bloodfeud in Anglo-Saxon England and early medieval Germany.[452] Regardless of exactly where in early medieval Europe Wayland's story originated, therefore, it will have arisen in a culture which, at the very least, understood the concept of feud. It may well have developed in an environment where violent vengeance was accepted or even encouraged. Saga literature also provides a directly relevant parallel to Wayland's story in that physical injury, like Wayland's laming, has been identified as a common cause for revenge homicide in saga literature.[453] His actions are therefore, on the surface, not outside the patterns set in contemporary literature, including violent revenge carried out by more clearly 'heroic' characters.

However, Wayland's revenge is unusual in a number of its details, if not in the fact of its existence, and may, therefore, have failed to fit the parameters of acceptable vengeance. Firstly, a variety of law codes from across the Germanic world indicate that killing in the heat of anger was viewed as more socially and morally acceptable than murder by stealth, with open killings generally treated

[450] Halsall, *Warfare and Society in the Barbarian West*, p. 16.
[451] Andersson and Miller, *Law and Literature in Medieval Iceland*, p. 44.
[452] See, for example, Fletcher, *Bloodfeud*; George Fenwick Jones, *Honor in German Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), p. 4.
[453] Hugh Firth, 'Coercion, Vengeance, Feud and Accommodation: Homicide in Medieval Iceland', *Early Medieval Europe*, 20 (2012), 139-75, p. 158.

more leniently than those that were concealed.[454] In the *Pactus Legis Salicae,* for example, attempting to conceal a body meant that the fine for homicide was trebled.[455] To express this in modern legal terms, openly admitted killing was manslaughter, while secret killing was murder.[456] Wayland deliberately conceals his murder of the princes in both *Þiðreks saga* and *Vǫlundarkviða*, hiding their bodies somewhere near the forge.[457] In the former narrative, he goes so far as to actively deny any knowledge of the princes' whereabouts when questioned by the king's representatives, as well as scheming to conceal the crime.[458] In legal terms, Wayland's killing of the princes is therefore most definitely murder rather than manslaughter, and he does not display the openness that might have been admired by a medieval audience. It is also unusual that Wayland carries out his revenge alone, and on his own behalf, rather than in response to the murder or mistreatment of a kinsman.[459] Such a situation does not appear to be covered in any surviving contemporary law texts, which generally focus on the relationship between the injured party and the person taking revenge, laying out who was entitled to take vengeance on whose behalf.[460] Wayland's decision to take his own revenge may be expected in *Vǫlundarkviða*, where he is separated from his family, and therefore has no one to act on his behalf, but even here it is an interesting detail that marks his revenge out as something perhaps quite unusual. In *Þiðreks saga*, on the other hand, Wayland is not alone: his brother Egil appears in the second part of the story, helping Wayland with his escape but not, interestingly, with his vengeance, which Wayland once

---

[454] 'It is prescribed that if a man murders a man, the penalty is outlawry. And it is murder if a man hides it or conceals the corpse or does not admit it.' *Grágas: Laws of Early Iceland,* trans. by Andrew Dennis, Peter Foote, Richard Perkins (Winnipeg: Manitoba Press, 1980), p. 146; Halsall, *Warfare and Society in the Barbarian West*, p. 15.

[455] Halsall, 'Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West', p. 15.

[456] Using modern English terms to express medieval concepts is problematic, but the distinction between these two crimes is a useful way to understand how the same killing could fall into different legal categories depending on circumstances.

[457] *Síðan drepr hann sveininn hvárntveggja ok skýtr undir smiðbelgi sína í gröf eina djúpa.* 'He killed both of the king's sons and dug a deep grave under the bellows', *Þiðreks saga*, section 73; 'Undir fen fiǫturs / foetr um lagði, 'beneath the mud of the forge-well laid their feet.' *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 25.

[458] *Þiðreks saga*, section 73.

[459] Grimstad, 'The Revenge of Volundr', p. 189. This is partly because most revenge killing is in response to another killing, so the victim clearly cannot take their own revenge.

[460] William Ian Miller, *Bloodtaking and Peacemaking: Feud, Law, and Society in Saga Iceland* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p. 188.

again carries out alone, as in *Vǫlundarkviða*.[461] In contrast to the procedures set out in legal texts such as the Icelandic *Grágas*, Wayland makes no attempt to receive formal compensation for the wrongs done to him, despite this apparently being an expected step before taking violent revenge: the wronged party could only exact vengeance if the wrongdoer refused a request for compensation.[462] Once again, this can at least partially be explained by story circumstances; when Wayland was mistreated by the king, usually the arbiter of justice, what higher authority could he have appealed to for mediation and enforcement?[463]

Homicide is, as might be expected, a major concern of many medieval law codes, from the Icelandic laws found in *Grágas*, to the codes issued by a number of Anglo-Saxon kings, to the remaining fragments of early Germanic tribal law-codes. First and foremost, killing another person was almost always a punishable offence, whether this punishment came in the form of outlawry or a fine.[464] Across the Germanic world, surviving law codes support the idea that making an act of violence public served to alleviate its consequences or even legitimize it.[465] Failing to declare a killing, particularly if deliberate deception was involved, was a more severe crime than a publicly acknowledged killing, and some law codes specified the timespans within which a homicide must be announced by the killer, depending on circumstances.[466] In some cases, concealing a body could be the detail that transformed a manslaughter case into murder.[467] Secrecy implied that there was no good reason for the killing, or at least not a reason that the killer thought would stand up to public scrutiny. It was dishonourable not to accept the consequences of one's actions, and avoiding

[461] Egil's arrival and a discussion of his relationship with Wayland can be found in *Þiðreks saga*, section 75.
[462] Halsall, *Warfare and Society in the Barbarian West*, p. 15; Jesse L. Byock, *Feud in the Icelandic Saga* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1982), p. 98.
[463] Fletcher, *Bloodfeud*, pp. 15 and 26; John G.H. Hudson, 'Feud, Vengeance and Violence in England from the Tenth to the Twelfth Centuries', in *Feud, Violence and Practice: Essays in Medieval Studies in Honor of Stephen D. White*, ed. by Belle S. Tuten and Tracey L. Billado (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 29-53, p. 36. Beeghley notes the influence of violent authority figures on frequent murders. *Homicide*, p. 26.
[464] For example, *Grágas*, p. 140.
[465] Halsall, 'An Introductory Survey', p. 15.
[466] For example, 'The killer is to publish the killing as his work within the next twelve hours, but if he is on mountain or fjord he must do it within twelve hours of returning.' *Grágas*, p. 146.
[467] *Grágas*, p. 146.

responsibility could even lead to an innocent person being blamed for the murder.[468] Wayland's concealment of the princes' bodies, therefore, would have violated both moral and legal codes all across the Germanic world, regardless of the validity of the killing as an act of revenge.

Several law codes also specify that it was unacceptable to kill a relative rather than the offender himself.[469] However, the killing of relatives appears in numerous Icelandic sagas, as well as in chronicle evidence from Anglo-Saxon England.[470] This may reflect a disconnect between either law and reality, or literature and reality, both of which are substantial problems in the use of such material as sources for moral norms: we can never be sure how much literature reflected contemporary society, or how closely law texts were adhered to or enforced. It certainly suggests a difficulty in using legal texts to asses literature, valuable though such texts are. It shows, at the least, that Wayland's decision to kill the king's sons, rather than the king himself, would not be unique in literature, whether or not such a deed was legal.

Another common theme in the law texts of the early medieval world is the importance of attempts at reconciliation through structured, time-honoured arbitration processes. In general, vengeance was legal only when the wrongdoer failed to pay acceptable compensation or refused to attempt reconciliation with the wronged parties.[471] Again, however, this step does not always appear in literature, including, as noted, Wayland's lack of any attempt to secure compensation. Arbitration and reconciliation do play a role in many Icelandic sagas, although the processes sometimes serve to antagonise violence rather than end it.[472] This may simply be a literary wish to avoid the less exciting aspects of legal processes, but it is also possible that 'violent self-help motivated by vengeance' was similarly common in real life, especially in cases where victims did not expect reasonable

[468] Halsall, 'An Introductory Survey', p. 15.
[469] For example, Anglo-Saxon code "II Edmund" (EHD I, no. 38) says that vengeance can only be carried out on the killer himself, although exceptions can be made if his relatives are supporting and assisting him. Halsall, 'Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West', p. 25.
[470] Clark, *Gender, Violence, and the Past in Edda and Saga*, p. 125; Andersson and Miller, *Law and Literature in Medieval Iceland*, p. 43; see also Fletcher, *Bloodfeud*.
[471] Hudson, 'Feud, Vengeance and Violence in England', p. 35.
[472] Byock, *Feud in the Icelandic Saga*, p. 45; Fletcher, *Bloodfeud*, p. 9

compensation or fair treatment, perhaps due to the higher status of the wrongdoer.[473] As already mentioned, Wayland's situation was especially difficult in that his oppressor is a king, who would also have been responsible for justice, and Wayland could therefore not expect a fair process of appeal. 'Violent self-help' might well have been his only option in this case.

The legal complexities of Wayland's revenge go beyond laws concerning murder and manslaughter; Wayland's possible status as a slave complicates the question of legality even further. There is evidence from Anglo-Saxon England, and possibly also Scandinavia, that at least some smiths were not free, and kept in compulsory service to their lords in a way that might be considered slavery.[474] This means that a contemporary audience might have understood Wayland's position of captivity at the king's court to be normal, considering him to be a slave rather than an unjustly imprisoned free man. Slave-owning was certainly common in Anglo-Saxon England, with multiple types of slavery in existence, covering various diverse groups of people.[475] The experiences of Wayland may have fallen within the boundaries of one of these groups, making his treatment by the king both socially and legally acceptable. Slavery was also present in Iceland until approximately the eleventh century, with evidence from *Grágas* suggesting the possible existence of debt slavery as late as the twelfth century.[476] The status of smiths in Scandinavia is still under discussion; it is unclear whether they were free or not.[477] It is possible, however, that at least some Scandinavian smiths were less than fully free, and the idea of smiths as slaves was not unknown. Once again, regardless of where in the Germanic world Wayland's story may have originated from (if there ever was a single point of origin), medieval audiences across Europe are likely to have had a reasonably similar understanding of his legal position at Niðhad's court.

---

[473] Hudson, 'Feud, Vengeance and Violence', p. 40.
[474] Hinton, 'Anglo-Saxon Smiths and Myths', p. 10.
[475] Richard Abels, *Alfred the Great: War, Kingship and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Taylor and Francis, 1998), p. 36.
[476] Andersson and Miller, *Law and Literature in Medieval Iceland*, p. 9.
[477] Nancy L. Wicker, 'The Elusive Smith', *Goldsmith Mysteries*, ed. by Alexandra Pesch and Ruth Blankenfeldt, pp. 29-36, p. 30.

What is even more clear is that, across the Germanic world, the rights of a slave to vengeance were extremely limited - far more so than the rights of free men. Slaves in Anglo-Saxon England had no right to oaths or vengeance at all, except in very specific circumstances, none of which are applicable to Wayland's story.[478] In Iceland, not only were slaves restricted in their own right to take action, but it was permissible for a slave-owner to kill his slave at any time except Lent and certain other holidays - and even then, some exceptions were made.[479] Under Icelandic law, the body and life of a slave were totally at the mercy of the owner, and a slave would certainly have no legal right to recourse if treated cruelly by a master. There were very few attempts to legally limit the violence of masters towards their slaves, even in Christian Europe.[480] Considering the possibility that Wayland was a slave offers a very different reading of the relationship between Wayland and Niðhad. If Wayland is viewed as a slave, his revenge is both an act of rebellion against his master and an action forbidden by law. Niðhad's violence and cruelty, in turn, becomes the legal right of a master to punish and exploit his property. Would audiences still have appreciated such honour and determination in a fictional slave, even if the legal realities of slavery forbade such actions? If *Vǫlundarkviða* and *Þiðreks saga* are indeed giving a slave's point of view, this is an unusual and even subversive approach to the events of the story.

A Royal Revenge?

It is important to consider Niðhad's family not simply as either villains or victims, but as royalty. The boys are not just children, caught up in their father's feud, but princes. Beadohild is not simply the daughter of Niðhad, but the daughter of a king, and her mother is a queen. Wayland is not simply taking revenge on the king, but potentially influencing royal inheritance, particularly in

[478] Abels, *Alfred the Great*, p. 36.
[479] *Grágas*, p. 173.
[480] Halsall, 'An Introductory Survey', p. 15 discusses a Visigothic law code which banned the killing of slaves by their masters but was short-lived and apparently ineffectual.

Vǫlundarkviða where there is no mention of another son once the princes are dead. The presence of a third son, who inherits, in *Þiðreks saga* may explain the 'happy' ending, compared to *Vǫlundarkviða*, where Wayland has essentially wiped out an entire royal line. Studies of the Wayland material has often focused on the role played by Niðhad as a king; a great deal of attention has been paid to the ways in which he subverts the appropriate behaviour of a king, by hoarding treasure instead of gifting it to his followers.[481] Less attention, however, has been paid to the way in which the royal women exhibit similar patterns of subversion.

Discussion of royal women and their appropriate roles in early medieval society has often focused on a few key texts, such as *Beowulf*. *Vǫlundarkviða* and *Þiðreks saga* have been largely ignored in this context, despite the key roles played by royal women in both texts, and the other Wayland sources which can support particular interpretations of royal women in these traditions. The roles of the queen and the princess are worth further consideration, however, and the form of Wayland's revenge hints at a particular interest in these female royals. His choice of objects to transform the bodies of the princes into has a particularly strong symbolic resonance when looked at from a gendered angle.

The transformation of the skulls into cups, which takes place in both *Vǫlundarkviða* and *Þiðreks saga*, is especially notable. The queen probably had a much closer relationship with the cups and tableware than her husband did, both physically and symbolically. Literature from Scandinavia and England suggests that cup-bearing women were linked to concepts of rank and honour.[482] Wayland's actions mean that the queen has been welcoming guests to her hall with the bones of her own dead son. It is grotesque and disgusting, and perhaps a direct comment on the nature of the welcome Wayland received from her. He has turned her into a parody of what a queen should be - or,

[481] McKinnell, 'The Context of *Volundarkvida'* p. 22; Dieterle, The Metallurgical Code of the '*Vǫlundarkviða*' p. 16; Webster, 'The Iconographic Programme of the Franks Casket', p. 233; Einarson, 'Artisanal Revenge in *Völundarkviða*', p. 23.
[482] Margaret Schaus (ed), *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 552.

arguably, he has used these symbolic objects to demonstrate the ways in which she is already an inadequate queen.[483] Wayland has either dishonoured the queen with his actions, or pointed out her pre-existing lack of honour. It is possible that the sculptural depictions of Beadohild also display this subversion; although the details are hard to discern, in at least one version, she may be holding a cup.[484] Giving Beadohild this symbol to hold both emphasizes her royal birth and hints at the disparity between how royal women should behave, and how the royal women of Wayland's story behave. It is a symbol with particular resonance in the context of the Wayland story, given that cups feature both as the product made from the princes' skulls and as the tool by which Beadohild is drugged, as appears on the Franks Casket. Beadohild, as a princess, would usually be expected to offer a cup to a guest; instead, she receives one from a prisoner. There is a possible parallel to this in the story of Gudrun, who, as she carries out her revenge, 'parodies' the behaviour of a woman at a feast.[485] Gudrun gives away drink, food, and treasure in her husband's hall, playing the role of an admirable queen, but she reveals that the food and drink are actually her children's flesh and blood, and that she is deliberately wasting treasure, in a 'subversive parody' of her role as queen.[486] The queen in *Vǫlundarkviða* might not be deliberately acting in such a subversive way, but Wayland's revenge makes a mockery of her role all the same.

The other precious items Wayland makes from the boys' bones and eyes in *Vǫlundarkviða* are all jewellery for the queen and the princess. Once again, this is potentially a comment on female honour, as the display of jewellery was important for high-ranking women.[487] It is also worth remembering that queens, like kings, were supposed to give gifts to their followers.[488] Queens in Old

[483] Einarson, 'Artisanal Revenge in Völundarkviða', pp. 24-25 considers the link between the cups and lordship, but does not consider the role of the queen, despite a mention of Wealhþeow and the mead-cup ritual in *Beowulf*.
[484] Wayland's own relationship with the cup motif will be discussed further in 'Wayland as Outsider'.
[485] Jana K. Schulman, 'A Guest in the Hall: Women, Feasts and Violence in Icelandic Epic', in *Women and Medieval Epic: Gender, Genre, and the Limits of Epic Masculinity*, ed. by Sara S. Poor and Jana K. Schulman (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), pp. 209-33, p. 225.
[486] Clark, *Gender, Violence, and the Past in Edda and Saga*, p. 40.
[487] Christine Fell, *Women in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984), p. 106.
[488] Fell, *Women in Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 35-36.

Norse and Old English literature are associated with treasure and gift-giving; the dispersal of gifts among loyal followers was an act for queens as well as kings.[489] This queen has done the opposite, only taking, just like she offered cruelty instead of hospitality. She is an inversion of how a good, noble queen should behave, and Wayland's revenge reflects that. In *Vǫlundarkviða*, Beadohild keeps Wayland's golden ring for herself, displaying greed rather than generosity. The queen and princess therefore seem like proper royal women on the outside, but their badges of status and honour are actually symbols of death, deceit, and the destruction of their family, which is a major theme in *Vǫlundarkviða*.

Wayland as the 'Dark Figure'

The legal evidence certainly encourages a clear-cut interpretation of Wayland's actions: he was a murderer, who killed two innocent boys unlawfully, then concealed his crime. However, the source material never presents Wayland in a wholly critical light. Given this ambiguous nature of Wayland's morality, it may be appropriate not to view him as either a hero or a villain, but instead to consider his similarities to a literary figure known as the 'dark figure' or 'dark hero'. This is a mysterious character who often occupies a protagonist role, yet is morally ambiguous and very different from more straightforward heroes. Edward R. Haymes describes such a figure as a hero who is not an entirely positive role model for the audience: someone who embodies both positive and negative characteristics in one literary figure.[490] A number of key characteristics have been identified as representative of such figures, including a liminal nature, with links to otherworldly powers despite being firmly human rather than magical, nonhuman, or divine.[491] The importance of knowledge and

[489] Pauline Stafford, 'Queens and Treasure in the Early Middle Ages', in *Treasure in the Medieval West*, ed. by Elizabeth M. Tyler (York: York Medieval Press, 2000), pp. 61-82, p. 72; Baker, *Honour, Exchange and Violence in Beowulf,* p. 69.
[490] Edward R. Haymes, 'Preface', in *The Dark Figure in Medieval German and Germanic Literature*, ed. by Edward R. Haymes and Stephanie Cain Van D'Elden (Göppingen: Kümmerle Verlag, 1986), pp. iii-vi, p. iv.
[491] Haymes, 'Preface', p iv; Winder McConnell, 'Kriemhild and Gerlind: Some Observations on the *vâlandinne*-Concept in the *Nibelungenlied* and *Kudrun*, in *The Dark Figure in Medieval German and Germanic Literature*,

wisdom, used for both good and evil, is another key motif.[492] The 'dark figure' may be a warrior or leader, but he often relies most heavily on his wisdom and cunning to bring him victory.

Such ambiguous characters appear with reasonable frequency in Old Norse literature, but there is still much debate over how they should be treated.[493] Jesse Byock has studied Egill Skalla-Grímsson through the lens of the 'dark figure', examining how well the central figure of Egill fits these definitions. His grandfather, perhaps implicitly a werewolf or shapeshifter, links Egill to the category of the otherworldly, without quite classifying him as non-human, while his cunning and skill further mark him out as one of these 'dark figures'. Byock also points out that such figures are usually not politically or socially important, but use their darkness and wisdom to benefit themselves in other ways.[494] While this is the most detailed analysis of an Old Norse 'dark figure', the concept has been identified in a number of other medieval literary texts.[495]

Wayland clearly fits this model in multiple different ways. The ambiguous nature of blacksmiths, particularly in folktales, has already been discussed - in many folktales, blacksmiths are cunning and powerful enough to trick and trap the devil, yet also have a dark side in that they are willing to make a deal with the devil in the first place.[496] Wayland's sea-monster grandmother and giant father in *Þiðreks saga* and his swan-wife in *Vǫlundarkviða* give him supernatural connections without suggesting that he himself is anything other than human. His wisdom and cunning are used to his advantage, in morally dubious ways, and benefit him more than his strength or royal connections.[497]

---

ed. by Edward R. Haymes and Stephanie Cain Van D'Elden (Göppingen: Kümmerle Verlag, 1986), pp. 42-53, p. 42.

[492] Maria Dobozy, 'The Function of Knowledge and Magic in *Salman und Morolf*', in Haymes, *The Dark Figure in Medieval German and Germanic Literature*, pp. 27-41.

[493] Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England,* p. 47.

[494] Jesse Byock, 'Egill Skalla-Grímsson: The Dark Figure as Survivor in an Icelandic Saga', in Haymes, *The Dark Figure in Medieval German and Germanic Literature*, pp. 151-163.

[495] Apart from the other texts studied in *The Dark Figure in Medieval German and Germanic Literature*, a notable example, relevant to the study of Wayland, is the figure of Oðinn in *Grimnismál*. Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 46; Davidson, 'The Smith and the Goddess', p. 218.

[496] Haaland, 'Technology, Transformation, and Symbolism', p. 14.

[497] See 'Wayland the Smith: Wayland the Smith in *The Consolation of Philosophy*' for more discussion of Wayland's 'wisdom'.

However, he does not use his skills in any way which leads to his increased political or social power; even in *Þiðreks saga*, when he marries a princess, he spends the rest of his life living quietly, rather than using his new family connections to seize power for himself. This is very similar to the model laid out by Byock. Widia benefits from his royal relationships, but Wayland himself does not.

Assessing Wayland as a 'dark figure' adds a different dimension to the discussion of whether his actions were right or wrong. It suggests that he was not intended to be either a role model or a tragic hero, but rather that his story provided a way to explore morally ambiguous behaviour and the potential implications of uncanny knowledge. Wayland has often been considered a tragic figure, trapped by fate, especially due to his presence in *Deor*, but this is not the most appropriate category of literary figures in which to place him.[498] He is not a mere victim: he is a cunning, skillful man who uses his abilities not to advance his own status, but to punish those who have done him wrong. His connections to supernatural figures are not necessarily a marker of 'pre-Christian' or 'shamanic' origins (although both these ideas will be discussed in the next chapter), but instead a marker of the category to which he truly belongs: that of the 'dark figure'.

Judging Wayland

While Wayland is an ambiguous figure in many ways, his vengeance appears to be violent and cruel beyond what was permitted by the legal and cultural standards of early medieval Scandinavia and England. Contemporary approaches to Wayland, however, do not always seem to have framed him as a villain. In the *Old English Consolation of Philosophy*, he is described as wise.[499] In *Deor*, his suffering is described, and he is placed among a list of victims, alongside Beadohild.[500] Each presentation of the Wayland tale uses the same basic events and key motifs to present a very

[498] Marco Mostart, 'Remembering the Barbarian Past: Oral Traditions about the Distant Past in the Middle Ages', in *The Medieval Chronicle IV*, ed. by Erik Kooper (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006), pp. 113-126, p. 113; Donoghue, *Old English Literature*, p. 53; Nedoma, 'The Legend of Wayland in *Deor*', p. 130.
[499] Murray F. Markland, 'Boethius, Alfred and *Deor*', *Modern Philology*, 66 (1968), 1-4, p. 1.
[500] Pulsiano and Wolf, *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*, p. 711.

different story, indicating that a range of different traditions and ideas clustered around the same central figure of the mythical smith. It is therefore difficult to come to a clear answer as to how medieval audiences would have judged the morality of Wayland's behaviour. Might an early medieval audience have understood why Wayland acted as he did, and perhaps sympathised, even if law texts criticized such actions? Could Wayland instead have been an example of how not to behave? Or was he a figure who stood entirely outside the acceptable norms of human behaviour? All of these varied possibilities can be supported by evidence from different Wayland sources.

The story of how the princes were killed by Wayland, and their heads removed, was clearly a part of the tradition from an early date, as evidenced by the presence of headless bodies on the Ardre Stone and Franks Casket. Even the choice of 'Wayland's Smithy' as a name might indicate a long tradition of associating Wayland with death. Unlike Wayland's fame as a smith, the knowledge of his identity as a murderer does not seem to have persisted independent of the tradition as a whole: understanding the killing of the princes requires knowledge of Wayland's entire story. This pattern of survival suggests that Wayland's actions as a murderer were seen as deeply embedded in a more complex series of events, rather than as a stand-alone aspect of his identity. The events of the murder are also broadly similar in both *Þiðreks saga* and *Vǫlundarkviða*, unlike the changes made to the rape section of Wayland's revenge, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Given that the Wayland of *Þiðreks saga* otherwise becomes a richer and more developed character, it is interesting that no attempt is made to absolve him of this crime. If anything, his actions are worse: he deliberately covers up the murder by having the boys walk backwards to his smithy. The details of what he does with the bodies are slightly embellished, but largely the same. It seems that the writer of *Þiðreks saga* saw no need to provide additional explanation or defence for the murder, despite the rich detail present in other parts of the story. Clearly, Wayland's claim that he killed the boys as revenge for the damage to his legs was seen as explanation enough.[501] Interestingly, Wayland is then

[501] A discussion of 'foolish' or 'nonsensical' reasons given by murderers for their crimes can be found in Beeghley, *Homicide*, p. 25.

forgiven by the king's son, even though no further justification is provided, and he makes no attempt to apologise or atone. The thought processes of this new king are not described, but the implication is that he too thought Wayland's reasoning was understandable and, to at least some degree, justifiable.

In both narrative versions, the focus is put as much on the revelation of the murders as on the murders themselves. This is important because of the distinction made between secret and public killings, but also because the murders do not achieve their desired aim until they are announced. Wayland's revenge is not so much the killing of the princes, but the revelation of his deeds to Niðhad, and the grief this announcement causes; in both versions, he makes a dramatic pronouncement as he flies away, with his speech forming the final climax of the narrative. The importance of this final revelation is perhaps why, on the Franks Casket and Ardre Stone, the bodies are shown frozen, in stasis. The murder is only the first of three parts to Wayland's revenge, which is not complete until he rapes Beadohild and announces his deeds to Niðhad. The goal is not the death of the boys, but rather the pain and suffering inflicted upon their father. This is perhaps why both versions of the Wayland story focus on what happens to the boys' bodies after their deaths, rather than focusing on the method by which they are killed. It is these re-used body parts, and the way they are used and interacted with, that causes additional grief and dishonour for Niðhad. He does not even ask how they died - it is the cause of the murder and the treatment of the bodies that Wayland tells him about.

Wayland's killing of the two princes is therefore not explicitly described as 'moral' or 'just', but it is part of a coherent sequence of cause and consequence. Niðhad initiates the conflict with the first act of violence, whether by abducting or by punishing Wayland, and Wayland then escalates this conflict to a lethal degree. Contrary to the views offered by some scholars, particularly based on a reading of *Deor*, Wayland is not simply trapped by fate, a tragic hero forced to make unpleasant decisions. He is an active participant in this relationship of violence, capable of making his own decisions about how

to respond to Niðhad's initiation of the violence. While Wayland is referred to in *Þiðreks saga* as 'cruel' and 'harsh', therefore, and the chest that tempts the boys in *Vǫlundarkviða* contains 'evil', Wayland's actions are presented less as the actions of a vicious man than as an understandable result of Niðhad's poor choices - not inevitable, certainly, but still predictable. He is judged neither as 'bad' nor 'good' but as a person responding to undeniably bad circumstances and poor treatment by the king who should have protected him, and whose powerful position means that seeking justice is impossible. He is presented in the narrative sources as both a victim and a perpetrator; this dual role is supported by *Deor*, where Wayland appears in the first stanza as a victim and as the (implied) villain in the second stanza. This layout parallels the shift from passive victim to active perpetrator found in *Vǫlundarkviða* and *Þiðreks saga,* suggesting that these two stages of Wayland's story were found more broadly across the varied traditions.

The moral nature of Wayland will be discussed much further in the succeeding chapters; this initial judgement offers only a starting point for considering how he was perceived by medieval audiences. His treatment of Beadohild, discussed fully in the next chapter, forms the second part of his revenge, while his possible identity as an outsider (in a variety of different ways) also colours interpretations of his actions. Categorising Wayland as a 'dark figure' discourages attempts to see Wayland's actions as 'good' or 'bad', instead positioning them as representative of a specific literary style. Wayland was not a real or historical figure (although he was closely associated with the past, as will be discussed later), and so he was not bound by the norms found in law codes and legal texts, although these cultural moral values will no doubt have coloured interpretations of his actions, perhaps encouraging lively debate around the morality of his revenge.

Certainly, in a legal sense, all the evidence from medieval Europe suggests that Wayland's revenge was morally wrong. Had a real person murdered two young boys in such a way, the legal texts suggest that the crime would not have been considered justified. Wayland's actions are decidedly murder, despite the apparent reluctance of both medieval and modern writers to categorise them as

such, but that does not mean that Wayland himself was viewed as a murderer. However, viewing Wayland as an outsider, not bound by the same rules as the societies that wrote about him, allows for a more nuanced view: medieval audiences did not necessarily judge him according to the same moral code by which they judged each other. His identity as a killer is so tightly bound up in the other facets of his identity, and the train of his story, that it cannot be separated and viewed independently. The idea of the 'dark figure' makes this even clearer, by examining the common characteristics of other figures who were morally ambiguous yet not overtly criticized for their 'bad' deeds. It is important to remember that violence, like cultural values and morality, is entirely culturally constructed, and indeed represents cultural values enacted in a physical form. What is seen as legitimate by one society (such as human sacrifice in some ancient societies, or executions in certain modern societies) might be viewed as abhorrent violence by other societies.[502] It seems that medieval audiences understood this, and did not necessarily expect their legal customs and social norms to be obeyed by literary or mythological figures, especially those associated with otherworldly figures, or placed in the distant past. Wayland is a particularly notable example of this.

[502] Halsall, 'Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West', p. 11; Sørensen, *The Unmanly Man*, p. 10; William H. Jackson, 'Court Literature and Violence in the High Middle Ages', in *German Literature of the High Middle Ages*, ed. by Will Hasty (Woodbridge: Camden House, 2006), pp. 263-76, p. 263.

Chapter 3: Wayland the Rapist

The two narrative sources provide, at first sight, very different interpretations of a key facet of Wayland's identity: his relationship with the princess. The rough outline of the story has already been explained in the Introduction, but it is worth going over again. After his murder of the two princes, Wayland does not immediately escape from his captivity. He has one more thing to do. In *Vǫlundarkviða*, he impregnates the (possibly drugged) princess before flying away, leaving her pregnant and apparently ashamed, as she apologises to her father. In *Þiðreks saga*, Wayland seduces the princess, and the two of them fall in love. He escapes, but later returns to marry the princess and claim his son. There is therefore a substantial difference between the two versions, and the nature of Wayland's relationship with the princess must have significantly altered how he was viewed by medieval audiences.

Like Wayland's murder of the princes, his relationship with the princess is founded on his desire for revenge. In both cases, Niðhad is the intended object of Wayland's revenge, although the princess is also a victim in *Vǫlundarkviða*. The rape or seduction always follows on from the murder, as the second aspect of Wayland's revenge; this sequence is also implied not only by the narrative sources but by the Franks Casket and Ardre Stone. Rape and violence are, of course, inextricable concepts; sexual violence is just one facet of broader physical violence, and this connection was certainly recognised in the early medieval world.[503] However, the two different stories mean that this second element of Wayland's revenge is far more complex than the murder story, which barely changes between the two versions. It is easy to describe Wayland as a murderer, but the question of whether he was a rapist is a more complex one; Old Norse did not have a specific term for 'rape' or

[503] Saunders, *Rape and Ravishment in the Literature of Medieval England*, p. 6; Clark, *Gender, Violence, and the Past in Edda and Saga*, p. 164; Estes, *Anglo-Saxon Literary Landscapes,* p. 168.

'rapists'.[504] The terms which are used to discuss such crimes in legal sources have subtly different meanings to the modern English words, requiring a careful consideration of the available legal evidence, and how the crimes described compared to Wayland's actions.

Wayland's victim is the princess, daughter of Niðhad, who is known in *Vǫlundarkviða* as Bǫðvildr and in *Deor* as Beadohild, which is the name that she will be known by in this chapter. She is unnamed in *Þiðreks saga*, but a number of similarities between the two texts confirm that this is the same princess, despite the lack of a name. She also appears on the Franks Casket, Ardre Stone, and a number of the Yorkshire stones, although she is not named on any of these. Despite the range of source material depicting the princess and hinting at the rape episode, she has not attracted anywhere near as much scholarly attention as the figure of Wayland himself. Her role on the Franks Casket has been discussed in terms of themes of pregnancy and motherhood, as her son, Widia, becomes a significant character in Germanic legend.[505] While Beadohild herself is not often included in discussions of medieval rape, despite the rich source material which tells her story, she did receive a mention by Corinne Saunders, thanks to the unusual richness of her emotions as presented in *Deor*.[506] As for the rape itself, it has been discussed in the context of prehistoric fertility rituals, in connection to the earlier murders of the princes; such fertility rituals are associated with blacksmiths in Eliade's work and are possibly echoed by Wayland's revenge in *Vǫlundarkviða*.[507]

However, Beadohild is deserving of far more study than she has so far received. Her story forms a substantial part of the text in both *Vǫlundarkviða* and *Þiðreks saga*, indicating that it was a widely-known tradition, and that it was accepted as one of the most important parts of the Wayland narrative. The Franks Casket focuses almost entirely on the moment before the rape of Beadohild, as

[504] Fredrik Charpentier Ljungqvist, 'Rape in the Icelandic Sagas: An Insight in the Perceptions about Sexual Assaults on Women in the Old Norse World', *Journal of Family History*, 40 (2015), 431–47, p. 433.
[505] Lang, 'Sigurd and Weland in Pre-Conquest Carving', p. 89; Kopár, *Gods and Settlers*, p. 21.
[506] Saunders, *Rape and Ravishment in Medieval England*, p. 46.
[507] Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible*, p. 26; Von See, La Farge, Picard, and Schulz, *Kommentar zu den Liedern der Edda,* p. 91; Beekman, 'The Structure of Volundarkvida', p. 231; Pulsiano and Wolf, *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encylopedia*, p. 711.

does the Ardre Stone, with the death of the princes having already happened, adding further weight to the importance of this event. In *Deor,* Beadohild receives a full stanza of her own, drawing a parallel between Wayland's suffering and her own. She therefore appears in an impressively wide range of source materials, spanning multiple geographical regions, time periods, and languages. She may be identifiable only in relation to Wayland, whose smithcraft and wings mark him out clearly, but this does not mean that she is not worthy of study in her own right. This sheer range of sources shows that she was an important, perhaps vital part of Wayland's story and the way he was understood by medieval audiences. It is only when references are limited to his metalworking, not his life or his revenge, that Wayland appears without Beadohild; the story of their relationship is a major part of Wayland's tale. She therefore plays a major role in his story, and appears in numerous sources, yet she has often been dismissed as a minor character, her rape simply an incidental plot point in the story of Wayland's revenge.[508] The focus is generally placed on his actions and decisions, rather than on Beadohild's responses. Her role in the story should be considered in as much depth as those of her brothers, if not more. She also exercises a surprising degree of agency, which has often been overshadowed by considering her only as Wayland's victim.

The consequences of the rape (or seduction) are also important: Beadohild gives birth to Widia, who becomes a leading legendary figure in his own right.[509] Beadohild has therefore been considered important primarily because of her role as Widia's mother, but this both under-emphasises her role as a character in her own right, and under-emphasises Wayland's role as a father. In *Þiðreks saga*, the Wayland episode is included in the text as part of the histories of the primary character's ancestors; even Wayland himself is therefore important due to his role as a father as well as his role as the smith who forged Widia's peerless sword. Without his relationship with Beadohild, which produced Widia, there might have been no way to tie Wayland into this huge, sprawling saga.

[508] For example, see Frank, 'Germanic Legend in Old English Literature', p. 89.
[509] For more on Widia, see R.M. Wilson, *The Lost Literature of Medieval England* (London: Methuen and Co, 1952), p. 7; also the Widia entry in Gillespie, *A Catalogue of Persons Named in German Heroic Literature*.

The use of the word 'rape' is fraught with difficulties; the modern term is very different to the word used during the Middle Ages, and its boundaries and connotations are constantly shifting. In a medieval context, the terms 'raptus' and 'ravishment' can be used, but these two terms encompass a range of degrees of consent.[510] Under certain medieval definitions, Wayland was almost certainly a rapist, and under certain modern definitions, he was certainly a rapist – but in both cases, his actions can be interpreted in very different ways. The difficulty of defining 'rape' in a medieval sense will be discussed in the first part of this chapter, followed by an analysis of how Wayland's actions are presented in the surviving sources. Key themes will then be identified and discussed in more depth, followed by a final conclusion, considering how Wayland's actions were most likely interpreted and judged by medieval audiences. Throughout this chapter, Beadohild will be considered a character deserving of as much attention as Wayland; discussion will therefore focus on her as much as on Wayland.

Early Medieval Attitudes to Rape

In modern English, the word 'rape' is generally understood to denote sexual intercourse without the consent of one party. It may or may not involve force, and can cover a wide range of circumstances, but the issue of consent is key. In medieval Europe, however, consent was viewed very differently, and so the crime of rape was, accordingly, not understood in quite the same way as in modern European laws. Essentially, rape in the medieval world was a social crime rather than a crime committed by one individual against another. It involved both a male antagonist and a female victim, but a range of other people could also be affected. While rape can, of course, involve all kinds of gender combinations, most medieval sources are concerned with the rape of women by men. As this is most relevant for Wayland's story, it is all that will be discussed in this chapter. When 'rape' is

[510] Saunders, *Rape and Ravishment in the Literature of Medieval England*, p. 4.

used, it will be referring explicitly to the rape of a woman by a man.[511] Julie Coleman suggests that any incident of rape affected not just the man and woman involved, but also the woman's entire family, and even the king.[512] When a woman was raped, the issue was not simply that her consent had been ignored and her body violated. Her male relatives had been dishonoured, and perhaps even lessened, by their failure to protect her; when a foreigner committed a rape, it was a slight on the woman's protectors, all the way up to the king, for failing to keep her safe. The term 'raptus' is often found to denote abduction (and perhaps rape) of a woman without her guardian's consent, but it is difficult to translate into 'rape' as it referred to the abduction of a woman either with or without her consent.[513] It could therefore be 'rape' in the modern sense, or something more like an elopement, with the woman's full consent and even her involvement in planning the 'abduction'.

Most north-west European medieval laws assumed that there was always a man responsible for any woman; with no husband, father, or other male relatives, a woman would be under the guardianship of the king.[514] This meant that consent was given by a male guardian rather than by the woman herself. Sexually assaulting a woman was therefore a significant crime against her male guardian, as well as an attack on her as an individual. The same was the case in Iceland; *Grágas*, for example, explicitly permits revenge if a man finds a woman under his protection being raped.[515] This makes it clear that the male guardian was the party who had the right to revenge, rather than the woman, implying that the man in question is also injured by the crime. In medieval Europe, therefore, rape was a crime committed by men against men, with the woman's body merely as an object in the middle. It was a crime of theft (abduction) or devaluation (rape), rather than a crime of sexual

[511] On male sexual violence against men in Old Norse literature, see Sørensen, *The Unmanly Man*.
[512] Julie Coleman, 'Rape in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West*, ed. by Guy Halsall (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998), pp. 193-204, p. 193.
[513] Schaus*, Women and Gender in Medieval Europe,* p. 695; Ljungqvist, 'Rape in the Icelandic Sagas', pp. 433-4.
[514] Coleman, 'Rape in Anglo-Saxon England', p. 193; Suzanne F. Wemple, 'Consent and Dissent to Sexual Intercourse in Germanic Societies from the Fifth to the Tenth Centuries', in *Consent and Coercion to Sex and Marriage in Ancient and Medieval Societies*, ed. by Angeliki E. Laiou (Washington, D.C; Dumbarton Oaks, 1993), pp. 227-43, p. 233.
[515] *Grágas*, p. 154.

violence.[516] It was a crime which could be settled between men, without the woman necessarily being involved in either the revenge or the provision of compensation, even though most modern European laws would see her as the victim. Many rape laws encouraged a private settlement, where the rapist either married his victim, or provided a dowry so that she could find another husband. In some cases, this might have provided a way for couples to elope without the permission of the woman's guardian, but it no doubt also led to women finding themselves forced into marriage with their rapists.[517] Female consent to marriage may have existed in early medieval Scandinavia, but evidence from law texts and sagas suggest that it was probably a later development, based on Christian influences about the nature of marriage and the importance of both parties consenting; the situation in Scandianvia therefore probably also led to women pushed into marriage to their rapists.[518] This focus of consent as given by a male guardian rather than the woman herself also meant that fornication was a crime; under Salic and Lombard law, fornication could be heavily penalized if a woman's guardian had not given consent, while in Anglo-Saxon England, even fornication with a widow was technically a crime.[519] A woman could not give consent herself, except in as much as she had the right to independently consent to marriage, and so any sexual intercourse with a woman that did not have the blessing of her guardian was technically rape, and was a crime against her father, husband, other male relative, or even her king. While fornication seems to have been regarded less negatively in medieval Scandinavia, particularly pre-Christianization, rape was still very much a crime against a woman's male guardian.[520]

---

[516] Saunders, *Rape and Ravishment in the Literature of Medieval England*, p. 35.
[517] Schaus, *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, p. 180.
[518] Jenny Jochens, *Women in Old Norse Society* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell, 1998), p. 17.
[519] Wemple, 'Consent and Dissent to Sexual Intercourse in Germanic Societies', p. 233 for Anglo-Saxon fornication fines; also Clare A. Lees and Gillian R. Overing, 'The Clerics and the Critics: Misogyny and the Social Symbolic in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Gender and Debate from the Early Middle Ages to the Renaissance*, ed. by Thelma S. Fenster and Clare A. Lees (New York: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 19-40, p. 24.
[520] Saunders, *Rape and Ravishment*, p. 47; Jóhanna Katrínn Friðriksdóttir, *Women in Old Norse Literature: Bodies, Words, and Power* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), p. 79.

In this context, it is perhaps not surprising that medieval texts establish a link between rape and revenge; the ravishment of a man's womenfolk was the ultimate insult to his masculinity.[521] Perhaps the most famous example of rape as emasculation is found in Wulfstan's *Sermo Lupi ad Anglos*, where Viking raiders violate the wife and daughter of a thegn, demonstrating both their barbarity and their subjugation of the English.[522] The story of Wayland continues this link between rape and vengeance, particularly in *Deor*, where the two concepts are discussed alongside each other in the two stanzas that focus on Wayland and Beadohild. Especially when foreign men were involved, it seems that the rape of women was seen as a part of the normal process of asserting a conqueror's power over the men of a country and establishing the national weakness of the conquered people.[523] The Norse sagas also display a strong link between sexual relationships and violence, whether individual or social.[524]

However, it is clear that medieval Europe did have some understanding of consent and its role in sexual relationships. Norse sagas suggest that asking a woman's consent to marriage (and therefore to sexual intercourse) was not entirely unknown, and some laws from other parts of Europe do distinguish between unlawful intercourse with and without the woman's consent, seeing rape as a crime against a woman as well as against her male protector.[525] The violent aspect of rape was recognized, and even if 'raptus' covered a broad range of degrees of consent, a crime which involved injuring an unwilling woman was likely to be penalized far more harshly than a case of 'raptus' which was essentially an elopement. The vagueness of the terminology makes it difficult to discuss medieval rape in a modern framework, but it is possible to understand enough to make a judgement

---

[521] Ljungqvist, 'Rape in the Icelandic Sagas', p. 437.
[522] Donoghue, *Old English Literature*, p. 95; Saunders, *Rape and Ravishment in the Literature of Medieval England*, p. 45; Alice Rio, *Slavery After Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 169.
[523] Coleman, 'Rape in Anglo-Saxon England', p. 195; Saunders, *Rape and Ravishment in the Literature of Medieval England*, p. 10.
[524] Clark, *Gender, Violence, and the Past in Edda and Saga*, p. 164.
[525] Jenny Jochens, '*Með Jákvæði Hennar Sjálfr*: Consent as Signifier in the Old Norse World', in *Consent and Coercion to Sex and Marriage in Ancient and Medieval Societies,* ed. by Angeliki E. Laiou (Washington, D.C; Dumbarton Oaks, 1993), pp. 271-90; Saunders, *Rape and Ravishment in the Literature of Medieval England*, p. 33.

on how Wayland and Beadohild's relationship might have been viewed by medieval audiences.[526] Furthermore, studying this relationship can *add* to our understanding of sexual violence and consent in the Middle Ages; it provides a rich body of evidence which has been little-studied in this context.

A general overview of the legal attitudes to rape therefore suggests that, while any sexual intercourse without a male guardian's consent was illegal, forced or violent intercourse, without the woman's consent, was seen as doubly wrong. While many rapists could make restitution through marriage, rape was still a crime which affected everyone involved, and came with strong connotations of violence and male struggle for power. There was, however, a literary tradition of 'heroic rape' and 'rape as seduction' which may reflect some depictions of the relationship between Wayland and Beadohild; the line between rape and seduction could be a thin one indeed. Wayland's story shows this especially well.

Rape in *Vǫlundarkviða*

In *Vǫlundarkviða*, the princess is not the first woman with whom Wayland has any form of relationship: the first part of the poem concentrates on the time he and his brothers spend with three swan-maidens, who seem to be their wives, or at least spend many years with them. Some of the themes and motifs introduced in this first section are relevant for the later rape episode, as well as showing Wayland's relationship with another woman, so it is worth considering in this chapter. The *meyiar*, 'maidens', each draw their 'swan wings' over one of the men, apparently choosing them.[527] The three women then do not leave until the ninth winter after their arrival.[528] Alvítr,

[526] Ljungqvist, 'Rape in the Icelandic Sagas', pp. 434-5 gives other examples of the difficulty of assessing a woman's consent in Old Norse saga literature.
[527] Meyiar flugo sunnan, 'Maidens flew from the south', *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 1; more on the swan maidens, including full quotations, appears in Chapter 4: Wayland the Outsider.
[528] Sáto síðan / siau vetr at þat, / en inn átta / allan þráðo, /en enn níunda /nauðr um skilði. 'Stayed then seven winters after that, but all the eighth ached with longing, and in the ninth need divorced them.' *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 3.

Wayland's swan-maiden, is later referred to as his *kvánar*, 'wife'.[529] It is after the three women fly away, and Wayland's brothers go after them, that he is left alone in Wolfdale, vulnerable to the attack of cruel King Niðhad.[530] While he waits for the return of his swan-bride, Wayland crafts gold rings, intending to gift them to her, and one of these rings is the first thing taken by Niðhad before capturing Wayland.[531]

The princess appears for the first time shortly after Wayland's capture, when he sees that she is now wearing this golden ring that he made for his wife. The queen's words, *ok hann Bǫðvildar / baug um þekkir*, 'and he recognises Bodvildr's ring', suggest that Wayland is able to see Beadohild wearing the ring for himself, and it is because of this anger the queen sees in him that she suggests he have his sinews cut and be imprisoned on the island of Sævarstaðr.[532] He clearly continues to think about this, saying, *Nú berr Bǫðvildr / brúðar minnar – / bíðka ek þess bót – / bauga rauða*, 'Now Bǫðvildr is wearing – I shall know no redress for this – my bride's red rings.'[533] Along with the theft of Wayland's sword by Niðhad, Beadohild's theft of the ring seems to be what fuels Wayland's anger and encourages him to take his vengeance on the two princes. Beadohild comes to visit Wayland when the ring breaks, after the death of her brothers, demanding that he repair it, and suggesting that she does not want anyone else to know that the ring is broken.[534] Wayland agrees, saying he will repair

[529] Svá beið hann sinnar liós[s]ar kvánar, / ef hánom koma gerði. 'So he waited for his radiant wife, if she should return to him.' *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 6. Wayland's wife is not named in the poem, but the prologue names her 'Hervǫr Alvítr', daughter of King Hlǫðvér.
[530] *Vǫlundarkviða* stanza 7.
[531] The crafting of the rings is described in *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 6, they are described further in stanza 8, one is stolen in stanza 9, and it is given to the princess in the prose section between stanzas 16 and 17.
[532] *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 17 and following prose interpolation.
[533] *Vǫlundarkviða,* stanza 18.
[534] … Þá nam Bǫðvildr / baugi at hrósa, / … / er brotit hafði: / 'Þoriga ek at segia, / nema þér einom'. … Bǫðvildr began then to praise the ring … which she had broken: 'I dare not tell it, save only to you.' *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 26.

the ring so that it seems even better than before to both herself and to her parents.[535] Instead, he 'bemused her with beer' so that she falls asleep, then he flies away, leaving her pregnant.[536]

A number of details in this story are worthy of further exploration. First is the motif of the golden ring, which also appears in *Þiðreks saga*, with a number of key differences. The transfer of the ring from one woman to another suggests that it has connotations of marriage, or at least a sexual relationship. Wayland's anger comes partly from seeing one of his most precious treasures worn by a member of Niðhad's family, but it is interesting that he chooses to take his revenge by targeting this woman herself, rather than making her father the direct object of revenge. Towards the end of the poem, Wayland seems to hint that he now sees Beadohild as his bride, perhaps suggesting that she became 'his' when she acquired his ring, originally made for a very different wife.[537] He seems to have transferred his (presumably) sexual relationship with the intended owner of the ring to the new owner, as if his relationship with the ring gives him a right to the woman who wears it.

Secondly, the princess does not seem concerned that the ring is Wayland's stolen property, or that seeing it might upset him. She is more interested in protecting herself from her parents' anger at the broken ring than in helping Wayland to avoid trouble of his own. It is also possible to interpret the broken ring as her deliberate attempt at finding an excuse to meet the mysterious new smith. In *Vǫlundarkviða*, the princess is not presented as a particularly sympathetic character in this part of the story; she benefits from Wayland's unjust capture and seems as greedy for gold as her father.

---

[535] Vǫlundr kvað: "Ek bœti svá / brest á gulli, / at feðr þínom / fegri þikkir, / ok mœðr þinni / miklo betri, / ok siálfri þér / at sama hófi." 'Vǫlundr said: "I shall so mend the break in your gold that to your father it will seem even fairer, and to your mother much better, and to yourself as fine as before." '*Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 27.

[536] Bar hann hana bióri, / þviat hann betr kunni, / svá at hón í sessi / um sofnaði, 'He bemused her with beer, for he was more knowing than she, so that on the couch she fell asleep'. *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 28. It is worth noting that *bjórr* is more accurately translated as 'mead', which could potentially have a stronger alcoholic content than beer. The most appropriate translation of *bera* is also unclear, but it could perhaps be translated as 'overpowerd'. The result is clear: Beadohild falls asleep due to the drink Wayland gives her.

[537] Eiða skaltu mér áðr / alla vinna, … at þú kveliat / kván Vǫlindar, / né brúði minni / at bana verðir — / þótt vér kván e[i]gim, / þá er þér kunnið, / eð[a] ióð eigim / innan hallar. 'First you must swear to me every oath… that you will not torture the wife of Vǫlundr nor my bride will you put to death — though we may have a wife whom you know, and may have a child within your hall.' *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 33.

The detail that she is 'bemused with beer' and then falls asleep is particularly important, although its precise meaning is unclear. Does it mean that Wayland drugged her, then raped her while she was unconscious? The episode in *Þiðreks saga* when Wayland attempts to poison the princess (discussed below) may reinforce this interpretation. Or does it simply mean that the princess was drunk, and convinced into making a decision she would come to regret? No mention is made of whether Wayland also drank, meaning that it is difficult to choose either version of these possible interpretations.[538]

Finally, in *Vǫlundarkviða*, Wayland flies away and leaves the princess alone. In the story as it currently stands, there is no indication that he returns to marry her, and the identity of their child is not mentioned, although Wayland does hint that she is pregnant. There are two causes of her weeping given in stanza 29 – she grieves both 'for her lover's going' and 'her father's wrath', suggesting that her father's anger will be for her as well as for Wayland.[539] This might suggest that she was not entirely unwilling in the entire affair, and that she did have some affection for Wayland: presumably, if he was nothing more than her rapist, she would not be unhappy to see him leave. Wayland's determination to secure oaths from Niðhad that Beadohild will be safe, even if she is pregnant, also suggests some affection between the two of them. It also suggests that Beadohild has good reason to fear her father. She does not speak to her father at this point, apparently choosing to stay silent about her encounter with Wayland, and his escape. Beadohild does receive the final words of the poem, however, making her own brief speech after Wayland's parting words. Implicitly, she apologises to her father, saying that she was unable to withstand Wayland – that she did not know how to stop him.[540] This speech most likely positions her firmly as Wayland's victim, implying that she was a medium of his revenge on her father, just like her brothers' deaths and the

[538] The drugged drink motif will also be discussed in 'Wayland the Outsider'.
[539] Grátandi Bǫðvildr / gekk ór eyio, / tregði fǫr friðils / ok fǫður reiði. 'Weeping Bǫðvildr went from the island, grieved for her lover's going, and her father's wrath. *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 29.
[540] Ek vætr hánom / [vinna] kunnak, / ek vætr hánom / vinna máttak.' 'I did not at all know how to prevent him, I had no power to prevent him at all.' *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 41.

transformation of their bodies. However, medieval audiences may also have interpreted her words as meaning that she could not resist the temptation presented by Wayland. In giving her the final words of the poem, she is also accorded an important position in the text as a whole, and the focus on her emotional response is not dissimilar to that found in *Deor*; she does not mention her brothers at this point, but focuses entirely on what has happened between her and Wayland. Beadohild's regret is evident, as is perhaps her shame. Is the Wayland of *Vǫlundarkviða* a rapist or a seducer? And, in early medieval Europe, was there much difference between the two?

Rape in *Þiðreks saga*

In *Þiðreks saga*, there is no swan-maiden, and the early part of Wayland's story contains no references to women; instead, this section is replaced by the account of how he acquired his smithing skills.[541] The princess appears first when Wayland is working for her father, apparently willingly and successfully. The king rides into battle and discovers too late that he has left behind a magical stone which guarantees his victory. With only a single night to go before he meets his enemy on the battlefield, the desperate king offers his daughter and half his kingdom to any man who can bring him the stone overnight.[542] Wayland rides at incredible speeds (taking one day when the king had taken five) and brings the stone back to the king's camp, ready to claim his prize and marry the princess. However, the king's steward intercepts him. He says that Wayland, a lowly blacksmith, will never be allowed to marry the princess, and should hand over the stone in exchange for a lesser

[541] A supernatural woman *does* appear in Wayland's family history, however – his father, Vadi, is the son of a 'sea-woman'. This may represent a faint memory of the swan-maiden tradition. This supernatural woman will be discussed further in 'Wayland the Outsider'.

[542] En þetta þykkir konungi allilla, er heima liggr sigrsteinn hans, ok lætr kalla til sín ráðamenn sína ok virktavini ok segir, at hann vill gefa þeim hálft ríki sitt ok þar með dóttur sína, er kæmi steininum til hans, áðr en sól væri í austri um morguninn eftir. 'The king thought it very ill that his stone was at home. He had his counselors and his close friends called and he said that he would give half of his kingdom along with his daughter to the man who would bring him the stone before the sun would rise in the east the morning after.' *Þiðreks saga,* section 70.

reward.[543] When Wayland refuses, the steward attacks him, and the two of them fight. Wayland finally kills the steward in self-defence, but the king is not satisfied with this excuse. Not only does he deny Wayland his reward, he expels the smith from his service and expels him from court, even though the stone Wayland has brought does indeed bring victory.[544] Insulted and furious, Wayland decides to take revenge.[545] He disguises himself as a cook and sneaks back into Niðhad's court, where he attempts to poison the princess. Her magical knife alerts her to the poison in her food, and she tells her father; Wayland is quickly captured and identified as the culprit. It is for this offence, his attempt to poison the princess, that he is imprisoned, and it is as a punishment for this that his hamstrings are cut.[546] The Wayland of *Þiðreks saga* therefore has a substantial history with the princess long before the rape episode, and he perhaps already thinks of her as his rightful wife.

The princess of *Þiðreks saga* also has a golden ring, although no mention is made of Wayland having crafted it, for another woman or otherwise. As in *Vǫlundarkviða,* the ring, her best gold ring, breaks, and the princess sends her maidservant to Wayland, asking him to repair it.[547] In *Þiðreks saga*, she first sends a maidservant, but Wayland says he will not help unless the princess comes herself - alone. He claims that he does not want to carry out any smithing without permission from the king,

[543] Dulinn ertu at þér, er þú hyggst fá munu konungsdóttur, smiðr einn, lítill fyrir þér, en þeir hafa eigi fengit, er af beztum ættum eru í landi þessu, enda skaltu þat hafa, er þér er óhagligra. 'You are a fool if you think that you will receive the king's daughter. You are a smith and of low degree, and others, who come from the best families in the land, have not received her'. *Þiðreks saga*, section 70.

[544] *Þiðreks saga*, section 71.

[545] Velent kemr nú á konungs fund ok færir honum sigrsteininn. Hann fagnar honum vel. Nú segir Velent konungi allan atburð á sinni ferð ok þat, at hann hafði drepit dróttsetann. 'Velent was much displeased. He had earned the king's wrath and he himself was outlawed. He thought of revenge.' *Þiðreks saga*, section 72.

[546] All of this takes place in section 72 of *Þiðreks saga*, presenting the poisoning and punishment as one continuous episode.

[547] Svá bar at eitt sinn, at konungsdóttir ok hennar fylgismær með henni váru gengnar út í grasgarð sinn, at jungfrú braut sundr sinn inn bezta gullhring, svá at engu var nýtr. Ok þetta þorir hún eigi at segja sínum feðr eða mæðr, ok nú spyrr hún meyna, hvat til ráðs væri, er svá illa hefir til tekizt. Þá svarar mærin: "Velent mun bæta þetta litla hríð. Ok þetta þykkir þeim báðum ráð. Nú gengr mærin til smiðju Velents ok segir, at hennar jungfrú sendir hana þangat með sinn hring, at hann skal bæta. 'It happened one time that the king's daughter and her maid-in-waiting had gone out into the courtyard, and the princess broke her best gold ring so that it could not be used. She did not dare tell her father or mother, so she asked the girl what she should do, since things turned out so badly. The girl said: "Velent would be able to fix that in a short time." This seemed to be the best idea to both of them. The girl went to Velent's smithy and said that her lady had sent her hence with the ring, and that he was to fix it.' *Þiðreks saga,* section 74.

and certainly will not do so on behalf of a maidservant.[548] Beadohild finally accedes and comes to meet him on his island, requesting that he re-forge her ring. Wayland says that he will 'forge something else first', and then 'closed the door fast and lay with the princess'. He then repairs the ring before she leaves, making it even finer than before.[549] No mention is made of beer, or even of force, although the situation presumably means that Wayland had a great deal of power over the young woman alone on his island. It is also interesting that the princess 'dare not tell her father or mother' about the broken ring, and instead relies on Wayland to fix it in secret.

In a very different development in the story, Wayland calls the princess back to see him before he escapes. Here, he says that 'At our last meeting I parted your clothing and I expect you may have a child, and it would please me if it were a son'.[550] They take the opportunity to declare their love to each other, Wayland saying that he does not want any other wife, and the princess saying that she wants to love no other man.[551] This romantic element is entirely lacking in *Vǫlundarkviða,* where Wayland seems to have affection only for his departed swan-wife, who is of course absent in *Þiðreks saga.* It is a thread which continues: some time after his escape, Wayland returns to claim the princess as his bride, and carry her away to his own country. By now, the king is dead, and the princess's third brother has taken the throne.[552] He seems content to give his blessing to the

[548] Velent svaraði: "Ekki mun ek hafa þína vörzlu þar til, en ef hún kemr sjálf hingat, þá geri ek sem mér sýnist." 'Velent answered: "I will not do it on your word, but if the princess comes here herself, then I will do what seems right to me." *Þiðreks saga*, section 74.

[549] Nú kemr konungsdóttir í smiðjuna ok biðr Velent bæta hringinn, en hann segir, at fyrr vill hann annat smíða. Lætr Velent aftr hurðina sem fastast ok leggst hjá konungsdóttur. Ok er þat er sýst, bætir hann hringinn, áðr en þau skilist, ok er þá miklu betr en áðr en brotinn væri. Ok þessu leyna þau bæði um hríð, at svá hafi at borit. 'The princess went into the smithy and asked Velent to fix her ring. He said that he would forge something else first. He closed the door fast and lay with the princess. When that had been done, he repaired the ring for her before they parted, and it was much better than it had been before it was broken. They both kept this a secret for a while after it had happened.' *Þiðreks saga*, section 74.

[550] "Í okkrum fundi þá hefi ek skipt okkrum klæðum, ok þat væntir mik, at þú munt fæða eitt barn, ok líkari þykir mér, at þat mun vera son." *Þiðreks saga*, section 76.

[551] Nú hittast þau ok talast við marga hluti sín á milli, ok þat kemr í þeira ræðu, at Velent vill enga konu eiga nema konungsdóttur. En hún segir, at hún vill engan mann eiga annan en Velent, *Þiðreks saga*, section 76.

[552] *Þiðreks saga, s*ections 78 and 79.

marriage, despite Wayland's murder of his two brothers, and so Wayland becomes part of Niðhad's family.[553]

Beadohild then appears one more time in the next part of the saga, when twelve-year-old Widia (in *Þiðreks saga* called Viðga) sets off to become a hero. Widia has refused his father's offer to train him as a smith, arguing that his mother's royal birth means that he is destined for something better.[554] This royal birth is mentioned again in the description of Widia's coat of arms.[555] Clearly, Beadohild has not ceased to be recognised as royal just because she has married a lowly smith, and Widia seems to value her and her side of his family. They also seem to have a close family relationship; Widia kisses his mother goodbye, and she passes on her gold ring to him - presumably the one which brought her together with Wayland.[556]

Wayland and Beadohild in *Deor*

The story of Beadohild's rape by Wayland is also hinted at in *Deor*, although the question of her consent is not addressed here. While Wayland's stanza deals with his own suffering, Beadohild's stanza focuses on the details of the revenge. Mention is made both of her brothers' deaths and of her own shame at finding herself pregnant. It is not specified that Wayland was responsible for these

---

[553] Konungr vill sættast við Velent ok sel honum grið til viðmælis. Velent ferr í Jútland, ok er þar vel við honum tekit, ok giftir Otvin konungr honum systur sína ok býðr honum þar at vera, ef hann vill… Konungr gefr þeim mikinn fjárhlut ok góðar gersimar, ok skiljast nú góðir vinir. 'The king wished to settle with Velent and granted him truce to negotiate. Velent traveled to Jutland and was warmly welcomed. King Otvin gave him his sister and offered to let him live there if he wished… The king gave them much money and treasure, and they parted good friends.' *Þiðreks saga*, section 79.

[554] Fyrir sakar míns móðernis þá vili guð, at mín hönd komi aldregi á hamarskaft né á tangararm. 'For the sake of my mother's side of the family, may God will that I never put my hands on a hammershaft or on a tongs' handle.' *Þiðreks saga*, section 80.

[555] Sá skjöldr var hvítr ok skrifat á með rauðum steini hamarr ok töng, fyrir því at smiðr var faðir hans. Í þeim skildi ofanverðum váru þrír karbúnkúlussteinar. Þat merkir móðerni hans, hann var konungborinn. 'The shield was white and decorated with hammer and tongs, because his father was a smith. On the upper part of the shield were three carbuncles. These showed his mother's line, since he was of royal birth.' *Þiðreks saga*, section 81.

[556] Síðan gekk Viðga at hitta móður sína, kyssti hana ok bað hana heila lifa, ok hún bað hann vel fara ok fekk honum þrjár merkr gulls ok fingrgull sitt. 'Vidga went to see his mother, kissed her and bade her good-bye. She bade him farewell and gave him three marks of gold and her gold ring.' *Þiðreks saga*, section 81.

things, but the juxtaposition of the two stanzas suggests that the poet knew a version of the story similar to that found in *Vǫlundarkviða* or *Þiðreks saga*; Beadohild and Wayland clearly seem to be connected in this poem.[557] The Beadohild stanza in *Deor* therefore depicts the aftermath of Wayland's rape of the princess, by presenting how she feels about the situation, in a way not dissimilar to her lines at the end of *Vǫlundarkviða*. Beadohild's emotions in *Deor* seem to be focused on her pregnancy: perhaps shame, grief, or fear for the future.[558] These emotions are powerful enough that they take priority over her grief at her brothers' deaths, and leave her uncertain what she should do, or how she should react. Such a sense of uncertainty and powerlessness seems very similar to the Beadohild of *Vǫlundarkviða*, claiming that she did not know how to stop Wayland and was unable to stop the rape from happening.[559] The two sources may draw upon a common tradition of Beadohild's expressions of confusion, regret, and helplessness. *Deor* does not give any further details of the conception, so it is unclear whether Beadohild consented, or whether she was, as in *Vǫlundarkviða*, 'bemused with beer'. If this stanza is read alone, it seems that the circumstances of how Beadohild's suffering came about are less important than the situation she is currently in.

Deor seems to take place at a moment when Beadohild discovers she is pregnant. Perhaps, by now, her father also knows this: in both *Vǫlundarkviða* and *Þiðreks saga*, Wayland reveals Beadohild's pregnancy at the same time as he announces his murder of the boys. Certainly, if the poet knew the *Þiðreks saga* version of the story, it is before Wayland returns to claim her and make her his wife. She appears to be alone and facing the consequences of her pregnancy without the support of a husband. Like some of the other characters in the poem, including Wayland himself, Beadohild seems to be trapped in circumstances not of her own making, isolated from potential help, and

---

[557] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers*, p. 6.
[558] Saunders, *Rape and Ravishment in the Literature of Medieval England*, p. 46.
[559] Jerome Mandel, 'Exemplum and Refrain: The Meaning of *Deor*', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 7 (1977), 1-9, p. 3; Joyce Hill, '*Þæt Wæs Geomuru Ides*: A Female Stereotype Examined', in *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature*, ed. by Helen Damico and Alexandra Hennessey Olsen (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 235-47, p. 241.

struggling to find a way forward. But, as the poem's refrain reminds us, Beadohild's suffering passes – although this refrain is tinged with irony, given that Wayland, in the first stanza, overcomes his own suffering by passing it on to Beadohild and her family. Whether she and Wayland are ever reunited is not explained, but Wayland also escapes and moves on from his suffering at the hands of Niðhad.

The choice to provide a stanza for both Wayland and Beadohild has interesting consequences for considering whether Wayland was viewed as a villain or hero. Certainly, he would have been recognised as the villain of Beadohild's stanza (although he is not named), causing her suffering and leaving her pregnant and grieving. However, his stanza, the first of the poem, clearly represents him as a victim himself, cruelly mistreated by a tyrannical king. If only the first stanza is read, Wayland's vengeance seems understandable and even just. The second stanza, in contrast, shows the painful consequences suffered by the people caught up in Wayland's quest for revenge. How can he be both victim and villain in one piece?

Reading *Deor* alongside *Þiðreks saga* as well as *Vǫlundarkviða* offers some hints. In *Þiðreks saga*, it is made clear that the princess's suffering is not because Wayland rapes her - she loves him and wishes to marry him. The true cause of her suffering is hinted at near the end of the story, where a passing comment mentions that the new king is popular and good to his sister. By implication, this hints that the old king, Niðhad, might not have been good to his daughter.[560] Is Beadohild's suffering, then, not due solely to her pregnancy and the circumstances under which it came about, but also due to her father's treatment of her when he learns the truth? Many law codes in the early medieval Germanic world did allow fathers to treat daughters cruelly if they had sexual intercourse without their father's consent.[561] It might be that Niðhad is the villain of both of these stanzas. Wayland is the one

[560] Niðungr konungr fær sótt brátt eftir þetta ok því næst bana, en ríkit tekr son hans, en sá heitir Otvin, ok er hann vinsæll við alla menn. Hann er ok vel til systur sinnar. 'King Nidung [Niðhad] became sick after that and died, and his son took his kingdom. His name was Otvin and he was popular with everyone. He was also good to his sister.' *Þiðreks saga*, section 78.
[561] Wemple, 'Consent and Dissent', p. 229.

who uses Beadohild to take revenge on her father, but it is ultimately her father who is causing her harm, both directly and indirectly, by pushing Wayland into taking revenge. Wayland in *Vǫlundarkviða* also tries to keep Beadohild safe from her father's anger, suggesting that, even in this apparently straightforward tale of rape, Beadohild's role - and her emotions - are a little more complex than they might at first seem.

Deor does not offer much detail about whether Wayland was a rapist in the medieval imagination, but it does open a window into the emotions of Beadohild, his possible victim. Her clear unhappiness at the situation might suggest that Wayland did rape her. However, Wayland's positioning as just as much of a victim implies that he is not the true villain of Beadohild's story - or, at least, not in a straightforward sense. While his actions are villainous to a certain degree, they are not decried as outright wrong. Even his murder of the two princes is somewhat brushed aside, whether because Beadohild is callous and uncaring, or because it was a well-deserved revenge on the king who treated Wayland so poorly for the sake of greed. It is worth considering the potential misogynistic overtones in this presentation of Beadohild; *Deor* and her final lines in *Vǫlundarkviða* can be read as the lament of a self-centred woman who has succumbed to temptation and regretted her decision when she finds herself pregnant. *Deor* may well present her as Wayland's victim, but it also offers a variety of different interpretations.

Wayland and Beadohild on the Franks Casket

The representation of Beadohild's rape on the Franks Casket is even more allusive. Indeed, at first glance, the Franks Casket does not refer to the rape episode at all. Instead, it shows us the moment before the rape takes place. A headless body is visible below Wayland's anvil, suggesting that he has just killed the princes and used their skulls to make treasures for the king. At the same time he holds a cup (perhaps the very same skull cup) over his anvil, offering it to a woman who stands on the other side. Beadohild is therefore not yet pregnant, and Wayland has not taken the second part of

his revenge. However, this scene most likely does not display a single moment in the narrative, like a modern piece of art might.[562] Instead, it is a summary of the entire narrative, presenting the story of Wayland to an audience who most likely already knew the tale well. Wayland is identifiable by his smith's tools, by the headless body – and by the cup he holds out to the woman. Beadohild, and her relationship with Wayland, is clearly one of the most significant parts of the story.

The appearance of the cup, which occupies a prominent part of the scene, suggests that the Franks Casket depiction of Wayland drew on a tradition similar to that of *Vǫlundarkviða*. Once again, it is not clear if the contents of the cup are intended to drug Beadohild into unconsciousness or intoxicate her, but its central position between Wayland and Beadohild implies that it was a key part of the story.[563] Perhaps this shows that Beadohild was not a willing participant, and that Wayland used alcohol or poison as part of his revenge plot. This is in distinct contrast to the romantic story laid out in *Þiðreks saga*, and suggests that there were two very different traditions concerning the relationship between Wayland and Beadohild. The Franks Casket does not offer a clear conclusion regarding the nature of Wayland's treatment of Beadohild, but the cup detail supports the drugging and rape as depicted in *Vǫlundarkviða*.

A second woman also appears on the Franks Casket, draped in a cloak and standing behind Beadohild. Her identity has been much debated, with four main possibilities. She may represent Wayland's swan-maiden, here to help her husband to drug the princess, or waiting behind Beadohild for Wayland to carry out his revenge and escape.[564] She may be the queen, the other prominent woman in *Vǫlundarkviða*. She may be the serving maid who acts as a go-between in *Þiðreks saga* or, finally, she may represent a second version of Beadohild, perhaps returning to Wayland's smithy for a second time, or perhaps on her way to the smithy, if the scene is read from right to left.[565] The

[562] Klein, 'The Non-Coherence of the Franks Casket', p. 33.
[563] The cup is discussed by Klein, 'The Non-Coherence of the Franks Casket', p. 32; McGuire and Clark, *The Leeds Crosses*, p. 38; Karkov, 'The Franks Casket Speaks Back', pp. 9 and 18.
[564] Grimstad, 'The Revenge of Volundr', p. 189
[565] McGuire and Clark, *The Leeds Crosses*, pp.34 and 38; Klein, 'The Non-Coherence of the Franks Casket', p. 33.

smithy setting makes the maid the most likely option, but the Franks Casket seems most closely tied to the *Vǫlundarkviða* version of the story, in which no maid appears. It is possible that a variant of the *Vǫlundarkviða* tradition did include the maidservant as a go-between.

The juxtaposition of the headless bodies and the cup offered to Beadohild places the focus of the Franks Casket image firmly on Wayland's revenge, but the central position afforded to Beadohild means that she is compositionally placed at the heart of the scene.[566] While her headless brother serves almost as a prop, Beadohild herself is an active participant, whether victim or not. The current action is focused on her acceptance of the cup from Wayland; she reaches out proactively, taking part in the action just as much as Wayland himself. Like *Deor*, the Franks Casket therefore positions Beadohild as Wayland's counterpart, and as a figure at the very heart of his story. In another possible parallel to *Deor,* the murder episode is depicted, but presented as less important than Beadohild's rape. It is only one stage of Wayland's revenge, which is not complete until Beadohild has also become involved.

The position of the Franks Casket Wayland scene also offers some interesting insights for how Beadohild was viewed by medieval audiences. It appears alongside the Adoration of the Magi, and around the corner from a depiction of Romulus and Remus suckled by the she-wolf.[567] All three of these scenes can be connected through their focus on the theme of motherhood - and, even more closely, through the motif of famous sons fathered by an otherworldly being.[568] This is not to say that Wayland was equated with the Christian God, or even Jupiter, but the positioning of his story in

[566] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers*, p. 21.
[567] This she-wolf is discussed by Semple, *Perceptions of the Prehistoric in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 149; also Webster, 'The Iconographic Programme of the Franks Casket', p. 245. James Lang, 'The Imagery of the Franks Casket: Another Approach', in *Northumbria's Golden Age*, ed. by Jane Hawkes and Susan Mills (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton, 1999), pp. 247-55, p. 251 suggests that the connection between Wayland and the Romulus and Remus scene is in fact the theme of exile. Romulus and Remus are also found on an eighth-century ivory plaque from Larling, Norfolk. Jane Hawkes, 'Design and Decoration: Re-Visualizing Rome in Anglo-Saxon Sculpture', in *Rome Across Time and Space: Cultural Transmission and the Exchange of Ideas, c. 500 - 1400*, ed. by Claudia Bolgia, Rosamond McKitterick, and John Osborne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 203-21, p. 209.
[568] Lang, 'The Imagery of the Franks Casket', p. 248; the parallels between otherworldly fathers in the Wayland and nativity panels was made by Davidson, 'The Smith and the Goddess', p. 219.

this context does indicate that Beadohild was seen as a significant part of his story, probably due to her role as Widia's mother. Although Wayland and Widia may not have been associated until relatively late in the development of their story, the Franks Casket suggests that they were already connected in the same legendary cycle, via Beadohild, by the eighth century.[569] The Franks Casket may well have another overall theme, such as kingship or gift-giving, but the central position of these three major female figures - three famous mothers - should not be overlooked.

Wayland and Beadohild on Stone Sculpture

It is not entirely certain whether Beadohild is the female figure who appears on the Ardre Stone and the Leeds Cross Shaft; as with the additional woman on the Franks Casket, a number of interpretations have been suggested. As Wayland seems to be attempting to grasp her while wearing his flying machine, she might be the swan-maiden, and Wayland's flight his way of attempting to find her again.[570] She might be Beadohild in an otherwise-unknown episode where Wayland carries her off as part of the rape story. This might also be a schematic way of depicting the story as a whole, showing both Wayland's rape of Beadohild and his escape in one image; the Ardre Stone also shows what seems to be a headless body, in a set of motifs that is comparable to the Franks Casket.[571] The prominence of Beadohild and the rape motif in other sources makes it likely that she is the woman who appears in these sculptural depictions. The similarities between the Ardre Stone and Franks Casket, despite the difference in style and medium, supports this interpretation. There is no association made between Wayland and the swan-maiden anywhere else in the surviving sources, so, while she *may* be the woman on the Ardre Stone, it is not unreasonable

[569] They are also both mentioned in *Waldere.* Himes, *The Old English Epic of Waldere*, p. 8.
[570] Bailey, *Viking Age Sculpture in Northern England*, p. 106; Lang, 'Sigurd and Weland in Pre-Conquest Carving from Northern England', p. 90; Brown, 'The Ancient Sculptured Shaft in the Parish Church at Leeds', p. 139.
[571] Lang, 'Sigurd and Weland in Pre-Conquest Carving from Northern England', p. 90; McGuire and Clark, *The Leeds Crosses*, p. 38.

to assume that it is instead Beadohild. The question is then why she is depicted in this way, when neither of the surviving narrative sources refer to Wayland carrying Beadohild off as part of his flight.

Unfortunately, much of the Leeds Cross Shaft is missing, and the image as it currently exists is largely a reconstruction, which makes it difficult to analyse the details. Through comparison between the surviving pieces and the other sculptural depictions of Wayland, it seems that the image shows Wayland gripping the female figure by her waist or dress, as well as by her hair.[572] This certainly suggests an element of force which is not visible in any other sources, and supports the idea of Wayland's relationship with Beadohild as based on rape and force. This female figure seems set on escape, facing away from Wayland rather than towards him. Wayland's apparent ability to grip her and hold her fast also reminds the viewer of his strength: although his legs were damaged, his work as a smith must have made him a strong and powerful man. He might have struggled with some physical tasks, such as walking, but he would still have been strong enough to overpower a young woman.

The appearance of Beadohild in this context also reinforces what a central role she plays in Wayland's story. Women are rare on Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture, and secular women even more so; female figures are more likely to be religious in nature.[573] The choice to include a female figure on the Wayland panel therefore suggests that she was a key part of the bundle of motifs that identified the Wayland story. If the Yorkshire sculptures were indeed based on a Scandinavian model similar to the Ardre Stone, it is interesting that the female figure survived the transition, but the headless bodies did not. Might this indicate that the Beadohild element of the story was more important than the murder element to medieval audiences?[574]

---

[572] The trailing dress and long pigtail are conventional in contemporary Scandinavian depictions of women. Brown, 'The Ancient Sculptured Shaft in the Parish Church at Leeds', p. 138; McGuire and Clark, *The Leeds Crosses*, p. 11; p. 36-7 for the woman on the Sherburn stone.

[573] Anna Gannon, *The Iconography of Early Anglo-Saxon Coinage: Sixth to Eighth Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 39.

[574] This same point was also discussed earlier, in 'Wayland the Murderer'.

Beadohild: Victim or Villain?

In her role as a victim, Beadohild is heavily defined in terms of her relationship to men. She may have considerable agency of her own, as will be discussed below, but she is also often passive, controlled by the clashing aims of the men who surround her. In *Þiðreks saga*, her passivity is best epitomized by the fact that she receives no name.[575] This is not a quirk of the saga: the other female characters are named, and referred to by name. Neither is it because *Bǫðvildr* as a name is unique to *Vǫlundarkviða*: we know from the appearance of *Beadohild* in *Deor* that this name was more widely known. The author of the saga simply chose not to give this particular character a name, instead referring to her throughout as 'the princess' or, in the later section, as 'Vidga's mother'. Both of these terms make it clear that her role is defined in terms of whichever man is currently most important to her identity: her father, the king, or her son, the hero. This is certainly due in part to the saga's focus on male characters, particularly when she is identified as Vidga's mother; he gains much of his identity through her. However, given the active roles played by other, named, women in *Þiðreks saga*, her identification only as 'the princess' serves to lessen the importance of her role quite considerably. Perhaps the writer had simply forgotten her name, or overlooked this particular detail, but it firmly gives the impression of a woman who is defined by men, and male action, rather than her own choices and actions.

Her misery in the second verse of *Deor* also seems defined by her relationships to men. Her two brothers are explicitly mentioned, although the implication is that Beadohild is not as upset about their deaths as she could (or should) be. Wayland is implied as the cause of her misery, particularly due to the positioning of the two stanzas, although additional knowledge of the story is needed to confirm that these two characters are connected. Most commentators have then judged

[575] It is also worth noting that her brothers, passive victims of Wayland's vengeance, are named in neither of the narrative sources.

that it is the birth of Widia which will help Beadohild's misery to pass away, as the refrain says it will. Although the stanza focuses on Beadohild, therefore, it hints at the ways men have defined her life, whether she is a victim, the sister of two victims, or the mother of a hero. Certainly, the beginning and end of her period of torment are defined by men. The message presented in *Deor* is more complex than this, and will be discussed in more detail, but it does present her as passive and victimized in her suffering.

The connection between Beadohild's rape and her brothers' murders is worth considering more broadly than the link made in *Deor*. In all the surviving sources, the murder happens first, and *then* the rape. This is the case in both *Þiðreks saga* and *Vǫlundarkviða*, where Wayland kills the boys and turns their bodies into treasure, before beginning the next stage of his revenge. On the Franks Casket, the cup motif suggests that the rape scene is just beginning, clearly *after* the murder of the princes, as a headless body is shown beneath the anvil. The structure of *Deor* supports this: the death of her brothers upsets Beadohild, but then something else happens to upset her even more. This sequence of events is interesting for a number of reasons. First, it emphasises the importance of the rape element: Wayland's revenge is not completed until he has involved Beadohild as well as her brothers. She is an important part of the story and it cannot end until she is included. There are connotations of a relationship between acts bringing life and acts bringing death, which are relevant to the possible initiatory aspects of Wayland's revenge. It might also, however, suggest that Beadohild is less important than her brothers. The key part of Wayland's revenge is killing the king's two sons; the rape of Beadohild is an additional detail. The actions of the revenge are described in this order when Niðhad is told what has happened. Beadohild, like her young brothers who are cut up and repurposed into inanimate objects, is a passive victim with no say in what happens to her. It is not clear whether she was seen as more or less important than them, but she is certainly comparable, and they are very clearly Wayland's victims.

One thing that is abundantly clear, whether or not Beadohild is viewed as a victim, is that the events of the story leave her feeling miserable and perhaps even ashamed. Her misery is made very clear at the end of *Vǫlundarkviða*, where her short speech ends the poem. She pleads with her father for understanding, as she insists that the fault lies with Wayland, not with her. She does not claim that Wayland's words are a lie: perhaps she, too, already suspects that she is pregnant and will not be able to conceal the truth from her parents. The decision to end the poem with Beadohild's declaration of misery highlights her feelings, and means that the poem ends with a sombre tone. We are not left with Wayland's feelings of success at his revenge plot and escape, or even Niðhad's fury and grief: it is Beadohild's sadness, delivered through dialogue, which forms the final dominant impression of the poem.

This same sense of misery, misfortune, and uncertainty fills Beadohild's stanza in *Deor*. Indeed, it is the focus of the entire poem, which deals with a variety of characters who have experienced misfortune and suffered accordingly. Beadohild is not singled out in the poem as particularly unfortunate, but the sheer fact of her inclusion in the poem suggests that she was broadly known as someone who suffered. Once again, her misery is linked to her rape by Wayland; at least, the rape and her pregnancy is presumably Beadohild's *þing* which troubles her more than the death of her brothers. She is not simply unhappy about what has been done to her family, but deeply miserable about the effects on her personally. By equating her suffering to that of Wayland, who endures crippling and imprisonment, Beadohild's rape is shown as a serious misfortune for her to endure. It is interesting that she is chosen as the second victim in the Wayland narrative, not her father, who is ostensibly the target of Wayland's revenge. Her father appears in the Wayland stanza of *Deor* as the cause of Wayland's suffering, and is not mentioned in the second stanza at all. Perhaps his grief at the situation could be assumed, or perhaps medieval audiences saw Beadohild as being the royal family member who suffered the most.

The question of *why* Beadohild is so miserable is a complex one, however. Female purity and honour were certainly highly valued in the Old Norse world, so Beadohild might well have been seen as devalued or polluted.[576] Medieval rape has often been described as a crime of 'devaluation' and as a crime committed by one man against another; Wayland's violation of Beadohild is a direct insult to her father, who should have been able to protect her from other men. It is therefore not unreasonable to think that Beadohild may be unhappy because, whether or not she consented to Wayland's advances, she has now brought misfortune, and even shame, upon her entire family. However, sexual purity and virginity were not prized as much as they were later in the Middle Ages, and illegitimacy was not necessarily seen as a problem.[577] Legitimate sons were usually given preference in inheritance disputes, but illegitimate sons were not shunned or outcast. Many early medieval Scandinavian kings were illegitimate, for example.[578] While *Vǫlundarkviða* might possibly reflect high medieval social attitudes, due to its late date of writing (regardless of when it was composed), the existence of the same motif in *Deor* suggests that it was part of an older story in which Beadohild was miserable because of what had happened to her. Is she ashamed because she has been raped? Or is it that she is traumatized and miserable, rather than necessarily ashamed?

The differences between *Vǫlundarkviða* and *Þiðreks saga* might hint at the second option. Here, Beadohild is pregnant when Wayland leaves, and this is revealed to her father in the same way as in *Vǫlundarkviða*. No mention is made, however, of Beadohild's shame or unhappiness, and she is not depicted as attempting to explain herself to her father. Instead, she waits patiently for Wayland's return. The main difference in their relationship between the two texts is, of course, Beadohild's love for Wayland in *Þiðreks saga*. Their sexual encounter seems here to have been consensual, rather than the result of Beadohild being drugged or drunk, and accordingly she is less

[576] Ruth Mazo Karras, *Common Women: Prostitution and Sexuality in Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 3. Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir points out that later medieval romances in particular tend to focus on women's sexual purity. *Women in Old Norse Literature*, p. 11.
[577] Jochens suggests that free versus unfree was a far more important social divide than legitimate or illegitimate. *Women in Old Norse Society*, p. 21.
[578] See Friðriksdóttir, *Women in Old Norse Literature*, p. 79 on the 'chaotic' nature of early medieval royal succession.

unhappy about it. Her pregnancy still might not be an ideal situation for her, especially as it will be some time before she is able to marry the father of her child, but it has not caused her the same misery as it does in *Vǫlundarkviða*. This difference suggests that Beadohild's misery is due in large part to the trauma of her treatment at Wayland's hands in *Vǫlundarkviða* and, perhaps, *Deor*, rather than simply the result of shame that she is no longer pure or virginal. In *Þiðreks saga*, Beadohild has not only been better treated, but also seems reasonably certain that Wayland will return to marry her, instead of leaving her as an unmarried woman. This, in turn, strengthens the idea that Beadohild is raped in *Vǫlundarkviða* but not in *Þiðreks saga* - and that rape involved *her* lack of consent, rather than her father's lack of consent. It seems that medieval audiences did recognise how a woman might feel differently about a sexual encounter depending on her personal affection for the man involved. While legal codes might not always have made this distinction (although many did), this does not mean that rape, in the modern sense, was not seen as a terrible crime in medieval Scandinavia and England.

However, Beadohild is not entirely passive in the events of Wayland's story, nor is she always presented as a helpless victim. She takes action on her own, and in some ways might be seen as one of the villains of Wayland's story, particularly in *Vǫlundarkviða*. First, there is the issue of the broken ring, which she brings to Wayland to be fixed. In *Vǫlundarkviða*, this is the ring originally made for the swan-maiden, then stolen from Wayland by Niðhad and given to Beadohild; in *Þiðreks saga*, the history of the ring is not given. Regardless, the story is the same: Beadohild's ring is broken, and she does not want her parents to know, so she asks Wayland to fix it in such a way that they will never be able to tell it was damaged. In *Þiðreks saga*, she first sends her handmaiden to order Wayland to carry out the work - it is perhaps this woman who appears on the Franks Casket, behind Beadohild. No handmaiden is mentioned in *Vǫlundarkviða*. Either way, Beadohild does eventually have to approach Wayland herself to ask for the ring to be fixed: in *Þiðreks saga*, he insists that the task is too dangerous, because of the risk of the king's anger, and he will not undertake it unless the princess personally asks him to. Regardless of which way the story is told,

Beadohild definitely approaches Wayland first. Of course, Wayland could hardly seek out the princess, given that he is unable to leave his smithy. Her decision to approach him is perhaps nothing more than a necessary plot point: Wayland's revenge cannot be carried out unless Beadohild makes the decision to come to him. This is still a very active role for Beadohild to fill, though: she has a problem, and she orders Wayland to fix it. Not only does she approach him, but she takes the role of a master commanding a servant (or slave).

Beadohild's action, in coming to see Wayland, is not just active but perhaps even boundary-transgressing. In *Vǫlundarkviða*, she literally has to cross a watery boundary to visit Wayland, showing how fundamental the barrier is between them. Water is often used as a barrier, particularly in a liminal sense, as it is both transportation and boundary.[579] Beadohild chooses to cross this boundary and step into what turns out to be a new life stage on the other side: motherhood. Her decision to visit Wayland and cross through this intermediary stage functions like a brief rite of passage, transferring her from maidenhood to her new role as a mother. Such rite of passage motifs are more often associated with heroes than with either villains or victims, which opens up the interesting possibility of considering Beadohild as the hero of her own story. However, her brothers also cross the water before undergoing an even more dramatic transformation - that of becoming precious metalwork objects. Beadohild and her brothers are safe on their side of the boundary, protected from Wayland's vengeance, but they all make the decision to cross.[580] Depending on the version, Wayland might lure Beadohild into his smithy with messages to her handmaiden, but it is always her choice to respond and come to him. He never has to seek her out – and indeed, due to his crippling, is unable to. This active role hints at the idea that Beadohild is, at least partly, to blame for what happens to her. By going to visit Wayland in his smithy, she crosses a boundary that she should not have crossed, both physically and, perhaps, morally. If she had remained at her parents'

[579] Semple, *Perceptions of the Prehistoric in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 74; Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (First published 1960; this edition Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), p. 15.
[580] Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 46.

court, carrying out the roles of a proper princess, she would not have found herself as Wayland's victim. She makes the decision to visit the dangerous space of Wayland's island.[581] Her story, and that of her brothers, is perhaps a warning about the risks faced by women and children who dare to cross boundaries that should not be crossed.

Beadohild also takes an active role in her decision to act as a peacemaker between Wayland and her family. This is particularly apparent in *Þiðreks saga*, although it can perhaps be identified in *Vǫlundarkviða*. In *Þiðreks saga*, she is actually one of a number of peacemaking princesses in the early sections of the sagas, a number of whom arrange for peace by making their own marriage plans and thereby ending conflict between their fathers and new husbands. Sometimes, the conflict is *because* a man wants to marry a princess but her father refuses; the princess then chooses to disobey her father and bring the conflict to an end by secretly making her own promise to marry the man in question. The changes made to the story in *Þiðreks saga*, where Wayland and the king fall out over the broken promise to let Wayland marry the princess, fit this pattern established earlier in the saga. It is then up to Beadohild to end this conflict by marrying Wayland regardless of her father's opinion. The story of Wayland, while it is strange in many ways, therefore fits neatly into the patterns and structure of *Þiðreks saga*, which, in the early sections, could be described as a series of bride-winning quests. Wayland takes a rather convoluted route to marry his princess, but the final result is one of peace, and a son born with royal heritage.[582] In *Þiðreks saga*, at least, Beadohild does seem to be successful in bringing peace between Wayland and her family. She might not succeed in improving his relationship with her father, but her brother does eventually make peace with Wayland. The marriage between Beadohild and Wayland helps to bring the feud to an end without involving future generations, and Widia's later connections to his

[581] Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 46.
[582] For more on women as peacemakers, see Jane Chance, *Woman as Hero in Old English Literature* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2005; previously Syracuse Press, 1986), p. 1; Peter S. Baker discusses the lack of evidence for women involved in peacemaking in Anglo-Saxon England in *Honour, Exchange and Violence in Beowulf*, p. 103.

mother's family seem to suggest that this peaceful relationship lasts. Beadohild's decision to approach Wayland and to form a relationship with him is what brings about this new peace. In *Vǫlundarkviða*, it is difficult to know what happens after the events of the poem, but there is no hint that peace is made between Wayland and Niðhad's family, or that Beadohild and Wayland ever marry. Beadohild's role as a peacemaker therefore seems to have either been created for *Þiðreks saga*, to fit the broader context of the stories that make up the saga, or the product of a tradition other than the one that produced *Vǫlundarkviða*.

In *Þiðreks saga*, Beadohild actually marries Wayland. It seems that the gold ring, once fixed, comes to represent a betrothal ring. A few years pass before the couple finally marry, but the promise symbolised by the gold ring is not broken. Even in *Vǫlundarkviða*, though, Beadohild is associated with ideas of marriage. The gold ring, which she breaks, was originally made for Wayland's swan-maiden wife, and Beadohild's appropriation of it has connotations of marriage, even if she did not intend as much. Wayland does refer to her as his 'bride', although he might not ever return for her, suggesting that the combination of the ring and their sexual intercourse makes the relationship a binding one.[583] In *Þiðreks saga*, where she supposedly falls in love with Wayland, her role as his wife is especially important, even in the period before they are actually married. Their words to each other in Wayland's smithy, where they declare their love and say that they intend to marry no one else, could be seen as a form of betrothal, which involved the making of promises to marry. Beadohild's expression of emotion is important for analysing whether their relationship constituted rape, but her promise to marry is important for considering her role in the later part of the story. While a father's permission was legally required for a marriage to be recognised, this probably was not the case for every single marriage, and some people did elope

[583] Jenny Jochens suggests that, by the thirteenth century, Norwegian couples could become betrothed in front of witnesses without consulting the woman's family. Jochens, 'Með Jákvæði Hennar Sjálfr', p. 277; Ruth Mazo Karras discusses the question of when a betrothal became a marriage in medieval England, *Common Women*, p. 85. Even if *brúðr* is here not translated explicitly as 'bride', it still implies possessiveness; Wayland is referring to Beadohild as 'his', rather than as Níðuðr's daughter.

without the father's permission.[584] This technically constituted the crime of 'raptus' and could be treated like rape under some legal systems. However, it could be difficult to break up a marriage, once it had been carried out, regardless of whether the father had consented. Betrothal could often form a contract as binding as marriage, and towards the central and later Middle Ages, it reduced in formality, so that eventually vows exchanged by a couple could be recognized as a binding betrothal, in contrast to the formal betrothal ceremonies of the earlier Middle Ages.[585] Beadohild's declaration of love and her stated intent not to marry anyone else might therefore indicate that she and Wayland were now betrothed, even if her father had not given permission for them to marry.

Was Wayland a Rapist?

The idea of rape is clearly an important one in the study of Wayland's story, but it is difficult to define him precisely as a 'rapist'. Beadohild maintained a central role in the story across time and in a number of different societies, but the details of her relationship with Wayland seem to have fluctuated depending on what was most appropriate in the context of the rest of each source. Overall, Wayland can certainly be defined as a rapist in at least one medieval sense of the term: his sexual relationship with Beadohild is not condoned by her father, so it is not legitimate. It is this element which makes it part of Wayland's revenge against Niðhad. Whether he could be considered a rapist in the modern sense of the term (and in the second medieval definition), however, is more difficult to ascertain.

At first sight, there is a stark divide between the drugged, mournful Beadohild of *Vǫlundarkviða* and the loving wife-to-be in *Þiðreks saga*, but the differences are not necessarily as clear as they immediately appear. While the Beadohild of *Þiðreks saga* chooses to marry Wayland, declaring her love for him, she says no such thing *before* their sexual encounter, and has not expressed any earlier

[584] Schaus, *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, pp. 71 and 695.
[585] Jochens, 'Með Jákvæði Hennar Sjálfr', p. 277.

interest in marrying him, despite her father's promise. Rather than a fully consensual encounter in the modern sense, this may be an example of the trope of 'rape as seduction', where the woman consents only *after* the first sexual encounter.[586] *Þiðreks saga* is certainly more romantic than *Vǫlundarkviða*, but this does not mean that it is not still an example of rape according to current Western norms.

The difference in tone between the two stories is, nevertheless, quite considerable. Clearly, the story required that *something* happen between Wayland and Beadohild in order for the revenge to be complete, but there was some scope for difference within the bounds of this requirement. *Vǫlundarkviða*, as indicated by Wayland's comment to Niðhad at their first meeting, focuses on the punishment of the king's family as a whole, so it is more appropriate for Beadohild to suffer. She is presented as just as guilty as her father through her lack of remorse at ordering Wayland to fix the ring she has stolen from him. More than the princess in *Þiðreks saga*, the princess in *Vǫlundarkviða* is involved in the exploitation of Wayland and the theft of his prized possessions. In *Þiðreks saga*, on the other hand, the story comes at the end of a series of bride-winning quests, so a romantic storyline is more fitting in terms of the broader saga context. This does not necessarily demonstrate that the *Þiðreks saga* writer did not know of a different tradition, but rather that the Wayland story was recognized as having scope for a variety of interpretations, depending on what the audience were expected to most enjoy. In a text clearly influenced by contemporary literary fashions that leaned towards courtly romance, it is not surprising to find a story adapted to fit these tastes.[587] The change to a consensual relationship, ending in marriage, may also have been due to the prominence of Widia in *Þiðreks saga*, and a desire to give him a history similar to that of the other heroes, whose families have their own bride-winning quests in the opening chapters of the saga. The motif of a princess promised to a brave knight is found elsewhere in medieval literature, and its use in *Þiðreks*

[586] Saunders, *Rape and Ravishment in the Literature of Medieval England*, p. 15.
[587] Kramarz-Bein, '*Þiðreks saga* in the context of Old Norwegian Literature,', p. 261; Nedkvitne, 'Beyond Historical Anthropology', p. 46.

saga provides a backstory more appropriate to eventual marriage than to a sexual encounter based entirely on revenge, particularly given the theme of princesses as peacemakers through marriage that is presented repeatedly throughout *Þiðreks saga*. *Vǫlundarkviða* also has a difference in that there is no mention of a third son; Beadohild is therefore Niðhad's only surviving child once the two princes are killed, and therefore she is an obvious target for Wayland's final act of revenge. In *Þiðreks saga*, on the other hand, she has another brother, Otvin, who is not pulled into Wayland's vengeance.[588]

The difference between the two stories therefore perhaps reflects a bigger, but less visible shift: that of Beadohild from Wayland's victim to Widia's mother. *Deor* shows this dichotomy clearly, as Beadohild appears in both roles, in a clear demonstration that she was recognized as significant in her own right. As she developed in her role as Widia's mother, she may have become better known and more sympathetic to medieval audiences, leading to the development of a role that is more complex than that portrayed in *Vǫlundarkviða*, where she is a mirror of her cruel mother. The question is, perhaps, less whether Wayland is a rapist than whether Beadohild is a rape victim. Wayland uses rape to assert his masculinity over Niðhad, but Beadohild was not simply a voiceless victim of this struggle between men. *Deor* is not the only source which demonstrates Beadohild's importance; the visual evidence shows that she was a key part of the Wayland story from an early date. The Franks Casket, which associates Beadohild with other famous mother-figures, is particularly important in this context, although it has been overlooked in terms of what it reveals about the importance of Beadohild. It is *Deor*, however, which provides the best indication that she came to be a well-known figure beyond her role as Wayland's victim, and was recognised as the protagonist of her own story, which results in the birth of Widia.

[588] See Carol Clover, 'Regardless of Sex: Men, Women, and Power in Early Northern Europe', *Speculum*, 68 (1993), 363-87, p. 369 for a discussion of how the role of daughters in feuds became more prominent if they had no brothers.

Deor also presents Beadohild as a victim, given that the entire premise of the poem is an exploration of the suffering of various characters. This does not necessarily mean that she was the victim specifically of rape, however, given that both *Þiðreks saga* and *Vǫlundarkviða* hint that her father's anger was partially directed at her. Her suffering is certainly because of Wayland, but not necessarily due to sexual assault. The theme of drugged beer, however, which can be traced in *Vǫlundarkviða*, *Þiðreks saga* and on the Franks Casket, suggests non-consent. While the *Vǫlundarkviða* episode might indicate drunkenness rather than drugging, the presence of the poison episode in *Þiðreks saga* hints at a broader tradition of Wayland adding something unsavoury to Beadohild's cup. The presence of this motif in both Scandinavian and English traditions suggests an early origin, rather than a later development. The Ardre Stone and Yorkshire sculptures, while they have no link to the drugged beer tradition, support the idea that Beadohild was viewed as the victim of a forceful assault: the woman on these stones faces away from Wayland in what seems like an attempt to escape his grip.

One detail which complicates the question of whether Beadohild was raped is the presence of the gold ring, which appears in both *Þiðreks saga* and *Vǫlundarkviða*. In *Þiðreks saga*, it seems on the surface to simply be a plot device which brings Beadohild to Wayland's smithy. However, the use of gold rings in other sections of the saga, where women give them as pledges to the men they intend to marry, suggests that the ring in the Wayland episode may have held a similar meaning to medieval audiences. Its presence in *Vǫlundarkviða* might then have had similar connotations: Wayland was not simply making precious objects to attract his swan-wife back to him, but was attempting to bind her to him with rings as a symbol of their marriage. When Beadohild began wearing one of these rings, she might have been, in his eyes at least, declaring herself as his wife, which is how he refers to her in his final speech. Just like *Þiðreks saga*, she brings the broken ring to him for mending, which in this broader context of rings as a symbol for female sexuality and marriage pledges could be read as a proposition.

It is once again useful to consider Wayland through the lens of the 'dark figure'. His actions lurk in some murky space between wrong and right: his vengeance is justified, but his methods are a little too cruel for comfort. His actions towards Beadohild are morally ambiguous and, like his murder of the princes, are carried out through cunning and guile rather than through brute strength. His decision to drug demonstrates his knowledge of plants or poisons, and even if the drink is simply beer, it shows how Wayland's plan was premeditated and carried out through trickery rather than his physical strength. He is not quite criticised in either narrative text, but neither is he praised.

Overall, it can be clearly demonstrated that Wayland *did* rape Beadohild, at least in one sense of the word: his sexual relationship with the princess is clearly a grave insult to her father, the king. Beadohild, however, cannot be so neatly defined as a rape victim. *Þiðreks saga* demonstrates that she was, at least occasionally, understood as a character with her own agency. The Franks Casket and *Deor* hint at how she was considered to be an important figure in her own right, rather than existing only as Wayland's victim. The sources other than *Þiðreks saga*, however, suggest that it would not be wrong to view her as a rape victim and an unwilling participant in Wayland's revenge. The Wayland narratives therefore create an interesting balance between two unfortunate victims, a balance which is best demonstrated by the twin stanzas of *Deor.* Once again, Wayland's actions, and they way they were presented, demonstrate the gaps between what was legal, what was right, and what was acceptable in fiction.

Chapter 4: Wayland the Outsider

The study of marginal and liminal figures has attracted a great deal of attention in the fields of sociology and anthropology. Particularly through the influence of post-structuralist theory, this interest in the people and places at the 'margins' of normal life has affected almost every field of academic study. Seminal texts such as Arnold van Gennep's *The Rites of Passage* and Victor Turner's *The Ritual Process* emphasised the importance of liminal states in societies around the world, and their theories have been applied to medieval societies and institutions.[589] This interest in liminality has also encouraged an interest in marginality. Medieval historians have adopted these concepts to study a variety of phenomena, from settlement patterns to literary motifs, examining the relationship between the people, objects and concepts on the inside (or in firmly defined positions) and those on the outside (or in transient positions).

It is important, at this point, to clarify the difference between liminality and marginality. Liminality, which is based on the idea of the threshold, refers to the space in between two positions or states. It is usually intended as temporary, although this is not always the case; the most important aspect is the idea of existing *between* two different fixed, permanent states.[590] Discussing blacksmiths as straddling a line between human and nonhuman, for example, would mean considering them as liminal figures, trapped between two different stages. They are still human, but their craft has brought them one step closer to the supernatural world than most humans will ever come. They are still, however, not quite within the boundaries of the supernatural. Van Gennep explains that the 'incompatibility between the profane and the sacred worlds' is so great that an intermediate stage is required.[591] Marginality, on the other hand, refers to a position that is outside what is normal or

[589] Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage;* Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure* (First published 1967; republished Abingdon: Routledge, 2017).
[590] For a discussion of how liminality can become permanent, see Bjørn Thomassen, 'Revisiting Liminality: The Danger of Empty Spaces', in *Liminal Landscapes: Travel, Experience and Spaces In-Between*, ed. by Hazel Andrews and Les Roberts (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), pp. 21-35.
[591] Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, p. 1.

central. It is the end, rather than the threshold.[592] It is simply 'other', without necessarily being on the way to a new 'normal' stage. Discussing blacksmiths as being considered not quite part of the community, for example, would mean analysing how far blacksmiths are marginal figures. The difference between these two states is further illustrated by relation to a concept described by Van Gennep as 'the pivoting of the sacred'. As a liminal situation requires two separate states on either side of a threshold area, both of these separate states can appear 'sacred' or 'other' from the opposite side.[593] In a marginal situation, however, there is no way for the position to pivot, and so it is always the marginal position that is the 'other'. However, there are still varied degrees of marginality, and it is possible for a figure who is marginal in one way to occupy non-marginal positions in other ways.

'Wayland the Smith' already discussed Eliade's claim that smiths have often been considered as liminal figures, but it is worth repeating here.[594] Eliade argues that, due to their abilities to transform raw materials into metal items, smiths were often viewed as existing in-between the human and the supernatural, giving them particular power in initiatory roles. Eliade suggests that smiths can, in some societies, even be seen as existing in-between genders, due to the way in which they combine the masculine nature of metalworking, particularly ironworking, and the feminine nature of creation. They could even exist between good and evil. Much of the work by archaeologists and medieval historians, however, has focused on the question of whether or not smiths were marginal, rather than liminal – whether they were pushed to the fringes of society and settlement, for reasons both of safety and belief. The archaeological evidence for smiths on the edges of towns and villages, for example, as presented in 'Wayland the Smith', suggests that they were marginal rather than liminal.[595] Smelting work taking place in forests also suggests marginality, as wilderness is often seen

[592] Thomassen, 'Revisiting Liminality', p. 21.
[593] Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, p. 12.
[594] See 'Wayland the Smith: Ritual Murder? Eliade, Metalworkers, and Initiation'.
[595] See 'Wayland the Smith: The Smith in the Wilderness'.

as fundamentally different from 'normal' space.[596] An association of smithies with particular boundary sites or religious locations, on the other hand, might indicate that they were viewed as liminal; those who are thought to straddle one boundary are often thought capable of straddling other boundaries simultaneously.

The texts and images that depict Wayland present him as liminal or marginal in a variety of ways, not just through geographical marginalisation or through reference to his role as a smith, although both of these elements are present. The possible gender fluidity displayed by the Wayland of *Vǫlundarkviða* is one example of this liminal presentation, particularly insofar as it connects to shamanic and semi-supernatural aspects of his identity. Wayland's gender identity is not relevant only for the ways it illuminates his relationship with Beadohild and the other women in his story, but also because it illustrates the ways in which he does and does not fit the norms of the societies which told his story. Such a gender-fluid position is a liminal one, and liminal gendering often indicates an identity which is liminal in other ways, as is the case in a number of shamanic societies around the world, and as will be discussed more fully later in this chapter. Wayland's position as a slave and a foreigner (both introduced in 'Wayland the Murderer') marks him out as marginal, separated both from the other people in his story and probably also from the people who told his story.[597] His connections to supernatural figures (again discussed in 'Wayland the Murderer', in the context of considering Wayland as a 'dark figure') also mark him out as both marginal and, potentially, liminal. While all these topics have been mentioned earlier, it is important to bring them together and study them together, in more detail, to obtain a fuller picture of how – and why – Wayland was viewed as an outsider. The importance of Wayland's disability - the severing of his sinews, and his reliance on flight as a form of transport - will also be discussed, as it marks Wayland out both as different from a 'normal' human body', and as potentially supernatural. Finally, the ways

[596] Donoghue, *Old English Literature*, p. 32; Bjørn Bandlien, 'Arthurian Knights in Fourteenth-Century Iceland: *Erex Saga* and *Ívens Saga* in the World of Ormur Snorrason', *Arthuriana,* 23 (2013), 6-37, p. 11; Carrie Roy, 'Practical Fastenings of the Supernatural', *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia*, 5 (2009), 177-212, p. 180.
[597] See Wayland the Murderer: Morality and Murder.

in which Wayland is portrayed as temporally separated from his audience, through his association with the distant past, will be considered. As in the previous chapters, the Wayland material will be considered first. All of the above themes will be identified in the different sources, and then discussed one at a time.

Wayland as Outsider in *Vǫlundarkviða*

The Wayland of *Vǫlundarkviða* is presented as an outsider in a number of different ways; this may be the Wayland source which presents him most explicitly as an outsider, both in terms of his ethnicity and his connection to the supernatural. The general impression given is that of a wild, unpredictable character who is fundamentally different from all the people at Niðhad's court – and different in a way that is frightening. He is an ethnic other (the prose introduction describes him as a 'Finn', or Sami), he is associated with the supernatural, and he shows elements of shamanic practice. These themes are all quickly introduced in the prose prologue, where Wayland is described as one of three brothers who are 'sons of the king of the Finns'.[598] In this single sentence, he is therefore clearly identified as non-Norse and also given a royal background. He and his brothers are living in 'Wolfdales', at 'Wolf Lake', a name which seems to indicate wilderness and a lack of civilization, although this is never explicitly confirmed by the poem. The prologue also mentions the arrival of women in their 'swan-garments', here called 'valkyries', which places them firmly in the supernatural realm.[599] Wayland and his brothers, meanwhile, travel on skis and hunt wild beasts.[600] In this short introduction, therefore, Wayland is already presented as a Sami both by name and

[598] Brœðr [vóro] þrír, synir Finna konungs. 'There were three brothers, sons of the king of the Lapps.' *Vǫlundarkviða,* prologue.
[599] Þar vóro hiá þeim álpatar-hamir þeira; þat vóro valkyrior. 'There beside them lay their swan-garments; they were valkyries.' *Vǫlundarkviða*, prologue.
[600] Þeir skriðo ok veiddo dýr. Vǫlundarkviða, prologue. The Sami were associated with skiing to the extent that the prefix 'ski' often appears in front of names for them in Old Norse and Old English, e.g. *skridefinnas*. Inger Zachrisson, 'The Sami and their Interaction with the Nordic Peoples', in *The Viking World*, ed. by Stefan Brink and Neil Price (Oxford and New York: Routledge 2008), pp. 32-39, p. 32; Neil S. Price, 'The Scandinavian Landscape: People and Environment,' in *Vikings: The North Atlantic Saga,* ed. by William W. Fitzhugh and Elisabeth I. Ward (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000), pp. 31-41, p. 38.

through descriptions of Sami stereotypes, while he is clearly associated with wild places and supernatural figures.

As the poem itself begins, these themes are all picked up again, along with some further indications of Wayland's position as an outsider. The swan-women are described as 'foreign' and 'southern', further strengthening Wayland's association with different places and foreign lands – his Sami connections place him in the north of the Norse world, while his wife comes from the south of the Norse world.[601] It is also here, early in the poem, where reference is made to Wayland's 'white' neck, along with his passivity in contrast to the swan-maiden who claims him as her husband.[602] This line introduces the idea of his complex gender identity, which marks him out as potentially outside normal gender boundaries. Such liminal gender is particularly important for the concept of Wayland as shaman, which will be discussed below.

The association between Wayland and his brothers and markers of Sami cultural identity continue when the brothers leave to look for their wives; their method of leaving suggests skis rather than walking or riding.[603] Wayland, left alone in Wolfdales, goes hunting and brings back a brown bear which he appears to skin and cook. He roasts the flesh, then sits on the bearskin.[604] The choice of a bear as his target suggests that he is indeed located in the wilderness, and further reinforces his association with Sami culture; bears are a Sami sacred animal and their consumption could be an

[601] Meyjar flugo sunnan/ Myrkvið í gǫgnom, / alvítr unga[r], / ørlǫg drýgia. 'Maidens flew from the south through Mirkwood, foreign beings, young, their fate to fulfil.' *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 1. The swan-maiden element may be Celtic in origin. Its inclusion would therefore link Wayland to another ethnic group seen as outsiders by the Norse. McKinnell, 'The context of *Volundarkvida*', p. 17.

[602] Ein nam þeira / Egil at veria, / fǫgr mær fira, faðmi liósom. / Onnur um Slagfinn / svanfiaðar dró, / en in þriðia, þeira sistir, / varði hvítan / háls Vǫlundar. 'One of them took Egill to cherish, lovely maid of the living, on her shining breast. The second over Slagfiðr drew her swan's wings, while the third, sister of these, enfolded the fair-white neck of Vǫlundr.' *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 2. Simply 'white' is a more accurate translation.

[603] Austr skreið Egill, 'East skimmed Egill', *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 5. 'Slid' may be a clearer translation to describe Egill's motion.

[604] Kom þar af veiði / veðreygr skyti, / Vǫlundr líðandi / um langan veg. / Gekk brúnni bero / [biart] hold steikia… Sat á berfialli. 'Came there from hunting the storm-watching marksman, Vǫlundr ranging on a long road. Went to roast [bright] flesh from the brown she-bear… Sat on the bear-skin.' *Vǫlundarkviða* stanzas 10 and 11.

elaborate ritual event.[605] The reference to the skin, where Wayland falls asleep, perhaps draws upon ideas of traditional shamanic spirit journeys with spirit animals.[606] Across northern Europe, bears are particularly important spirits for such shamanic elements, as will be discussed further in the section on Wayland as a shaman.

Here, Wayland is also referred to for the first time as 'prince of Elves'.[607] A few lines later, he is called 'master of elves' by the king, emphasizing this choice of epithet.[608] He seems therefore to be linked to supernatural beings, although the prologue suggests that later readers (the prologue is widely thought to be later than the poem) interpreted these 'elf' references to mean that Wayland was a Sami rather than an 'elf'.[609] It is possible that these two were correlated, and the Sami people were seen as being slightly non-human.[610] The queen refers to Wayland as 'the one who comes from the wood', which emphasizes the importance of hunting and the wilderness in perceptions of his identity, and suggests that the people of Niðhad's court are less involved with such wild places.[611] She also says that 'his teeth are tempted' and that his eyes remind her of a serpent, both of which add to the depiction of him as wild and savage.[612] Such animalistic descriptions reinforce the idea that Wayland is different from the people around him.

In response to this fear of Wayland's capacity for violence, the queen suggests that he should be crippled through the cutting of his sinews.[613] This is carried out, and his crippling places Wayland into a new category of outsider: he is no longer able to walk, and his damaged legs mark him out as

---

[605] Thomas A. DuBois, 'Diet and Deities: Contrastive Livelihoods and Animal Symbolism in Nordic Pre-Christian Religions,' in *More Than Mythology: Narratives, Ritual Practices and Regional Distribution in Pre-Christian Scandinavian Religions*, ed. by Catharina Raudvere and Jens Peter Schjødt (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2012), pp. 65-96, p. 86.
[606] Satt hann svá lengi / at hann sofnaði. 'He sat so long that he fell asleep.' *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 12.
[607] Álfa lióði*, Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 11.
[608] Vísi álfa*, Vǫlundarkviða,* stanza 14.
[609] See the Introduction to the Sources section for a discussion of the dating of *Vǫlundarkviða.*
[610] Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 42.
[611] Era sá nú hýrr, / er ór holti ferr. 'He is not well-disposed now, this one who comes from the wood.' *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 16; Einarson, 'Artisanal Revenge in *Völundarkviða*', p. 28.
[612] Tenn hánom teygiaz… Ámon ero augo / ormi þeim enom frána. 'His teeth are tempted… His eyes remind one of the glittering serpent.' *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 17.
[613] Sniðið ér hann / sina magni, 'Cut from him the strength of his sinews'. *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 17.

different. However, he is clearly still able to work as a smith, so his status is not entirely changed by his new disability. After the cutting of his sinews, Wayland is then placed on an island off the coast, which becomes his smithy.[614] This separates him from the rest of the court, even though his visits from the princes and princess suggest that Niðhad and his family do not live a very long way away. The choice of an island means that he is separated from the rest of the court by water, a common indicator of liminality, perhaps marking him out as different from those on land in a social or even spiritual way, as well as being geographically separated.

In *Vǫlundarkviða*, the description of Wayland's flight from his island prison is vague.[615] The focus is placed on the action of flight, rather than the details of how he is able to fly. It is not clear whether he actually shifts shape, or whether he has built himself wings, like those described in *Þiðreks saga*. There is no wing-building sequence like the one that appears in *Þiðreks saga*, and the presence of the swan-maiden episode suggests that, most likely, Wayland in *Vǫlundarkviða* was envisaged as actually transforming into a bird. The mention of his 'webbed feet' strongly hints at this, possibly suggesting that Wayland transformed into a bird not dissimilar to his swan-wife. Wayland is then once again referred to by Niðhad as 'master of elves'.[616] In this context, with Wayland hovering above on his wings, the supernatural implications of this term are even stronger. It may be that earlier references to 'Finns' represented how the Norse thought of their northern neighbours as closer to elves than to humans. It may also be the case that, in the earlier versions of the story, Wayland was more explicitly supernatural, and this aspect of his otherness was gradually transformed into an identity as an ethnic other.

[614] Svá var gǫrt, at skornar vóro sinar í knésfótom, ok settr í hólm einn er þar var fyrir lande, er hét Sævarstaðr. 'So it was done: the sinews in the hollows of his knees were cut, and he was placed on an island off the coast there, which was called Seastead. *Vǫlundarkviða*, between stanzas 17 and 18.
[615] 'Vél [á] ek', kvað Vǫlundr— / 'Verða ek á fition, / þeim er mik Níðaðar / námo rekkar!' / Hlæiandi Vǫlundr / hófz at lopti. '"I have a trick," said Vǫlundr— "May I be on those webbed feet that Níðuðr's brave men bereft me of!" Laughing, Vǫlundr lifted himself to the sky.' *Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 29.
[616] Vísi álfa*, Vǫlundarkviða*, stanza 32.

Wayland as Outsider in *Þiðreks saga*

Þiðreks saga similarly portrays Wayland as an outsider in many ways, particularly through his association with foreign places and supernatural beings. These associations begin even before Wayland's story starts, in the earlier saga episode about his grandfather, King Vilkinus. The king meets a beautiful woman who is a 'mermaid' – that is, the text explains, she is a sea monster who is able to transform into a woman on land.[617] She is apparently strong and powerful enough to hold the king's ship still in the water when he tries to leave.[618] She gives birth to the king's son, Vadi, then leaves him with the king and disappears.[619] Vadi, Wayland's father, grows up to be a giant, adding to the strange details of Wayland's ancestry. The saga specifically says that Vadi 'was not like human men'.[620]

The story of Wayland himself begins when, as a young boy, he is apprenticed to Mimir, another famous smith in Norse legend. The hero Sigurd, here a young man, is a fellow apprentice who treats

[617] Þess er enn getit eitthvert sinn, at Vilkinus konungr ferr með her sinn í Austrveg. Ok er hans skip lágu við land, var þat eitthvert sinn, at konungr sjálfr var staddr á landi ok farinn í einn skóg, svá at hann var einn saman ok engi hans maðr með honum. Ok þar hittir hann eina konu. Sú var fögr, ok konungi rann hugr til hennar ok leggst með henni. En þetta var ekki önnur kona en þat, sem kallat er sækona, en þat á eðli í sæ sem skrimsl, en sýnist á landi sem kona. 'It happened one time that King Vilkinus traveled with his army along the eastern route through the Baltic. When his ship was moored one time, it happened that the king went onto the shore and went into a forest alone with no one else along. There he met a woman. She was fair, and he set his mind on her and lay with her. This was none other than the woman known as a mermaid, who had the nature that she was a monster in the sea but seemed to be a woman on land'. *Þiðreks saga*, section 23.

[618] Ok er þeir koma langt undan landi, þá kemr upp hjá konungsskipi hjá lyftingunni kona ok tekr í skipstafninn ok heldr svá fast, at skipit stendr kyrrt. 'And when they had gone some distance from the land, the woman came up beside the king's ship next to the raised deck at the stern, and she took hold of the ship's stem and held it so fast that the ship stood still'. *Þiðreks saga*, section 23.

[619] Ok er hann hefir heima verit misseri, þá kemr til hans kona ein ok segir, at hún ferr með hans barn, ok hann kennir fullgerla þessa konu ok lætr flytja hana til eins húss, er hann á, ok er hún hefir dvalizt þar litla hríð, elr hún sveinbarn, ok er sá sveinn kallaðr Vaði. Ok nú vill hún ekki dveljast þar lengr ok hverfr á brott, ok engi maðr veit, hvat af henni varð síðan. 'When he had been home a half-year, a woman came to him and said that she was carrying his child. He fully recognized her and had her taken to a house that he owned, and when she had been there a short time she gave birth to a male child, and this boy was called Vadi. But then she did not want to remain there any longer and she left, and no man knows what has happened to her since'. *Þiðreks saga*, section 23.

[620] Ok þessi sveinn, er hann elst upp, verðr svá mikill, at hann er risi, ok brá því til hans móðernis, at hann var eigi sem mennskir merín. 'And this boy, when he grew up, became so large that he was a giant and took after his mother's side, so that he wasn't like human men'. *Þiðreks saga*, section 23.

Wayland so badly that Vadi brings him home again.[621] This episode, although short, connects Wayland to the wider world of Norse myth, presenting him as a comparable figure to the famous hero Sigurd, rather than a normal, everyday person. Next, Wayland takes up a second apprenticeship, this time with two dwarfs in a mountain called Kallava, who are the best smiths in the world, 'whether dwarf or human'.[622] Dwarfs are consistently linked with metalworking in Norse myth, as will be discussed below. The choice of a mountain, and an underground smithy, is a particularly notable way in which Wayland is separated off from the outside world while he learns his craft. It is also worth noting that the journey to this mountain involves crossing a body of water, which is often a marker of the liminality separating different life stages.[623] Vadi wades across the deep water of the sound with Wayland on his shoulders, in a journey that both marks Wayland's transition into a new stage of his life and demonstrates Vadi's unusual size and nature.

After Wayland has killed the dwarfs and escaped the mountain with their treasure, he once again makes use of water-based transport in a way which hints at his status as an outsider. He builds himself a special boat out of a hollowed tree, into which he sets a glass window.[624] Not only is this an extraordinary form of transportation, but the water travel parallels his arrival at the mountain across water, thereby marking the end of this period in his life through the repeated motif of boundary crossing. The strangeness of this transportation is reinforced when Niðhad's men find him, and

[621] Ok þingat ferr Vaði risi með son sinn Velent ok fekk í hönd Mími, at hann skal kenna honum járnsmíð… Í þann tíð var með Mími Sigurðr sveinn ok gerir margt illt hans smiðjusveinum, barði þá ok beysti. 'Vadi traveled hence with his son Velent and took Mimir in hand, saying that he should teach him blacksmithing… At this time Sigurd was with Mimir and did much harm to the apprentices, beating and thrashing them'. *Þiðreks saga,* section 57.

[622] Vaði risi spyrr ór Sjólandi, hvar búa tveir dvergar í einu bergi, er heitir Kallava. Þessir dvergar kunnu betr smíða af járni en engi aðrir, hvárki dvergar né mennskir menn. 'Vadi heard in Sjoland that there were two dwarfs living in a mountain called Kallava. These dwarfs were better at smithing iron than any others, whether dwarf or human'. *Þiðreks saga*, section 58.

[623] Nú tekr Vaði risi son sinn Velent ok ferr heiman ok kemr til Grænasunds, ok þá er þar ekki skip yfir at flytjast sundit, ok beið hann þar um hríð. Ok nú tekr hann sveininn ok setr á öxl sér ok veðr yfir sundit, en þat var níu álna djúpt. 'Vadi left home with his son and came to Graenasound, and there was no ship available to cross the sound. They waited there for a while. He then took the boy and put him on his shoulders and waded across the sound. The water was nine ells deep'. *Þiðreks saga*, section 58.

[624] This is discussed in the *Þiðreks saga* section of 'Wayland the Smith'.

Wayland has to assert that he is a person, not a troll.[625] Even if he is not a troll, however, Wayland is now most definitely a foreigner: although he is a king's grandson in his own country, here he is nothing more than a servant to the king.

The extraordinary skill of Wayland's metalworking is the next hint that he is not like other people; the knife he makes is able to cut through the bread *and* the table. His smithing contest with Amilias likewise shows this exceptional skill.[626] But metalworking is not the only way in which Wayland has superhuman abilities – he is able to ride off to fetch the king's victory stone and travel as far in a day as the king travelled in five days.[627] Once again, Wayland seems to have access to semi-supernatural forms of transport.[628] His use of wings is the most spectacular example of these. In *Þiðreks saga*, it is explicitly stated that Wayland makes a flying apparatus similar to the wings of a vulture or ostrich.[629]

Wayland as Outsider in the Other Literary Sources

Just as Wayland occupies a variety of 'outsider' roles in the narrative sources, so too he is presented as an outsider in a number of different ways in the surviving literary material. The French formulaic references in particular display how Wayland continued to be seen as an outsider even as the details of his story faded away and were forgotten. The briefer nature of these other sources, however, mean that Wayland's identity as an outsider is not always described as explicitly as in the narrative sources. Without a deeper understanding of the tradition as a whole, and without looking for

[625] M*ælti svá: "*Maðr em ek, herra, en eigi troll, ok gersamliga vil ek biðja yðr, at þér gefið mér grið, lífs grið ok fjár.*"* He spoke thus: "I am a man, sir, and not a troll, and I wish to ask you truly for asylum for life and property." *Þiðreks saga*, section 62.

[626] This was also discussed in 'Wayland the Smith'.

[627] Velent ríðr nú í brott um nóttina ok ferr þat á einu dægri, er konungrinn hafði flutt herinn fimm daga. 'Velent rode away in the night and went as far in a day as the king had covered in five days'. *Þiðreks saga*, section 70.

[628] The horse-breeder who produces Wayland's horse features in an earlier section (he is introduced in section 18) of *Þiðreks saga*; horses from his farm are ridden by many of the saga's heroes, and his son is also a notable figure.

[629] This was also discussed in 'Wayland the Smith'.

themes presented by other sources, it might be difficult to appreciate the full range of ways that the literary sources present Wayland as an outsider.

In *The Old English Boethius*, for example, Wayland is deployed as an Anglicized version of Fabricius, but the context remains firmly non-Anglicized, with the rest of the text drawing upon a foreign and historic background; the next figure mentioned in the text, in the very next sentence, is the Roman consul Brutus. While Wayland is never explicitly presented as an outsider, the context suggests that, while it could be expected that English readers knew of him, they would not necessarily find it strange to see him listed among foreign, Roman figures from the past. Wayland is therefore positioned as someone 'different' from the people reading the text, while the focus on memory and forgetting suggests that he belongs to a distant past, rather than recent memory. Knowledge of his skill may have survived, but his bones are lost and forgotten. These dual motifs of foreign origin and links to the ancient past create an image of Wayland as, if not quite a liminal figure, someone set apart from the audience of the poem, and once again relegated to the boundaries of the familiar world.

Similarly, in *Beowulf*, Wayland is presented as strange and 'other' through association rather than through specific description. The other smiths described in the poem are giant smiths, perhaps implying that Wayland is similarly non-human through association.[630] An implicit connection to Tubal-Cain, through the web of allusions to giants and smiths, might also suggest that Wayland was viewed as somewhat supernatural, rather than purely human.[631] The mention of *wyrd* in the same section of the poem, although not necessarily a pagan concept as some commentators have seen it, might also suggest that Wayland was seen as fitting into a context slightly different from the ordinary.[632] The poem's action also takes place in Denmark, not England; Wayland is therefore

[630] See Brady, 'Weapons in *Beowulf*'.
[631] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, p. 66; Michael Hunter, 'Germanic and Roman Antiquity and the Sense of the Past in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3 (1974), 29-50.
[632] The use of *wyrd* in *Beowulf* has been much discussed. See Jon C. Kasik, 'The Use of the Term *Wyrd* in *Beowulf* and the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxons', *Neophilologus*, 63 (1979), 128-135; Richard North, '"Wyrd"

placed not only in the distant past, but in a place beyond the shores of England. In a story written in England, Wayland was associated with foreign places.

Such connotations continue in the French formulaic references, where Wayland's association with foreign places and supernatural beings becomes even more explicit. The swords made by 'Galans' are frequently portrayed as being identified with those who are ethnic others in some way, particularly Saracens. In *Fierabras*, the hero himself is a Saracen, and has swords made by Galans and his brothers – including Durendal, and also Courtain, Ogier the Dane's sword.[633] In *Huon of Bordeaux*, a Saracen is in possession of a sword made by Galans.[634] Godfrey of Bouillon supposedly has a sword made by Galans at the siege of Antioch.[635] This demonstrates how the 'Saracen' connections were important not only as an illustration of Wayland's otherness, but because the Holy Land was the location of a great deal of French heroic literature. Pagans are specifically mentioned in the *Chanson d'Antioch* as the owners of a sword made by Ishmaels and completed by Wayland in an extended, repeated tempering routine which echoes that found in *Þiðreks saga*.[636]

In *Le Chevalerie d'Ogier de Danemarche*, a sword made by Galans is owned by Brehus, Admiral of the Persians, providing yet another non-European association. The sword was supposedly made on the Isle of Mascon and kept for some time in the treasury of Pharaoh. Another sword was made by Galans on the Isle of Persois, and has one side red and the other side white. The choice of an island once again places Wayland's smithy in a marginal location, or perhaps even a liminal place, and is similar to the island in *Vǫlundarkviða*. It might also suggest a tradition of Wayland as a captive, kept prisoner on an island that he is unable to leave. The description of the sword suggests a supernatural

---

and "Wearð ealuscerwen" in *Beowulf*, *Leeds Studies in English*, 25 (1994), 69-82; F. Anne Payne, 'Three Aspects of Wyrd in *Beowulf*,' in *Old English Studies in Honour of John C. Pope*, ed. by Robert B. Burlin and Edward B. Irving Jr (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), pp. 15-36; Karen Bek-Pedersen, *The Norns in Old Norse Mythology* (Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press, 2011).

[633] *Fierabras*, lines 644-54.

[634] *Huon de Bordeaux en prose du XVème siècle*, ed. by Pierre Ruelle (Brussels: Presses Universitaires de Bruxelles, 1960), line 7611.

[635] *Godefroi de Buillon*, ed. by Jan Roberts, The Old French Crusade Cycle, Volume X (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1996), p. 105.

[636] *The Chanson d'Antioche*, p. 203.

element to his metalworking – that the items he produces are of a quality beyond normal human skill. Red and white in particular are symbolic of the otherworld in Celtic medieval literature which had a strong influence on French literature, particularly in terms of French adoption of supernatural themes found in Arthurian stories.[637] This clearly places Wayland's work beyond the borders of Christian Europe, but in a way that is very different from the choice of a Sami shaman as the smith. The use of Eastern references to position Wayland as a foreigner suggests the adaptation of an older tradition of his foreign origins, making it appropriate for Crusades-influenced literature.

In *Raoul de Cambrai*, Galans forged the sword in question in a dark cavern or dark valley.[638] This is an extremely marginal location, both geographically and socially, and often carries symbolic connotations of death and rebirth. It might, in fact, represent a tradition similar to that of associating Wayland with the burial mound of Wayland's Smithy. It may also be similar to the *Þiðreks saga* episode which sees Wayland spending time with dwarf smiths beneath a mountain. Certainly, the *Raoul de Cambrai* reference to a dark cavern suggests a tradition of associating Wayland with isolated places outside normal human society. It may support the idea of smiths as marginal figures, working on the edges of settlements, or in the wilderness.

One clear reference to Wayland as having supernatural connections is found in *Doolin de Mayence*.[639] Here, it is explained that, while Gallant made the sword Merveilleuse, its special edge and its name were given by Gallant's fairy mother. This might come from the tradition of Wayland's sea-monster grandmother, or from a broader European tradition associating fairy women with exceptional swords, most famously the Lady of the Lake and Excalibur. It certainly reinforces the idea of Wayland as having non-human ancestry, even if he himself is largely human. There is a lack of reference to Wayland's crippling, revenge and later escape in the literary sources other than

[637] Dorothy Anne Bray, 'Further on White Red-Eared Cows in Fact and Fiction', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland*, 19 (2005), 239-55; Boyd, 'The Ring, the Sword, the Fancy Dress, and the Posthumous Child', p. 206.
[638] … et fu forgie en une combe oscure. / Galans la fist qi toute i mist sa cure. *Raoul de Cambrai*, line 313-4.
[639] *Doon de Maience, chanson de geste publiée pour le premiere fois*, ed. by M.A. Pey (1859), p. 209.

Vǫlundarkviða and *Þiðreks saga*; the closest is *Deor*, which describes his misery and his 'exile' but does not give specific details. At no point in the surviving formulaic references is Wayland referred to as either crippled or winged, and the focus seems to be firmly on his work rather than his life. Any further details about the smith himself are more incidental than in the Wayland narrative sources.

Wayland as Outsider in the Visual Sources

All of the themes already discussed can also be identified in the visual sources although, once again, they might not be immediately apparent. It is possible, through careful examination of the visual sources, to identify Wayland as a supernatural figure, as a crippled smith, and perhaps as associated with borderlands and symbolic liminality. On the Franks Casket, the scenes which are firmly identified are all associated with foreign places (Rome, Jerusalem, Bethlehem), and if Wayland fits neatly between them, he may also have been associated with foreign places, beyond England's shores. As has already been discussed in the 'Wayland the Rapist' chapter, he is also positioned in between a scene showing Jesus on one side and Romulus and Remus, sons of Mars, on the other side.[640] A position in between these two panels might indicate that Wayland belonged to a similarly supernatural milieu. He is also separated from the other figures in the panel by his anvil: his craft keeps him separate from the rest of the world, except the corpse that rests by his feet. Only the body, and the cup that Wayland holds (which is, perhaps, the skull cup) provides a bridge around and across the anvil. Wayland's bent leg on the Franks Casket perhaps also marks him out as disabled, identifying that is he is physically different and indicating that he is trapped by his inability to walk. The Wayland panel is also marked out as different from the other images on the casket in that it has a riddle rather than a caption.[641] The connotations of this are not clear, but it does perhaps hint at the strange, ambiguous nature of Wayland.

[640] See 'Wayland the Rapist: Wayland and Beadohild on the Franks Casket'.
[641] Webster, 'The Iconographic Programme of the Franks Casket', p. 233.

On the Ardre Stone, it is the wings that most clearly mark Wayland out as different. While much of the detail has been lost over time, the Arde Stone depiction seems to show a birdman, rather than a man in a flying machine. This may draw on older traditions of depicting birdmen in prehistoric Scandinavia, such as the Uppåkra man.[642] Wayland's scene is also placed alongside a variety of other mythological and legendary figures, suggesting that his story was thought to belong in that context, rather than belonging among sagas about historical human figures. The stone was found in a church, but pre-dates the Christianization of Scandinavia by some time.[643] It was therefore already old and belonging to a different time when it was placed inside the church, and perhaps carried a great deal of symbolic weight as an object in its own right, beyond the connotations of the imagery. The stone also shows Wayland in the act of escaping from the smithy, which emphasizes the element of his captivity.

The Leeds Cross Shaft also shows Wayland with his wings. In this depiction, however, they appear to be strapped onto his body, more like a flying machine than a whole-body transformation; the same straps are found on the other Yorkshire carvings. There is a possible bird head at the top of the image, grasping the woman, but the bindings around the figure's arms and legs suggest that the wings are attached to the figure, rather than part of him. This still demonstrates an extraordinary level of skill on Wayland's part, even if it is very different from traditions of him as a shapeshifter or shaman. This cross shaft may once have stood at or near a boundary, although this is conjecture, based on the probable nature of the Leeds area as a borderland between Anglo-Saxon Northumbria and British Elmet, which may have continued into the early period of the Viking kingdom of York.[644] The cross shaft does, at the very least, illustrate the idea of a cultural borderland, with its style demonstrating a fusion of Hiberno-Scandinavian and Anglo-Saxon motifs.[645] The assorted other panels on the cross show the merging of artistic traditions which epitomize the cultural fusion of

[642] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers*, p. 17.
[643] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers*, p. 17; Bailey, *Viking Age Sculpture in Northern England*, p. 105.
[644] Halstead, 'The Stone Sculpture of Anglo-Scandinavian Yorkshire in its Landscape Context', p. 207.
[645] Coatsworth, *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture*, p. 75; Hadley, *The Northern Danelaw*, p. 257.

early medieval Germanic Christianity. It may have originally served as a burial marker, again associating Wayland with death and the boundaries between life and death.[646]

Wayland as Outsider: Wayland's Smithy

The association between Wayland and the site of Wayland's Smithy strengthens his identification as an outsider in a number of ways. First, the name of the site is preserved in the boundary clause of an Anglo-Saxon charter, clearly demonstrating that it was identified as existing on a boundary in some way. Its position on the Ridgeway also hints at a liminal location, as the Ridgeway has served as both a road and a boundary since prehistory.[647] Wayland's Smithy is a little way off the road, so it is not situated in the most prominent site for notice by passing travellers, but it is certainly still in the general boundary zone that lies on either side of the road, and may well have originally been built to take advantage of this liminal location. By the Roman period, it seems that the burial mound served as a field boundary, and this may still have been the case during the Anglo-Saxon period.[648] Archaeological evidence suggests that, otherwise, it was a little-used area. This might indicate that it was a relatively unimportant area, or it might indicate, supported by the choice of name, that it was seen as somehow sacred or special, and was therefore left alone.

There is, of course, a great deal of symbolic weight behind the choice of a burial mound to bear Wayland's name. Such places form a boundary dividing the living from the dead, both literally and symbolically. Burial mounds have often also formed literal boundaries, with the ancestral dead used to mark the limits of family property.[649] Wayland's Smithy is also part of a wider complex of pre-

---

[646] David Stocker, 'Monuments and Merchants: Irregularities in the Distribution of Stone Sculpture in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire in the Tenth Century', in *Cultures in Contact: Scandinavian Settlement in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, ed. by Dawn M. Hadley and Julian D. Richards (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), pp. 179-212, p. 193.
[647] Tom Williamson, *Environment, Society and Landscape in Early Medieval England: Time and Topography* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2013), p. 93.
[648] R. J. C. Atkinson, 'Wayland's Smithy', *Antiquity*, 39 (1965), 126-33, p. 133.
[649] Howard Williams, 'Monuments and the Past in Early Anglo-Saxon England', *World Archaeology*, 30 (1998), 90-108, p. 95.

Anglo-Saxon sites with potential to be recognized as sacred or magical places. This complex includes the famous Uffington White Horse and the Iron Age hillfort of Uffington Castle. As non-English monumental sites, this landscape may have been understood as 'foreign' to the English-speaking people who lived there. Certainly, the landscape as a whole had connections to non-English ethnic groups, and perhaps to imagined supernatural races, given the connections made between ancient ruins and giants in the Anglo-Saxon imagination.[650] The choice of Wayland may have been because he was seen to fit comfortably in this landscape, or it may have been an attempt to 'Anglicize' a landscape still dominated by the monumental works of earlier peoples. Certainly, Wayland's presence in this complex of ancient monuments suggests that he was associated with the distant past. While there is no evidence that the site ever functioned as a smithy, the choice of name may also have drawn upon ideas of dwarf smithies as underground places, like the mountain dwarfs of *Þiðreks saga*.

Wayland and Gender Identity

The relationship with Beadohild in Wayland's story is not the only way that issues of gender come in to play. Wayland himself is unusually gendered, blending elements of masculine and feminine identity in a way that hints at the broader importance of gender themes in his story.[651] His identity is not straightforwardly masculine in contrast to the feminine identity of Beadohild; the issue is rather more complex than that. Wayland's ambiguous gender identity is most evident in *Vǫlundarkviða*, where the word *hvít* is used to describe his neck.[652] Usually translated into modern English as 'fair' or 'white', this word is otherwise almost exclusively used to describe women or children, and is mostly found as an epithet for 'maiden', 'woman' or 'bosom'.[653] It is otherwise attested for adult male use

[650] Hunter, 'Germanic and Roman Antiquity', p. 46.
[651] The idea of Wayland as occupying a 'third gender' is discussed briefly in Wright, 'Crafters of Kingship', p. 275.
[652] Pollington, *Wayland's Work*, p. 126.
[653] Meletinsky, 'Commonplaces and Other Elements of Folkloric Style', p. 26.

in Eddaic poetry only in the example of Heimdallr in *Þrymskviða*.[654] While some other examples are found in both Old English and Old Norse, this choice of word does seem to have been used for men who were not entirely human. Its use in *Vǫlundarkviða* positions Wayland in a slightly different category to 'ordinary' men.[655]

The relationship of Wayland and his brothers with the swan-maidens is also unusual in terms of gender identity. While Old Norse literature generally positions men as active and women as passive, this section does the opposite.[656] It is the three women who seem to do the pursuing and the choosing, with the brothers simply accepting the women's decision. When, after nine years, the swan-maidens leave, it is they who make the decision. Wayland is the most passive of the three brothers, because he does not even pursue his wife, but instead sits and waits for her to return. Such passive behaviour is unusual for men in Old Norse literature, and may have implied that Wayland had been emasculated by this supernatural woman. He is then crippled by Niðhad's queen in a second example of his traditionally masculine attributes being taken away by a woman.[657] Even Wayland's revenge is, in some ways, passive and not in accordance with masculine ideals; instead of directly challenging Niðhad, the man who has done him wrong, he takes his vengeance on women and children, which is most certainly not the approach most associated with injured masculine pride in Old Norse sagas.[658]

A number of reasons have been suggested for this unusual gender identity presented in *Vǫlundarkviða*. It may reflect anthropological ideas of smiths as adopting feminine aspects due to

---

[654] Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 44.
[655] The potentially derogatory nature of *hvítr* when used to describe a man is suggested by its mention in *Fóstbræðra saga* (the Flateyjarbók manuscript): Helgi átti kenningarnafn ok var kallaðr hvítr, ok var honum þat eigi auknefni, því at hann var vænn maðr ok vel hærðr, hvítr á hár. 'Helgi had a nickname and was called hvítr('white'), and for him it was not a derogatory nickname, because he was a handsome man and had fine, white hair.' See Paul R. Peterson, 'Old Norse Nicknames' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2015), p. 41.
[656] Sørensen, *The Unmanly Man*, p. 27. See Clover, 'Regardless of Sex' for a discussion of the relationship between 'masculine' and 'feminine' behaviour in Old Norse literature; she argues for a continuum rather than a binary, meaning that values, traits, and actions are 'less masculine' rather than strictly 'feminine'.
[657] Pollington, *Wayland's Work*, p. 126.
[658] As already noted, the closest parallel to Wayland's revenge is the story of Gudrun.

their creative abilities, a theme which has been much discussed.[659] This idea of smiths as occupying an alternative or third gender is consistent with Eliade's theories regarding smiths as fertility figures and agents of creation. He suggests that smiths had special abilities which would usually be considered feminine, and so were positioned somewhere between male and female on a spectrum of gender identity.[660] The mythical Greek smith Hephaestus, for example, was portrayed as quasi-feminine in some respects, such as his reliance on trickery and magic rather than more traditionally masculine physical strength.[661] The dwarf smiths of Old Norse literature (who are particularly relevant given their appearance in *Þiðreks saga)* have also been considered as androgynous figures, who create precious metal objects rather than creating through sexual reproduction.[662]

Wayland's unusual gender identity may also reflect the gender-neutral or third gender aspects of shamanism. The idea of shamans as straddling gender boundaries, or existing as their own gender, has been observed in a number of North American groups, including the Inuit of Arctic Canada, as well as among the Sami. As in the case of smiths, this idea of men adopting feminine traits is often considered to be due to the appropriation of creative powers, otherwise associated with childbirth.[663] Another parallel might be found in Old Norse literature in the figures of berserkers: the berserker 'Bjørn the Pale' from *Gísla saga Súrssonar* is said to be versed in witchcraft and immune to iron.[664] In the example of Bjørn, he is also both 'pale' and rapes wives and daughters, making him perhaps a particularly close parallel to Wayland. Some commentators, such as John McKinnell and Randi Barndon, have examined the importance of Wayland's sword in this context, seeing its removal as a symbolic castration of Wayland by Niðhad.[665] The rings that play such an important role

[659] Haaland, 'Technology, Transformation and Symbolism', p. 2; Barndon, 'Myth and Metallurgy', p. 101; Jørgensen, 'The Iron Age Blacksmith', p. 310.
[660] Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible*, pp. 26, 31, and 40.
[661] Lois Bragg, p. 31.
[662] Uli Linke, 'The Theft of Blood, the Birth of Men: Cultural Constructions of Gender in Medieval Iceland', in *From Sagas to Society: Comparative Approaches to Early Iceland*, ed. by Gísli Pálsson (London: Hisarlick Press, 1992), pp. 265-88, p. 282.
[663] Sandra E. Hollimon, 'The Gendered Peopling of North America: Addressing the Antiquity of Systems of Multiple Genders', in *The Archaeology of Shamanism*, ed. by Neil Price (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 124-34.
[664] Sørensen, *The Unmanly Man*, p. 46.
[665] McKinnell, 'The Context of *Vǫlundarkviða*', p. 23.

in both narrative texts have been interpreted as a symbol of female sexuality, a reading which seems to be borne out by their appearance in other parts of *Þiðreks saga*, and the sword may therefore act as the masculine counterpart.[666] Wayland, deprived of his sword, then arguably needs to reassert his masculinity through his rape of Beadohild.

Other Wayland sources, however, do not offer any such indication that Wayland had a complex gender identity. Indeed, in *Þiðreks saga*, Vadi explicitly tells Wayland to kill the dwarfs if necessary, so that he can say he has a son rather than a daughter - and Wayland carries out this instruction, killing every single one of the dwarfs in a clear demonstration of his masculinity. His later exploits seem to reaffirm a nature which is impulsive and violent in the style of many other Old Norse heroes. The Wayland of *Þiðreks saga* also does *not* give up his sword to the king, using trickery to keep it for himself, and there is no swan-maiden element to complicate the question of Wayland's gender role. None of the other sources seem to comment in any depth on Wayland's gender identity; this is a theme largely reserved for *Vǫlundarkviða*.

One way in which the Wayland of *Þiðreks saga* does display an ambiguous gender identity, however, is one which is common to a number of other sources: his offering of a drugged or poisoned cup to Beadohild. It was already noted in 'Wayland the Murderer' that cups and the serving of drinks is strongly associated with high-status women.[667] Portraying a man as serving a drink - especially to a woman - is unusual and almost always occurs in a satirical context.[668] Wayland's use of an alcoholic drink to 'bemuse' Beadohild has definite feminine connotations, which is especially interesting given that he goes on to impregnate her; clearly, he is only feminine to a certain degree. Even in *Þiðreks saga*, Wayland's use of poison as part of his revenge, after he is denied the princess's hand, is an

[666] McKinnell, 'The Context of *Vǫlundarkviða*,', p. 18.
[667] See 'Wayland the Murderer: A Royal Revenge?'
[668] Jochens, *Women in Old Norse Society*, p. 107; Christine Fell comments on this episode in *Vǫlundarkviða* as one of the only examples in Old Norse literature of a man serving alcohol, *Women in Anglo-Saxon England*, p.145. For more on the motif of women serving drinks, see Michael J. Enright, *Lady with a Mead-Cup: Ritual, Prophecy and Lordship in the European Warband from La Tène to the Viking Age* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1996).

unusually feminine choice of weapon, given both the feminine associations with food and drink, and the lack of confrontational violence. Poison is also a feminine weapon; in *Völsunga saga*, Jana K. Schulman identified four occurrences of women offering a man a 'bitter' drink, one of which is poisoned, while two are potions of forgetfulness, and one contains blood mixed with wine.[669] Given that the Wayland of *Þiðreks saga* has successfully engaged in violent altercations, this seems a strange choice and may indicate that the writer of the saga struggled to fit the figure of Wayland into the gender norms more expected from later medieval sagas.

Wayland's injury perhaps also adds a degree of ambiguity to his gender identity; the loss of strength in his legs.[670] Once his sinews are cut, he is no longer able to walk, which means he cannot carry out any of the actions usually associated with masculine identity. Most of all, he would not have been able to fight.[671] However, Wayland's injury does not seem to have a particularly strong impact on his gender identity, as he is still able to work as a smith just as successfully as before, and his cunning allows him to overcome his physical weakness through the creation of wings, although this may be due to a third-gender identity rather than a masculine identity. There are also other examples in medieval Norse and German literature, though, of men overcoming physical impairment to live normal lives that demonstrated their continued ability to act in ways seen as conventionally masculine.[672]

[669] Schulman, 'A Guest in the Hall', p. 213.
[670] The issue of Wayland's disability is discussed further below.
[671] Sally Crawford, 'Differentiation in the Later Anglo-Saxon Burial Ritual on the Basis of Mental or Physical Impairment: A Documentary Perspective', in *Burial in Late Anglo-Saxon England, c. 650 - 1100 AD*, ed. by Jo Buckberry and Annia Cherryson (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2010), pp. 93-102, p. 95.
[672] John P. Sexton, 'Difference and Disability: On the Logic of Naming in the Icelandic Sagas', in *Disability in the Middle Ages: Reconsiderations and Reverberations* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 149-63, p. 163; see also the ending of *Waltharius*.

Wayland and Disability

Wayland's disability, as a result of his lameness, contributes to his status as an outsider. In both *Vǫlundarkviða* and *Þiðreks saga*, he is mutilated by Niðhad, although the circumstances differ slightly. In *Vǫlundarkviða*, Wayland is lamed at the suggestion of the queen, who fears what he may do in revenge for his kidnapping and the theft of his precious items. In *Þiðreks saga*, on the other hand, Wayland has the sinews in his legs cut as a punishment for his attempt to poison the princess. There is therefore a substantial difference between the mutilation of a foreign prince captured in a raid, and the judicial mutilation of a guilty criminal. In both cases, however, Wayland loses the ability to walk, and finds himself held captive by the king.

There is a strong association between disability and liminality; a disabled person is neither sick nor healthy, but is instead trapped in a state somewhere in between.[673] Shamanistic initiations in particular may involve trances or spirit journeys in which the imagined body of the initiate is mutilated or even destroyed, as discussed in the shamanism section above. Examples are found in Norse myth, particularly the example of Odin in *Grímnismál* and *Hávamál*, where he undergoes torture and ritual death.[674] Other mutilated figures are found in classical mystery cults: Dionysos was dismembered as part of the initiation stories of his cult.[675] Similarly, the ugliness and lameness of the smith god Hephaestus might have originally been part of a ritual exchange of his unimpaired body for his knowledge of science and magic.[676] Examples can even be drawn from Christian tradition: blindness is a key part of the initiation sequence in which Saul was transformed into Paul.[677] If Wayland's laming is read through this lens of initiation, it might have then resulted in his ability to fly, which was a compensation for the loss of his legs.[678]

---

[673] Irina Metzler, *A Social History of Disability in the Middle Ages: Cultural Considerations of Physical Impairment* (New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 7.
[674] Grimstad, 'The Revenge of Volundr', p. 202.
[675] Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible*, p. 150.
[676] Barndon, 'Myth and Metallurgy', p. 99; see also Bragg, *Oedipus Borealis*, pp. 26, 28, and 31 for a further Hephaestus comparison.
[677] Metzler, *A Social History of Disability in the Middle Ages*, p. 8.
[678] Grimstad, 'The Revenge of Volundr', p. 189.

While there are, therefore, a number of ways in which Wayland's disability may reveal him as an outsider, or a liminal figure, medieval ideas of disability were complex and multi-layered. There is, in fact, no known medieval term which is directly equivalent to the modern words 'disabled' or 'disability'; instead, we must look at the ways in which impaired people are presented in different sources.[679] Tony Vandeventer Pearman describes disability as a 'social process' and 'the interaction between bodily difference and society'.[680] The extent to which someone is seen as 'disabled' therefore depends on the extent to which their physical impairment affects their ability to fulfil a 'normal' social role. If Wayland is still able to work as a smith and support himself, he is therefore perhaps impaired rather than disabled.[681] Impairment could quickly become disability, particularly if a medieval man could not walk or ride and therefore could not carry out military service, but Wayland's loss of the use of his legs does not stop him from working as a smith.[682] There is a parallel to this in the story of Louis, a deaf-mute child in 1250's France, who was able to work as a smith's assistant for twelve years: although his impairment was recognized as a problem, it did not entirely disable him.[683] Lois Bragg notes that smithing is, in fact, an appropriate occupation for the lame, given that it focuses on strength of the arms rather than strength of the legs, although it would have made it difficult for smiths to travel in search of work.[684] Wayland, as a lame smith trapped in one place, is not, strictly speaking, disabled.

The early medieval world contains many comparable examples of individuals whose impairment did not prevent them from occupying their expected roles in society. An excellent example is the story of Onund Ofeigsson, in the opening part of the saga of his great-grandson, Grettir Asmundarson: Onund is one-legged, and this loss affects his confidence but does not affect his ability to marry and

---

[679] Metzler, *A Social History of Disability in the Middle Ages*, p. 4; Bragg, *Oedipus Borealis*, p. 10.
[680] Tony Vandeventer Pearman, '*O Sweete Venym Queynte!:* Pregnancy and the Disabled Female Body in *The Merchant's Tale*', in *Disability in the Middle Ages: Reconsiderations and Reverberations,* ed. by Joshua R. Eyler (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 25-37, p. 26.
[681] Irina Metzler, *Disability in Medieval Europe: Thinking About Physical Impairment During the High Middle Ages*, *c. 1100 - 1400* (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 190.
[682] Crawford, 'Differentiation in the Later Anglo-Saxon Burial Ritual', p. 95.
[683] Metzler, *A Social History of Disability in the Middle Ages*, pp. 199-200.
[684] Bragg, *Oedipus Borealis*, p. 29.

otherwise live his life like a two-legged man.[685] Similarly, in the closing scene of *Waltharius*, the now heavily mutilated characters joke about how they will continue to live the lives of noblemen just as they did before.[686] There are also a number of impaired or disabled characters in Icelandic sagas, and among the pagan gods, including one-handed Tyr and one-eyed Odin.[687] Wayland was certainly not alone, or even unusual in his impaired status. This may have been the case in real life as well as in literature: although many injuries and disabilities are not visible in the archaeological record, Tovey notes that broken bones were extremely common among Anglo-Saxon men, and may represent part of a range of injuries that led to impairments of various degrees.[688]

While impairment was not necessarily unusual in early medieval Europe, there is still some evidence of the marginalization of disabled bodies. The prevalence of judicial mutilation as punishment for crimes meant that disability was often linked to criminality, both in reality and in the imagination; those who became impaired due to accident or injury might struggle to prove their non-criminal status.[689] The presence of physically impaired bodies at the limits of cemeteries, such as the eleventh century North Elmham cemetery in Norfolk, might also indicate that these were the impaired bodies of criminals, buried apart from the rest of the community.[690] Individuals with physical impairments were frequently not treated differently after death, but the association between mutilation and liminal burial suggests a strong connection between impairment and liminality, due to the role of judicial mutilation.

---

[685] Sexton, 'Difference and Disability', p. 163.
[686] *Waltharius*, lines 1423 - 1442.
[687] Sexton, 'Difference and Disability', p. 150.
[688] Beth Tovey, 'Kingly Impairments in Anglo-Saxon Literature: God's Curse and God's Blessing', in *Disability in the Middle Ages: Reconsiderations and Reverberations*, ed. by Joshua R. Eyler (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 135-48, p. 136.
[689] Metzler, *A Social History of Disability in the Middle Ages*, p. 26.
[690] D.M. Hadley, 'Burying the Socially and Physically Distinctive in Later Anglo-Saxon England', in *Burial in Later Anglo-Saxon England, c. 650 - 1100 AD*, ed. by Jo Buckberry and Annia Cherryson (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2010), pp. 103-15, p. 104; also Andrew Reynolds, *Anglo-Saxon Deviant Burial Customs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 228.

Wayland, Saracens, and the Sami

As already discussed, there is a strong connection between the idea of Wayland as an outsider because of his potential slave status, and the idea of Wayland as an outsider because of his foreign origins. The concept that he was culturally or ethnically 'other' from the people who told and heard his story seems to have remained a common thread all the way through medieval retellings of his story, right up to the French formulaic references in the thirteenth century. His place of origin may have shifted over time, but the idea of him as an outsider did not. Medieval Europe was home to many peoples and ethnic groups, but Wayland is associated particularly with the *Finnar*, today best known as the Sami people, indigenous to northern Scandinavia, and with 'Saracens'.[691]

The ancestors of today's Sami were present in the Nordic region by at least 3300 BC. Agropastoralism followed later, c. 2700 – 2600 BC, leading to the eventual development of two separate population and language groups: the Sami and the Norse. These two groups formed a paired economy, growing up alongside each other, and often trading the goods produced by their different lifestyles.[692] As hunter-gatherers, Sami people had a culture very different from that of the agropastoralist Old Norse-speaking Scandinavians, but these differences allowed the two groups to support each other in a symbiotic relationship of trade and exchange. This close relationship persisted into the Middle Ages, although it grew more strained over time, particularly as the power of Scandinavian kings became stronger.[693] Nevertheless, there was a substantial degree of cultural overlap between the two groups; much of Scandinavia could be described as a 'two-culture' area, with archaeological evidence of Sami culture found right across Fennoscandia, and Sami graves, campsites, and objects found almost as far south as Oslo and Uppsala.[694] Particularly in the north of

[691] The origins of his *Þiðreks saga* mermaid grandmother in the Baltic area may also hint at foreign connections or associations; Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir argues that giantesses were also connected to the Sami people in early Old Norse literature. *Women in Old Norse Literature*, p. 65.
[692] Thomas A. DuBois, *Nordic Religions in the Viking Age* (University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1999), p. 17.
[693] Zachrisson, 'The Sami and Their Interaction with the Nordic Peoples', p. 35.
[694] John Lindow, 'Cultures in Contact', in *Old Norse Myths, Literature and Society*, ed. by Margaret Clunies Ross (University Press of Southern Denmark, 2003), pp. 89-109, p. 91.

Norway, the Late Iron Age and medieval period saw considerable interaction between the Sami and Scandinavian peoples.[695] Nordic and Sami elite exchanged marriage partners, and rich graves suggest that they exchanged valuable objects as well.[696] Some Sami people may even have moved to Iceland as part of the Norse settlement.[697]

The Sami came to be particularly associated with magic and witchcraft in Old Norse sources, becoming known as skilled magicians during the High Middle Ages.[698] This may be because many of them did not convert to Christianity until centuries after the Norse; many Sami people did not convert until the eighteenth century.[699] They were associated, for example, with magical reindeer skins that could protect against all weapons.[700] In *Ynglinga saga*, a Sami princess is able to send nightmares that kill the king who has seduced and abandoned her.[701] The Sami were also known to the Norse as notable shamans, and were often depicted in Norse literature as such. This theme will be discussed more fully below. Magic is not the only thing the Sami were well-known for; they seem also to have been associated with metalworking. Both written sources and the archaeological evidence of hunting-ground graves, which persisted into the Iron Age, suggest that the Sami had a tradition of expert metalwork; over twenty silver hoards from the tenth to thirteenth centuries have been found in Sami areas.[702] In the nineteenth century, estate inventories reveal that metalworking tools were far more likely to be found on Sami estates than on Norse ones. This cannot, of course, be used as evidence for the medieval situation, but it does suggest a long tradition of associating the Sami people with metalworking.[703]

---

[695] Jørgensen, 'The Iron Age Blacksmith', p. 300.
[696] Zachrisson, 'The Sami and Their Interaction with the Nordic Peoples', p. 36.
[697] Zachrisson, 'The Sami and Their Interaction with the Nordic Peoples', p. 33.
[698] Zachrisson, 'The Sami and Their Interaction with the Nordic Peoples', p. 33.
[699] DuBois, *Nordic Religions in the Viking Age*, p. 42.
[700] Lindow, 'Cultures in Contact', p. 100.
[701] John Lindow, *Murder and Vengeance Among the Gods: Baldr in Scandinavian Mythology* (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1997), p. 17.
[702] Zachrisson, 'The Sami and Their Interaction with the Nordic Peoples', pp. 35 and 37.
[703] Jørgensen, 'The Iron Age Blacksmith', p. 309.

The other group which Wayland is repeatedly associated with, 'Saracens', is not so much a single ethnic group as a broad category encompassing anything foreign, exotic, or outlandish to Western European Christians.[704] The word comes from the Greek *sarakenos*, probably related to the Arabic *sharqiyuna*, which meant 'easterners'. This word developed into the Latin *saracenus*, which came to be used primarily to designate Muslims.[705] However, the term 'Saracen' could be used to describe all kinds of ethnic or cultural others. In Middle English, 'Sarazin' could refer to pagan invaders of Britain, or foreigners in general.[706] It was also used to refer to Hungarians and Normans; ultimately, Frakes suggests, 'Saracen' was a term which owed more to the Christian imagination than to actual Muslims.[707] The use of the term does suggest a more extreme degree of otherness rather than simply coming from a neighbouring country.

The use of the term 'Saracen' may also be relevant given that some of the finest swords in medieval Europe came from the east, most famously from Damascus. For a medieval audience, it might have been highly convincing to hear that the world's finest swordsman was a 'Saracen'; the Franks and the Saracens seem to have highly valued each other's swords.[708] Both of these specific foreign identities, Sami and Saracen, therefore have ties to metalworking.

Giants, Valkyries, and Dwarfs: Wayland and the Supernatural

Wayland's associations with supernatural beings have already been mentioned a number of times; here, they will be considered in more detail. Not only is Wayland a strange and slightly supernatural figure in his own right, but he is associated with a variety of even stranger figures. As already noted

[704] Jerold C. Frakes, *Vernacular and Latin Literary Discourses of the Muslim Other in Medieval Germany* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 38.
[705] Frakes, *Vernacular and Latin Literary Discourses of the Muslim Other in Medieval Germany*, p. 38.
[706] Matthieu Boyd, 'Celts seen as Muslims and Muslims seen by Celts in Medieval Literature,' in *Contextualising the Muslim Other in Medieval Christian Discourse*, ed. by Jerold C. Frakes (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 21-38, p. 22.
[707] Frakes, *Vernacular and Latin Literary Discourses of the Muslim Other in Medieval Germany*, p. 38.
[708] Coupland, 'Carolingian Arms and Armor in the Ninth Century', p. 44.

in 'Wayland the Murderer' this is often a sign of the 'dark figure', and Wayland's association with the supernatural continues right across the Middle Ages. It remained a consistent part of his identity, suggesting that it was a powerful element of how he was perceived by medieval audiences.

In *Vǫlundarkviða*, he is associated with the swan-maidens, also referred to as 'valkyries', although the word *valkyrie* is used only in the prologue of *Vǫlundarkviða*, not the main body of the poem. The tradition of these swan-maidens does not appear anywhere else, but it perhaps prefigures Wayland's own transformation into a bird (or winged man) and provides him with a pre-existing link to the supernatural world.[709] Valkyries may also have been known in England; the Old English word *wælcyrge* may have referred to a similar being.[710] The strange, supernatural connotations of the swan-maiden in *Vǫlundarkviða* may explain the gender ambiguity of the relationship between her and Wayland. Many medieval texts display a fascination with exotic women who took on male roles, while also embodying the power of potentially dangerous female sexuality. The Amazons, for example, often appear as both the lovers of male heroes, luring them in with excessive female sensuality, and as their opponents, threatening them with masculine martial strength.[711] In Old Norse literature, martial, supernatural women sometimes occupy a similarly ambiguous role: they are beautiful and feminine, providing assistance to their male warrior-lovers. But they are also dangerous warriors in their own right, shifting the balance of power between the genders.[712]

A supernatural woman is also linked to Wayland in *Þiðreks saga* in the form of his 'mermaid' or sea-monster grandmother. That this tradition was widespread is confirmed by the poem *Rabenslaucht*, where the sea-woman appears again to save Widia when he rides into the lake, and is described as his ancestor.[713] This connection between Wayland and his supernatural female ancestor was

[709] McGuire and Clark suggest that the woman on the Leeds Cross Shaft may be a Valkyrie welcoming the dead Wayland into the afterlife, but the weight of the other source material makes it far more likely that this female figure is Beadohild. *The Leeds Crosses*, p. 11.
[710] Schaus, *Women and Gender*, p. 811.
[711] Schaus, *Women and Gender*, p. 16.
[712] Sørensen, *The Unmanly Man*, p. 22; Jenny Jochens, *Old Norse Images of Women* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), p. 38.
[713] Davidson, 'Weland the Smith', p. 150.

therefore clearly recognized beyond *Þiðreks saga*. This association with supernatural women might have inspired the writer of *Vǫlundarkviða* to attach the swan-maiden episode, perhaps originally told about a different man, to Wayland's story. Giant mistresses are not uncommon in Old Norse stories, particularly the *fornaldarsögur*, and often have sons with their hero-lovers.[714] Just like Wayland's grandmother, such women are frequently encountered while their lover is away from home, exploring in a potentially wild and mysterious place.[715] This mysterious giantess therefore fits many broader patterns found in contemporary sagas, so might not have been original to the Wayland story. Even if the precise details of the 'mermaid' connection were altered to fit generic conventions, it seems likely that Wayland had connections to such sea-creatures outside the brief episode in *Þiðreks saga*.

Wayland also has a giant in his ancestry: Wade, father of Wayland and son of the sea-monster, is a giant both in *Þiðreks saga* and in broader tradition.[716] No mention is made of Wayland himself being a giant, but the reference to giant smiths in *Beowulf* suggests that such an association did exist, and that a connection was recognized between ancient smiths and giants; 'work of giants' is another formulaic phrase used to describe high-quality treasures.[717] Widia in *Þiðreks saga* is described as being 'the tallest of men who are not considered giants', and the earlier heroes of the saga are also presented as giants.[718] The giants of *Þiðreks saga* are therefore linked firmly to the past, with men becoming smaller over time.[719] Giants are elsewhere also connected to Saracens, biblical figures, and figures from the Celtic past; the choice of a giant as Wayland's father therefore links him to a broad

[714] Jochens, *Old Norse Images of Women*, p. 57.
[715] Friðriksdóttir*, Women in Old Norse Literature,* p. 59.
[716] Wade may have originally been a sea giant; his associations with the sea are found elsewhere as well and may support the idea that he was linked with his sea-monster mother elsewhere. Wilson, *The Lost Literature of Medieval England*, p. 14.
[717] Orchard, *Pride and Prodigies*, p. 58; Grimstad, 'The Revenge of Volundr', p. 194.
[718] This is discussed in detail by Claudia Bornholdt, 'Everyone Thought it Very Strange How the Man Had Been Shaped': The Hero and His Physical Traits in the Riddarasögur', *Arthuriana*, 22 (2012), 18-38.
[719] Michael Curschmann, 'The Prologue of *Þiðreks saga*': Thirteenth-Century Reflections on Oral Traditional Literature', *Scandinavian Studies*, 56 (1984), 140-51, p. 141.

spectrum of associations, both in Northern European myth and biblical scripture.[720] The connection between Wayland and giants in *Beowulf* might reflect how the Old English phrase 'work of giants' often included both Roman ruins and prehistoric barrows.[721] Wayland's Smithy might perhaps have been seen as the work of 'giants', who may have included Wayland or his ancestors.

In *Þiðreks saga*, Wayland receives his metalworking education from dwarfs – first from Mimir, who is also the instructor of Sigurd, and then from the two dwarfs who live beneath the mountain Kallava. These mountain dwarfs are presented as greedy and jealous, but extremely talented in the working of metal, which is why Wayland goes to learn from them. Such talented metalworking dwarfs appear elsewhere in Norse mythology, as well as in traditions from further afield.[722] They are often associated with underground spaces, like the dwarfs in *Þiðreks saga* and Wayland in a number of sources, and Wayland's Smithy is not the only example of a mound being associated with metalworking.[723] Eliade suggested that there was a link between dwarfism and the disabilities associated with initiation, but it is worth noting that, in Norse myth, the term *dvergr*, 'dwarf', does not necessarily refer to someone of small stature.[724] The smith Albrich, who also appears in *Þiðreks saga*, is sometimes presented as a dwarf and sometimes as a giant; the same can be said of the smith Regin.[725]

Depictions of Wayland, particularly in *Vǫlundarkviða*, but also in other sources, also have supernatural connections in the way they resonate with ideas about shamanism. This depiction may have been particularly influenced by ideas about Sami shamans and religious practices. Shamanism was certainly known in the Norse world, so it is not particularly controversial to look for traces of it

[720] Boyde, 'Celts Seen as Muslims', p. 22; Hamilton, 'The Religious Principle in *Beowulf*', p. 117; J.R.R. Tolkien, '*Beowulf*: The Monsters and the Critics', in *An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism*, ed. by Lewis E. Nicholson (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963), pp. 51-104, p. 77.
[721] Hunter, 'Germanic and Roman Antiquity and the Sense of the Past in Anglo-Saxon England', p. 46.
[722] Jørgensen, 'The Iron Age Blacksmith', p. 311; Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 32.
[723] Davidson, 'Weland the Smith', p. 147; see Depping, *Wayland the Smith*, p. Lxxiii, for the Italian tradition of subterranean Cyclops smiths in Mount Etna; Pulsiano and Wolf, *Medieval Scandinavia*, p. 713, for other Mediterranean earth-dwelling smiths including Ptah of Egypt and Hephaistos of Lemnos.
[724] Eliade, *The Forge and the Crucible*, p. 105.
[725] Davidson, 'Weland the Smith', p. 154.

in the construction of Wayland as a character. Although the word 'shaman' comes from the Evenki tribe of Siberia, and its application to other cultural groups is sometimes controversial, it is largely accepted as applicable in a Sami context.[726] The Sami people have considerable similarities to other northern European groups, and this includes spiritual practices. Although only minimal evidence survives regarding the religious beliefs of Iron Age and early medieval Sami, what does exist, and what can be guessed at from later religious beliefs, suggests that 'shamanism' is an appropriate and applicable term.[727] There are also traces of shamanic belief in Norse mythology, particularly with relation to Odin, whose journey to learn magic secrets from the giants has echoes of shamanic spirit journeys.[728] Snorri's description of Odin's shape-changing magic and his body lying inert while his spirit visits another world has particularly strong shamanic connotations.[729] While shamanic traditions are mostly associated with tight-knit hunter-gather groups, it is not impossible that traces of such beliefs survived among the agricultural Scandinavians, or were borrowed from their Sami neighbours.[730]

Shamanism might, for Norse audiences, have reflected the strange, almost supernatural nature of the Sami; this seems to be the case in *Vǫlundarkviða*, where Wayland is presented both as a Finn and as an elf.[731] Stories of shamanic magic, such as the magician found in the *Historia Norwegiae*, do show that the Sami were believed to be powerful magicians and spirit travellers.[732] Shamanic practice might also have been associated with the pre-Christian past, if the Norse believed that their ancestors had once had similar beliefs. Using shamanic practice also illustrates the otherness or

---

[726] Neil S. Price, 'An Archaeology of Altered States: Shamanism and Material Culture Studies', in *The Archaeology of Shamanism*, ed. by Neil Price (Routledge: London, 2001), pp.3-16, p. 6. It is worth noting that, although the Evenki coined the word *saman*, they have no word for 'shamanism' as a concept or religious system, only for the individual shaman.
[727] DuBois, *Nordic Religions in the Viking Age*, p. 13.
[728] Richard North, *Heathen Gods in Old English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 84. See also Lund, 'Living Places or Animated Objects?' p. 25 for traces of shamanism in Old Norse paganism.
[729] Lindow, 'Cultures in Contact', p. 98; Du Bois, *Nordic Religion in the Viking Age*, p. 52.
[730] Davis, *Beowulf and the Demise of Germanic Legend in England*, p. 93.
[731] Einarson, 'Artisanal Revenge in *Völundarkviða*', p. 30.
[732] In this story, a 'magus' dies while trying to send his spirit to revive a dead woman. A second magus is able to revive the woman, and says that he also saw the dead magus's soul in the spirit world. Lindow, 'Cultures in Contact', p. 101.

strangeness of these non-Norse people by showing how their religious beliefs differed even from pre-Christian Norse beliefs.

There are a number of ways in which the depictions of Wayland suggest the influence of Norse ideas about shamanism. His transformation into a bird or birdman might have had its roots in shamanic practice; spiritual transformations into animals are a common theme in shamanic cultures around the world, and transformation into animals is one of the most frequently reported hallucinatory experiences of people in an altered state of consciousness.[733] Birds are particularly important as spirit guides.[734] The animal-human images which appear frequently in early Germanic art might represent a broader tradition of shamanic animal journeys, and in Scandinavia in particular, iconographies of shamanic flight, such as the Uppaåkra man, are relatively common.[735] Bird transformations are far from unique to shamanic traditions, however, and are found elsewhere in Old Norse literature. Loki borrows Freyja's *fjaðrhamr*, a feather cloak (or even feather form), while Odin escapes in eagle form.[736] The word *fiaðrhamr* appears in *Þrymskviða, Þiðreks saga*, *Alexanders saga*, and *Breta sǫgur*, although it is never quite clear whether this refers to tied-on wings or a full bird transformation.[737] Elsewhere in medieval literature, a cluster of motifs similar to those found in Wayland's story, including otherworldly bird-people and a semi-supernatural son, can be found in Marie de France's *Yonec*.[738] Wayland's story may have drawn on Old Norse ideas about shamanic practice among the Sami, or it may have been drawn from entirely different traditions. Elements of shamanism have frequently been identified in *Vǫlundarkviða*, but this may be due to the interests of

[733] Thomas A. Dowson and Martin Porr, 'Special Objects - Special Creatures: Shamanistic Imagery and the Aurignacian Art of South-West Germany', in *The Archaeology of Shamanism*, ed. by Neil Price (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 165-77, p. 170.
[734] Hollimon, 'The Gendered Peopling of North America', p. 127; DuBois, *Nordic Religion in the Viking Age*, p. 53 on such guides in Sami trances.
[735] Paul Budd and Timothy Taylor, 'The Faerie Smith Meets the Bronze Industry: Magic Versus Science in the Interpretation of Prehistoric Metal-Making', *World Archaeology*, 27 (1995), 133-43, p. 139.
[736] Lindahl, McNamara, and Lindow, *Medieval Folklore*, p. 693; Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 46.
[737] John McKinnell, 'Eddic Poetry in Anglo-Scandinavian Northern England', in *Vikings and the Danelaw: Select Papers from the Proceedings of the Thirteenth Viking Congress*, ed. by James Graham-Campbell, Richard Hall, Judith Jesch, and David N. Parsons (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2001), pp. 327-42, p. 334.
[738] Boyd, 'The Ring, the Sword, the Fancy Dress, and the Posthumous Child'.

scholars: Eliade also wrote a book on shamanism as well as on smiths, and saw smiths as connected to shamans through their association with initiations.[739]

Wayland's transformation into a bird or winged figure also has connotations for his gender identity. This is particularly highlighted in *Vǫlundarkviða*, where such a transformation is first associated with a distinctly female character.[740] It may also be reflected in the choice of words used to describe both the swan-maiden's transformation and Wayland's own 'webbed feet'; Philip Shaw has argued that water-fowl transformations are particularly associated with feminine characters in Old Norse, as opposed to the more masculine associations of eagle transformations.[741]

Wayland and the Past

Ideas of the past are significant in all of the Wayland material, whether Anglo-Saxon, Old Norse, or French, but it is a particularly strong theme in the Old English material, and had a special resonance in Anglo-Saxon culture. For people whose history involved migration or other major changes in society, ideas of the past may become more complex than a straightforward chronology. In cases of migration in particular, the past can often be located not just in a different time but in a different place. This concept, of a past that differs from the future both geographically and temporally is described by Homi K. Bhabha as the 'beyond': a place that is outside current existence yet not specifically identifiable as a certain time or place.[742] The physical location of the past may, to a certain extent, coincide with a historically-attested homeland or place of origin. It can also transcend such straightforward interpretations, becoming a place uprooted from firm ideas of both place and time. It can also draw on the locations of imagined or borrowed homelands, such as the Roman use

[739] Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, translated by Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964, originally published 1951). Examples of this approach to *Vǫlundarkviða* include Grimstad, 'The Revenge of Volundr', Barndon, 'Myth and Metallurgy'.
[740] Beekman Taylor, '*Vǫlundarkviða*, *Þrymskviða*, and the Function of Myth', p. 271.
[741] Philip Shaw, 'Telling a Hawk from an *Herodio*: On the Origins and Development of the Old English Word *Wealhhafoc* and Its Relatives', *Medium Ævum*, 82 (2013), 1-22, p. 17.
[742] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 4.

of Troy as their mythical place of origin. This idea of the 'beyond' removes the past from a simple structure of past-present-future by placing it in a geographical rather than temporal context, thereby allowing for its consideration as an ever-changing entity rather than part of a fixed continuum of time.[743] The past may be over and finished, but the 'beyond' still lives.

The idea of the 'beyond' is therefore a useful tool for revising and re-understanding the past. It simultaneously still exists, no longer exists, and has never existed, which makes it the ideal space for exploring cultural values and absorbing new cultural elements. Ancient Romans, for example, knew little of the 'real' Troy, or its current state of existence, but that did not diminish its value as an original homeland. If anything, it provided such a complex and multi-faceted tale that it could be used in all kinds of different ways for the exploration of distinctly Roman values. Similarly, the Franks developed a myth of their origins lying in the fall of Troy.[744] Such an idea allows people to examine their own histories through a 'double vision' which can incorporate their past selves and their current selves alongside each other, a concept which would have been extremely important for the people of Anglo-Saxon England, conscious both of the myths of their overseas origins and the relative newness of their Christian faith.[745] The adoption of Christianity placed another layer of difference between the Anglo-Saxons and the ancestors of their origin myths, who came to Britain across the North Sea. A reluctance to entirely abandon pre-existing ideas about their history can be seen in a continued interest in tracing royal genealogies to pagan gods or legendary figures, and in the continued presence of figures like Wayland in art and literature.[746] Anglo-Saxon ideas of the past were deeply altered by Christianity, but their flexibility allowed for the absorption of new ideas, and

[743] This concept is also discussed by Catherine Karkov in 'The Franks Casket Speaks Back', although she focuses on the Franks Casket as a whole object, rather than specifically on the Wayland story across its various forms.
[744] Matthew Innes, 'Trojans or Teutons? The Carolingians and the Germanic Past', *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Yitzhak Hen and Matthew Innes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 227-49.
[745] Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, p. 5; Karkov, 'The Franks Casket Speaks Back'.
[746] John D. Niles, 'Pagan Survivals and Popular Belief', in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. by Godden and Lapidge, pp. 126-41, p. 135; Hunter, 'Germanic and Roman Antiquity', p. 43.

this concept of the 'beyond' continued to serve as a tool for understanding identity. It is this altered, Christianised, version which we see in surviving texts and works of art.

The Germanic-speaking people who settled in Britain probably originated in what is now northern Germany and central Scandinavia, and this concept of a Continental homeland was preserved in their legends and mythology. While the nature of this migration was complex, and many of the people who identified with the associated legends were probably of largely British origin, there seems to have been a sense of a common geographical origin, with a common migration story. This shared geographical sense of past was explored through stories; *Beowulf*, for example, is set in Denmark and draws on Danish history and mythology, while also linking the story to Anglo-Saxon England through the figure of Scyld, reputed ancestor of a number of English royal houses.[747]

This migration story remained a key part of Anglo-Saxon identity, but it was not the only part. It absorbed Classical and Biblical ideas, fusing them in a way which created a continued sense of group identity through reference to a shared past. Like the Anglo-Saxon past, the stories of the Old Testament and the Classical world lay outside Britain's shores, in places that were known to be 'other', yet had still played an important part in the shaping of Anglo-Saxon culture and belief. Texts like *Judith* present Biblical stories in the mould of Anglo-Saxon heroic literature. All of these elements tangled together to form a complex but fairly consistent idea of the past that lay beyond Britain's shores. The layers added by the Scandinavian settlers of Northern England, as reflected in the Yorkshire stone sculptures, created an even more complex picture, drawing on precedents from the Anglian past but also developing a new, Scandinvanian-influenced style.[748]

Iceland, where the manuscript copies of both *Vǫlundarkviða* and *Þiðreks saga* were produced, similarly had a past which lay beyond the sea, in Scandinavia and Germany. The prologue of *Þiðreks saga* is particularly aware of the complex history that lay behind the stories told in the saga, as it

[747] Abels, *Alfred the Great*, p. 27.
[748] Halstead, 'The Stone Sculpture of Anglo-Scandinavian Yorkshire in its Landscape Context', pp. 170 and 208.

discusses the importance of writing to preserve the stories which have long circulated orally.[749] The saga does bring in Biblical references, but sparingly, and emphasises continuity through the different periods covered in the many stories; this is similar to the compound past created by the Franks Casket.[750] Across both Anglo-Saxon and Icelandic traditions, therefore, Wayland belongs firmly to a distant time period - but not one which is imagined as somehow separate from the Christian, Classical, or Biblical past.

Another useful concept for the study of Anglo-Saxon attitudes to Wayland is that of memory retention and degradation, particularly as it relates to multi-part memories like stories.[751] Essentially, specific combinations of story elements are easier to remember over a longer period of time, but these selfsame elements can also contribute to a more rapid erosion and alteration of the story's original form. The varied sources and extended time period available for Wayland material in Anglo-Saxon England allows for an analysis of this phenomenon: which elements of Wayland's story were remembered and transmitted, and which were not? This is an approach which makes the most of the allusive nature of the surviving Wayland material, treating it as a strength rather than a weakness. Each fragment is valued as a window into a separate aspect of the broader Wayland tradition, suggesting what was most prominent or most valued in different contexts.

When considered in terms of these ideas, the Wayland story appears not as a pagan leftover, in opposition to new Christian ideas, but as a layer both underlying and overlaying Christian cultural elements. Not only did Christian beliefs colour how Wayland was viewed by the Anglo-Saxons, but Germanic myth, legend, history, and identity (including the story of Wayland) shaped the nature of Christianity. The complexity of this relationship must not be ignored or underestimated; Wayland existed alongside and in the same conceptual space as a Christian past, and Anglo-Saxon audiences

[749] Pernille Hermann, 'Concepts of Memory and Approaches to the Past in Medieval Icelandic Literature', *Scandinavian Studies*, 81 (2009), 287-308, p. 292.
[750] Curschmann, 'The Prologue of *Þiðreks saga*', p. 141.
[751] See Scott Atran, *In Gods We Trust: The Evolutionary Landscape of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), particularly pp. 100-107.

evidently did not consider this to be contradictory. Modern scholars have often considered Wayland as a 'Germanic legendary figure', but this categorisation is artificial. For Anglo-Saxons, it seems that he was part of their group memories about their past, whether that past was Northern European, Christian, Roman, or even British; Wayland's Smithy shows how the story of Wayland could be integrated into the landscape of Britain. This approach to the Wayland story would explain how the story was deemed appropriate to appear alongside the Nativity, or on a cross shaft: its connection to retellings of a semi-imagined past was more powerful than its associations with paganism or violence. It may have been aided by the presence of other, iconographically similar figures in other traditions, such as Daedalus or Hephaestus in Ancient Greek myth.[752] The Anglo-Saxon use of repeated formulae, both in literature (and presumably oral communication) and art pre-dated Christianization, and absorbed Christian elements and motifs into this scheme.[753] Wayland might therefore have been familiar from clusters of related images which gradually absorbed new Christian images, as well as from formulaic references which reinforced his link to a 'heroic' ancient past. It must be remembered that the majority of Anglo-Saxon art no longer survives; we can only assume that the same, or similar, motifs appeared in other media, such as tapestry.[754]

A variety of memory studies have attempted to elucidate why it is that certain parts of stories are preserved, while others are forgotten - and the results of these studies are often contradictory. The overall pattern, taking into account a variety of theories, seems to be that the best-remembered stories are those which contain mostly well-understood, culturally relevant concepts, combined with a small percentage of 'counterintuitive' beliefs, which appear to aid recollection of stories.[755] The story of Wayland fits this model well: as a smith, his profession is elite and potentially mysterious, yet also reassuringly everyday. Surely, everyone in medieval England and Scandinavia must have

[752] Hinton, 'Anglo-Saxon Smiths and Myths', p. 5; Dunn, *The Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons,* p. 66; Von See, La Farge, Picard, and Schulz, *Kommentar*, p. 83.
[753] Leslie Webster, *Anglo-Saxon Art: A New History* (London: British Museum Press, 2012), p. 8*;* see also Lilla Kopár on 'figurative thinking' in Anglo-Scandinavian art, *Gods and Settlers*, p. xxv.
[754] Kopár, *Gods and Settlers*, p. 17; Hall, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 15; Webster, *Anglo-Saxon Art*, p. 40.
[755] Atran, *In Gods We Trust*, pp. 106 - 7.

known a smith, and so would already have a mental framework of smith-related memory cues. A story about a mere smith, however, might not have survived for so long: it is the more fantastical elements, such as his flight, his almost superhuman skills, and his over-elaborate revenge, which make Wayland's tale so memorable. Not all of these elements are necessary at once, however, in order to convey the basic and most important idea of Wayland as a smith from the ancient Anglo-Saxon past. Various writers and artists - and perhaps storytellers within entire oral traditions - could therefore pick and choose from the assortment of motifs and ideas attached to the Wayland story. Their audience did not necessarily all need to know the same Wayland story, or necessarily any Wayland story at all; they simply had to be familiar with some of its key motifs, and able to associate it with other episodes, formulae, and motifs connected to stories of an ancestral past.

Wayland the Outsider

Wayland is therefore clearly identified as a liminal or marginal figure in a number of ways. But how does this contribute to a deeper understanding of his story? The prevalence of outsider motifs and identities might suggest that smiths in general *were* seen as outsiders, and medieval audiences expected to see smiths presented as somehow different from the people around them. On the other hand, Wayland's outsider status could have meant that he was intrinsically different from 'real' smiths, and was viewed as a mythological figure rather than a representative of smiths in general. In the case of this second possibility, Wayland's story does *not* provide evidence that smiths were marginal, only that Wayland was viewed as marginal and was also a smith. *Vǫlundarkviða* is the only text which provides firm evidence that Wayland was imprisoned apart from other people as a result of his metalworking skill; in *Þiðreks saga*, access to Wayland's metalworking is simply a positive side effect enjoyed by the king after he imprisons Wayland for attempting to poison the princess. The lack of further details regarding this in other sources, however, makes it impossible to draw any clear conclusions.

What the range of sources, viewed together as a whole, does suggest is that Wayland's identity as a smith, as a foreigner, and as a supernatural figure survived long after his story disappeared – or reached areas that his story never reached. These are the elements that appear across the medieval world, and are the three elements which survive in the French formulaic references. This shows the powerful appeal of Wayland's identity, which allowed his memory to persist even when his narrative was apparently forgotten. No mention is made in these French sources of Wayland's identity as a murderer or rapist, even though they make up such a significant portion of his story. Wayland's story, perhaps, was limited in its cultural relevance, but the idea of a foreign smith with supernatural connections could survive anywhere during the Middle Ages. The survival of this motif cluster does suggest a strong popular correlation between smiths and outsiders, although not necessarily with the same connotations of smiths as 'marginal' figures, living on the edge of a community.

The surviving sources also show the strength of a link between foreigners and the supernatural in the medieval world, and demonstrate how this connection was found all over Europe and across the centuries. The story of an Old Norse smith might not be the first place to look when studying attitudes towards ethnic others, but the sheer range of available material shows how this connection between foreigners and magical, otherworldly beings persisted even as what was 'foreign' shifted. The story of Wayland potentially reveals a great deal about fear of such ethnic others, while also suggesting a degree of admiration for the skills and abilities of such people.

Beliefs in smiths as strange figures, whether foreign or supernatural, also hints at the rarity of the finest medieval metalwork. While most people would surely have known a blacksmith, the goldsmiths and swordsmiths who produced the luxurious metalwork items owned by kings and great lords were far more mysterious figures. The associations made between Wayland and metalworking dwarfs or Sami shamans indicate how people knew very little about these elite metalworkers, whether foreign or otherwise. This in itself might support the idea of metalworkers as itinerant:

always travelling, rarely staying still long enough for communities to become comfortable with their presence. The Tattershall Thorpe smith grave may illustrate this very well.

Wayland's story also demonstrates the narrative power of 'the other' to create tension and mystery. A story about a foreign magician with a shape-shifting wife offers more storytelling possibility than an everyday blacksmith, and so attributing outsider status to Wayland provides more space for exploration. The idea of a smith as a marginal figure can be expanded to fill a larger stage, with exaggeration allowing for deeper investigation of all the issues associated with Wayland's character and story. It is worth noting that, in both the narrative sources, Niðhad himself is 'foreign' in relation to the place of origin of the manuscripts. Wayland is not the only outsider in his stories: he is a foreigner in a foreign place. Even if the king's court is presented as less 'other' than a Sami camp or Saracen palace, it is still just beyond the world of the story's audience, and takes advantage of the storytelling latitude this provides.

What becomes clear through studying the idea of Wayland as an outsider is the way in which many of these various strands of his identity link back to ideas of the past. The foreign places in which he is found are also the ancestral homes of the Anglo-Saxons, Icelanders, and Anglo-Scandinavians who told his story. His story mirrors those told of pagan gods, associated with the distant Scandinavian past, or he is associated with pagans whose traditions resisted the encroachment of Christianity. He is connected with slavery, an institution largely extinct in Northern Europe by the time his story was written down in *Vǫlundarkviða* and *Þiðreks saga*. The giants and dwarfs who raise him and teach him belong to an earlier time period, as made clear by the prologue to *Þiðreks saga*. Even the application of his name to a prehistoric burial mound shows the strength of these links to the past. Wayland is therefore placed in the category of 'outsider' or 'different' not only spatially and culturally, but also temporally. He does not belong in any single time period, as such, but in a broad temporal liminal or marginal stage: an*other* time.

Conclusions

Studying the Wayland material as a whole - the art, the literature, the place-names - reveals a great deal about the values and priorities of the people who told his story. It is easy to ask what the history of Scandinavia or England could tell us about the story of Wayland, but there is another question: what can Wayland tell us about the cultures that created his many identities? Viewing the sources alongside legal texts makes it clear that there was a disconnect between legal norms, popularly held values, and the expected behaviour of fictional or legendary figures. Assessing all of the Wayland material together reveals that even a character who exhibited behaviour that was disapproved of, such as murder and rape, could still be admired for other things: Wayland is both admired for his skill and feared for his anger. The use of Wayland's story - his biography - as a specific case study provides a helpful way to understand and explore the relationship between law, fiction, and social expectations. Items such as *Þiðreks saga* and the Franks Casket, which blend stories and motifs from all over the medieval world, allow these discussions to be broadened into a consideration of how different value systems interacted and integrated to create different images of Wayland.

The story of Wayland's revenge, when considered alongside the often-sympathetic portrayal of Wayland as an individual, suggests a certain degree of admiration for what might today be considered extreme and brutal violence. This ambiguous presentation provides an under-studied opportunity to analyse the two main schools of thought regarding violence in early medieval Scandinavia, characterized by Vilhjálmur Árnason as the humanistic and romantic schools.[756] In the humanistic school, sagas are assumed to offer Christian moral lessons about the fate of those who are proud or arrogant, while the romantic school sees sagas as explorations of ideal Norse heroes, entirely separate from Christian moral values.[757] The Wayland of *Vǫlundarkviða* may have been a

[756] Árnason, 'Morality and Social Structure', p.157.
[757] Árnason, 'Morality and Social Structure', p.159.

pagan figure, due to the historical period in which his story is set, and the Wayland of the Ardre Stone certainly was, but there is no evidence that his actions were provided as a moral contrast to Christian behaviour. *Þiðrekssaga* is theoretically part of a Christian milieu (Theoderic himself was Christian), but no reference to religion is made at any point in Wayland's story, and his violent revenge does not especially suggest a promotion of Christian values. His eventual status as the father of a hero might support the romantic theory, but the unresolved ending of *Vǫlundarkviða* and the focus on cruelty in both, and in other texts, such as *Deor*, seems to undermine this more romantic approach to the Wayland story.

The Wayland material is therefore useful when considering attitudes towards violence, rape, vengeance, and the treatment of social outsiders in a broader social context than offered by legal texts. This does not, of course, guarantee that such attitudes were shared by all of the north-western medieval world, or that they exerted a direct influence over actions and reactions, but they do suggest certain patterns and undercurrents of belief. The dramatic change in Wayland's relationship with Beadohild suggests changes in the way that sexual relationships were expected to be depicted - changes that would not be visible if either *Vǫlundarkviða* or *Þiðreks saga* were studied in isolation. Given this rich opportunity, it is surprising that not only has *Þiðreks saga* been relatively little-studied, but the section about Wayland has attracted even less attention. It has appeared in English-language literature almost exclusively as an 'alternative' to *Vǫlundarkviða*, usually summarized and then skimmed over in favour of the other version. *Þiðreks saga* as a whole is usually considered something of a 'lesser' saga because of its later date, and this interpretation has affected treatments of *Velents þáttr smiðs* as well. However, if there is no desire to look for traces of 'pagan' belief in Old Norse literature, this later date does not in any way undermine the saga's value. In fact, it is the opposite – it provides a welcome opportunity to appreciate the dynamic, changing nature of Norse literature. It does not show a deterioration of an ancient tradition, but rather a developing society with a literary tradition connected to the different cultures across Europe.

Studying the figure of Wayland shows the different ways in which similar societies, separated by time and space, and influenced by different genre expectations, could interpret similar themes. Wayland of *Þiðreks saga* is a hero of a different century to the protagonist of *Vǫlundarkviða*, but he is also the hero of an entirely different literary genre, formed into the mould of a courtly hero without losing his distinctive characteristics or saga-hero character. He moves from isolation to a central position in the pantheon of Germanic heroes, transitioning from a 'son of the king of the Sami' to the grandson of a Scandinavian king, educated alongside the great hero Sigurðr. In England, he moved comfortably into the company of Biblical and Classical heroes, while other changes brought him into churches and the halls of legendary kings. In his role as a smith, he could move across time periods and cultures, adapting to fit whatever was expected of a smith in each time and place. As a killer, he shows the difficulties of applying legal norms to fictional characters, and shows the complexities of moral values that can exist within single cultures. As a rapist, he shows how attitudes to women and sexuality shifted and changed across the medieval world. And, as an outsider, he reveals how motifs of 'otherness' could allow for exploration of ideas that were troublesome or difficult. Viewed alone, each Wayland source can only hint at who this legendary smith was. When the material is taken all together, however, as a 'biography' of Wayland, it forms a network of allusions and motifs which reveal so much more about Wayland and the people who told his story.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems, ed. by Elliott van Kirk Dobbie (London: Routledge, 1942), *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, Vol 6, p. 116

The Chanson D'Antioche: An Old-French Account of the First Crusade, trans. by Susan B. Edgington and Carol Sweetenham (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011)

Le Chevalerie D'Ogier de Danemarche, ed. by Mario Eusebi (Milan: Istituto Editoriale Cisalpino, 1963)

Deor, ed. by Kemp Malone (London: Methuen's Old English Library, 1933; this edition Exeter: University of Exeter, 1977)

Deor, trans by Robert E. Bjork, in *Old English Shorter Poems, Volume II, Wisdom and Lyric* (Harvard: Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, 2014)

Doon de Maience, chanson de geste publiée pour le premiere fois, ed. by M. A. Pey (1859)

The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry: An Edition of Exeter Dean and Chapter MS 3501, Vol 1: Texts, ed. by Bernard J. Muir (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1994)

Fierabras: chanson de geste du XIIe siècle, ed. by Parc Le Person (Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 2003)

Godefroi de Buillon, ed. by Jan Roberts, The Old French Crusade Cycle, Volume X (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1996)

Grágas: Laws of Early Iceland, trans. by Andrew Dennis, Peter Foote, Richard Perkins (Winnipeg, University of Manitoba Press, 1980)

Huon de Bordeaux en prose du XVème siècle, ed. by Pierre Ruelle (Brussels: Presses Universitaires de Bruxelles, 1960)

Klaeber's Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg, ed. by R. D. Fulk, Robert E. Bjork, and John D. Niles, 4th edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008)

Life of Merlin, Geoffrey of Monmouth, ed. and trans. by Basil Clarke (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1973)

The Old English Boethius, Vol. 1, ed. by Malcolm Godden and Susan Irvine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)

The Old English Epic of Waldere, ed. and trans. by Jonathan B. Himes (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009)

Raoul de Cambrai, ed. and trans. by Sarah Kay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992)

The Saga of Thidrek of Bern, trans. by Edward R. Haymes (New York: Garland, 1988)

Þiðreks saga af Bern, ed. by Guðni Jónsson (Reykjavík: Íslendingasagnaútgáfan, 1954)

Waltharius and Ruodlib, ed. and trans. by Dennis M. Kratz (New York: Garland Publishing, 1984)

Waltharius, ed. and trans. by Abram Ring (Leuven: Peeters, 2016)

Secondary Sources

Abels, Richard, *Alfred the Great: War, Kingship and Culture in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Taylor and Francis, 1998)

- 'What has Weland to do with Christ? The Franks Casket & the Acculturation of Christianity in Early Anglo-Saxon England', *Speculum*, 84 (2009), 549-81

Ager, Barry and Brian Gilmour, 'A Pattern-Welded Anglo-Saxon Sword from Acklam Wold, North Yorkshire', *The Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 60 (1988), 13-24

Andersson, Theodore M. and William Ian Miller, *Law and Literature in Medieval Iceland* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1989)

Andrén, Anders, Kristina Jennbert & Catharina Raudvere (eds), *Old Norse Religion in Long-Term Perspectives: Origins, Changes and Interactions* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2006)

Andrews, Le Roy, 'The Criteria For Dating the Eddic Poems', *PMLA*, 42 (1927), 1044-54

Árnason, Vilhjálmur, 'An Ethos in Transformation: Conflicting Values in the Sagas', in *Gripla XX*, ed. by Ólason, pp. 217-40

Atkinson, R.J.C., 'Wayland's Smithy', *Antiquity*, 39 (1965), 126-33

Atran, Scott, *In Gods We Trust: The Evolutionary Landscape of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002)

Aufderhaar, Iris, 'What Would a Goldsmith's Workshop Look Like In Theory?', in *Goldsmith Mysteries*, ed. by Pesch and Blankenfeldt, pp. 87-98

Axboe, Morten, 'Late Roman and Migration Period Sites in Southern Scandinavia with Archaeological Evidence of the Activity of Gold and Silver Smiths', in *Goldsmith Mysteries*, ed. by Pesch and Blankenfeldt, pp. 123-42

Bailey, Richard N., *Viking Age Sculpture in Northern England* (London: William Collins, 1980)

Baker, Peter S., *Honour, Exchange and Violence in Beowulf* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2013)

Bandlien, Bjørn, 'Arthurian Knights in Fourteenth-Century Iceland: *Erex Saga* and *Ívens Saga* in the World of Ormur Snorrason', *Arthuriana,* 23 (2013), 6-37

Barndon, Randi, 'Myth and Metallurgy: Some Cross-Cultural Reflections on Smiths', in *Old Norse Religion in Long-Term Perspectives*, ed. by Andrén, Jennbert, and Raudvere, pp. 99-103

Barron, W. R. J., 'Versions and Texts of the *Naissance du Chevalier au Cygne*', *Romania*, 356 (1968), 481-538

Beatie, Bruce A., 'Patterns of Myth in Medieval Narrative', *Symposium*, 25 (1971), 101-22

Beeghley, Leonard, *Homicide: A Sociological Explanation* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003)

Bek-Pedersen, Karen, *The Norns in Old Norse Mythology* (Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press, 2011)

Bergstøl, Jostein, 'Iron Technology and Magic in Iron Age Norway', in *Metals and Society: Papers From a Session Held at the European Association of Archaeologists Sixth Annual Meeting in Lisbon*

2000, ed. by Barbara S. Ottaway and Emma C. Wager, BAR International Series 1061 (2002), pp. 77-82

Bhabha, Homi K., *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994)

Birch, Thomas, 'Living on the Edge: Making and Moving Iron From the 'Outside' in Anglo-Saxon England', *Landscape History*, 31 (2011), 5-23

Blair, John, 'Exploring Anglo-Saxon Settlement: In Search of the Origins of the English Village', *Current Archaeology*, 291 (2014), 12-21

Bornholdt, Claudia, 'Everyone Thought it Very Strange How the Man had Been Shaped': The Hero and His Physical Traits in the Riddarasögur', *Arthuriana*, 22 (2012), 18-38

Boyd, Matthieu, 'The Ring, the Sword, the Fancy Dress, and the Posthumous Child: Background to the Element of Heroic Biography in Marie de France's *Yonec*', *Romance Quarterly,* 55 (2008), 205-30

- 'Celts seen as Muslims and Muslims seen by Celts in Medieval Literature,' in *Contextualising the Muslim Other in Medieval Christian Discourse*, ed. by Jerold C. Frakes (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 21-38

Brady, Caroline, 'Weapons in *Beowulf*: An Analysis of the Nominal Compounds and the Poet's Use of Them', *Anglo-Saxon England*, 8 (1979), 79-141

Bragg, Lois, *Oedipus Borealis: The Aberrant Body in Old Icelandic Myth and Saga* (Cranbury, NJ: Rosemount Publishing, 2004)

Bray, Dorothy Anne, 'Further on White Red-Eared Cows in Fact and Fiction', *Peritia: Journal of the Medieval Academy of Ireland*, 19 (2005), 239-55

Bright, James W., 'The Ubi Sunt Formula', *Modern Language Notes*, 8 (1893), 94

Brink, Stefan, 'Lord and Lady - Bryti and Deigja: Some Historical and Etymological Aspects of Family, Patronage and Slavery in Early Scandinavia and Anglo-Saxon England,' *The Dorothea Coke Memorial Lecture in Northern Studies, University College London 17 March 2005* (London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 2008)

- 'Naming the Land', in *The Viking World*, ed. by Brink and Price, pp. 57-66
- 'Slavery in the Viking Age' in *The Viking World,* ed. by Brink and Price, pp. 49-56

Brink, Stefan and Neil Price (eds), *The Viking World* (Routledge, Oxford and New York, 2008)

Brookes, Stuart, Sue Harrington, and Andrew Reynolds, *Studies in Early Anglo-Saxon Art and Archaeology: Papers in Honour of Martin G. Welch*, BAR British Series 527 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2011)

Brooks, Nicholas, *Communities and Warfare, 700-1400* (London: Hambledon Press, 2000)

Brown, Rev. G. F., 'The Ancient Sculptured Shaft in the Parish Church at Leeds', *Journal of the Archaeological Association*, 41 (1885), 131-43

Buckberry, Jo and Annia Cherryson, *Burial in Later Anglo-Saxon England, c. 650 - 1100 AD* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2010)

Budd, Paul and Timothy Taylor, 'The Faerie Smith Meets the Bronze Industry: Magic Versus Science in the Interpretation of Prehistoric Metal-Making', *World Archaeology*, 27 (1995), 133-43

Buisson, Ludwig, *Der Bildstein Ardre VIII auf Gotland: Göttermythen, Heldensagen und Jenseitsglaube der Germanen im 8. Jahrhundert n. Chr.* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976)

Byock, Jesse L. *Feud in the Icelandic Saga* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982)

- Egill Skalla-Grímsson: The Dark Figure as Survivor in an Icelandic Saga', in *The Dark Figure in Medieval German and Germanic Literature*, ed. by Haymes and Van D'Elden, pp. 151-63

Callmer, Johan, 'Wayland: An Essay on Craft Production in the Early and High Middle Ages in Scandinavia', in *Centrality-Regionality: The Social Structure of Southern Sweden during the Iron Age*, ed. by Lars Larsson and Birgitta Hårdh, Almqvist& Wiksell, Lund (2003) pp. 337-61

Campbell, J., 'Anglo-Saxon Ivories', in *The Anglo-Saxons*, ed. by James Campbell (London: Penguin, 1982), pp. 196-7

Caie, Graham D., ''*Ealdgesegena worn:* What the Old English *Beowulf* Teaches Us About Oral Forms' in *Oral Art Forms and their Passage into Writing*, ed. by Mundal and Wellendorf, pp. 109-20

Cameron, Angus, Ashley Crandell Amos, Antonette dePaolo Healey et al, *Dictionary of Old English: A to I* online (Toronto: Dictionary of Old English Project, 2018)

Cameron, Esther A., *Sheaths and Scabbards in England AD 400-1100*, BAR British Series 301 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2000)

Capelle, Torsten, 'An Insight into the Goldsmith's Workshop', in *Goldsmith Mysteries*, ed. by Pesch and Blankenfeldt, pp. 17-27

Carstens, Lydia, 'Might and Magic: The Smith in Old Norse Literature', in *Goldsmith Mysteries*, ed. by Pesch and Blankenfeldt, pp. 243-69

Cecire, Maria Sachiko, 'Ban Welondes: Wayland Smith in Popular Culture', in *Anglo-Saxon Culture and the Modern Imagination*, ed. by David Clark and Nicholas Perkins (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2010), pp. 201-18

Chance, Jane, *Woman as Hero in Old English Literature* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2005; previously Syracuse Press, 1986)

Clark, David, *Gender, Violence, and the Past in Edda and Saga* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)

Clark, George, 'Beowulf's Armour', *ELH*, 32 (1965), 409-41

Clover, Carol, 'Regardless of Sex: Men, Women, and Power in Early Northern Europe', *Speculum*, 68 (1993), 363-87

Clover, Carol and John Lindow (eds), *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature: A Critical Guide* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985)

Clunies Ross, Margaret (ed.), *Old Norse Myths, Literature and Society* (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2003)

Cramp, Rosemary, 'The Northumbrian Identity', in *Northumbria's Golden Age*, ed. by Hawkes and Mills, pp. 1-11

- 'The Changing Image, Divine and Human, in Anglo-Saxon Art, in *Aedificia Nova: Studies in Honor of Rosemary Cramp*, ed. by Karkov and Damico, pp. 3-32

Crawford, Sally, 'Differentiation in the Later Anglo-Saxon Burial Ritual on the Basis of Mental or Physical Impairment: A Documentary Perspective', in *Burial in Late Anglo-Saxon England, c. 650 - 1100 AD*, ed. by Buckberry and Cherryson, pp. 93-102

Coatsworth, Elizabeth, 'The Cross in the West Riding of Yorkshire', in *The Place of the Cross in Anglo-Saxon England,* ed. by Catherine E. Karkov, Sarah Larratt Keefer, and Karen Louise Jolly (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006), pp. 14-28

- *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture, Volume VIII, Western Yorkshire*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press/British Academy, 2008)

Coatsworth, Elizabeth and Michael Pinder, *The Art of the Anglo-Saxon Goldsmith: Fine Metalwork in Anglo-Saxon England: Its Practice and Practitioners* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2002)

Coggins, D., K. J. Fairless, and C. E. Batey, 'Simy Folds: An Early Medieval Settlement Site in Upper Teesdale, Co. Durham', *Medieval Archaeology*, 27 (1983), 1-26

Coupland, Simon, 'Carolingian Arms and Armor in the Ninth Century', *Viator*, 21 (1990), 29-50

Curschmann, Michael, 'The Prologue of *Þiðreks saga*': Thirteenth-Century Reflections on Oral Traditional Literature', *Scandinavian Studies*, 56 (1984), 140-51

Damon, John Edward, 'Desecto Capite Perfido: Bodily Fragmentation and Reciprocal Violence in Anglo-Saxon England', *Exemplaria,* 13 (2001), 399-432

Davidson, Hilda Ellis, 'Weland the Smith', *Folklore*, 16 (1958), 145–59

- *The Sword in Anglo-Saxon England: Its Archaeology and Literature* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1962)
- 'The Smith and the Goddess: Two Figures on the Franks Casket from Auzon', in *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 3 (1969), 216-26
- 'Human Sacrifice in the Late Pagan Period in North Western Europe', in *The Age of Sutton Hoo*, ed. by M. Carver (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1992), pp. 331-40

Davis, Craig R., *Beowulf and the Demise of Germanic Legend in England* (New York: Garland, 1996)

Depping, G.B., *Wayland the Smith: A Dissertation on a Tradition of the Middle Ages. With Additions by S.W. Singer* (London: William Pickering, 1847)

Di Sciacca, Claudia, 'The Ubi Sunt Motif and the Soul-and-Body Legend in Old English Homilies: Sources and Relationships', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 105 (2006)

Dieterle, Richard L., 'The Metallurgical Code of the '*Vǫlundarkviða* and its Theoretical Import', *History of Religions*, 27 (1987), 1-31

Dobozy, Maria, 'The Function of Knowledge and Magic in *Salman und Morolf*', in *The Dark Figure in Medieval German and Germanic Literature*, ed. by Haymes and Van D'Elden, pp. 27-41.

Donoghue, Daniel, *Old English Literature: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004)

Dowson, Thomas A. and Martin Porr, 'Special Objects - Special Creatures: Shamanistic Imagery and the Aurignacian Art of South-West Germany', in *The Archaeology of Shamanism*, ed. by Price, pp. 165-77

Drout, Michael D.C., 'Blood and Deeds: The Inheritance System in *Beowulf*', *Studies in Philology*, 104 (2007), 199-226

Dunbabin, *Captivity and Imprisonment in Medieval Europe, 1000-1300* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan)

DuBois, Thomas A., *Nordic Religions in the Viking Age* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999)

- 'Diet and Deities: Contrastive Livelihoods and Animal Symbolism in Nordic Pre-Christian Religions,' in *More Than Mythology,* ed. by Raudvere and Schjødt, pp. 65-96

Dunn, Marilyn, *The Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons, c.597 - c.700: Discourses of Life, Death and Afterlife* (London: Continuum, 2009)

Edel, Doris, *Cultural Identity and Cultural Integration: Ireland and Europe in the Early Middle Ages,* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1995)

Einarson, Leif, 'Artisanal Revenge in *Völundarkviða*: Völundr's Creations in the Spatial Relations of the Poem', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 114 (2015), 1-31

Eliade, Mircea, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, translated. by Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964, originally published 1951)

- *The Forge and the Crucible: The Origins and Structures of Alchemy*, trans. by Stephen Corrin, 2nd edn (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978)

Enright, Michael J., *Lady with a Mead-Cup: Ritual, Prophecy and Lordship in the European Warband from La Tène to the Viking Age* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1996)

Eriksen, Stefka Georgieva and Karl G. Johansson, 'Francia et Germania - Translations and the Europeanisation of Old Norse Narratives', in in *Francia et Germania*, ed. by Johansson and Flaten (Oslo: Novus Forlag, 2012), pp. 9-52

Estes, Heide, *Anglo-Saxon Literary Landscapes: Ecotheory and the Environmental Imagination* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017)

Eyler, Joshua R. (ed.), *Disability in the Middle Ages: Reconsiderations and Reverberations* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010)

Faith, Rosamund, *The English Peasantry and the Growth of Lordship* (London: Leicester University Press, 1997)

Fassin, Didier, 'Introduction: Toward a Critical Moral Anthropology,' in *A Companion to Moral Anthropology*, ed. by Didier Fassin (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 1-18

Fell, Christine, *Women in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984)

Firth, Hugh, 'Coercion, Vengeance, Feud and Accommodation: Homicide in Medieval Iceland', *Early Medieval Europe*, 20 (2012), 139-75

Fischer, Svante, Jean Soulat, and Teodora Linton Fischer, 'Sword Parts and their Depositional Contexts: Symbols in Migration and Merovingian Period Martial Society', *Fornvännen,* 108 (2013), 109-22

Fletcher, Richard, *Bloodfeud: Murder and Revenge in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)

Foley, John Miles, 'Oral Tradition into Textuality', in *Texts, Textuality: Textual Instability, Theory, and Interpretation*, ed. by Philip Cohen (New York: Garland, 1997), pp. 1-24

- 'Verbal Marketplaces and the Oral Literate Continuum', in *Along the Oral-Written Continuum: Types of Texts, Relations and their Implications*, ed. by Slavica Ranković, Leidulf Melve and Else Mundal, Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy, 20 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), pp. 17-37.

Frakes, Jerold C., *Vernacular and Latin Literary Discourses of the Muslim Other in Medieval Germany* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011)

Frank, Roberta, 'Germanic Legend in Old English Literature', in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. by Godden and Lapidge, pp. 88-106

Friðriksdóttir, Jóhanna Katrín, *Women in Old Norse Literature: Bodies, Words, and Power* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013)

Gannon, Anna, *The Iconography of Early Anglo-Saxon Coinage: Sixth to Eighth Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)

Ghosh, Shami, *Writing the Barbarian Past: Studies in Early Medieval Historical Narrative* (Leiden: Brill, 2016)

Gillespie, George T., *A Catalogue of Persons Named in German Heroic Literature: 700-1600* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973)

Godden, Malcolm, and Michael Lapidge (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991)

Griffiths, David, 'Markets and "Productive" Sites: A View From Western Britain', in *Markets in Early Medieval Europe*, ed. by Pestell and Ulmschneider, pp. 62-72

Grimstad, Kaaren, 'The Revenge of Volundr', *Edda: A Collection of Essays*, ed. by Robert Glendinning and Haraldur Bessason, (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1983), pp. 187-203

Gundersen, Jostein, Josephine M. Rasmussen, Ragnar Orten Lie, 'Private Metal Detecting and Archaeology in Norway', in *Open Archaeology*, 2 (2016), 160-70

Gunnell, Terry, 'Eddic Poetry' in *A Companion to Old Norse-Icelandic Literature and Culture*, ed. Rory McTurk (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 82-100

Gustafsson, Ny Björn, 'Beyond Wayland- Thoughts on Early Medieval Metal Workshops in Scandinavia', *Historical Metallurgy*, 45 (2011), 20-31

- 'In the Wake of the Hoards: Glimpses of Non-Ferrous Metalworking through the Finds of the Gotland Hoard Projects', *Fornvännen*, 108 (2013), 1-11
- 'Beeswax in Metalworking in Viking Period Gotland', *Fornvännen*, 111 (2016), 97-101

Haaland, Randi, 'Technology, Transformation and Symbolism: Ethnographic Perspectives on European Iron Working,' *Norwegian Archaeological Review*, 37 (2004), 1-19

Hadley, Dawn M., *The Northern Danelaw: Its Social Structure, C.800-1100* (London: Leicester University Press, 2000)

- 'Burying the Socially and Physically Distinctive in Later Anglo-Saxon England', in *Burial in Later Anglo-Saxon England, c. 650 - 1100 AD*, ed. by Buckberry and Cherryson, pp. 103-15

Hall, Alaric, *Elves in Anglo-Saxon England: Matters of Belief, Health, Gender and Identity* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007), p. 39

Hall, J. R. Clark, *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, fourth edition (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, first published 1894, this edition 1960)

Halsall, Guy (ed.), *Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998)

- 'An Introductory Survey', in *Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West*, ed. by Halsall, pp. 1-46
- *Warfare & Society in the Barbarian West, 450-900* (Oxford: Taylor and Francis, 2003)

Halstead, Robert, 'The Stone Sculpture of Anglo-Scandinavian Yorkshire in its Landscape Context' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leeds, 2016)

Hamerow, Helena, *Early Medieval Settlements: The Archaeology of Rural Communities in Northwest Europe, 400 - 900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002)

- *Rural Settlements and Society in Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)

Hamilton, Marie Padgett, 'The Religious Principle in *Beowulf*', in *An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism*, ed. by Nicholson, pp. 105-36

Härke, Heinrich, 'The Circulation of Weapons in Anglo-Saxon Society', in *Rituals of Power*, ed. by Theuws and Nelson, pp. 377-400

Harris, Joseph, 'Eddic Poetry', in *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature*, ed. by Clover and Lindow, pp. 68-156

Haslam, Jeremy, L. Biek, and R. F. Tylecote, 'A Middle Saxon Iron Smelting Site at Ramsbury, Wiltshire,' *Medieval Archaeology*, 24 (1980), 1-68

Hawkes, Jane, 'Design and Decoration: Re-Visualizing Rome in Anglo-Saxon Sculpture', in *Rome Across Time and Space: Cultural Transmission and the Exchange of Ideas, c. 500 - 1400*, ed. by Claudia Bolgia, Rosamond McKitterick, and John Osborne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 203-21

Hawkes, Jane and Susan Mills, *Northumbria's Golden Age* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton, 1999)

Haymes, Edward R., 'Preface', in *The Dark Figure in Medieval German and Germanic Literature*, ed. by Haymes and Van D'Elden, pp. iii-vi

Haymes, Edward R. and Stephanie Cain Van D'Elden (eds) *The Dark Figure in Medieval German and Germanic Literature* (Göppingen: Kümmerle Verlag, 1986)

Hedegear, Lotte, *Iron Age Myth and Materiality: An Archaeology of Scandinavia AD 400-1000* (Oxford: Routledge, 2001)

Heintz, Monica, 'Introduction: Why There Should Be an Anthropology of Moralities', in *The Anthropology of Moralities*, ed. by Monica Heintz (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), pp. 1-19

Helmbrecht, Michaela, 'A Winged Figure from Uppakra', *Fornvännen*, 2012 (107), 171-8

Hermann, Pernille, 'Concepts of Memory and Approaches to the Past in Medieval Icelandic Literature', *Scandinavian Studies*, Vol. 81 (2009), 287-308

Hill, Joyce, *Old English Minor Heroic Poems* (Durham: Durham and St Andrews Medieval Texts, 1983), p. 15

- '*Þæt Wæs Geomuru Ides*: A Female Stereotype Examined', in *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature*, ed. by Helen Damico and Alexandra Hennessey Olsen (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), pp. 235-47

Hills, Catherine, 'Work-Boxes or Reliquaries? Small Copper-Alloy Containers in Seventh-Century Anglo-Saxon Graves', in *Studies in Early Anglo-Saxon Art and Archaeology,* ed. by Brookes, Harrington, Reynolds, pp. 14-19

Hilts, Carly, 'Secrets of the Staffordshire Hoard: Skills of the Saxon Smiths Revealed', *Current Archaeology*, 297 (2014), 12-15

Hines, John, 'Myth and Reality: The Contribution of Archaeology', in *Old Norse Myths, Literature and Society*, ed. by Clunies Ross, pp. 19-39

- '*Beowulf* and Archaeology: Revisited', in *Aedificia Nova: Studies in Honor of Rosemary Cramp*, ed. by Karkov and Damico, pp. 165-74

Hinton, David, 'Late Saxon Treasure and Bullion', in *Ethelred the Unready: Papers from the Millenary Conference*, ed. by David Hill, BAR British Series 59 (Oxford: B.A.R., 1978), pp. 135-58

- 'Anglo-Saxon Smiths and Myths', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library,* 80 (1998), 4-21
- *A Smith in Lindsey: The Anglo-Saxon Grave at Tattershall Thorpe, Lincolnshire* (London: The Society for Medieval Archaeology, 2000)
- *The Alfred Jewel and Other Late Anglo-Saxon Decorated Metalwork* (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 2008)

Hjärthner-Holder, Eva, 'The Metal Workshop at Skeke in Uppland, Sweden', in *Goldsmith Mysteries,* ed. by Pesch and Blankenfeldt, pp. 157-68

Hollimon, Sandra E., 'The Gendered Peopling of North America: Addressing the Antiquity of Systems of Multiple Genders', in *The Archaeology of Shamanism*, ed. by Price, pp. 124-34

Holm, Ingunn, 'A Cultural Landscape Beyond the Infield/Outfield Categories: An Example from Eastern Norway', *Norwegian Archaeological Review*, 35 (2002), 67-80

Holman, Katherine, *The Northern Conquest: Vikings in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Signal Books, 2007)

Hooke, Della, 'The Woodland Landscape of Early Medieval England', in *Place-Names, Language and the Anglo-Saxon Landscape*, ed. by Nicholas J. Higham and Martin J. Ryan (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011), pp. 143-74

Hornblower, Simon, Antony Spawforth, and Esther Eidinow (eds), *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, fourth edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)

Hudson, John G.H., 'Feud, Vengeance and Violence in England from the Tenth to the Twelfth Centuries', in *Feud, Violence and Practice: Essays in Medieval Studies in Honor of Stephen D. White*, ed. by Belle S. Tuten and Tracey L. Billado (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 29-53

Hunter, Michael, 'Germanic and Roman Antiquity and the Sense of the Past in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3 (1974), 29-50

Innes, Matthew, 'Trojans or Teutons? The Carolingians and the Germanic Past', *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Yitzhak Hen and Matthew Innes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 227-49

Jackson, William H., 'Court Literature and Violence in the High Middle Ages', in *German Literature of the High Middle Ages*, ed. by Will Hasty (Wodbridge: Camden House, 2006), pp. 263-76

Jakobsson, Ármann, 'The Extreme Emotional Life of Volundr the Elf', *Scandinavian Studies*, 78 (2006), 227-54

Jezek, Martin, 'The Disappearance of European Smiths' Burials', *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, 25 (2015), 121-143

Jochens, Jenny, '*Með Jákvæði Hennar Sjálfr*: Consent as Signifier in the Old Norse World', in *Consent and Coercion to Sex and Marriage in Ancient and Medieval Societies,* ed. by Laiou, pp. 271-90

- *Old Norse Images of Women* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996).
- *Women in Old Norse Society* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell, 1998)

Johansson, Karl G. and Rune Flaten (eds), *Francia et Germania: Studies in Strengleikar and Þiðreks saga af Bern* (Oslo: Novus Forlag, 2012)

John, Simon, 'Godfrey of Bouillon and the Swan Knight', in *Crusading and Warfare in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Simon John and Nicholas Morton (Ashgate: Farnham, 2014), pp. 129-42

Johnston, Elva, *Literacy and Identity in Early Medieval Ireland* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2013)

Jones, George Fenwick, *Honor in German Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959)

Jørgensen, Lars, 'Manor and Market at Lake Tissø in the Sixth to Eleventh Centuries: the Danish "Productive"' Sites', in *Markets in Early Medieval Europe,* ed. by Pestell and Ulmschneider, pp. 175-207

Jørgensen, Roger, 'The Social and Material Context of the Iron Age Blacksmith in North Norway', *Acta Borealia*, 29 (2012), 1-34

- 'The Iron Age Blacksmith, Simply a Craftsman?', in *Everyday Products in the Middle Ages: Crafts, Consumption and the Individual in Northern Europe c. AD 800-1600*, ed. by Gitte Hansen, Steven P. Ashby, and Irene Baug (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2015), pp. 300-18

Karkov, Catherine E., 'The Franks Casket Speaks Back: The Bones of the Past, the Becoming of England', in *Postcolonising the Medieval Image*, ed. by C. E. Karkov and E. Frojmovic (London: Routledge, 2017), pp. 37-61

Karkov, Catherine, and Helen Damico (eds), *Aedificia Nova: Studies in Honor of Rosemary Cramp* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2008)

Karras, Ruth Mazo, *Slavery and Society in Medieval Scandinavia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988)

- *Common Women: Prostitution and Sexuality in Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)

Kasik, Jon C., 'The Use of the Term *Wyrd* in *Beowulf* and the Conversion of the Anglo-Saxons', *Neophilologus*, 63 (1979), 128-35

Kershaw, Jane F., The Distribution of the "Winchester" Style in Late Saxon England: Metalwork Finds From the Danelaw', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 15 (2008), pp. 254-69

Klein, Thomas, 'The Non-Coherence of the Franks Casket: Reading Text, Image, and Design on an Early Anglo-Saxon Artifact', *Viator*, 45 (2014), 17-54

Kłosowska, Anna, 'The Etymology of *Slave*', in *Disturbing Times: Medieval Pasts, Reimagined Futures*, ed. by Catherine E. Karkov, Anna Kłosowska, and Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei (Santa Barbara: Punctum Books: 2020), pp. 151-214

Kopár, Lilla, *Gods and Settlers: The Iconography of Norse Mythology in Anglo-Scandinavian Sculpture* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012)

Kramarz-Bein, Susanne, '*Þiðreks saga* in the context of Old Norwegian Literature,' in *Francia et Germania*, ed. by Johansson and Flaten (Oslo: Novus Forlag, 2012), pp. 251-64

Laiou, Angeliki E. (ed.), *Consent and Coercion to Sex and Marriage in Ancient and Medieval Societies,* (Washington, D.C: Dumbarton Oaks, 1993)

Lamm, Kristina, 'Helgö as a Goldsmiths' Workshop in Migration Period Sweden,' in *Goldsmith Mysteries*, ed. by Pesch and Blankenfeldt, pp. 143-55

Lang, James T., 'The Imagery of the Franks Casket: Another Approach', in *Northumbria's Golden Age*, ed. by Hawkes and Mills, pp. 247-55

- 'Sigurd and Weland in Pre-Conquest Carving from Northern England', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 48 (1976), 83-94

Lees, Clare A. and Gillian R. Overing, 'The Clerics and the Critics: Misogyny and the Social Symbolic in Anglo-Saxon England', in *Gender and Debate from the Early Middle Ages to the Renaissance*, ed. by Thelma S. Fenster and Clare A. Lees (New York: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 19-40

Le Jan, Régine, 'Frankish Giving of Arms and Rituals of Power: Continuity and Change in the Carolingian Period', in *Rituals of Power*, ed. by Theuws and Nelson, pp. 281-310

Lindahl, Carl, John McNamara, and John Lindow, *Medieval Folklore: An Encyclopedia of Myths, Legends, Tales, Beliefs and Customs* (Santa Barbara: ABC-Clio, 2000)

Lindberg, Av Magnus and Maria Lingström, 'Systematisk metalldetektering', *Fornvännen*, 111 (2016), 118-26

Lindow, John, 'Mythology and Mythography', in *Old Norse-Icelandic Literature*, ed. by Clover and Lindow, pp. 21-67

- *Murder and Vengeance Among the Gods: Baldr in Scandinavian Mythology* (Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 1997)

- ‘Cultures in Contact’, in *Old Norse Myths, Literature and Society*, ed. by Clunies Ross, pp. 89-109

Linke, Uli, ‘The Theft of Blood, the Birth of Men: Cultural Constructions of Gender in Medieval Iceland’, in *From Sagas to Society: Comparative Approaches to Early Iceland*, ed. by Gísli Pálsson (London: Hisarlick Press, 1992), pp. 265-88

Ljungqvist, Fredrik Charpentier, ‘Rape in the Icelandic Sagas: An Insight in the Perceptions about Sexual Assaults on Women in the Old Norse World’, *Journal of Family History*, 40 (2015), 431-47

Lord, Albert, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960)

Lund, Julie, ‘Living Places or Animated Objects? Sami Sacrificial Places with Metal Objects and Their South Scandinavian Parallels’, *Acta Borealia*, 32 (2015), 20-39

Magoun, Francis P., ‘The Oral-Formulaic Character of Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poetry,’ in *An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism*, ed. by Nicholson, pp. 189-222

Mandel, Jerome, ‘Exemplum and Refrain: The Meaning of *Deor*’, *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 7 (1977), 1-9

Markland, Murray F., ‘Boethius, Alfred and *Deor*’, *Modern Philology*, 66 (1968) 1-4

McConnell, Winder, ‘Kriemhild and Gerlind: Some Observations on the *vâlandinne*-Concept in the *Nibelungenlied* and *Kudrun*, in *The Dark Figure in Medieval German and Germanic Literature*, ed. by Haymes and Van D’Elden, pp. 42-53

McGuire, Alex, and Ann Clark, *The Leeds Crosses* (Leeds: Leeds City Museums, 1987)

McKinnell, ‘The Context of *Vǫlundarkviða*’, *Saga-Book of the Viking Society*, 24 (1996), 1-27

- ‘Eddic Poetry in Anglo-Scandinavian Northern England’, in *Vikings and the Danelaw: Select Papers from the Proceedings of the Thirteenth Viking Congress*, ed. by James Graham-Campbell, Richard Hall, Judith Jesch, and David N. Parsons (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2001), pp. 327-42

Meletinsky, Eleazar M., ‘Commonplaces and Other Elements of Folkloric Style’, in *Structure and Meaning in Old Norse Literature: New Approaches to Textual Analysis and Literary Criticism*, ed. by John Lindow, Lars Lönnroth, and Gerd Wolfgang Weber (Odense: Odense University Press, 1986), pp. 15-31

Metzler, Irina, *Disability in Medieval Europe: Thinking About Physical Impairment During the High Middle Ages*, *c. 1100 - 1400* (New York: Routledge, 2006)

- *A Social History of Disability in the Middle Ages: Cultural Considerations of Physical Impairment* (New York: Routledge, 2013)

Miller, William Ian, *Bloodtaking and Peacemaking: Feud, Law, and Society in Saga Iceland* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1996)

Moisan, André, *Répertoire des Noms Propres de personnes et de lieux cités dans le Chansons de Geste françaises et les oeuvres étrangères dérivées*, Vol. 1 (Geneva: Droz, 1986)

Moorhead, Sam, Roger Bland, Dan Pett, ‘Hoarding in Ancient Britain’, *Current Archaeology*, 248 (2010), 12-15

Mostart, Marco, 'Remembering the Barbarian Past: Oral Traditions about the Distant Past in the Middle Ages', in *The Medieval Chronicle IV*, ed. by Erik Kooper (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006), pp. 113-26

Mundal, Else, and Jonas Wellendorf (eds), *Oral Art Forms and their Passage into Writing* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2008)

Murdoch, Brian, 'Heroic Verse', in *German Literature of the Early Middle Ages*, ed. by Brian Murdoch (Camden House: Woodbridge, 2004), pp. 121-38

Naismith, Rory, *Money and Power in Anglo-Saxon England: The Southern English Kingdoms 757 - 865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012)

Nedoma, Robert, 'The Legend of Wayland in *Deor*', *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, 38 (1990), 129-208

Nedkvitne, Arnved, 'Beyond Historical Anthropology in the Study of Medieval Mentalities', *Scandinavian Journal of History,* 25 (2010), 27-51

Neidorf, Leonard, 'Germanic Legend, Scribal Errors, and Cultural Change', in *The Dating of Beowulf: A Reassessment*, ed. by Leonard Neidorf (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2014), pp. 37-57

Newman, John, 'Exceptional Finds, Exceptional Sites? Barham and Coddenham, Suffolk', in *Markets in Early Medieval Europe,* ed. by Pestell and Ulmschneider, pp. 97-109

Nicholson, Lewis E. (ed.), *An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963)

Niles, John D., 'Pagan Survivals and Popular Belief', in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. by Godden and Lapidge, pp. 126-41

North, Richard, *Pagan Words and Christian Meanings* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1991)

- '"Wyrd" and "Wearð ealuscerwen" in *Beowulf*', *Leeds Studies in English*, 25 (1994), 69-82
- *Heathen Gods in Old English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

Oehrl, Sigmund, 'Wieland der Schmied auf dem Kistenstein von Alskog kyrka und dem Runenstein Ardre kyrka III. Zur particelen Neulesung und Interpretation zweier gotländischer Bildsteine', *Analecta Septentrionalia,* 65 (2009), 540-66

Ólason, Vésteinn (ed), *Gripla XX: Nordic Civilisation in the Medieval World* (Reykjavik: Arní Magnusson Institute, 2009)

Olsen, Alexandra Hennesey, 'Formulaic Tradition and the Latin Waltharius', in *Heroic Poetry in the Anglo-Saxon Period: Studies in Honour of Jess B. Bessinger*, Jr. (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1993), pp. 265-282

Ong, Walter, *The Technologizing of the Word*, 3rd edition (New York: Routledge, 2002)

Orchard, Andy, *Pride and Prodigies: Studies in the Monsters of the Beowulf Manuscript* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1985)

- *A Critical Companion to Beowulf* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003)

Osborn, Marijane, 'A New Suggestion About Weland be wurman in *Deor*', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 118 (2019), 157-76

Page, R., 'The Runic Solidus of Schweindorf, Ostfriesland, and Related Runic Solidi', *Medieval Archaeology*, 12 (1968), 12-25

Payne, F. Anne, 'Three Aspects of Wyrd in *Beowulf*,' in *Old English Studies in Honour of John C. Pope*, ed. by Robert B. Burlin and Edward B. Irving Jr (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), pp. 15-36

Paz, James, '*Beowulf* as Wayland's Work': Thinking, Feeling, Making', in *Dating Beowulf: Studies in Intimacy*, ed. by Daniel C. Remein and Erica Weaver (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), pp. 73-94

Pearman, Tony Vandeventer, '*O Sweete Venym Queynte!:* Pregnancy and the Disabled Female Body in *The Merchant's Tale*', in *Disability in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Eyler, pp. 25-37

Pederson, Unn, 'Leadworking in Viking-Age Norway', in *Viking Worlds: Things, Spaces and Tourism*, ed. by Marianne Hem Eriksen, Unn Pederson, Bernt Rundberget, Irmelin Axelsen, Heidi Lund Berg (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2014) pp. 179-94

Pelteret, David, *Slavery in Early Medieval England: From the Reign of Alfred Until the Twelfth Century* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1995)

Pesch, Alexandra, and Ruth Blankenfeldt (eds), *Goldsmith Mysteries: Archaeological, Pictorial and Documentary Evidence from the 1st Millennium AD in Northern Europe* (Neumunster: Wachholtz-Verlag, 2012)

Pesch, Alexandra, 'The Goldsmith, His Apprentice and the Gods: A Fairy Tale', in *Goldsmith Mysteries*, ed. by Pesch and Blankenfeldt, pp. 37-48

Pestell, Tim and Katharina Ulmschneider (eds), *Markets in Early Medieval Europe: Trading and 'Productive' Sites, 650-850* (Macclesfield, Cheshire: Windgather Press, 2003)

Peterson, Paul R., 'Old Norse Nicknames' (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2015)

Pollington, Stephen, Lindsay Kerr, and Brett Hammond, *Wayland's Work: Anglo-Saxon Art, Myth, and Material Culture, 4th-7th Century* (Ely: Anglo-Saxon Books, 2001)

Prescott, Christopher, 'Symbolic Metallurgy: Assessing Early Metallurgic Processes in a Periphery', in *Form, Function and Context: Material Culture Studies in Scandinavian Archaeology*, ed. by Deborah Olausson & Helle Vankilde (Lund: Institute of Archaeology, 2000), pp. 213-26

Price, Neil, 'The Scandinavian Landscape: People and Environment,' in *Vikings: The North Atlantic Saga,* ed. by William W. Fitzhugh and Elisabeth I. Ward (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000), pp. 31-41

- (ed.) *The Archaeology of Shamanism* (London: Routledge, 2001)
- 'An Archaeology of Altered States: Shamanism and Material Culture Studies', in *The Archaeology of Shamanism*, ed. by Price, pp. 3-16
- 'Mythic Acts: Material Narratives of the Dead in Viking Age Scandinavia', in *More Than Mythology*, ed. by Raudvere and Schjødt, pp. 13-46

Price, Theron Douglas, *Ancient Scandinavia: An Archaeological History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015)

Pulsiano, Philip and Kirsten Wolf (eds), *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia* (Garland: New York, 1993)

Raudvere, Catharina and Jens Peter Schjødt (eds), *More Than Mythology: Narratives, Ritual Practices and Regional Distribution in Pre-Christian Scandinavian Religions* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2012)

Reichl, Karl, 'Heroic Epic Poetry in the Middle Ages', *The Cambridge Companion to the Epic*, ed. by Catherine Bates (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 55-75

Renoir, Alain, 'Oral-Formulaic Tradition and the Affective Interpretation of Early Germanic Verse', in *Germania: Comparative Studies in the Old Germanic Languages and Literatures*, ed. by Daniel G. Calder and T. Craig Christy (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 1988), pp. 113-26

Reuter, Timothy, '"You Can't Take It With You": Testaments, Hoards and Movable Wealth in Europe, 600-1100,' in *Treasure in the Medieval West*, ed. by Tyler, pp. 11-24

Reynolds, Andrew, *Anglo-Saxon Deviant Burial Customs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)

Reynolds, Andrew and Sarah Semple, 'Anglo-Saxon Non-Funerary Weapon Deposition', in *Studies in Early Anglo-Saxon Art and Archaeology*, ed. by Brookes, Harrington, and Reynolds, pp. 40-48

Riddler, Ian, 'The Archaeology of the Anglo-Saxon Whale' in *The Maritime World of the Anglo-Saxons*, ed. by Stacy S. Klein, William Schipper, and Shannon Lewis-Simpson (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2014), pp. 337-52

Riedinger, Anita R., 'The Formulaic Style in the Old English Riddles', *Studia Neophilologica*, 76 (2004), 30-43

Rio, Alice, *Slavery After Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017)

Roy, Carrie, 'Practical Fastenings of the Supernatural', *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia*, 5 (2009), 177-212

Russel, James C., *The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity: A Sociohistorical Approach to Religious Transformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994)

Saunders, Corinne, *Rape and Ravishment in the Literature of Medieval England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001)

Schaus, Margaret (ed), *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Routledge, 2006)

Schulman, Jana K., 'A Guest in the Hall: Women, Feasts and Violence in Icelandic Epic', in *Women and Medieval Epic: Gender, Genre, and the Limits of Epic Masculinity*, ed. by Sara S. Poor and Jana K. Schulman (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), pp. 209-33

Schulte, Michael, 'Literacy in the Looking Glass: Vedic and Skaldic Verse and the Two Modes of Oral Transmission', *Scripta Islandica*, 59 (2008), 181-200

Scragg, Donald, 'The Nature of Old English Verse', in *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, ed. by Godden and Lapidge, pp. 55-70

Semple, Sarah, *Perceptions of the Prehistoric in Anglo-Saxon England: Religion, Ritual, and Rulership in the Landscape* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)

Sexton, John P., 'Difference and Disability: On the Logic of Naming in the Icelandic Sagas', in *Disability in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Eyler, pp. 149-63

Shaw, Philip, 'Telling a Hawk from an *Herodio*: On the Origins and Development of the Old English Word *Wealhhafoc* and Its Relatives', *Medium Ævum*, 82 (2013), 1-22

Sheehan, John and Donnchadh Ó Corráin (eds), *The Viking Age: Ireland and the West: Proceedings of the Fifteenth Viking Congress* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010)

Sheppherd, Deborah J., 'The Ritual Significance of Slag in Finnish Iron Age Burials', *Fennoscandia archaeologica*, 14 (1997), 13-22

Sigirðsson, Gísli, 'Orality, Harnessed: How to Read Written Sagas From an Oral Culture?', in *Oral Art Forms and their Passage into Writing*, ed. by Mundal and Wellendorf, pp. 19-28

Simek, Rudolf, 'Völundarhús - Domus Daedali Labyrinths in Old Norse Manuscripts', *NOWELE. North-Western European Language Evolution*, 21 (1993), 323-68

Sindbæk, Søren M., 'Crafting Networks in Viking Towns', *Medieval and Modern Matters*, 4 (2013), 119-32

Snædal, þórgunnur, 'Ailikn's Wagon and Óðinn's Warriors: The Pictures on the Gotlandic Ardre Monuments', in *The Viking Age,* ed. by Sheehan and Ó Corráin, pp. 441-49

Sørensen, Preben Meulengracht, *The Unmanly Man: Concepts of Defamation in Early Northern Society*, trans. by Joan Turville-Peter (Odense: Odense University Press, 1983)

Stafford, Pauline, 'Queens and Treasure in the Early Middle Ages', in *Treasure in the Medieval West*, ed. by Tyler, pp. 61-82

Stalsberg, Anne, 'Ulfberht Revisited: A Classification', in *The Viking Age*, ed. by Sheehan and Ó Corráin, pp. 450-64

Stocker, David, 'Monuments and Merchants: Irregularities in the Distribution of Stone Sculpture in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire in the Tenth Century', in *Cultures in Contact: Scandinavian Settlement in England in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries*, ed. by Dawn M. Hadley and Julian D. Richards (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), pp. 179-212

Stone, Rachel, 'Waltharius and Carolingian Morality: Satire and Lay Values', *Early Medieval Europe*, 21 (2013), 50-70

Stylegar, Frans-Arne, 'Byggland i Morgedal - smedgrav, eller?', *Fornvännen*, 109 (2014), 90-100

Svavarsson, Svavr Hrafn, 'Honour and Shame: Comparing Medieval Iceland and Ancient Greece', in *Gripla XX: Nordic Civilisation in the Medieval World*, ed. by Vésteinn Ólason (Reykjavik: Arní Magnusson Institute, 2009), pp. 241-56

Taylor, Paul Beekman, '*Vǫlundarkviða, Þrymskviða*, and the Function of Myth', *Neophilogus*, 78 (1994), 263-81

Thacker, Alan, 'Membra Disjecta: The Division of the Body and the Diffusion of the Cult', in *Oswald: Northumbrian King to European Saint*, ed. by Clare Stancliffe and Eric Cambridge (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1995), 97-127

Theuws, Frans and Janet L. Nelson, *Rituals of Power: From Late Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, (Brill: Leiden, 2000)

Thomassen, Bjørn, 'Revisiting Liminality: The Danger of Empty Spaces', in *Liminal Landscapes: Travel, Experience and Spaces In-Between*, ed. by Hazel Andrews and Les Roberts (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), pp. 21-35

Tolkien, J.R.R., '*Beowulf*: The Monsters and the Critics', in *An Anthology of Beowulf Criticism*, ed. by Nicholson, pp. 51-104

Tollerton, Linda, *Wills and Will-Making in Anglo-Saxon England* (York: York Medieval Press, 2011)

Tovey, Beth, 'Kingly Impairments in Anglo-Saxon Literature: God's Curse and God's Blessing', in *Disability in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Eyler, pp. 135-48

Turner, Victor, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure* (First published 1967; republished Abingdon: Routledge, 2017)

Tyler, Elizabeth M. (ed.), *Treasure in the Medieval West* (York: York Medieval Press, 2000)

Ulmschneider, Katharina, 'Markets Around the Solent: Unravelling a "Productive" Site on the Isle of Wight', in *Markets in Early Medieval Europe,* ed. by Pestell and Ulmschneider, pp. 73-83

Ulmschneider, Katharina and Tim Pestell, 'Introduction: Early Medieval Markets and "Productive" Sites', in Markets in *Early Medieval Europe*, ed. by Pestell and Ulmschneider, pp. 1-10

Van Gennep, Arnold, *The Rites of Passage* (First published 1960; this edition Abingdon: Routledge, 2004)

Von See, Klaus, Beatrice La Farge, Eve Picard, and Katja Schulz (eds), *Kommentar zu den Liedern der Edda, Vol 3: Götterlieder* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 2000)

Voorwinden, Norbert, 'Latin Words, German Thoughts - Germanic Words, Latin Thoughts, the Merging of Two Traditions', in *Latin Culture and Medieval Germanic Europe: Proceedings of the First Germania Latina Conference* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1992), pp. 113–128

Wall, William, 'Middle Saxon Iron Smelting near Bonehills Farm, Wittering, Cambridgeshire', *Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History*, 17 (2011), 87-100

Webster, Leslie, 'The Iconographic Programme of the Franks Casket', in *Northumbria's Golden Age*, ed. by Hawkes and Mills, pp. 227-46

- 'Ideal and Reality: Versions of Treasure in the Early Anglo-Saxon World', in *Treasure in the Medieval West*, ed. by Tyler, pp. 49-60
- *Anglo-Saxon Art: A New History* (London: British Museum Press 2012)

Welton, Andrew J., 'Encounters with Iron: An Archaeometallurgical Reassessment of Early Anglo-Saxon Spearheads and Knives', *Archaeological Journal*, 173 (2006), 206-44

Wemple, Suzanne F., ‘Consent and Dissent to Sexual Intercourse in Germanic Societies from the Fifth to the Tenth Centuries’, in *Consent and Coercion to Sex and Marriage in Ancient and Medieval Societies*, ed. by Laiou, pp. 227-43

Whitelock, Dorothy, *The Audience of Beowulf* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951, repr. 1967)

Whittle, Alasdair, Alex Bayliss, and Michael Wysocki, ‘Once in a Lifetime: The Date of the Wayland’s Smithy Long Barrow’, *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*,17 (2007), 103-21

Wicker, Nancy, ‘The Elusive Smith’, in *Goldsmith Mysteries,* ed. by Pesch and Blankenfeldt (Neumunster: Wachholtz-Verlag, 2012), pp. 29-36

Williams, Howard, ‘Monuments and the Past in Early Anglo-Saxon England’, *World Archaeology*, 30 (1998), 90-108

- ‘An Ideology of Transformation: Cremation Rites and Animal Sacrifice in Early Anglo-Saxon England’, in *The Archaeology of Shamanism*, ed. by Price, pp. 193-212

Williamson, Tom, *Environment, Society and Landscape in Early Medieval England: Time and Topography* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2013)

Wilson, R.M., *The Lost Literature of Medieval England* (London: Methuen and Co, 1952)

Wright, Duncan, ‘Tasting Misery Among Snakes: The Situation of Smiths in Anglo-Saxon Settlements’, *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology*, 20 (2010), 131-6

- ‘Crafters of Kingship: Smiths, Elite Power, and Gender in Early Medieval Europe’, *Medieval Archaeology*, 63 (2019), 271-97

Zachrisson, Inger, ‘The Sami and their Interaction with the Nordic Peoples’, in *The Viking World*, ed. by Brink and Price, pp. 32-39

Ziolkowski, Jan M., ‘Of Arms and the (Germ)man: Literary and Material Culture in the *Waltharius*, in *The Long Morning of Medieval Europe: New Directions in Early Medieval Studies*, ed. by Jennifer R. Davis and Michael McCormick (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 193-208