

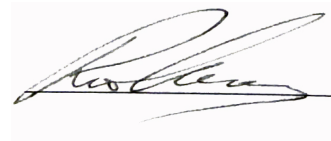
**Representations of Christ
in Christian Skaldic Poetry**

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UCL

PhD

I, Ruth Elizabeth Cheadle, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ruth Elizabeth Cheadle', is centered on the page. The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Abstract

This thesis aims to demonstrate that, through use of literary genre, vocabulary, and emphasis of detail, the authors of Christian skaldic verse in the twelfth to fifteenth centuries continually reshaped a specific set of representations for Christ to suit each poem's individual purpose, its audience, and the literary tastes of the periods in which they were written. In order to show how Christ's portrayal changes over time and according to each poem's overarching purpose, I have selected the following five Christian skaldic poems and made each the focus of a chapter: Einarr Skúlason's *Geisli*, Gamli kanóki's *Harmsól*, and the anonymously-composed poems *Leiðarvísan*, *Líknarbraut*, and *Lilja*. Within each chapter I provide an overview of the poem, selecting stanzas that highlight features of Christ that are prevalent or striking in some way, and analyse how these representations not only influence the poem itself, but also shape perceptions of Christ's relationship with humanity. Each chapter leads to an overall consideration both of the image of Christ as this has been represented, and of the degree to which this has been influenced by biblical and patristic writings, Old Norse literature and culture, or by a combination of these elements. In the concluding chapter I identify the prevailing representations of Christ throughout these five poems, dividing these characterisations into five categories: Christ as Warrior Chieftain, as Healer and Abundant Nourisher, as Legal Authority, as Beguiler, and as Light. I assess the changing importance of each of these representations over time and in these poems, in order to enable a better understanding of the changing images of Christ in the medieval skaldic corpus and how these may reflect locally specific perceptions of Christ.

Acknowledgements

This thesis represents the culmination of an academic journey spanning nearly fifteen years. It began with the work of several dedicated high school teachers – particularly Gary Pate, Ryan Summers, and Mike Zirretta – whose passion for their subjects sparked my interest in the relationship between history, literature, art, and theology. This interest grew and developed in my undergraduate years at Westmont College, where the English Literature faculty honed my analytical skills, enabled me to pursue study of medieval literature through time abroad at the Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies in Oxford, and encouraged my pursuit of a final dissertation focusing on the Old English poem *Judith*.

My time as a master's student in St Hilda's College at the University of Oxford greatly influenced the direction of my academic focus. Working with Professor Malcolm Godden and Professor Heather O'Donoghue, I continued to learn about Old English poetry and began to gain an understanding of Old Norse literature. This led to my involvement in both the Viking Society for Northern Research and COLSONOEL (Cambridge, Oxford & London Symposium in Old Norse, Old English and Latin), the beginnings of my research into depictions of Christ in Old Norse poetry, and finally to my pursuit of a PhD at University College London and the production of this thesis.

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This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Jeffrey and Margaret Cheadle, and to my husband, James Strain. Thank you for the love and profound joy you bring to my life.

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List of Abbreviations

ADIP = *Arnarnagnæan Dictionary of Icelandic Prose*. <http://onp.ku.dk/english/>.

Accessed 6 January 2015.

Agathias Hist. = Dindorf, L., ed. 1871. *Agathias. On the Reign of Justinian*, in *Historici graeci minors*, Vol. 2. Leipzig.

AH = Dreves, G. M., C. Blume and H. M. Bannister, eds. 1961. Reprint. *Analecta hymnica medii aevi*. 55 vols. Leipzig: Reissland. Originally published 1886-1922. New York: Johnson.

AÍ = Kålund, Kristian and Natanael Beckman. 1908-18. *Alfræði Íslenzk: Íslandsk encyklopædisk litteratur*. 3 vols. *Samfundet til Udgivelse af Gammel Nordisk Litteratur* 37, 41 and 45. Copenhagen: Møller.

Ambrosiaster, CSEL = Souter, A., ed. 1908. [Ambrosiaster] Pseudo-Augustinus. *Quaestiones veteris et novi testamenti*. Vol. 50. *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*. Vienna: F. Tempsky.

Amm. Marc. = Clark, C. U., ed. 1910-15. *Ammianus Marcellinus*. Berlin.

Arn Hardr^{II} = Vol. 2. Arnórr Þórðarson jarlaskáld, *Haraldsdrápa*.

Skj: Arnórr Þórðarson jarlaskáld: 6. Erifdrápa om kong Harald hárdråde (AI, 349-53; BI, 322-6).

Arn Magndr^{II} – Vol. 2. Arnórr Þórðarson jarlaskáld, *Magnúsdrápa*.

Skj: Arnórr Þórðarson jarlaskáld: 3. Magnúsdrápa. (AI, 338-43; BI, 311-15).

ASB = Cederschiöld, Gustave, Hüge Gering, Eugen Mogk, Finnur Jónsson, and Emil Olson, eds. 1892-1929. *Altnordische Saga-Bibliothek*, 18 vols. Halle: Max Niemeyer.

Brev. Nidr. = *Breviarium Nidrosiense*. Facsimile ed. 1964. Reprint. Oslo: Børsum. Originally published 1519. Paris: Jean Kerbriant and Jean Bienayse.

British Library 1977 = British Library, Department of Manuscripts. 1977. *Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts 1756-1782: Additional Manuscripts 4101-5017*. London: British Museum Publications.

CCSL = *Corpus Christianorum*. Continuatio mediaevalis. 1971-. Vol. 1-. Turnhout: Brepols.

DH = Milfull, Inge B. and Simon Keynes, eds. 1996. *The Hymns of the Anglo-Saxon Church: A study and edition of the 'Durham Hymnal'*. Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England, Vol. 17. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

DI = Jón Sigurðsson and Jón Þorkelsson *et al.*, eds. 1857-1976. *Diplomatarium Islandicum. Íslenzkt fornbréfasafn*. 16 vols. Copenhagen: Möller and Reykjavík: Félagsprentsmiðju.

Dist. = Boas, Marcus, ed. 1952. *Disticha Catonis*. Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company.

Eluc 1992 = Firchow, Evelyn Scherabon, ed. and trans. 1992. *The Old Norse Elucidarius: Original Text and English Translation*. Medieval Texts and Translations: Studies in German Literature, Linguistics and Culture. Columbia, South Carolina: Camden House.

Fritzner = Fritzner, Johann. 1973. Reprint. *Ordborg over det gamle norske sprog*. 3 vols. Oslo etc.: Universitetsforlaget. 4th ed. Originally published 1883-96. Kristiania (Oslo): Den norske forlagsforening.

Germania = Furneaux, Henry, ed. 1938. Tacitus. *Germania*. Rev. by J.G. Anderson. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Glossa Ordinaria = Fuldensis, Strabo, ed. 1590. Nicholas de Lyra. *Biblia sacra cum glossa ordinaria*, 7 vols. Paris: Franciscus Fervandentium.

Hortus Deliciarum = Herrad of Hohenbourg. 1979. *Hortus Deliciarum*. Eds. Rosalie Green, Michael Evans, Christine Bischoff, and Michael Curschmann. 2 vols. Studies of the Warburg Institute, 36. London and Leiden: Warburg Institute.

Hómísl 1993 = de Leeuw van Weenen, Andrea, ed. 1993. *The Icelandic Homily Book: Perg. 15 4^o in the Royal Library, Stockholm*. Íslensk handrit / Icelandic Manuscripts Series in quarto 3. Reykjavík: Stofnun Árna Magnússonar á Íslandi.

Hómísl 1872 = Wisén, Theodor, ed. 1872. *Homiliu-bók: Isländska Homilier efter en handskrift från tolfte århundradet*. Lund: C. W. K. Gleerups Förlag, 75-76.

HómNo = Indrebø, Gustav. 1966. Reprint. *Gamal norsk homiliebok, Cod. AM 619, 4^o*. Det norske historiske Kjeldeskrift Fond, Skrifter 54. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget. Originally published 1931. Oslo: Dybwad.

HqrðG Lv 7^v (*Harð* 14) = Vol. 5 *Harðar saga* 14 (Hqrðr Grímkelsson, Lausavísur, 7)
Skj: [Anonyme digte og vers XIV]: A. 2. Vers af sagær: Af isl. Slægtsagær: Af Harðar saga Grímkelssonar 14 (All, 448; BII, 480).

IED = Cleasby, Richard, and Guðbrandur Vigfússon, eds. 1962. *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

ÍF = 1933 - . *Íslenzk fornrit*. Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag.

-*ÍF* 6 = *Vestfirðinga sögur*. Ed. Björn K. Þórolfsson and Guðni Jónsson. 1943.

-*ÍF* 8 = *Vatnsdæla saga*. Ed. Einar Ólafur Sveinsson, 1939.

-*ÍF* 24 = *Morkinskinna*. 2 vols. Eds. Ármann Jakobsson and Þórður Ingi Guðjónsson. 2011.

-*ÍF* 26 = *Heimskringla*. Ed. Bjarni Aðalbjarnarson. 1941-51.

ÍM = Jón Helgason, ed. 1936-8. *Íslensk Miðaldakvæði: Íslandske digte fra senmiddelalderen*. 2 vols. Copenhagen: Munksgaard.

*Jón*⁴ 1874 = *Jóns saga postula*. See Unger 1874: 466-9³⁴, 470³³-513²².

KLE = von See, Klaus, Beatrice La Farge, Eve Picard, Ilona Priebe, and Katja Schulz, eds. 1997. *Kommentar zu den Liedern der Edda. Bd. 2: Götterlieder (Skírnismál, Hárbarðsljóð, Hymiskviða, Lokasenna, Brymskviða)*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter.

LEI 2006 = Dennis, Andrew, Peter Foote, and Richard Perkins, trans. 2006. *Laws of Early Iceland: Grágás, Vol. I*. Winnipeg, Canada: University of Manitoba Press.

LEI 2000 = Dennis, Andrew, Peter Foote, and Richard Perkins, trans. 2000. *Laws of Early Iceland: Grágás, Vol. II*. Winnipeg, Canada: University of Manitoba Press.

Legenda Aurea = Jacobus a Voragine 1965. Reprint. *Legenda Aurea*. Ed. Th. Graesse. 3rd edn. Ostabrück. Originally published 1890. Vratislavia.

LH = Finnur Jónsson 1920-4. *Den oldnorske og oldislandske litteraturs historie*. 3 vols. 2nd ed. Copenhagen: Gad.

LP = Finnur Jónsson. 1966. Reprint. *Lexicon Poeticum Antiquæ Linguæ Septentrionalis. Ordbog over det norsk-islandske skjaldesprog oprindeligt*

forfattet af Sveinbjörn Egilsson. Copenhagen: Atlas Bogtryk. 2nd ed. published 1931. Copenhagen: Møller.

Mar 1871 = Unger, C.R., ed. 1871. *Mariu saga: Legender om Jomfru Maria og hendes Jertegn efter gamle haandskrifter*. 2 vols. Det norske Oldskriftselskabs Samlinger 11-16. Kristiania (Oslo): Brøgger & Christie.

MHN = Storm, Gustav, ed. 1880. *Monumenta historica Norvegiae*. Det norske historiske Kjeldeskrift Fond. Skrifter 14. Kristiania (Oslo): Brøgger.

NN = Kock, Ernst Albin. 1923-44. *Notationes Norrœnæ: Anteckningar till Edda och skaldediktning*. Lunds Universitets årsskrift. New series, sec. 1. Lund: Glerup.

NRSV = Metzger, Bruce M. and Roland E. Murphy, eds. 1991. *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocryphal / Deuterocanonical Books*. New Revised Standard Version. New York: Oxford University Press.

ÓHLeg 1982 = Heinrichs, Anne, Doris Janshen, Elke Radicke, and Hartmut Röhn, ed. and trans. 1982. *Olafs saga hins Helga: Die 'Legendarische Saga' über Olaf den Heiligen (Hs. Delagard. Saml. Nr. 8^{II})*. Heidelberg: Carl Winter.

ÓST = Ólafur Halldórsson, ed. 1958-61. *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar en mesta*, I-II. EA A 1-2. Copenhagen: Munksgaard.

ÓTHkr = *Lausavísa* from *Óláfs saga Tryggvasonar* in *Heimskringla* – see *ÍF*.

PL = J.-P. Migne, ed. 1844-1904. *Patrologie cursus completus omnium SS. Patrum, doctorum scriptorumque ecclesiasticorum. Series latina*. 221 vols. Paris: Garnier.

Sentences = Peter Lombard. 1971. *Sententiae in IV Libris Distinctae*. 3rd edition, 2 vols., Spicilegium Bonaventurianum, 4 and 5. Rome: Grottaferrata.

Skald = Kock, Ernst Albin, ed. 1946-50. *Den norsk-isländska skaldediktningen*. 2 vols. Lund: Gleerup.

Skj = Finnur Jónsson, ed. 1912-15. *Den norsk-isländske skjaldedigting*, Vols. AI, AII (tekst efter håndskrifterne) and BI, BII (rettet tekst). Copenhagen: Gyldendal.

SnE 2005 = Faulkes, Anthony, ed. 2005. Reprint. Snorri Sturluson. *Edda: Prologue and Gylfaginning*. Oxford: Clarendon. University College London: Viking Society for Northern Research. Originally published 1982. Oxford: Clarendon.

SnE 1998 = Faulkes, Anthony, ed. 1998. Reprint. Snorri Sturluson. *Edda: Skáldskaparmál*. Oxford: Clarendon. Originally published 1988. University College London: Viking Society for Northern Research.

SÓT = Finnur Jónsson, ed. 1932. *Saga Óláfs Tryggvasonar af Oddr Snorrason munk*. Copenhagen: Gad.

Vulg 2012a = Kinney, Angela M., ed. 2012. *The Vulgate Bible, Volume IV: The Major Prophetic Books. Douay-Rheims Translation*. Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library. London: Harvard University Press.

Vulg 2012b = Kinney, Angela M., ed. 2012. *The Vulgate Bible, Volume V: The Minor Prophetic Books and Maccabess. Douay-Rheims Translation*. Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library. London: Harvard University Press.

Vulg 2011 = Swift, Edgar, and Angela M. Kinney, eds. 2011. *The Vulgate Bible, Volume III: The Poetical Books. Douay-Rheims Translation*. Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library. London: Harvard University Press.

Vulg 2010 = Swift, Edgar, ed. 2010. *The Vulgate Bible, Volume I: The Pentateuch. Douay-Rheims Translation*. Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library. London: Harvard University Press.

Vulg 1979 = *Nova Vulgata Bibliorum Sacrorum Editio: Sacros. Oecum. Concilii Vaticani II Ratione Habita Iussu Pauli PP. VI Recognita Auctoritate Ioannis Pauli PP. II Promulgata*, 1979. Liberia Editrice Vaticana, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis.

Manuscripts and Transcripts

Sigla for Manuscript Collections

Adv = Advocates Library, National Library of Scotland

AM = The Arnamagnæan Collection (Reykjavík, Stofnun Árna Magnússonar í íslenskum fræðum and Copenhagen, Den arnamagnæanske samling, Nordisk Forskningsinstitut, University of Copenhagen).

BLAdd = British Library: Additional Manuscripts

DKNVSB = Det Kongelige Norske Videnskabers Selskabs Bibliotek, Universitets-biblioteket i Trondheim

GKS = Den gamle kongelige samling, Det kongelige bibliotek, Copenhagen

Holm = Kungliga biblioteket, Stockholm

ÍB = Safn Hins íslenska bókmenntafélags, deildar þess í Kaupmannahöfn, Landsbókasafn Íslands, Reykjavík

ÍBR = Handritasafn Reykjavíkurdeildar Hins íslenska bókmenntafélags, Landsbókasafn Íslands, Reykjavík.

JS = Safn Jóns Sigurðarsonar, Landsbókasafn Íslands, Reykjavík

Lbs = Handritasafn Landsbókasafns Íslands, Reykjavík

UppsUB = Uppsala Universitetsbiblioteket

Manuscripts and Transcripts

Adv 21 8 10 ^x	AM 99 a 8 ^o (99a)
AM 104 8 ^{ox}	AM 136 4 ^o
AM 622 4 ^o	AM 624 4 ^o (624)
AM 684c 4 ^o	AM 695 a 4 ^{ox}
AM 705 4 ^{ox} (705 ^x)	AM 706 4 ^{ox}
AM 707 4 ^{ox}	AM 713 4 ^o
AM 714 4 ^o	AM 715 a 4 ^{ox}
AM 715 b 4 ^{ox}	AM 717 h 4 ^{ox}
AM 720 a VIII 4 ^o (720a VIII)	AM 720 b 4 ^o (720b)
AM 757 a 4 ^o (B)	BLAdd 4892 (4892)

DKNVSB 41 8^{ox} (41 8^{ox})

Hkr = Heimskringla

Holm papp 64 fol^x

ÍB 104 4^{ox}

ÍB 200 8^{ox}

ÍBR 74 8^{ox}

JS 399 a-b 4^{ox}

JS 413 8^{ox}

Lbs 444 4^{ox} (444^x)

Lbs 848 4^{ox}

Lbs 966 4^{ox}

Lbs 1745 4^{ox}

Lbs 2293 8^{ox}

GKS 1005 fol (Flat), Flateyjarbók

Holm papp 23 fol^x

Holm perg 1 fol (Bb), Bergsbók

ÍB 159 8^{ox}

ÍBR 16 8^{ox}

JS 260 4^{ox}

JS 406 4^{ox}

Lbs 221 4^{ox}

Lbs 804 4^{ox}

Lbs 953 4^{ox}

Lbs 1152 8^{ox}

Lbs 2289 4^{ox}

UppsUB R 547 4^o

Chapter One - Introduction

Although scholars to date have thoroughly explored the representations of Christ in Old English poetry, comparatively little attention has been devoted to this subject in Old Norse literature, particularly in the poetry of the skalds.¹ The publication of Margaret Clunies Ross's *Poetry on Christian Subjects* (2007), which offers new editions of the poems by a range of scholars, has recently stimulated scholarly interest in Christian skaldic verse and the topics on which it focuses, while creating further accessibility to this branch of Old Norse literature for readers of modern English. These volumes have encouraged much new exploration – this thesis among them – of how skalds blended a distinctively courtly poetic tradition with the ecclesiastical influence of Christian literary techniques.

From around the twelfth century onwards, skaldic poems celebrating Christ and His followers begin to emerge in the Old Norse literary corpus, revealing a complex blend of Latinate, biblical, liturgical, and patristic traditions with the Germanic heroic idiom and the distinctive form of Old Norse skaldic lyric. As I hope to show, these unique combinations produce some intriguing and nuanced representations of Christ, highlighting qualities that both align with images of Christ in Christian literature while holding appeal for an audience steeped in Old Norse literary tradition. This thesis aims to demonstrate that, through use of the genre, vocabulary, and emphasis of detail, the authors of Christian skaldic verse in the twelfth to fifteenth centuries continually reshaped Christ's representation in keeping with each poem's purpose, its audience, and the literary tastes of the periods in which they were written.

¹ For examples of scholarship exploring Christ in Old English poetry, see Alexander 2002; Cherniss 1972; Clayton, ed. and trans. 2013; Clemoes 1995; Greenfield 1965: 124-45; Hill, Wright, Biggs, and Hall 2007; Johnson 1994; Kennedy 1952; Ó Carragáin 1995: 310-333; and Smithson 1971. By comparison, fewer scholars have considered Christ in Old Norse poetry with the same scrutiny; exceptions include general studies of Christian skaldic material by Paasche (1948 and 1957) and Lange 1958; and brief overviews of Christ's representations in skaldic verse from Marold 1985 and Mundal 1995. Notably, the latter two studies do not include analysis of later Christian skaldic poems such as *Lilja*.

In order to show how Christ's portrayal changes over time, I have selected the following five Christian skaldic poems and made each the focus of a chapter: Einarr Skúlason's *Geisli*, Gamli kanóki's *Harmsól*, and the anonymously-composed poems *Leiðarvísan*, *Líknarbraut*, and *Lilja*. Within each chapter I select stanzas that highlight features of Christ that are prevalent or striking in some way, and analyse how these representations not only influence the poem itself, but also shape perceptions of Christ's relationship with humanity. Each chapter leads to an overall consideration both of the image of Christ as this has been represented, and of the degree to which this has been influenced by biblical and patristic writings, by Old Norse literature and culture, or by a combination of these elements. In the concluding chapter I will divide the characteristics found in these poems into five categories: Christ as Warrior Chieftain, as Healer and Abundant Nourisher, as Legal Authority, as Beguiler, and as Light. I then assess the changing importance of each of these categories over time and in these poems, in order to enable a better understanding of the changing images of Christ in the medieval skaldic corpus and how these may reflect a locally specific theology.

Overview and Methodology

This thesis examines representations of Christ in individual poems across the corpus of Christian skaldic verse. The aim is to assess the representation of Christ in each poem by analysing individual stanzas selected for their pertinence to the project at hand. The Introduction offers an outline of the development of Christian skaldic verse from the twelfth to fourteenth centuries within its historical, literary, and scholarly contexts. It also explains why the five poems in this study have been selected. Since comparisons with mythological texts arise at various points in this thesis, the Introduction addresses briefly the context in which Old Norse mythology was still viable, and the potential issues that are raised by analyzing texts to reveal early mythological belief. This introductory chapter concludes with a brief historical overview of Norway and Iceland before and during the periods in which these poems were composed, moving finally into the main body of the thesis.

The subsequent five chapters of the thesis are each devoted to a particular poem.² The poems under review in these chapters are Einarr Skúlason's *Geisli* from the mid-twelfth century, Gamli kanóki's *Harmsól* from the mid- to late-twelfth century, *Leiðarvísan* from the second half of the twelfth century, the mid- to late-thirteenth century *Líknarbraut*, and the mid-fourteenth century *Lilja*.³ Apart from *Geisli*, which celebrates the Norwegian king and martyr Óláfr Haraldsson, the other four poems come from a homiletic or didactic literary tradition. Each chapter begins with an introduction to the poem's content and themes, its known historical background, and available editions. An analysis of individual stanzas follows, which notes their context within each poem and how they contribute towards particular representations of Christ. The analysis focuses not only on the internal structure and specific meaning of each stanza in relation to Christ's role, but also on the larger context of the poem and on any potentially significant literary and cultural influences from Iceland, Norway, and further afield in Europe. These chapters then conclude with an overview of Christ's portrayal in the poem. The particular roles each poem emphasises for Christ in relationship to His followers are identified and reviewed, a process that helps to reveal the different purposes and agendas of each work, not to mention changes that may have developed through trends in Church scholarship and literature at the time of composition.⁴

On the basis of the distinctive images of Christ identified in chapters two through six, my concluding chapter draws up a definition of Christ's representation in five key categories which occur to varying degrees and in different forms throughout the Christian skaldic corpus. The objective of this closing section is to assess how Christ was perceived through Christian skaldic poetry, taking account of both how this understanding changes over three centuries and also the underlying purpose of each poem. My ultimate aim is to identify the changing importance of particular representations of Christ

² Unless otherwise noted, skaldic stanzas in this thesis have been drawn from the two volumes of *Poetry on Christian Subjects* (2007).

³ These dates are approximate, and in some cases speculative based on various factors such as content and letter-forms. More information about the dating can be found at the beginning of each poem's respective chapter.

⁴ For the sake of consistency, the divine pronoun will be applied to the Trinity and Its three Persons throughout the thesis.

according to factors such as literary tastes, contemporary doctrine, and cultural context. By comparing particular aspects of these poems in the final stage of the thesis I hope to reveal further similarities and differences between them, giving a fuller sense of how they relate to one another, as well as the cultural contexts in which they were composed. Ultimately, this analysis demonstrates that Christ's portrayal becomes much more developed and nuanced over time, gradually moving away from the characteristics valued in a Scandinavian courtly context and towards the tastes of late medieval Christian literature.

Christian Skaldic Poetry: A General Introduction

Skaldic verse, a genre which has its roots in a courtly setting, was originally a part of the personal and political relationship that a poet, frequently Icelandic in origin, shared with the king of Norway. This poetic form began as a means of recounting the fame of rulers or patrons, celebrating their achievements in a literary form that would survive long past their reigns. The popularity of this genre, as Roberta Frank notes, was 'fast going out of fashion' when much of it was recorded on Icelandic vellums in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries.⁵ These are also the centuries to which most Christian skaldic verse has been dated, indicating that they mark a transitional period into new literary territory as new poetic styles began to emerge from the old. Frank's observation that the task of the Christian *skáld* 'was that of converting poetic style intimately associated with pagan ideas and divinities into a medium of Christian supernaturalism' neatly summarises the challenge for poets writing about Christ: to offer a representation that both affirms Christian doctrine while working with a poetic form and literary tropes first developed outside of a Christian context.⁶

The poems under consideration here appear among poems and verses in the two-volume edition of *Poetry on Christian Subjects* (2007). The assignment of these poems to the category of Christian skaldic verse, while a modern-day

⁵ Frank 1978: 30.

⁶ Frank 1978: 66.

distinction, nonetheless identifies them through a set of features that distinguishes them from others in the skaldic corpus. As observed in the first volume's introduction, these poems share in common their 'sustained and direct treatment of a Christian subject' and were also all composed from the mid-twelfth to the early-fifteenth century.⁷ They each draw from Christian literary traditions to varying degrees and incorporate Christ into their narratives in a variety of ways. Within the category of Christian skaldic verse, there also exist the subgenres of hagiography; homiletic and didactic work; gnomic and wisdom verse; Marian poetry; and legal texts, to name but a few. Each of these is defined by the content and style of its verses, and each was composed to fulfil a distinct set of purposes.

Hagiographies, which comprise the majority of recorded Christian skaldic poems, were composed from the mid-twelfth through to the fourteenth century. Einarr Skúlason's *Geisli* 'Light-beam' established this subgenre in the mid-twelfth century, and as an influential work and one of the earliest examples of Christian skaldic verse merits attention within this thesis. Other examples of narrative hagiographical poems, ranging across the period of composition for Christian skaldic verse, include Níkulás Bergsson's *Jónsdrápa postula* 'Drápa about the Apostle John', Gamli kanóki's *Jónsdrápa* 'Drápa about St John', and *Plácitusdrápa* 'Drápa about Plácitus (St Eustace)' from the twelfth century; Kolbeinn Tumason's *Jónsvísur* 'Vísur about St John' from the thirteenth century; and *Pétrsdrápa* 'Drápa about St Peter', *Andreasdrápa* 'Drápa about St Andrew', and *Kátrinardrápa* 'Drápa about St Catherine' from the fourteenth century.⁸ The three skaldic poems about St John and the one about Peter appear alongside prose texts celebrating the same figures in the manuscripts in which they survive, and this type of context hints at a culture of interconnected literary practices that are further confirmed by other less direct influences.⁹ There are also non-narrative verse hagiographies in the fourteenth century, among them *Allra postola minnisvísur* 'Celebratory Vísur about all the Apostles', *Heilagra*

⁷ Clunies Ross 2007: xliii.

⁸ The Introduction to *Poetry on Christian Subjects* observes that the surviving sections of *Andreasdrápa* and the three poems celebrating St John are too short to determine whether they were fully narrative (Clunies Ross 2007: xlvi).

⁹ Clunies Ross 2007: xlvi.

manna drápa ‘Drápa about Holy Men’, and *Heilagra meyja drápa* ‘Drápa about Holy Virgins’.

The cult of Mary was particularly important in Iceland in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, a trend that is evident in the numerous poems about Mary during these centuries.¹⁰ Miracle accounts of the Virgin Mary, all of which were composed in the fourteenth century, also fall within the hagiographical category, and include *Máriudrápa* ‘Drápa about Mary’, *Gýðingsvísur* ‘Vísur about a Jew’, *Bruðkaupsvísur* ‘Vísur about a Wedding’, *Máriuvísur I-III* ‘Vísur about Mary I-III’, *Vitnisvísur af Máriu* ‘Testimonial Vísur about Mary’, and *Drápa af Máriugrát* ‘Drápa about the Lament of Mary’. *Máriudrápa* stands thematically on its own as a hymn praising the Virgin Mary, and features a catalogue of her epithets and prayers for her merciful mediation of humanity at the Last Judgement; it borrows heavily from liturgical texts, but often translates concepts to accommodate Icelandic and Norwegian cultures.

The poems classified by Clunies Ross as homiletic or didactic were composed between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, and include Gamli kanóki’s *Harmsól* ‘Sun of Sorrow’, *Leiðarvísan* ‘Way Guidance’, *Líknarbraut* ‘Way of Grace’, and *Lilja* ‘Lily’.¹¹ These four poems stand apart from other Christian skaldic works in their attention to biblical narrative and, in particular, their representations of Christ within that narrative. They are also each comprised of a combination of biblical, liturgical, and vernacular literary tradition. Since these homiletic and didactic poems serve as natural focal points for representations of Christ within the skaldic corpus, they will be the primary focus of this study.

In order to develop a sustained analysis of Christ’s changing role in Christian skaldic verse, the poems I have selected for this study span the period c. 1150 to c. 1350 and share certain interconnections in aspects such as subgenre, content, and style. Consequently, while I will briefly touch on hagiography and devote the most attention to didactic and homiletic material, other Christian skaldic subgenres will not be addressed in this thesis. These

¹⁰ Clunies Ross 2007: xlv.

¹¹ Clunies Ross 2007: xlv.

include the aforementioned hagiographical and Marian poems; translations of the Latin *Stanzas addressed to Fellow Ecclesiastics*; and gnomic and visionary poems such as *Sólarljóð* ‘Song of the Sun’ and *Hugsvinnsmál* ‘Sayings of the Wise-minded One’. While each of these poems certainly merits examination in its own right, those poems that have been selected offer the most detailed representations of Christ and are thus the ones best suited for the purposes of this thesis.

All of the poems reviewed in this study are categorised as *drápur* – a long encomiastic poem with a *stef* or ‘refrain’ – and they share their form with ‘the most prestigious secular encomia of the West Norse tradition in status and dignity.’¹² Such poems are characterised by their structure, which is comprised of an *upphaf* or ‘opening’ set of stanzas, a middle section with periodic refrains called the *stefjamél* or *stefjabálkr*, and a set of concluding stanzas called the *sloæmr*. As Clunies Ross has noted, a poem’s *stef* ‘was intended to be flattering to the patron or subject of the *drápa*’ and was ‘highly memorable’, causing the subject to be remembered long past his reign.¹³ *Drápur*, which were originally developed in a courtly setting to praise a ruler for his glorious deeds, also afforded the skald to further his own fame and favour in the *drótt*; traditional features such as a skald’s call for hearing and his request for payment, for example, are both features of this poetic genre that helped to define the skald’s relationship with the ruler.¹⁴

Geisli, *Harmsól*, *Leiðarvísan*, and *Líknarbraut* employ the six-syllable *dróttkvætt* ‘court metre’, which was used in skaldic verse from the ninth to the fourteenth centuries. The emergence of the literary genre of *dróttkvætt* verse, as Roberta Frank notes, ‘coincides with the strengthening of royal power in late ninth-century Norway’ and was primarily composed for kings and other prominent leaders.¹⁵ The form was largely dominated by Icelandic poets, who

¹² Clunies Ross 2007: lv.

¹³ Clunies Ross 2005: 37.

¹⁴ Clunies Ross 2005: 44 and 47.

¹⁵ Frank 1978: 23. *Dróttkvætt* or ‘court poetry’ is a syllabic metre composed of eight lines, which are divided into two four-line *helmingar* or half-stanzas. The end of the first *helmingr* and the start of the second represent a syntactic break, and the odd and even lines throughout differ from one another structurally. Paired lines are connected through alliteration, and assonance occurs in-line.

composed in praise of the king and other prominent leaders in the Norwegian court, filling their stanzas with cryptic and allusive references to Norse mythological figures and events. Christian poets thus took a genre ‘intimately associated with pagan ideas and divinities’ and transformed it into ‘a medium of Christian supernaturalism’, continually pointing back to Christ and God as the source of poetic inspiration.¹⁶

Lilja, in contrast to the four other poems under scrutiny in this thesis, uses the eight-syllable *hrynhent* or ‘flowing metre’, a later development that Clunies Ross suggests was ‘probably an attempt to imitate the falling trochaic metres of Latin hymns and sequences’.¹⁷ Though the poem maintains at least some links to its Norse literary past, the development of this new and popularized verse form heralded the end of the skaldic genre as it adjusted to suit literary influences and tastes of the day. Guðrún Nordal thus describes Christian skaldic poems, which are defined by their fusion of traditions and mark a transitional moment in Norse literary practice, as ‘the most lasting flowering on the old skaldic branch, when the interest of those composing secular verse was drawn to the *rímur* or new metrical forms.’¹⁸ All skaldic verse has been preserved largely through its adaptability to the Christian context, and these poems exemplify that adaptability to new subjects and themes.

As Clunies Ross observes, Christian skaldic verse has been ‘relatively neglected and unappreciated’ compared to early courtly material, and even other secular poetry of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.¹⁹ Rather than courtly poets, members of the clergy and perhaps aristocratic laypeople adopted the skaldic poetic form and began to compose verses that celebrated the spiritual fame of the Apostles, saints, and biblical figures in a manner that departed to some extent stylistically from earlier work.²⁰ However critics, in judging the later poems by a set of standards derived from earlier ones, may not appreciate the cultural differences that redefined literary expectations: whereas earlier poems

¹⁶ Frank 1978: 66.

¹⁷ Clunies Ross 2005: 227. *Hrynhent* metre is a later development of the skaldic verse-form consisting of an eight-line stanza with eight syllables per line.

¹⁸ Guðrún Nordal 2001: 66.

¹⁹ Clunies Ross 2007: liii.

²⁰ Whaley 2012: xvii.

were presumably composed orally in a court setting and later transcribed from recitation in a possibly monastic context, poems from the twelfth to fourteenth centuries seem to have been composed and transcribed almost entirely in monastic settings, and always in a Christian context.²¹ By appreciating these poems for the value they have in their literary period, we might better appreciate the insight that each one offers into the style and values of this genre.

With a few exceptions, most Christian skaldic poems only survive in a few manuscripts; in some cases, there is just one extant copy of a poem. Wolf explains that this is because religious works, unlike practical texts like law codices and leech books, were less prone to survive.²² Unlike earlier skaldic verse composed in a court setting, much of the surviving Christian skaldic corpus lacks authorial attribution.²³ Less than a quarter of surviving skaldic verse on Christian subjects has named authors, whereas the names of secular skalds tend to be included with their poetic work. Named authors share common educational backgrounds and social standings, either as members of the clergy or educated *goðar* (the chieftains of medieval Iceland). Those poets who composed Christian skaldic verse and are specifically identified, such as *Harmsól's* composer Gamli kanóki, held some religious office in the church.²⁴ Even Einarr Skúlason's poem *Geisli*, which celebrates the martyred Norwegian king Óláfr Haraldsson and acknowledges current Norwegian rulers among the audience, was composed for a cathedral setting.

Although the original audience for skaldic poems on Christian subjects is not always clear, reasonable speculations can be made through content. Based on the frequent appearance of liturgical material embedded in the Norse poetic form, Clunies Ross takes the original audiences to be religious communities or elite secular households that patronised skalds and owned a proprietary church.²⁵ On the other hand, Guðrún Nordal argues that the aristocrats were

²¹ Guðrún Nordal 2001: 339-40.

²² Wolf 1997: 261.

²³ The individual overviews for each poem will specify whether there is a known or speculated author.

²⁴ Cf. Guðrún Nordal 2001: 141-142.

²⁵ Clunies Ross 2007: li.

themselves the skalds.²⁶ Didactic and homiletic verse seems particularly well suited to the setting of a religious community, since it could serve as a creative accompaniment to a relevant sermon and offer meditative reflection upon biblical accounts. Most extant Christian verse appears in compilations from the early sixteenth century and was produced prior to the Reformation, presumably in areas that resisted Protestantism, such as the north of Iceland.²⁷ The existence of these compilations alone seems to suggest that the poems shared an ideological appeal for at least some northern Icelandic religious communities resistant to Protestantism, and that these vernacular religious poems were so much valued that they were preserved in religious collections.

A strong academic interest in Christian skaldic verse did not develop until the mid-nineteenth century.²⁸ Prior to that time only a few transcriptions and editions were produced by Icelandic academics, yet these works have proven to be some of the more indispensable resources due to the deterioration of many late medieval manuscripts in which these poems were preserved. Manuscript AM 757 a 4^o (B) serves as a good example: the poems preserved in this early fifteenth-century manuscript include *Harmsól*, *Leiðarvísan*, *Líknarbraut*, but the original has become one of the most difficult Icelandic manuscripts to read as a result of deterioration.²⁹ Modern scholars studying poems in this manuscript rely heavily on a transcript of B by Jón Sigurðsson (1811-79), entitled JS 399 a-b 4^{ox} (399a-b^x). These early transcriptions, in combination with early editions of Christian poems, have helped modern scholars to analyse readings that have long since been lost. Until relatively recently, few scholars devoted their attention to Christian skaldic verse. Even then, most of this past scholarship focused on the presumed shortcomings of this verse in comparison to the

²⁶ Guðrún Nordal 2001: 117-43.

²⁷ Clunies Ross 2007: xlv. For a brief overview of the corpus of medieval Christian skaldic poetry, see Clunies Ross 2007: xliii-xlv.

²⁸ For an overview of early critical attitudes towards Christian skaldic verse, see Clunies Ross 2007: li-liii.

²⁹ This manuscript dates to c. 1400, possibly originates in Iceland, and is comprised of 14 folios. The religious verse in B includes: *Heilags anda vísur*, *Leiðarvísan*, *Líknarbraut*, *Harmsól*, *Maríudrápa*, and *Gyðingvísur*.

merits of earlier skaldic verse from a courtly setting, and did not consider the merits of Christian Skaldic poems within their own times and contexts.³⁰

Old Norse Mythology in Christian Skaldic Verse

The content of certain skaldic stanzas throughout this thesis invites comparisons with Old Norse mythological figures and narratives, which may have served as an influence in some respects. However, when examining the use of this mythology in Christian skaldic verse, the reader must always be aware that the mythology has been filtered through several layers of historical context. The mythological narratives that survived in a literary format therefore need to be approached with a degree of caution, as they may be products of a Christian context. Abram stresses that, even though the worldview of Norse myth may seem static at first glance, determining the effect of religious and cultural changes in these texts is one of the greatest challenges when working with Old Norse myths.³¹ He also notes that artefacts, while possibly revealing earlier perceptions of myths, 'can remain frustratingly silent about their identity, function and significance within a wider mythological-religious framework'.³² To appreciate the difficulty in separating the myth from the period in which it was written in manuscripts, a consideration of Snorri's Sturluson's handbook on poetic composition offers some useful pointers.

Composed around 1225, the *Snorra Edda* seems to have been produced as a means of making poetry and its mythological allusions accessible to a thirteenth-century audience.³³ It was through the study of *grammatica*, which included instruction from the *Snorra Edda*, that educated clergy and laypeople learned not only about Norse narratives and myth, but also Christian literary resources such as homiletic and encyclopedic material, and biblical exegesis, which were used as points of reference for those learning the poetic craft in Old

³⁰ For exceptions, see Tate 1974; Chase 1981; Attwood 1996a; Tucker 1974; and Louis-Jensen 1998. Further information about scholarship and critical reception of Christian skaldic poetry can be found in Clunies Ross 2007: li-liii.

³¹ Abram 2011: viii.

³² Abram 2011: 4.

³³ Abram 2011 25.

Icelandic.³⁴ Although it is likely to be subjective in several aspects, Snorri's attitude towards Old Norse mythology in the *Gylfaginning* and *Skáldskaparmál* sections is non-judgemental as he 'attempts to integrate genuine pagan tradition into the high-medieval world picture in as unprovocative a way as possible, and to exploit it in terms of a specifically 'Norse' cultural ideology'.³⁵ He is careful to present these myths as separate from the accepted truth of Christianity, thus presenting Old Norse mythology in a diplomatic way that would satisfy both antiquarian interest and a Christian audience. Quinn has noted that much of skaldic verse – the poems in this thesis included – reflects the fashions and versification of the thirteenth century found in *Snorra Edda*.³⁶

The antiquarian interest demonstrated in *Snorra Edda* may indeed have stemmed from the distinction between practice and knowledge, since what 'conversion-era kings forbade in their realms was pagan practice, not pagan myth *per se*'.³⁷ In many ways our understanding of Old Norse myths are most comprehensively informed by the written record of Old Norse mythology, and our best means of finding their meaning is to consider the text from the point of view of the manuscripts themselves.³⁸ Therefore in this study Old Norse texts on mythological figures and narratives will be consulted, albeit cautiously, and their potential influences and connections considered. With regards to Old Norse myth, Margaret Clunies Ross observes that we only have access to the 'tip of the narrative iceberg' and, by extension, 'the tip of the religio-historical iceberg', but Schjødt argues that reconstruction of any religion of the past is going to rely on comparative evidence and analogy.³⁹ The context of Christian skaldic verse dictates that the literary function of the re-use of old myths is the most important emphasis.

³⁴ von See 2001: 368. Cf. Guðrún Nordal 2001: 345, 346.

³⁵ Abram 2011: 25.

³⁶ Quinn 2012: 213.

³⁷ Abram 2011: 181.

³⁸ Quinn 2012: 255.

³⁹ Clunies Ross 1994: 25 and Schjødt 2010: 162.

Historical Background in Norway and Iceland

The history of Christian skaldic verse is informed in part by the religious and political histories of Iceland and Norway. To provide further context for the poems that this thesis covers, I include here a brief overview of conversion and political histories in these two countries. Though earlier missionaries had attempted large-scale conversions, the first significant spread of Christianity came in Norway with Óláfr Tryggvason (995-1000), successor of the pagan ruler Earl Hákon of Trøndelag.⁴⁰ Óláfr famously converted parts of Norway, the Atlantic islands, Iceland and Greenland with the use of threats and violence.⁴¹ The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records that, prior to his reign in Norway and while in England as part of a Scandinavian attack, Óláfr was confirmed at Andover in 994 by the Bishop of Winchester.⁴² He returned to Norway with Bishop Sigeward of England and a priest whom the Icelanders named Þangbrandr, and seized power from Earl Hákon. He then set to work converting his subjects by beginning in south-east Norway, an area already introduced to Christianity via Denmark.⁴³ While his conversion campaigns resulted in the formal conversion of vast populations – and in a sense were successful – the violence of Óláfr’s coercive methods ‘alienated large numbers of his countrymen’.⁴⁴

Óláfr Tryggvason’s unpopular cruelty may in part explain why Eiríkr (1000–1015), son of Earl Hákon, allowed freedom of worship. Eiríkr had a political relationship with Denmark, and thus was involved in the Danish invasion of England during Knútr’s reign. While Eiríkr was away on these invasions Óláfr Haraldsson (1015-1028) – a descendent of the first Norwegian monarch – took control of Norway and gained favour among local assemblies in the country. As king he sought to spread Christianity to areas of Norway that had either lapsed in Christian practice or were overlooked in previous

⁴⁰ Abram 2011: 139.

⁴¹ The list of nations converted by Óláfr Tryggvason grew over time; earlier records exclude the conversion of the Atlantic Islands and Greenland.

⁴² For the Old English and Latin versions of the text, see Baker 2000: 88. For a Modern English translation of this account, see Swanton 1998: 128, which presents this account from The Canterbury Manuscript (F) 994.

⁴³ For archaeological evidence confirming the presence of Christianity in Norway during this period, see Haki Antonsson 2010: 25.

⁴⁴ Kirby 1986: 19. For an overview of Óláfr’s conversion tactics, see Abram 2011: 174.

campaigns. His methods, it seems, were effective, as he was ‘able to root out heathen practices, establish churches widely in the land, and ensure the final acceptance of Christianity as the religion of the entire country’.⁴⁵ He sought to distance his own kingdom from England and Denmark, instead making the arch-see of Bremen into Norway’s immediate religious authority.⁴⁶ Thus Norway broke its ties with England as the influence of Christianity from the German region of the Continent gained increasing importance. A little over a century later, the entire land of Norway was formally united under one faith.

Even after Óláfr Haraldsson’s death in the Battle of Stiklarstaðir in 1030, his influence persisted, as stories of miracles associated with his sainthood began to circulate. The growing esteem for the deceased ruler, in combination with the unpopularity of his political successors, prompted Norwegians to ask Óláfr’s son Magnús (ruled 1035-1047) to assume the throne, and he became the first Norwegian king to be consecrated by the church. Only a few decades later, following claims of miraculous events attributed to Óláfr Haraldsson, the latter’s identity as sainted king of Norway was firmly established. King Magnús Erlingsson (1156-1184) adopted the title *rex perpetuus Norvegiae*, identifying his new symbolic role with that of St Óláfr, the perpetual king of Norway.⁴⁷ This symbolic political title further entrenched Christianity as an integral part of Norway’s identity, as the king now represented both secular and religious authority.

With Magnús Ólafsson (1035-1047) the missionary church of St Óláfr grew into a strong organisation that could aspire to the king’s allegiance.⁴⁸ The concept of a national church developed during the reign of his uncle, Haraldr harðráði (1047-1066), when archbishop Adalbert of Bremen (1043-1072) sought to gain further control of the church from the king; Haraldr reacted by having his bishops consecrated in England and France rather than Bremen, and by appointing Norwegian successors. By distancing Norway from Bremen’s authority, Haraldr implicitly proclaimed his country’s religious autonomy and

⁴⁵ Kirby 1986: 21. Cf. Nedkvitne 2009: 86.

⁴⁶ Kirby 1986: 21.

⁴⁷ Kirby 1986: 22. For depictions of St Óláfr in religious art, see Nedkvitne 2009: 68-9.

⁴⁸ Kirby 1986: 28.

further developed its identity as an independent political power. During this time significant religious centres were founded in Norway. Three sees were established there in the eleventh century, based in Niðarós, Oslo, and Selja. Later in the century Bergen also became an important Christian centre, and cathedrals were built in all four locations. The archbishop with responsibility for Norway was based in Lund in Danish-held Sweden from 1103/4, and during this period bishops answered to him. By the end of the eleventh century Norway had also established both Benedictine and Cistercian monasteries.

The church in Norway continued to grow stronger in the twelfth century, gaining greater authority with the formal creation of the arch-see of Niðarós (now Trondheim) by the Pope in 1153.⁴⁹ In some respects the authority seemed to be slipping away from secular rulers; for example, the Norwegian king could no longer select bishops, and church leaders no longer had to operate under the same laws as secular authorities, having instead the ability to select their own clergy and hold their own legal courts.⁵⁰ The church's power in Norway reached its pinnacle when King Magnús Erlingsson (1164-1184), son of Erlingr Skakki, became the only Norwegian king to be crowned by the church.⁵¹ Magnús's reign also changed the environment in which skaldic poetry was produced. The increased emphasis on the institution of kingship, combined with the ever-increasing use of written material, meant that skalds were not called upon as frequently to celebrate individual kings in this traditionally oral form of composition; consequently many skalds turned to other patrons to produce written praise poems in their honour.⁵² In some cases, they also turned to religious figures and events for their subjects. By the fourteenth century the relationship of church and state became less strained as the archbishop gained increasing power over secular rulers, and Christianity continued to enjoy a flourishing literary presence in Scandinavia and throughout Europe.

The history of Iceland as a Christian nation begins decisively, according to written records, in the year 1000. Prior to this official conversion, however, the

⁴⁹ For an overview of Norwegian church reform in the decades that followed, see Orri Vésteinsson 2000: 167.

⁵⁰ Orri Vésteinsson 2000: 118.

⁵¹ Nedkvitne 2009: 45.

⁵² Meylan 2013: 43. Cf. Bragge 1996; and Wanner 2008, 76-79.

island had an early Christian presence. As recorded by the Irish monk Dicuil in the ninth century, Iceland's earliest inhabitants were not permanent settlers but pilgrim monks from Ireland, called *peregrini*, who sought isolated locations to focus on their religious devotion.⁵³ Despite these earliest recorded inhabitants bringing Christianity with them, they ultimately left little trace of it or themselves behind. Iceland would not experience a strong Christian presence again for at least another century.⁵⁴

According to *Íslendingabók*, an ecclesiastical history of Iceland completed by Ari Þorgilsson in c. 1125, Iceland was settled in the year 870, and over the next century developed laws, organised a government, and formed territories.⁵⁵ By 930, all habitable land had been claimed and cultivated, marking the end of large-scale migrations to the island. Although some of the settlers were Christian, it seems that the pagan religion had a much larger presence: *Landnámabók* describes pagan practices among the first Norwegian settlers in Iceland, including temples, a constitution with pagan influences, and pagan burial customs.⁵⁶

In contrast to other larger Scandinavian countries in the tenth century, Iceland lacked a strong central ruler; instead, its settlers established a system of self-governance that was led by *goðar*, thirty-six to thirty-nine men who served as religious and political leaders in the community. These men met annually at the *alþingi* – a meeting established alongside the Icelandic constitution in 930 – to settle religious and political matters collectively.⁵⁷ Due in part to the unique political institutions of Iceland in the tenth century, people could follow the religious practices of their choice without having to adhere to politically-

⁵³ O'Donoghue 2004: 1. Cf. Smith (Feb 1995): 319-347.

⁵⁴ Variations on Iceland's early history are recorded in several Old Norse texts. The sources most frequently referenced for the conversion history of Iceland are Ari Þorgilsson's *Íslendingabók*, *Landnámabók*, *Kristni saga*, *Hungrvaka*, and the lives of bishops. No conversion narratives contemporary to these early events survive, so the above-mentioned accounts function as our main historical records for this period.

⁵⁵ Úlfljótr's laws were created around 927; the *alþingi* was established in 930; and Iceland was divided into quarters around 960. For a more detailed timeline of this period in Iceland's history, see Grønlie 2006. For further details regarding the reliability of Ari's witnesses, see Jochens (Jul 1999): 625-6.

⁵⁶ Jochens (Jul 1999): 627. Cf. Ólafur Briem 1945; Hjaltalin 1868: 176-182; Jochens (Jul 1999): 621-655; and O'Donoghue 2004: 17-21.

⁵⁷ For more information about Iceland's early social order, see Helgi Þorláksson 2005: 139-41; and Turville-Petre 1953: 5-7.

sanctioned beliefs: both pagan and Christian practices were accepted, although Christianity was 'diffuse and decentralized' during this period.⁵⁸ In short, Christianity in this time and place did not contribute to a sense of social structure, whereas pagan practices were apparently integral to the role of Iceland's political leaders, the *goðar*.

There had been missions in Iceland from 981 onwards, with missions in the last decade of the tenth century causing particular tension and conflict.⁵⁹ However, the formal conversion of Iceland as described by the twelfth-century chronicler Ari *fróði* in *Íslendingabók* did not take place until 999/1000.⁶⁰ The arrival of the Christian missionaries Hjalti and Gizurr in Iceland coincided with a division among the Icelandic people into two societies, 'one based on paganism and another on Christianity but without clear geographic parameters'.⁶¹ An appeal was made to the people at the *alþingi* to accept Christian law, emphasizing the importance of unity among Icelanders through a common legal code. Þorgeirr, one of the pagan leaders and the law-speaker that year, was given the task of considering which legal code would be accepted. According to Ari's account, Þorgeirr lay silently underneath his cloak for a day and night, after which he reached a decision in favour of Christianity for the sake of unity, and to maintain law and peace. His decision was accepted in what is known as *kristnitaka*, 'the taking of Christianity'; a few provisions for private pagan sacrifice and exposure of children remained according to legal stipulations at the conversion, but by 1016 were supposedly eliminated.⁶² Many scholars have considered Iceland's conversion narrative unique among contemporary examples in Europe.⁶³ Ari's account of Iceland's conversion in *Íslendingabók* seems very unlike other conversion narratives from surrounding countries during this period, most notably in its account of a pragmatic approach to

⁵⁸ Abram 2011: 186.

⁵⁹ Abram 2011: 186.

⁶⁰ Orri Vésteinsson 2000: 17-19.

⁶¹ Jochens (Jul 1999): 649.

⁶² Jochens (Jul 1999): 621.

⁶³ Further reading: Haki Antonsson 2010: 25-74; Foote 1984: 56-64; Foote 1993a: 106-8; Foote 1993b: 137-44; Jochens (Jul 1999): 621-655; Jón Hnefill Aðalsteinsson 1999; and Pizarro 1985: 793-811.

Christian conversion.⁶⁴ It is possibly because the political compromise by which a common government and religion were established was so swift and relatively peaceful, that writers in Iceland were able to embrace literary traditions predating the conversion.

The period following the Conversion saw the establishment of monasteries and nunneries in Iceland. As Steinunn Kristjansdóttir has observed, the establishment of monasteries and nunneries in Iceland coincided with a period of renewal for monasticism in Europe generally.⁶⁵ During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in particular the number of monasteries and nunneries significantly increased and a number of new orders were introduced.⁶⁶ According to Steinunn, at least nine monasteries and nunneries were established in Iceland between the early twelfth and late fifteenth century, all of them by either the Benedictine or Augustinian orders that were governed from Norway and, later, Denmark.⁶⁷ Given the tendency of Augustinians and Benedictines to settle outside of urban environments in more rural locations, the presence of these orders in Iceland is in keeping with the standard operations.⁶⁸ The first monastery in Iceland was established at Þingeyrar in 1133, and the last at Skriðuklauster in 1493. The bishopric of Skálholt contained five monasteries and one nunnery, while the bishopric of Hólar had three monasteries and one nunnery. By around 1550, in the midst of the Protestant Reformation, all medieval monasteries in Iceland were dissolved.⁶⁹ Among the

⁶⁴ For more information on the conversion of Iceland according to *Íslendingabók*, see Orri Vésteinsson 2000: 17-19. Orri Vésteinsson (2000: 17) notes that the other accounts of Iceland's conversion 'are much later and do not seem to derive material on the conversion itself from any other source'. These other accounts are *Historia de antiquitate regum norwagensium* (MHN 21); *Saga Ólafs Tryggvasonar* (SÓT 122-30; ÓST ii. 188-98; ÍF xxvi, 347); *Kristni saga* (ASB xi. 36-42); and *Njáls saga* (ÍF xii. 269-72).

⁶⁵ Steinunn Kristjansdóttir 2013: 150. For a general overview of the spread of monasticism to Scandinavia, see Nyberg 1993: 415-419. For current archaeological surveys of Icelandic monastic sites, see Graham 2014, as well as the *Klaustar á Íslandi – Monasticism in Iceland* website and Facebook page.

⁶⁶ For more information on this period of monastic growth, see Thompson 1913: 2-3; Aston 2001; and Kerr 2009.

⁶⁷ Steinunn Kristjansdóttir 2013: 150. Cf. Magnús Stefánsson 1975: 81-85; and Gunnar Karlsson 2000: 39-41. Speaking about the Middle Ages as a whole, Steinunn Kristjansdóttir, Inger Larsson, and Per Arvid Åsen (2014: 561) note that 70 monasteries were established in Denmark, some 50 in Sweden, around 30 in Norway and 12-15 in Iceland.

⁶⁸ Steinunn Kristjansdóttir 2013: 151.

⁶⁹ Steinunn Kristjansdóttir 2013: 152. Cf. Gunnar F. Guðmundsson 2000: 212-46; and Steinunn Kristjansdóttir, Inger Larsson, and Per Arvid Åsen 2014: 562.

characteristics of these reformed monasteries was an increased openness to the communities surrounding these sites. Such changes included hospitality for those seeking ‘physical and mental shelter’, and welcoming ‘communities of sick, needy, poor, and aged people, or all those who sought spiritual shelter’.⁷⁰ Monasteries also carried out education and a variety of daily work, including gardening, weaving, and writing.⁷¹

The commonly held view of recent decades has been that Icelandic monasteries differed from their counterparts in Europe, ‘with their few inhabitants living their own cloistered life separately from the rest of society’.⁷² However, recent and ongoing excavations reveal that the Icelandic monastery’s daily life was not all that different from European counterparts, and was in fact ‘run and designed in accordance with monastic models outside Iceland’.⁷³ Additionally, monasteries kept Icelanders in ‘close contact with continental Europe’ through the bishoprics in Hamberg-Bremen, Lund and Niðarós, and over 40 Icelanders are known to have travelled as pilgrims throughout Europe, allowing for exposure to new ideas and practices as they arose.⁷⁴ The newly emerging picture of monastic life in medieval Iceland, therefore, seems to indicate that it not only displayed the values and practices of Augustinians and Benedictines as seen on the Continent, but also reveals an active involvement in the community surrounding these sites.

The missionary period in Iceland was a swift one, as by 1016 the country had moved towards a full acceptance of Christian law and practice. Starting in

⁷⁰ Steinunn Kristjánsdóttir 2013: 150-1. Cf. Gunnar F. Guðmundsson 2000: 98-100; Gilchrist and Sloane 2005: 6-8.

⁷¹ Steinunn Kristjánsdóttir 2013: 150-1. For a detailed study of plants found on monastic sites in Iceland, and what this reveals about life in these monastic communities, see Steinunn Kristjánsdóttir, Inger Larsson, and Per Arvid Åsen 2014: 560-79. One particular discovery of note during the excavations of Viðeyjarklaustur was ‘a small statue of St Dorothy, the patron saint of horticulture, brewers, brides, florists and gardeners’; this may reveal something of the importance of cultivating land on monastic sites (Steinunn Kristjánsdóttir, Inger Larsson, and Per Arvid Åsen 2014: 562-3). Excavators at Skriðuklaustur found a fifteenth-century effigy of St Barbara, a saint known for protection against illness and disease, along with surgical equipment and the bones of clerics and laypeople that points to the site’s medical work within the community (Steinunn Kristjánsdóttir, Inger Larsson, and Per Arvid Åsen 2014: 563-4).

⁷² Steinunn Kristjánsdóttir, Inger Larsson, and Per Arvid Åsen 2014: 562. Cf. Steinunn Kristjánsdóttir 2013: 154-5; Helgi Þorláksson 2003: 26-28; Anna Sigurðardóttir 1988: 293; Hörður Ágústsson 1989a: 293-95; Björn Þorsteinsson, and Guðrún Ása Grímsdróttir 1990: 141-58; and Gunnar Karlsson 2000: 89 and onwards.

⁷³ Steinunn Kristjánsdóttir 2013: 149-150.

⁷⁴ Steinunn Kristjánsdóttir, Inger Larsson, and Per Arvid Åsen 2014: 574.

the eleventh century with the family line of Gizurr Teitsson (the White, born c. 940), chieftains and their families played an important role in the development of the Icelandic church.⁷⁵ Gizurr was one of the three influential chieftains baptized by Þangbrandr during his missions to Iceland in the late tenth century, and he was particularly involved in establishing the Icelandic church. Gizurr himself founded the church in Skálholt that was later officiated by his son Ísleifr (1056-1080), who became the first native bishop of Iceland.⁷⁶ Ísleifr also founded a school in Skálholt, an example that was followed by Jón Þgmundarson, the first bishop of Hólar (1106-1121). These schools served as training centres for both priests and the sons of privileged families, but it was not until 1133, with the establishment of the Benedictine monastery at Þingeyrar, that monasticism began to spread throughout Iceland.⁷⁷ Among the most important learning centres in the twelfth century were Haukadalr, Skálholt, and Oddi (where Snorri Sturluson received his formal education).⁷⁸ As the number of church schools and monastic centres of learning grew, a literary elite increasingly familiarised themselves with texts from the Continent. The establishment of Niðarós as the archdiocese in Norway in 1153 led to church reforms in the decades that followed. As part of this reform, in 1190 Eiríkr of Niðarós wrote a letter to Bishops Þorlákr (1178-93) and Brandr forbidding men in Holy Orders 'both to act as advocate in secular disputes and to carry weapons', thereby ending the ordination of men who held secular authority and *goðorð*.⁷⁹ The need for this distinction is telling of the close relationship between the church and political leaders within Iceland.⁸⁰

Literature and its preservation began to shift alongside the political changes of the thirteenth century. As Clunies Ross observes, grammatical treatises and related literature such as Snorri Sturluson's *Háttatal* and *The Third*

⁷⁵ Nedkvitne 2009: 45. For information about the close links between chieftains and the Church in the twelfth century, see Orri Vésteinsson 2000: 182-94.

⁷⁶ The Haukdælir family produced prominent leaders in the Icelandic church for several generations.

⁷⁷ Haki Antonsson 2012: 126. Haki Antonsson (2012: 127) also observes that Þingeyrar 'had very likely been founded as an act of atonement by the feuding chieftains of the region'.

⁷⁸ Guðrún Nordal 2001: 29-30.

⁷⁹ Haki Antonsson 2012: 126. Cf. Sverrir Jakobsen 2009: 151-70.

⁸⁰ For a review of the complex relationship between chieftaincies and the Church in Iceland from the conversion to the thirteenth century, see Orri Vésteinsson 2000.

and Fourth Grammatical Treatises composed around this time not only have an educational intent, but are also 'bound up in the celebration and perpetuation of the tradition of skaldic poetry as an elite, court-oriented art'.⁸¹ Furthermore, those poems which survived did so through the support of 'ruling families, powerful chieftains and farmers', and 'powerful clans [that] acted as patrons'.⁸² Thus, the Icelandic aristocracy played an influential role in preserving and studying past literature as interpreted through the grammatical instruction composed during this period.

The histories of Iceland and Norway converge in 1262, when Iceland came under the rule of the Norwegian king Hákon Hákonarson (1204-1263). Whereas by this time the church in Norway was enjoying an increasing organisation and power, tension had emerged between Iceland's church and secular leaders. It was during the earlier reign of Magnús Erlingsson that bishop Þorlákr of Skálholt (1178-1193) began to spread reform throughout Iceland, challenging the power that church owners wielded over their local priests. Bishop Guðmundr Arason of Hólar (1203-1237) also came into direct competition in several ways with these leading families, all of whom had privately owned parishes on their farmland: he called for the church to have independent control, claimed that the law of God had supremacy over the law of the land, and alienated wealthier families by filling their traditional role of providing food to the poor.⁸³ Bishop Arason consequently spent many years in exile and eventually sought help in Norway, but his actions mark the church's gradual move towards its own identity and a slight shift away from loyalty to particular chieftaincies. As Orri notes, the arrival of two Norwegian bishops in Iceland in 1239 meant that 'the Icelandic church finally acquired a leadership which could work towards shaping its corporate identity'.⁸⁴

By the second half of the thirteenth century, Iceland's political organisation had moved from shared power amongst independent farmers, to a small collection of families with significant land-holdings, and finally to the ceding of

⁸¹ Clunies Ross 2005: 218.

⁸² Clunies Ross 2005: 218.

⁸³ Orri Vésteinsson 2000: 175. Cf. Nedkvitne 2009: 88, 201-5.

⁸⁴ Orri Vésteinsson 2000: 222.

independence to the king of Norway and his officials.⁸⁵ As the established secular authority in Iceland broke down, the unity of the church increased. Bishops gained greater control in the country, with Icelandic-born bishops serving uninterruptedly in both Hólar and Skálholt for over half a century.⁸⁶ This century also marked the 'classical period' of Icelandic saga writing, and saw the copying down of such works as the *Snorra Edda*, *Poetic Edda*, *Völsunga saga*, and *Grettis saga*. Unlike Viking Age skaldic poems, which celebrated individual rulers and kingly lines within a courtly context and were transmitted orally, the twelfth century saw a shift towards the recording of poems as source material in the kings' sagas, literary examples in poetic treatises, and accounts of Norse myths and heroes. Some of the earliest examples of Christian skaldic verse were also being composed during this period, and may have had the opportunity to be influenced by some of these thirteenth-century writings.⁸⁷ In total, approximately one thousand stanzas and half-stanzas of Christian skaldic poetry survive, 'many of them in the form of long and elaborate poems, some recorded in unique manuscripts outside a prose context'.⁸⁸ This emerging genre within the skaldic corpus reflects both the literary and cultural changes underway during this period, applying poetry once rife with obscure Norse mythological references and reserved for prominent Scandinavian rulers to religious and devotional Christian literature that also brought its own set of distinct traditions.

As this brief introduction demonstrates, both Norway and Iceland, which are the most likely centres for the composition of Christian skaldic verse, were well entrenched in Christian belief and practice on both a religious and political level by the twelfth century. The context after this time was not one in which Christian people faced serious threat from pagan belief; consequently the poems which I shall consider in this thesis often reflect not only a strong familiarity with such Christian literary practices as circulated during the period, but also a willingness to explore Icelandic culture in the poetic expression of

⁸⁵ O'Donoghue 2008: 103-4.

⁸⁶ Kirby 1986: 40.

⁸⁷ In general, Bishops' and saints' sagas are the works of Old Norse literature most likely to influence, or be influenced by, Christian skaldic poetry.

⁸⁸ Clunies Ross 2005: 18.

Christ and His followers. In the chapters that follow, we will see this confirmed through the nuances of each work and the variety of ways in which Christ is represented in this poetic genre.

A Note on the Presentation of Skaldic Stanzas, Letter Forms, and Capitalised Pronouns

Throughout this thesis, I have relied predominantly on the editions of Christian skaldic poems in the two volumes of *Poetry on Christian Subjects*, edited by Margaret Clunies Ross and published in 2007. Unless otherwise noted, I have made use of the word choices found in the main text of poems from this edition, and have also retained italicisation where letters were missing and completed by the editor, as well as asterisks to indicate when a word form has been reconstructed or is a hypothetical etymon.⁸⁹ While these editions of the poems and their Modern English translations have proven an invaluable resource for this project, and contribute significantly to the ever-increasing accessibility of these poems to academics in the present day, I have chosen to deviate from their editorial choices in two ways. Firstly, I have modified the punctuation in instances where I believe the change would clarify a stanza's meaning; these changes in punctuation are reflected in my Modern English translations to help the reader compare the two versions of the stanza with one another. Secondly, and perhaps more contentiously, I have chosen to present my stanzas in four long lines with caesura, in contrast to the eight half-lines (usually known as 'lines') that are standard throughout the *Poetry on Christian Subjects* volumes. My decision is not intended to belittle the merits of the half-line format, which can be useful for viewing a stanza's metrical components and individual sections with analytical precision. However, I view the long-line format as a better means of engaging with the stanza as a readable poetic work, allowing its audience to grasp the syntax of the overall meaning before delving into particulars of how this meaning is conveyed. For the purposes of the project at

⁸⁹ For more information regarding the abbreviations used in this edition, see Clunies Ross 2007: xvi-xvii.

hand, allowing the audience to read each of these stanzas first and foremost as poetic works will help to develop a more complete view of Christ's representations in each of the poems that follow. In a similar effort to achieve clarity in this project, quotations of stanzas that appear in my analysis will make use of extrapolated prose word-order; however, text which undergoes this treatment will also appear in its original word-order and stanza format, so the reader will have a point of reference.⁹⁰

With regard to letter forms, my choices in some instances require the modification of some of the edited texts used for this project, and also communicate assumptions about the composition dates for each of the poems in this thesis. The use of *ó* and *ö* serves as a useful point of reference: the former is an earlier letter form and its use implies earlier poetry, whereas the latter is a fifteenth-century vowel that the editors of the two-volume *Poetry on Christian Subjects* chose to use in later poems such as *Lilja*. For the sake of consistency with the editions in these volumes, I have chosen to retain both the *ó* and *ö* forms, using them as they appear in these editions of the poems. When quoting other original texts and critical material I will likewise retain their spellings, but in all other circumstances I will use *ó* in place of *ö*.

There are a few further departures from *Poetry on Christian Subjects* that I have applied primarily for the sake of clarity. Throughout the thesis I use capitalised pronouns in reference to the Trinity and Its three Persons: God the Father, Christ, and the Holy Ghost. I also capitalise the Cross when referencing the Crucifixion, though its pronoun is not capitalised. Unlike Wolfgang Lange, who attempts to distinguish between God the Father and God the Son, I favour the approaches of Edith Marold and Else Mundal in avoiding such distinctions in Christian skaldic verse unless they are clearly made within the stanza; I therefore apply characterisations to Christ that could equally also apply to God the Father.⁹¹

⁹⁰ This rule does not apply to quotations from stanzas that are mentioned in the context of paraphrases or summaries for particular sections of a poem. In these instances, I only use extrapolated prose word-order.

⁹¹ Cf. Lange 1958b; Marold 1985; and Mundal 1995.

Chapter Two - Einarr Skúlason's *Geisli*

Geisli 'Light beam' survives in two medieval manuscripts: the entire text of the poem can be found in Bergsbók, Holm perg 1 fol (Bb), and all but stanzas 31-3 in Flateyjarbók, GKS 1005 fol (Flat).⁹² Both manuscripts are corrupt, but in general Flateyjarbók is more regular in its language and orthography and has a preferable stanza organisation; for this reason Chase favours Flateyjarbók as the primary source for his 2007 edition.⁹³ Although the earliest mentions of this poem in *Morkinskinna* and *Heimskringla* refer to it as *Óláfs drápa* rather than *Geisli*, in Flateyjarbók it is preceded by a rubric reading *Geisli er Einarr Skulason quad vm Olaf Haraldsson 'Geisli* which Einarr Skúlason composed about Óláfr Haraldsson', from which modern editions derive the title and attributed author.⁹⁴ Both manuscripts date to the fourteenth century, and are thus much later than the poem's presumed date of composition two centuries earlier in 1153.⁹⁵

Geisli is one of the few Christian skaldic poems with a clearly identified author, a potentially identifiable context for its composition, and even a fairly precise and plausible date of composition. While this is not the earliest poem about King Óláfr Haraldsson (1015-30), it does more fully than previous works reflect his new role as *rex perpetuus* of Norway and national patron in 1152, when the archdiocese of Niðarós was established.⁹⁶ The poem's attributed author, Einarr Skúlason, comes from the Kveld-Úlfr family and was probably born near Borgarfjörður in the last decade of the eleventh century.⁹⁷ Einarr was in Norway by 1114 and involved in the Norwegian court, first under King Sigurðr

⁹² For details regarding the full contents of Flat and Bb, other manuscripts containing sections of *Geisli*, and Chase's editorial principal for this poem, see Chase 2005: 4.

⁹³ Chase 2007: 6.

⁹⁴ Chase 2007: 6. Cf. *Morkinskinna*, ÍF 24 vol. 2, 2011: 221-2; and *Heimskringla*, ÍF 28, 271.

⁹⁵ The editions consulted by Chase for his 2007 edition, which is the basis for the stanzas in this thesis, are Finnur Jónsson (*Skj* A and B), Kock (*Skald* and *NN*), *ASB*, and Chase 2005. Other editions include Schöning 1777-1826, 3: 461-80; Rafn *et al.* 1925-37, 5: 349-70; Guðbrandur Vigfússon and Unger 1860-8, 1: 1-7; *ASB*; Wennberg 1874; Guðbrandur Vigfússon and Powell 1883: 283-94; and Theodor Wisén 1886-9, 1: 52-62. For further details about each of these editions, see Chase 2005: 5-8.

⁹⁶ Chase 2005: 10-12.

⁹⁷ Chase 2005: 9.

Jórsalafari (1103-1130), and then under the joint reigns of Haraldr Gilli (1130-6) and Magnús blindi (1130-5). He subsequently served as poet for Haraldr Gilli's three sons – Eysteinn, Sigurðr, and Ingi – who also shared joint rule. Einarr was strongly linked with Eysteinn in particular, and also served as his *stallari* or 'marshall'. Stanzas 8 to 11 and 71 of *Geisli* explain that the poem was commissioned by Eysteinn and performed at Niðarós cathedral before Eysteinn, Sigurðr, Ingi, and Archbishop Jón Birgisson, an event that is described in the following passage from *Morkinskinna*:

Einarr Skúlason var með þeim bræðrum, Sigurði ok Eysteini, ok var Eysteinn konungr mikill vin hans. Ok Eysteinn konungr bað hann til at yrkja Ólafsdrápu, ok hann orti ok færði norðr í Þrándheimi, í Kristskirkju sjálfri, ok varð þat með miklum jarteinum, ok kom dýrligr ilmr í kirkjuna. Ok þat segja menn at þær áminningar urðu af konunginum sjálfum at honum virðisk vel kvæðit.⁹⁸

Einarr Skúlason was with those brothers, Sigurðr and Eysteinn, and King Eysteinn was a great friend of his. And King Eysteinn asked him to compose a heroic poem about Saint Óláfr, and he composed. And he presented it north in Trondheim, in Christ Church itself, and it came to pass with great miracles, and a glorious scent arose in the church. And people say that there were signs of approval from the king himself that he thought well of the poem.

Since the poem refers to Trondheim as an archbishopric in stanza 65, the composition date can be narrowed to after spring 1153, when the cathedral was elevated to this standing, and before summer 1155, when Sigurðr was killed by Ingi; the feuding began in 1154, which further narrows the likely date of composition to 1153 and possibly even to St Óláfr's feast day on 29 July.⁹⁹ The establishment of the archbishopric marked an increase in power for the church, a decrease in power for the Norwegian king, and the creation of closer ties with Rome, as Cardinal Nicholas Breakspear, who would become Pope Adrian IV, consecrated Jón Birgisson at Niðarós as its first archbishop.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ *Morkinskinna*, CV. Kapítuli of *ÍF* 24 vol. 2, 2011: 221-2.

⁹⁹ Chase 2007: 6.

¹⁰⁰ Chase 2007: 5.

In addition to being one of the few Christian skaldic poems with a known and specific historical context, *Geisli* is also the earliest skaldic *drápa* to survive intact.¹⁰¹ It draws on both the Germanic literary tradition of skaldic praise poetry for secular rulers, and the Christian literary tradition of hagiography. *Geisli* is structured around a 17-stanza *upphaf* ‘beginning’ (stanzas 1-17), a 28-stanza *stefjabálkr* which is a section marked with periodic refrains (stanzas 18-45), and a 26-stanza *slœmr* ‘closing section’ (stanzas 46-71). The *upphaf* consists of a religious *invocatio* (stanzas 1-6), the poet’s bid for his audience to listen (stanzas 7-11), and a historical introduction to Óláfr Haraldsson with an overview of his life and death (stanzas 12-17).¹⁰² Though Óláfr was known in life as a formidable military leader whose militaristic conversion practices resembled those of his predecessor Óláfr Tryggvason (c. 960’s–1000), his saintly status also meant that he became renowned for his miracles, and was thus regarded as a source of both physical and spiritual healing.¹⁰³ The *stefjabálkr* that immediately follows focuses on miracles associated with St Óláfr. Its sections of narrative, divided by refrains beginning in stanza 18, are Óláfr’s death and the subsequent solar eclipse (stanzas 19-21); the miracles of Óláfr’s body curing a man’s blindness, and the two resurrections of his body after burial (stanzas 23-25); the victory of Óláfr’s son Magnús at the battle of Hlýrskógheiðr, after Óláfr appeared to him in a dream (stanzas 27-29); the victory of Óláfr’s nephew Gurthormr in battle (stanzas 31-33); the miracles of the petrified loaves and the restored tongue of the servant (stanzas 35-37); the healing of the man whose tongue had been cut out by Wends (stanzas 39-41); and the beginning of the story of Óláfr’s sword Hneitr (stanzas 43-45). The *slœmr* continues the story of Hneitr (stanzas 46-50), and recounts the victory at Pézínaveilir brought about by a prayer to Óláfr for success in battle (stanzas 51-56), followed by the healing of the maimed Ríkharrðr, who was wrongfully accused of sleeping with

¹⁰¹ Chase 2007: 5.

¹⁰² While earlier skálds linked ‘poetic creativity and Óðinn’s gift of the poetic mead’ to their creative process, Einarr Skúlason instead begins *Geisli* ‘with an invocation of the Trinity and then follows it with a prayer for inspiration in the manner of a Latin *invocatio*’ (Clunies Ross 2005: 124-5). Clunies Ross (2005: 125) further observes that Óðinn’s gift, which traditionally could only be obtained by those already skilled in poetry, also differed from the Christian perception that ‘a person previously lacking in poetic talent could be turned into a fine poet by divine or other supernatural inspiration’.

¹⁰³ Chase 2007: 6.

an important woman (stanzas 57-62). The final eight stanzas consist of an elaborately composed conclusion (stanzas 64-68) and the poet's request for a reward from God (stanzas 69-71).

In celebrating a saint who was also a famous Norwegian king, Einarr carefully balances his presentation of this figure as both a worldly leader and holy martyr as expressed through the conventions of Latin hagiography.¹⁰⁴ The celebration of Óláfr's life is partly expressed through Einarr's use of traditional skaldic practices, among them the accounts of battles, complex kennings, and difficult syntax.¹⁰⁵ Even in its focus on Óláfr's martyrdom and miracles, *Geisli's* flavour is that of a traditional skaldic praise poem. Without knowing the specific sources for the numerous Christian elements in this poem, we can safely assume the literary and conceptual influences were drawn, either directly or indirectly, from Scripture, Latin hymns, homilies, and medieval theological treatises, with the Liturgy of the Hours serving as the primary influence in *Geisli's* use of Christian diction.¹⁰⁶ Einarr's attempt to produce a 'nationalistic work' that praises the martyred king Óláfr also celebrates the universal church; in the process, Chase observes, 'national boundaries fade into the background and Óláfr the saint becomes another Christ'.¹⁰⁷ The poet presents the relationship between Óláfr and Christ as figural or typological; that is, Óláfr's life and afterlife as a saint function as *mirabilia* 'marvels' pointing to the life of Christ.¹⁰⁸ This subgenre was popular in both England and Scandinavia, and was used as a means of celebrating kings who had fallen in battle against heathen enemies.¹⁰⁹ The link between Óláfr and Christ in Old Norse literature persisted from the twelfth century onwards, and this early example of Christian

¹⁰⁴ For a detailed overview of earlier texts about Óláfr, and particularly those focused on his sainthood, see Chase 2005: 11-15.

¹⁰⁵ Chase 2005: 15.

¹⁰⁶ Chase 2005: 15.

¹⁰⁷ Chase 2007: 6.

¹⁰⁸ Chase 2005: 24-5.

¹⁰⁹ Further examples of this subgenre, as noted by Chase (2005: 25), include Bishop Eysteinn's *Passio et Miracula Beati Olavi*, the *Historia de Antiquitate Regum Norwagiensum* of Theodoricus, the anonymous *Passio Sancti Kanuti regis et martyris*, Ælnoth's *Passio gloriosissimi Canuti regis et martyris*, the *Tabula Othiniensis*, the *Epitaphium S. Canuti*, Abbo's *Passio Sancti Eadmundi*, the *Liber de Miraculis Sancti Eadmundi* of Herman the Archdeacon, the Life of Edward in the anonymous *Vita Oswaldi*, the Lives of Ethelbert by Giraldus Cambrensis and Osbert, the *Vita Sancti Thomae Cantuariensis* by John of Salisbury, and the *Vita Sancti Erici Regis et Martyris*.

skaldic verse demonstrates how closely the two were aligned with one another in twelfth-century Norway.¹¹⁰

Given that *Geisli* itself is a poem that seeks to praise both King Óláfr and Christ, it offers a unique glimpse into the similarities at play in the two descriptions. However, in approaching *Geisli* and the Christian skaldic poems that follow, an awareness of the general debt of these poems to earlier skaldic works, particularly in the patterns for king-kennings from the Conversion period and other identifying features of a king in relation to his subjects, merits careful consideration. In order to accomplish this, it is worth considering the life and work of particular transition poets such as Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld Óttarsson (c. 960s), Sigvatr Þorðarson (c. 995-1045), Arnórr jarlaskáld (after 1011-after 1073), whose literary contributions help to understand the underlying Old Norse influences of twelfth-century skalds. From there, a brief exploration of common themes and motifs will help to contextualise some of the influences for the Christian skaldic poems that follow.

Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld Óttarsson, whose nickname means ‘difficult-poet’, spent his early life around the 960’s in northern Iceland, specifically Vatnsdalur.¹¹¹ *Hallfreðar saga* provides an account of events related to his work as a skald, focusing primarily on his ‘unhappy relationship with Kolfinna Ávaldadóttir, his travels as trader, fighter and poet, his conversion to Christianity, and his devotion to Óláfr Tryggvason’.¹¹² Though there are some extant fragments of a *drápa* for Hákon jarl Sigurðarson (r. c. 970-c. 995) by Hallfreðr, King Óláfr Tryggvason (c. 995-c. 1000) is the primary subject of his surviving works, among them *Óláfsdrápa* and *Erfidrápa Óláfs Tryggvasonar*. Hallfreðr’s position as a poet operating before and after the formal conversion to Christianity in Norway is reflected in much of his poetry, which reveals his

¹¹⁰ Chase 2005: 12-13. *Geisli* is the first piece of Old Norse literature to draw the parallels between Óláfr and Christ; it is followed in the thirteenth century by the *Legendary Saga of St Óláfr*, which also ‘places a strong emphasis on Óláfr’s miracles and on the conformity of his life to Christ’s’, the Latin *vita et miracula* published as *Passio et Miracula Beati Olai* and composed by Archbishop Eysteinn of Trondheim (d. 1188) (Chase 2005: 13). For a more comprehensive overview of *Geisli*’s sources and analogues, see Chase 2005: 10-16.

¹¹¹ Whaley 2012: 386.

¹¹² Whaley 2012: 386. For a continuous text of *Hallfreðar saga*, see *ÍF* 8, 133-200.

struggle to adjust to new religious beliefs under the reign of King Óláfr.¹¹³ He died from sickness and injury at almost forty years of age while sailing and was buried in Iona.

Sigvatr Þorðarson (c. 995-1045) composed skaldic poems before, during, and after the reign of King Óláfr Haraldsson. Sigvatr grew up in Apavatn in southwest Iceland before sailing to Trondheim as a young man to join his father in King Óláfr's retinue.¹¹⁴ Not only did he, as many skalds from the same period had done, praise the deeds of a ruler through 'first-person narration of events', but he also actively participated as a diplomat as indicated in poems such as *Austrfararvísur* ('Verses about a Journey Eastwards'), c. 1017, and *Vestrfararvísur* ('Verses about a Journey Westwards'), c. 1025-6.¹¹⁵ Sigvatr was thus both politically and personally involved in the life of the court, serving as a member of the king's *drótt*; as this thesis will demonstrate, a similar personal relationship is developed between the poet and Christ in several Christian skaldic poems. At the time of Óláfr's death Sigvatr composed an *erfidrápa* 'funeral poem' about the fallen monarch in which a solar eclipse marks the ruler's death; this follows a 'common concluding trope of memorial lays' that asserts 'the world will be destroyed or suffer cataclysmic harm before another such ruler is born'.¹¹⁶ Clunies Ross suggests that, prior to the Conversion, this was 'likely to have been tied to the invocation of the destruction of the world at Ragnarøk and the ruler being received into Vallhøll, whereas Sigvatr's account of the solar eclipse perhaps connects the saint's death to that of Christ's at the Crucifixion.¹¹⁷ Thus, Sigvatr's work contains well-established tropes that also carry through to the poems that follow. According to a written anecdote that accompanies Sigvatr *lausavísa* 11, he died in northwestern Norway on the island of Selja, and was buried in Trondheim in Kristskirkja.¹¹⁸

¹¹³ For an example of a poem that reveals Hallfreðr's struggle, see stanza 6-10 of Hallfreðr's *Lausavísur*. For a list of other poems attributed to Hallfreðr, and other rulers for whom he composed skaldic stanzas, see Whaley 2012: 386.

¹¹⁴ Jesch 2012: 532. Further information regarding Sigvatr's early life can be found here, as well. For more other studies of Sigvatr's life and works, see Paasche 1917; Hollander 1940; and Petersen 1946.

¹¹⁵ Clunies Ross 2005: 47.

¹¹⁶ Clunies Ross 2005: 48-9.

¹¹⁷ Clunies Ross 2005: 48-9.

¹¹⁸ Jesch 2012: 532.

The son of the farmer-poet Þórðr Kolbeinsson and Oddný eykyndill 'Island-candle' Þorkelsdóttir, 'Arnórr jarlaskáld 'jarls'-poet' (after 1011-after 1073) grew up in Hítarnes in western Iceland and had become a skald for King Knútr inn ríki (Cnut the Great) (d. 1035) by his early twenties.¹¹⁹ As Gade notes, 'he spent several years in the Orkney Islands as poet and intimate of the jarls Rognvaldr (d. c. 1045) and Þorfinnr (d. c. 1065)' and 'was in Norway during the brief joint rule of Magnús Ólafsson and Haraldr Sigurðarson (c. 1045-6)'.¹²⁰ Much of his surviving work is comprised of encomia (*erfidrápur*) in the *dróttkvætt* metre and, like Sigvatr, Arnórr composed oral poetry to recount and celebrate the specific accomplishments of rulers. In the late-eleventh century poem *Þorfinnsdrápa*, for example, Arnórr praises the Orkney earl Þorfinnr Sigurðarson and even provides first-hand accounts of battles, indicating his personal involvement in serving the rulers he celebrates.¹²¹ He, like many other eleventh-century poets, avoided composing skaldic poems 'on specifically religious themes' but 'assumed a Christian perspective on life, and composed verses that, while quite traditional, could be understood in a Christian context'.¹²² As Whaley observes, he accomplished this by focusing his work around 'motifs of weapons flying, carrion beasts scavenging, or ships being launched, a great variety of *heiti*...and some 150 kennings' that tended not to include references to Old Norse myth.¹²³ Arnórr's poetry, Clunies Ross explains, 'is directly Christian in that it assumes the working of the Christian God and his agents in the world, appeals directly to God,...compares the patron to God,...and, even more elaborately...invokes God's protection of the king'.¹²⁴ Well before the composition of what are defined in this thesis as Christian skaldic poems, skalds were already modifying elements of their work to reflect the influences of Christianity.

In her examination of the works of Arnórr jarlaskáld, Diana Whaley observes that, due to the conventional nature of the subject-matter and style of

¹¹⁹ Gade 2009: 177. For more about Arnórr's life and compositions, see Hollander 1945, 177-83; Turville-Petre 1968, 5-10, 1976, 93-4; Whaley 1998, 41-7.

¹²⁰ Gade 2009: 177.

¹²¹ Clunies Ross 2005: 46.

¹²² Clunies Ross 2005: 126.

¹²³ Whaley 1993: 21.

¹²⁴ Clunies Ross 2005: 127. Cf. Whaley 1998: 178-9.

skaldic encomiastic poetry, ‘it is only after close examination that the character of an individual poem or poet emerges’.¹²⁵ The same can certainly be said of the Christian skaldic poems that follow, and much of what Whaley observes in eleventh-century poetry also appears in these later works, creating a parallel between the relationship between a poet and earthly ruler, and that of the poet and Christ. For example, motifs such as the poet’s call for hearing from his audience and the ‘self-referential’ asides about poetic activity, inform our understanding of the poet’s relationship to God when these motifs arise.¹²⁶ Similarly, there are numerous motifs related to rulers and battle that arise in skaldic poetry of the tenth and eleventh century, that are appropriated into Christ’s representation in poems from the twelfth century onwards.¹²⁷ Where relevant in this chapter and those that follow, I will note similarities between the portrayal of Christ and earthly rulers in earlier skaldic poems.

The first two stanzas of *Geisli* function together as an opening invocation addressed to the Trinity. Through them, the poet asks to be taught song and entreaties in order to celebrate the king and martyr Óláfr Haraldsson, highlighting the courtly influence that is here applied to a jointly secular and religious figure. The second *helmingr* of stanza 1, in particular, highlights the symbolic significance of the poem’s title, emphasising Óláfr’s relationship to Christ as a beam of light emanating from the sun:

Eins má óð ok bænir (alls Ráðanda ins snjalla
vels fróðr, sás getr góða) Guðs Þrenning mér kenna;
göfugt Ljós boðar geisli gunnöflugr miskunnar
(ágætan býðk ítrum Óláfi brag) Sólar, (*Geisli* 1)¹²⁸

The Trinity of one God can teach me song and entreaties
(he is amply wise, who gets the goodness of the eloquent Ruler
of all);
the battle-strong light-beam of the Sun of mercy announces

¹²⁵ Whaley 1998: 49.

¹²⁶ Clunies Ross 2005: 47. On the self-referential aspects of skaldic poems, see Whaley 1998: 51; Fidjestøl 1982, 210-12 and 221-27; and Clover 1978.

¹²⁷ For a list of motifs related to the hero, the hero’s men, the enemy, the battle, seafaring, and the skald, see Whaley 1998: 55-7. Many, though not all, of these motifs apply to Christ his relationship with humanity in the poems that follow.

¹²⁸ I have modified Chase’s edition of the Old Norse text by using brackets instead of dashes to differentiate clause-boundaries, and changing where the sentence ends.

a magnificent Light (I offer the famous poem to excellent Óláfr),

'battle-strong light-beam': St Óláfr, who is described here as an emanation of Christ, who is the 'Sun of mercy' and represented symbolically by a magnificent Light

þeirars heims (í heimi heims) myrkrum brá (þeima)
ok (Ljós meðan) var Vísi veðr- (kallaðisk) -hallar.
Sá lét bjartr frá bjartri berask Maðr und skýjaðri
(frægr stóð af því) flœðar (fornuðr) Røðull stjörnu. (*Geisli* 2)

of that Sun which slew the darkness of the world, and was the Chief of the wind-hall (while He called Himself the Light of the world in this world).

That Man, the bright Orb, caused Himself to be born from the bright star of the flood-tide under the cloud-cover (famous fortune stood forth from that).

Chief of the wind-hall: the wind-hall is heaven, and God its Chief
the bright Orb: Christ, who is here represented by the sun
the bright star of the flood-tide: the star of the sea, a translation of *stella maris* in reference to the Virgin Mary

Stanza 1 acknowledges the *Brenning* 'Trinity', indicating the poet's clear grasp of this basic theological concept before continuing with more direct references to Christ.¹²⁹ He is identified as *Ráðandi* 'Ruler', which literally means 'spirit of wisdom or counsel' and stresses the role of Christ as a valued authority for humanity.¹³⁰ The modifier *inn snjallr* 'the eloquent' for *Ráðandi* places further emphasis on Christ's wise counsel, a quality valued in Scandinavian legal counsellors and political leaders.¹³¹ Icelandic *goðar*, for example, were expected to provide wise legal counsel and serve as representatives for their *þingmenn* in legal settings.¹³² While the *goði-þingmenn* relationship would not have reflected the Norwegian religious and political context in which this poem was composed, the social dynamic and values would have been recognised by the audience at Niðarós.

¹²⁹ For *Brenning*, see LP 645.

¹³⁰ For *ráðanda*, see IED 485. Arguably, the Trinity is represented fully in stanza 1, with God as *Guð*, the Holy Spirit as *Ráðanda*, and Christ as *Sól*.

¹³¹ For *snjallr*, see LP 522; and SnE 1998: 397.

¹³² For more information regarding the involvement of Icelandic *goðar* in lawsuits, see Miller 1990: 240-41, 246-47.

A fusion of Christian and Norse literary culture is already evident in this opening invocation when Einarr requests divine inspiration from God, who will teach him *óð ok bænir* ‘songs and entreaties’. While *bæn* simply refers to a ‘prayer’ or ‘request’, the term *óðr* can mean ‘mind, wit, soul’ or ‘sense’ and is identified in the eddic poem *Völuspá* as being one of the three aspects of the human soul, with the other two being *ǫnd* ‘spirit’ and *læ* ‘craft’.¹³³ *Óðr* appears to be personified as the goddess Freyja’s husband in *Völuspá* 25, indicating that this term for ‘song’ or ‘poetry’ held some Norse mythological associations from a literary standpoint.¹³⁴ The word choice indicates that the poet did not feel a strong need to separate this hagiographical poem from its Scandinavian literary past, at least not in this respect. The self-referential aspect of the opening itself, as mentioned previously, also somewhat reflects tropes for introducing earlier skaldic poems in their courtly context, inviting the audience to view *Geisli* as following in the tradition of Old Norse praise poetry.¹³⁵

The second *helmingr* of stanza 1 moves from the poet’s request for God’s help to the celebration of the poem’s subject, the martyr-king Óláfr. In keeping with *Geisli*’s focus on light, the poet describes Óláfr as the *gunnǫflugr geisli Sólar miskunnar* ‘battle-strong light-beam of the Sun of mercy’ who *boðar gǫfugt Ljós* ‘announces a magnificent Light’ that symbolises Christ. The presentation of Christ Himself as a Ray of sunlight originates in earlier biblical and Christian literature, including Hebrews I: 1-3¹³⁶ and the *Glossa Ordinaria* commentary, which includes an epistle for the morning Mass of Christmas that

¹³³ For *bæn*, see *SnE* 1998: 254. For *óðr*, see *LP* 441; and *SnE* 1998: 366.

¹³⁴ *Völuspá* 25 identifies Freyja as *Óðs mey* ‘Óðr’s girl’ (*NK*, 6; Dronke 2007: 13).

¹³⁵ For further information regarding motifs for the skald, see Whaley 1998: 56.

¹³⁶ Chase 2005: 21. Hebrews I: 1-3: *Multifariam et multis modis olim Deus loquens patribus in prophetis, in novissimis his diebus locutus est nobis in Filio, quem constituit heredem universorum, per quem fecit et saecula; qui, cum sit splendor gloriae et figura substantiae Eius et portet omnia verbo virtutis Suae, purgatione peccatorum facta, consedit ad dexteram maiestatis in excelsis* (*Vulg* 1979, Hebrews I: 1-3) ‘Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom He also created the worlds. He is the reflection of God’s very being, and He sustains all things by His powerful word. When He had made purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name He has inherited is more excellent than theirs’ (*NRSV*, Hebrews I.1-3). For more information on the history of light imagery pertaining to Christ, see Chase 2005: 21-5.

makes explicit the image of Christ as a light-beam.¹³⁷ Óláfr's announcement of 'a magnificent light' draws influence from the biblical account of John the Baptist preparing the way for Christ in John 1.7-8, hinting at Óláfr's relationship to Christ as both follower and witness:

Hic venit in testimonium, ut testimonium preberet de lumine, ut omnes crederent per illum. Non erat ille Lux, sed ut testimonium perhiberet de Lumine.¹³⁸

He [John the Baptist] came as a witness to testify to the Light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the Light, but he came to testify to the Light.¹³⁹

This biblical passage makes explicit that a follower of Christ, in this case John the Baptist, can bear witness to the Light of Christ while not being the source of that light himself. As a *geisli Sólar miskunnar* 'light-beam of the Sun of mercy', Óláfr bears witness to Christ's light through his miracles as a martyr. Martyrs and saints during this period were similarly described using this imagery, and the poet's reference to Óláfr as the *geisli Sólar miskunnar* 'light-beam of the Sun of mercy' fits within this tradition.¹⁴⁰ As will be seen in examples throughout this chapter, Einarr frequently applies the image of a light-beam to Óláfr, emphasising his role as an avenue through which Christ's Light may be transmitted to humanity.

Continuing his thought from the second *helmingr* in stanza 1, Einarr Skúlason describes Christ in stanza 2 as *bjartr Rǫðull* 'the bright Orb', symbolically associating Him with the sun. The use of *rǫðull* 'sun' occurs here and in other Christian skaldic stanzas as part of heaven-kennings in which Christ is identified as Ruler.¹⁴¹ However, the traditional association of Christ with

¹³⁷ Chase 2005: 21. The Latin version of the translated passage reads, *Pater est gloria, Filius idem cum eo: et Eum notificans homo factus, ut radius solem* 'The Father is glory; the Son is one with Him, and made man, makes him known, just as the sunbeam makes known the sun' (*Glossa Ordinaria* 6: 795; Modern English translation from Chase 2005: 21). The noun *sól* 'sun' is used of both the literal sun and Christ in a variety of instances throughout Christian skaldic verse. For examples of *Sól* used to identify Christ or God, see *Geisli* 1 and 3; and *Lilja* 33.

¹³⁸ *Vulg* 1979, John 1.7-8.

¹³⁹ *NRSV*, John 1.7-8.

¹⁴⁰ Chase 2005: 36. For *geisli* 'light beam', see *LP* 177; *SnE* 1998: 286; and entry in *ADIP*.

¹⁴¹ For *rǫðull*, see *LP* 474; and *SnE* 1998: 379. Examples of *rǫðull* in the context of heaven as Christ's domain occur in *Geisli* 9; *Harmsól* 10, 16, and 59; *Leiðarvísan* 33; and *Liknarbraut* 19.

light extends much further back to passages from the Gospel of John. Not only does the description of Christ as *Ljós heims* 'Light of the world' echo the epithet *Lux mundi* 'Light of the world' in John VIII.12, the stanza also explains that He *brá myrkum heims* 'slew the darkness of the world', establishing darkness in opposition to light.¹⁴² The latter description resonates with John I.5, which reads, *et lux in tenebris lucet, et tenebrae eam non comprehenderunt* 'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it'.¹⁴³ Even the triple repetition of *heims* resembles the wording and structure of John I. 9-10, indicating Einarr was influenced by both content and style.¹⁴⁴ The adjective *myrkr*, meaning 'dark' and 'murky', occurs a number of times in Christian skaldic verse as a symbol for sinfulness and Hell in opposition to the salvation and light of Christ and His heavenly realm.¹⁴⁵ Like the image of Christ's followers as rays of light emanating from their source of salvation, darkness as an absence or separation from Christ is present in early Christian skaldic poetry and remains important throughout this poetic genre.

The description of Christ slaying the darkness with light also brings forth the theme of Christ in spiritual battle, a representation that allows the *Geisli* poet to more readily connect Him with Óláfr. The idea of Christ humbling Himself through the Incarnation and Crucifixion to slay darkness has numerous Christian literary precedents. Gregory the Great, in his *Homiliae in Evangelia*, presents the Incarnation and the Crucifixion in combination as 'the heroic acceptance of an apparent loss of status, of humiliation', which makes it possible for Christ to wage war against the devil on Good Friday.¹⁴⁶ There also

¹⁴² For *myrkr*, see LP 415; SnE 1998: 359; and KLE 82. For *heimr*, see LP 237; SnE 1998: 305; and entry in ADIP. John VIII.12: *Iterum ergo locutus est eis Jesus dicens: 'Ego sum Lux mundi; qui sequitur Me, non ambulabit in tenebris, sed habebit lucem vitae'* (Vulg 1979, John VIII.12) 'Again Jesus spoke to them, saying 'I am the Light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life' (NRSV, John VIII.12).

¹⁴³ Vulg 1979, John I.5; Modern English translation from NRSV, John I.5.

¹⁴⁴ Chase 2007: 8-9. From John I. 9-10: *Erat Lux vera, quae illuminat omnem hominem, veniens in mundum. In mundo erat, et mundus per Ipsum factus est, et mundus Eum non cognovit* (Vulg 1979, John I.9-10) 'The true Light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through Him; yet the world did not know Him' (NRSV, John I.9-10).

¹⁴⁵ For *myrkr*, see LP: 415; SnE 1998: 359; and KLE 82.

¹⁴⁶ Ó Carragáin 2005: 85. This section alludes to a passage in Étaix 1999: No. 34, ll. 213-21. Ó Carragáin (2005: 79) also notes that the link between humiliation and courage in the Incarnation

seems to be a correlation between Christ's humility as a courageous act and the increased value placed on the humility of self-giving in Germanic society after the conversion period.¹⁴⁷ The perception of Christ's humility and death as courageous, which also appears in Old and Middle English texts such as the *Dream of the Rood* and *Piers Plowman*, is based on a theology that emphasises Christ's volition at His death on the Cross.¹⁴⁸ In this way, the poet is able to present apparent defeat as a heroic act of spiritual battle, adding to the representation of Christ as Warrior Chieftain, and in so doing reflecting the changing values of Norway's post-Conversion society.

Stanza 2 bases its description of Mary as *bjartar stjarna flæðar* 'bright star of the sea' on the popular Latin phrase *stella maris*, which first appeared in the ninth-century hymn *Ave maris stella*.¹⁴⁹ The association of Mary with light, as with Christ, begins in early skaldic verse and becomes an increasingly prevalent image in later medieval poems. For both Christ and Mary, the poet employs the adjective *bjartr*, which literally translates as 'bright' and can metaphorically mean 'pure' and 'good' in a moral sense.¹⁵⁰ The use of *stjarna* in this stanza, referring to Mary as a 'star', also describes the heavens over which Christ is Ruler.¹⁵¹ The poet thus subtly hints at the similarity between Óláfr and Mary as extensions of Christ's divine light, highlighting the important work completed by Christ's followers on His behalf and looking forward to the praise of Óláfr in the stanzas to come.

Stanzas 3 and 4 continue to elaborate on the idea of Christ as Light in the world, briefly recounting the Crucifixion and Resurrection. Stanza 3 begins with the narrative observation that the *Ljósi Sólar heilags siðar brá* 'Light of the Sun of holy faith went out', referencing both the solar eclipse at the Crucifixion and Christ's departure from the world in order to win the *líf allra fyrða* 'life of all warriors'. Einarr balances the eclipse in stanza 3 with the rising sun in stanza 4, which celebrates Christ's Resurrection three days after the Crucifixion.

and Crucifixion is a Lenten theme, and this doctrine has been present in Christian writings from the late seventh-century.

¹⁴⁷ Ó Carragáin 2005: 94.

¹⁴⁸ Finlay 1986: 19-21.

¹⁴⁹ *AH*: 51, 140. Cf Chase 2007: 8.

¹⁵⁰ For *bjartr*, see entry in *ADIP*; *LP*: 49; *SnE* 1998: 245; and *IED*: 65.

¹⁵¹ For *stjarna*, see *LP*: 537 and *IED*: 594.

Upp rann allrar skepnu iðvandr á dag þriðja
 Krístr með krapti hæstum kunnr réttlætis Sunnu.
 Veitk, at mildr frá moldu meginfjölði reis hǫlða
 (iflaust má þat efla ossa vǫn) með Hónum. (*Geisli* 4)¹⁵²

Diligent Christ, known to all creation, rose up with
 the highest power of the Sun of righteousness on the third day.
 I know that a munificent great assembly of men rose from the ground
 (undoubtedly that can strengthen our hope) with Him.

Sun of righteousness: God

In Old Norse literature, the image of Christ as the rising Sun tends to occur more in works relating to Advent and the Incarnation than ones about the Resurrection, making this a fairly uncommon use of the image, with exceptions to this rule here and in the Norwegian homily *Jn die fancto pafce* ‘On the holy day of Easter’ found in *Gamal norsk homiliebook*.¹⁵³ Chase observes that this stanza reflects the concept, expressed in Romans XVI.25-6, of the Resurrection as a revelation of Christ’s salvation for humanity.¹⁵⁴ The Christ-epithet *Sunna réttlætis* ‘Sun of righteousness’ is based on the *iustitiae sol oriens* ‘rising of the sun of righteousness’ in Malachi IV.2, which also appears in the sequence *Deus Pater piissime* and symbolically identifies Christ as the ultimate source of Light.¹⁵⁵ The description implies Christ’s supreme authority, including His role

¹⁵² I have modified Chase’s edition of the Old Norse text by using brackets instead of dashes to differentiate clause-boundaries.

¹⁵³ Chase 2007: 10. Exceptions to this rule occur in the Norwegian homily *Jn die fancto pafce* ‘On the holy day of Easter’ found in *Gamal norsk homiliebook: At upp-runninni folo fáo þær ængil hia grof. þvi at þa megom vér fcilia himnefca luti ef ret-lætes fol lkin í hiortum vaorum* ‘At the sun’s rising they saw an angel by the tomb, because then we may discern heavenly things if the sun of righteousness shines in our hearts’ (*HómNo*, 82).

¹⁵⁴ Chase 2007: 10. Romans XVI. 25-6: *Ei autem, qui potens est vos confirmare juxta evangelium meum et praedicationem Iesu Christi secundum revelationem mysterii temporibus aeternis taciti, manifestati autem nunc, et per scripturas prophetarum secundum praeceptum aeterni Dei ad oboeditionem fidei in cunctis gentibus patefacti* (*Vulg* 1979, Romans XVI.25-6) ‘Now to [God] who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith’ (*NRSV*, Romans XVI.25-6).

¹⁵⁵ *HómNo*, 82. The Latin *iustitiae sol oriens* ‘the rising sun of righteousness’ comes from Malachi IV.2 and appears as a name for Christ in *Deus Pater piissime* from *Analecta hymnica medii aeui* (*AH*: 15, 13). Malachi IV.2 reads: *Et orietur Vobis timentibus nomen Meum Sol iustitiae, et sanitas in pinnis Eius, et egrediemini et salietis sicut vituli de armento* (*Vulg* 2012b,

as the spiritually pure Judge of humanity's righteousness, and also combines in the figure of Christ the image of the rising sun and the idea of the Sun of righteousness. *Réttr*, which refers to legal rights and compensation in certain contexts, can also indicate spiritual righteousness and atonement as it does here.¹⁵⁶ Christ's righteousness thus carries with it legal connotations, both ecclesiastical and 'secular', and establishes the portrayal of Christ's involvement in legal processes. In any case, the association of Christ with the rising sun in stanza 4 celebrates both the spiritual victory and the hope for salvation that it inspires in humanity.

The opening invocation continues with praise of Christ's elevated place in heaven, presenting Him almost as a Germanic Warrior Chieftain. This representation of Christ is rife throughout the poem and frequently connects to particular Christian literary traditions that would have been familiar in the medieval monastic context. The description of Christ as the *Dǫglingr ǫðlinga* 'Prince of princes' in *Geisli* 5, for example, demonstrates this natural dovetailing of skaldic practices with earlier Christian literary traditions. This stanza also draws on several details that depict Christ in the historic courtly setting of skaldic verse:

Sonr sté upp með ynði auðar mildr frá hauðri,
 jöfra Beztr, til æztrar alls Ráðanda hallar.
 Lofaðr sitr englum efri (ǫðlinga hnígr þingat
 Dǫglings hirð) á dýrðar dagbóls Konungr stóli. (*Geisli* 5)¹⁵⁷

The Son of the Counsellor of all, generous with wealth, went up
 with delight from earth, Best of chiefs, to the highest hall.
 The praised King of the day-house sits above angels (the retinue
 of the Prince of princes bows thither) on the throne of glory.

Counsellor of all: God, whose Son is Christ
 Best of chiefs: Christ
 'day-house': heaven, whose King is Christ
 'Prince of princes': Christ, whose 'retinue' are His followers

Malachi IV.2) 'But unto You that fear My name the Sun of justice shall arise, and health in His wings, and you shall go forth and shall leap like calves of the herd' (*Vulg* 2012b, Malachi IV.2).

¹⁵⁶ For *réttr*, see *LEI* 2006: 273; *SnE* 1998: 376; and *IED* 495.

¹⁵⁷ For *dýrð*, see *LP* 92; *SnE* 1998: 261; and entry in *ADIP*. I have modified Chase's edition of the Old Norse text by using brackets instead of dashes to differentiate clause-boundaries.

In its celebration of Christ's exalted place in heaven following the Ascension, stanza 5 presents Christ as the Ruler of a great hall, with His angels and followers figured as His retinue. Through the Christ-kenning *Sonr Ráðanda* 'Son of the Counsellor', Einarr once again refers to a person of the Trinity as wise in counsel, an apt description given the stanza's focus on Christ's authority. Described as *Beztr jǫfra* 'Best of chiefs', Christ is Himself implicitly presented as a *Jǫfurr*, which most frequently means both 'king' and 'warrior' as it does here, but literally translates as 'a wild boar' and probably developed its abstract meaning from an early practice of Scandinavian leaders wearing boars' heads as helmets.¹⁵⁸ The second *helmingr* refers to Christ as both *Konungr*, a straightforward term meaning 'King', and *Dǫglingr qǫlinga*, which serves as a translation of the Latin *Rex regum* 'Prince of princes'.¹⁵⁹ The term *Dǫglingr* is only found in *Geisli*, *Leiðarvísan*, and *Kátrinardrápa* among the Christian skaldic poems; it generally means 'Ruler' or 'King', but specifically refers to a descendent of King Dagr.¹⁶⁰ *Qǫlingr*, which appears in *Geisli* and *Harmsól*, as well as the eddic poem *Gripisspá*, is only used in reference to a nobleman or prince and refers to descendants of Auði.¹⁶¹ All of these epithets aim to praise Christ's reputation and wealth within a strongly Scandinavian framework, here used as a means of exalting Christ while developing a link to King Óláfr as ruler in the narrative that follows. They also serve as an early example of how Christ's representation in Christian skaldic verse can simultaneously reflect Christian literary practice while also being reshaped to suit Old Norse literary sensibilities.

Adding to his portrayal of Christ as Warrior Chieftain, Einarr describes heaven as a *hǫll* 'hall', which in Norse refers most frequently to a king or earl's hall rather than a private dwelling and often implies feasting and hospitality.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸ For *jǫfurr*, see *LP* 329; *SnE* 1998: 331; and *IED* 327. *Jǫfurr* is used for Christ and God multiple times in Christian skaldic verse. Of the poems reviewed in this thesis, it is used of God in all but *Lilja*.

¹⁵⁹ For biblical examples in the Latin Vulgate, see Ezekiel XXVI.7 *Regem regum*; 2 Maccabees XIII.4 *Rex regum*; 1 Timothy VI.15 *Rex regum*; Revelations I.5 *Princeps regum*; Revelation XVII.14 *Rex regum*; and Revelation XIX.16 *Rex regum*.

¹⁶⁰ *SnE* 1998: 262, 451. For more on *dǫglingr*, see *LP* 94; *SnE* 1998: 262; and entry in *ADIP*.

¹⁶¹ *SnE* 1998: 440, 527-8. For more on *qǫlingr*, see *IED* 762. *Qǫlingr* is also used of a Norwegian king in stanza 1 of *Róðudrápa* by Þórðr Særeksson.

¹⁶² For *hǫll*, see *LP*: 310; *SnE* 1998: 327; entry in *ADIP*; and Zoëga 2004 [1926]: 225.

This stanza uses *hǫll* in reference to heaven, while in eddic poems it sometimes identifies the dwelling place of the Norse gods.¹⁶³ Although the ‘King of heaven’ formula is based on the *Rex caelestis* of the liturgical *Gloria*, as well as depictions found in the hymn *Christe caeli Domine* and the sequence *Regem celi cantico*,¹⁶⁴ Chase also acknowledges the potential for influence from the Germanic vernacular, since ‘the concept of heaven as a great mead hall in the sky was dear to early Christians in Germanic lands’.¹⁶⁵ The idea has roots in the Germanic great halls, which, as excavations such as Borg in Lofoten, Norway and Hofstaðir in Mývatnssveit, Iceland reveal, existed in the pre-Christian era, and continued ‘long into Christian times’.¹⁶⁶ The description of the angels in heaven as *hirð*, which translates to a king’s bodyguard or household within the courts of Norway, also reflects this type of hierarchy.¹⁶⁷ The term is a loanword from the Old English *hired*, and this particular relationship probably brought with it ‘more sophisticated methods of royal administration’.¹⁶⁸ Though the eleventh-century meaning more broadly referred to royal officers, it is likely that this poem takes its earlier meaning of *hirðmenn* as members of the leader’s household who received ‘protection, support, prestige, and gifts...in return for military service’.¹⁶⁹ Thus, the details of heaven as a hall and angels as retinue contribute to Christ’s representation in skaldic verse as a Germanic Warrior Chieftain, as they draw from a long literary understanding of *hǫll* and *hirð* and their development into terms specific to a courtly setting.

One important aspect of the chieftain-*þegn* relationship in skaldic verse is the praise of hospitality and generosity in wealth, since formal gift-exchange and feasts both played a crucial role in the culture of reciprocity between a chieftain

¹⁶³ Eddic poems that describe the dwelling of the Norse gods as *hǫll* include: *Vǫluspá* 21 í *hǫll Hárs* ‘in Hárr’s hall’ (NK, 5; Dronke 2007: 12); *Hávamál* 111 *Háva hǫllo at*, / *Háva hǫllo í* ‘at High One’s hall, in High One’s hall’ (NK, 34; Dronke 2011: 24); and *Lokasenna* 3 and 4 *Ægis hallir í* ‘in to Ægir’s halls’ (NK, 97; Dronke 2007: 333).

¹⁶⁴ For *Christe caeli Domine*, see AH 51:12. For *Regem celi cantico*, see ÓNið 399. Cf. Chase 2005; 25-6.

¹⁶⁵ Chase 2005: 153.

¹⁶⁶ Orri Vésteinsson 2000: 7-8.

¹⁶⁷ Chase 2007: 11. Cf. Meissner 1921: 371. For *hirð* ‘retinue’, see SnE 1998: 310; LP 252; entry in ADIP; and Zoëga 2004 [1926]: 198. Among the poems examined in this thesis, *hirð* only occurs in *Geisli* and *Lilja*, though it does also appear in other Christian skaldic poems such as *Plácitusdrápa*, *Heilags anda Drápa*, *Máriúdrápa*, *Heilagra meyja drápa*, and *Pétursdrápa*.

¹⁶⁸ Syrett 2000: 265.

¹⁶⁹ Syrett 2000: 266.

and his retainer.¹⁷⁰ Stanza 6 builds on this understanding of the chieftain's duties to his followers and explains that the world, since Christ's Ascension, has been gifted with the witness of His sacrifice and mercy in the world. God is presented as the *hæstr Skjöldungr* 'highest King' as he *býðr hauldum til himinvistar* 'invites men to a heavenly reception' which, according to Chase, 'parallels the Germanic traditions of the chieftain rewarding his retainers with hospitality and gifts of land'.¹⁷¹ The practice of gift-giving in this spiritual context probably draws some influence from *dona Spiritus Sancti* 'gifts of the Holy Spirit', though the other details in Einarr's presentation of Christ as Warrior Chieftain invite the audience to read Christ's generosity as a distinctly courtly characteristic.

Turning his focus to Óláfr as an extension of Christ's light, the poet explains in stanza 7 that we should now honour *gofgan geisla Guðs hallar* 'the glorious light-beam of God's hall', since people know *hann skína jartegnum víða* 'he shines with miracles extensively' as an emanation of Christ's mercy. Einarr next addresses the joint rulers Eysteinn, Sigurðr, and Ingi in stanza 8, and asks that their power support the praise he offers, once again reminding the reader of the poem's original context. This continues in stanza 9 as he then calls the first archbishop of Niðarós, Jón Birgisson, *yfirmaðr allrar alþýðu lærdra* 'the over-man of all the scholarly people', observing that his eminence at Niðarós *vex, þars heilagur konungr hvílir* 'grows, where the holy king [Óláfr] rests'.¹⁷² Stanza 10 concludes the celebration of these men gathered together *at lofi ítrgeðs Óláfs* 'to the acclaim of high-minded Óláfr', before Einarr asks the Norwegian people in stanza 11 *hlyða prýðibrag þreklynds þegns Krists* 'to hear the ornamented poem of the powerful-minded thegn of Christ'.¹⁷³ *Geisli's* use of *þegn* to describe Óláfr confirms Christ's representation here as Warrior Chieftain. Though not terminologically specific to either Iceland or Norway, *þegn* nonetheless expresses a relationship to a king that is grounded in mutual

¹⁷⁰ Byock 2001: 193. On gift giving in early medieval societies, see Brown 2003: 29-34, and his index, pp. 329-30.

¹⁷¹ Chase 2005: 131.

¹⁷² I have modified Chase's edition of the Old Norse text so that its word forms accord with my sentence's grammar.

¹⁷³ I have modified Chase's edition of the Old Norse text so that its word forms accord with my sentence's grammar.

loyalty and the king's recognised leadership over the thegn.¹⁷⁴ The term also appears in the final extant stanza of *Húsdrápa* 'Eulogy on a House' (c. 995) as well as other Scandinavian literary sources, and in all instances seems to retain this meaning, even in occurrences where the relationship it defines does not exist in the historical context in which a given poem was produced.¹⁷⁵ The term *þegn*, then, is aptly used to show a saint or martyr's relationship to Christ his King, as he serves in both literal and spiritual battle. The secular and spiritual authorities addressed in stanzas 8 and 9 reinforce a sense of hierarchical organisation, drawing the real world and literary concept together.

Einarr celebrates the poets who had composed earlier works about Óláfr in stanza 12, reminding the audience that this king and martyr is a fitting subject for skaldic poetry. However, unlike the skalds Sigvatr and Óttarr, who have proclaimed Óláfr's courage and accomplishments as King of Norway, Einarr distinguishes the purpose of *Geisli* as he explains *lýtk helgum jǫfri fira* 'I pay tribute to the holy ruler of people'. He notes in stanza 13 that Óláfr *leyndi hǫleitri gœzku snara þegna* 'hid glorious goodness from gallant thegns', thus explaining why previous poets had focused on his victories in battle rather than his Christian faith. The poem then moves into a very brief account of Óláfr's life and death. Stanza 14 celebrates how Óláfr *réð láði þría vetr um tolf* 'ruled the land for three winters beyond twelve' before moving into an account of a prophetic dream that Óláfr shared with his troops before the battle of Stiklarstaðir. According to stanza 15, Óláfr *sá fagran stiga standa af jǫrðu til himna* 'saw a fair ladder proceeding from earth to the heavens', and in stanza 16 *hugðisk síðan ganga hagliga upp í lopt* 'thought then he went surely up in the sky' as God opened heaven to him. His life reaches its end in stanza 17, when *hvatir skatnar*

¹⁷⁴ For *þegn*, see *SnE* 1998: 433; and *LEI* 2006: 275. Syrett (2000: 251, 260-1) has noted that *þegn* seems to most frequently refer to a free man who is older and more settled than a *drengr*, though both terms are used in skaldic verse to cover the same semantic range from 'man' to 'warrior'.

¹⁷⁵ For more information on the potential meanings of *þegn*, both in skaldic verse and other literary contexts, see Syrett 2000: 243-71. Stanza 12 of Ulfr Uggason's *Húsdrápa* reads *þar kǫmr á, en æri / endr bark mærd af hendi / (ofrak svá) til sævar, / sverðregns (lofi þegna)* 'There comes a river to the sea, while once again I have delivered renown (Thus I lift up the praise of thegns) for the herald of sword-rain' (North *et al.* 2011: 587). For the definitive edition of Ulfr Uggason's *Húsdrápa*, see *SnE* 1998.

felldu gram ‘bold men killed the warrior king’ in battle, marking his transition into the role of martyr.

Geisli’s predominant focus on Óláfr’s spiritual life in the stanzas that follow, and the placement of his death so early in the poem, may defy some of our expectations for skaldic poetry, particularly in terms of perceived martial failure. That said, Óláfr’s spiritual victories in his martyrdom, as well as Christ’s victory through humility and apparent loss at the Crucifixion, share an intriguing parallel with the tenth-century poem *Eiríksmál* and its interpretation of King Eiríkr’s death in battle. Whereas a leader’s death in battle is traditionally perceived as a failure in Old Norse praise poems, the *Eiríksmál* poet explains that Óðinn needed Eiríkr to serve him in the afterlife as a brave warrior, thus rendering his death ‘blameless, praiseworthy, heroic and divinely sanctioned’.¹⁷⁶ In a similar vein, Eyvindr skaldaspillir’s tenth-century poem *Hákonarmál*, which has the same opening formula in its final stanza as stanzas 76 and 77 of the eddic poem *Hávamál*, could be identified as part of an Odinic poetic tradition and certainly identifies glory in death as a desirable characteristic.¹⁷⁷ These three poems may suggest a Norse literary precedent for Einarr’s attitude towards the deaths of Christ and Óláfr in *Geisli*, indicating the importance of the Warrior Chieftain image as a representation of Christ alongside influences from Christian literary traditions.

The *stefjabálkr* commences in stanza 18, which praises Óláfr for attaining *mannþýðir* ‘manly qualities’ as the greatest among kings, and concludes with a refrain that once again glorifies him. Einarr’s refrain portrays Christ as *Gramr sólar* ‘Warrior King of the sun’, and describes Óláfr using the more contemporary epithet *Guðs ríðari* ‘God’s knight’, which marks one of the few instances in which the relationship between Christ and His follower becomes grounded in somewhat contemporary terminology for political ties. The result is a stanza of

¹⁷⁶ Abram 2011: 99.

¹⁷⁷ Abram 2011: 104-5. *Hávamál* 76-77: *Deyr fé, / deyja frændr, / deyr siálfir it sama; / enn orðtírr / deyr aldregi, / hveim er sér góðan getr. / Deyr fé, / deyja frændr, / deyr siálfir it sama; / ec veit einn, / at aldri deyr: / dómr um dauðan hvern* ‘Livestock die, / kinsmen die, / oneself dies just the same, / but renown of glory / never dies, / for any who gets that good thing. / Livestock die, / kinsmen die, / oneself dies just the same; / I concede one thing / that never dies: / judgement on every dead person’ (NK, 29).

praise that draws both from the setting of contemporary Norwegian courts and the language of the Norse literary past.

Fúss emk, þvítt vann vísir (vas hann mestr konungr flestra,
drótt nemi mærd), ef mættak, manndýrðir, stef vanda.
Greitt má gumnum létta Guðs ríðari stríðum;
rǫskr þiggr allt, sem æskir, Óláfr af Gram sólar. (*Geisli* 18)¹⁷⁸

Eager am I, for the leader attained manly qualities (he was the greatest
king of most,
let the court receive this praise), if I can, to compose a refrain.
God's knight can easily soothe strife for men;
brave Óláfr gets all he wants from the Warrior-King of the sun.¹⁷⁹

In the first *helmingr* Einarr informs the *drótt* 'court' that he wishes to compose a refrain in praise of Óláfr. The term *drótt*, which 'answers to the *comitatus* of Tacitus' and was 'in the saga time called *hirð*', in combination with the stanza's focus on praise, once again locates *Geisli* within the tradition of courtly poetry as we are reminded of the chieftain-*þegn* relationship established between Christ and Óláfr.¹⁸⁰ The refrain in the second *helmingr* presents Óláfr as *Guðs ríðari* 'God's knight', expressing the idea of *miles Christi* 'soldier of Christ' from 2 Timothy II.3 while also drawing influence from medieval courtly literature. The term *ríðari*, which means 'rider' or 'horseman', most frequently refers to a 'knight' with distinctly courtly connotations.¹⁸¹ According to Chase, 'this is one of the earliest instances of the word *ríðari* in poetry', with a few earlier exceptions in secular verse, and *Geisli* is the only poem presented in this thesis that makes use of it.¹⁸² As a foreign borrowing that reflected European literary precedents more than pre-twelfth century Scandinavian battle experience, *ríðari* seems to have resonated for Einarr Skúlason as a meaningful way to define Óláfr's role in relation to Christ. The refrain continues with a description of Óláfr as *rǫskr*, meaning 'doughty' or 'brave', and Christ as *Gramr sólar* 'Warrior-King of the

¹⁷⁸ I have modified Chase's edition of the Old Norse text by using brackets instead of dashes to differentiate clause-boundaries.

¹⁷⁹ This refrain also appears in stanzas 21, 24, 27, 30, 33, 36, 39, 42, and 45.

¹⁸⁰ For *drótt*, see *SnE* 1998: 259-60; *LP* 87; *IED* 107; and Zoëga 2004 [1926]: 96.

¹⁸¹ For *ríðari*, see *LP* 465 and *IED* 497.

¹⁸² Chase 2007: 22. *Ríðari* also occurs in the Christian skaldic poems *Plácitusdrápa* and *Kátrinardrápa*.

sun', reiterating the representation of Christ as Light, Ruler, and military Leader.¹⁸³ The term *gramr*, which literally means 'hostile' or 'fierce one' and more generally refers to a 'ruler', is used not only of Christ and God in Christian skaldic verse, but also of human kings and Norse deities in numerous eddic poems.¹⁸⁴ The stanza ultimately presents Óláfr and God as leaders in battle, both worldly and spiritual. Having implicitly made his new home in the hall of heaven through his martyrdom in stanza 17, Óláfr's portrayal as Christ's knight marks his transition into his heavenly home.

Einarr begins a new section of the poem with narrative accounts of Óláfr's martyrdom. He begins in stanza 19 with the eclipse and darkness that mark Óláfr's death, employing a trope commonly associated with both Christ's death and that of His followers. To once again demonstrate the connection between Christ and Óláfr, Einarr juxtaposes their deaths alongside one another.

Náðit bjartr, þás beiðir baugskjalda lauk aldri
 (sýndi Salvörðr grundar sín tǫkn) rǫðull skína.
 Fyrr vas hitt, at Harra hauðrtjalda brá dauða
 Happ (nýtask mér) mætu (máltól) skini sólar. (*Geisli* 19)¹⁸⁵

The bright sun, when the ring-shields' desirer ended his life
 (earth's hall-Guardian showed tokens of that), was unable to shine.
 It happened earlier that through the death of the Lord of earth-tents
 the sun's excellently (speech-tools are of use to me) fortunate shining was
 destroyed.

'ring-shields' desirer': warrior, in this instance Óláfr
 'earth's hall-: heaven, whose Guardian is Christ
 'earth-tents': heaven, whose Lord is Christ

Einarr interprets both eclipses as God showing *Sín tǫkn* 'His signs' to illustrate that holiness has departed from the world. The first *helmingr* observes that the *bjartr rǫðull* 'bright sun' was unable *skína*, meaning 'to shine' or 'gleam', at Óláfr's death, and likewise in the second *helmingr* the sun's *skini* 'shining' was

¹⁸³ For *rǫskr*, see LP 476 and IED 508. *rǫskr* is used to describe Óláfr throughout *Geisli*, but is used once in *Leiðarvísan* 27 to describe Christ.

¹⁸⁴ *SnE* 1998: 293. For more on *gramr*, see LP 198. To hint at the term's violent undertones, I have translated it here as 'warrior-king'.

¹⁸⁵ I have modified Chase's edition of the Old Norse text by using brackets instead of dashes to differentiate clause-boundaries.

destroyed at Christ's death on the Cross.¹⁸⁶ Chase also notes that the the first *helmingr* is reminiscent of a passage from the *Legendary Saga of St Óláfr*, which reads:

Nu let Ólafr konongr þar lif sitt. Þar varð sva mikil ogn, at solen fal gæisla sinn oc gerði myrct, - en aðr var fagrt veðr – æftir þui sem þa var, er Sialfr Skaparenn for af veroll denne. Syndi Guð þa mikla ogn¹⁸⁷

Now king Óláfr gave up his life there. There was such great fear, that the sun covered its light-beams and everything went murky – but before it had been fair weather – just as it did, when the Creator Himself perished from the world. God then revealed great terror.

The solar eclipse, which is also a feature of the *Legendary Saga of St Óláfr*, has a long literary history of representing divine displeasure, and provides an example of how this poem functions as a *mirabilia*.¹⁸⁸ Though the eclipse motif does not often appear in hagiographies of this period, there are two twelfth-century analogues in the form of the Latin *Lives of Ethelbert*, king of East Anglia by Osbert of Clare, and the *Legendary Saga of St Óláfr*. This detail serves to link Christ and Óláfr through common characteristics: both have merited supernatural responses at their deaths, and both are recognised as kings. There are many interpretative possibilities for the grammatical organisation of the second *helmingr*; for example, *happmætu* 'excellently fortunate' could be applied to both *máltól* 'speech-tools' and *skíni* 'shining' in order to connect the sun with the poet's own communicative abilities, which are perhaps failing at the thought of Christ's death.¹⁸⁹ Whichever interpretation is taken, the point remains that Christ's representation as Light contrives to be not only a means of strengthening connections with Óláfr in this stanza, but also an important thread throughout *Geisli*.

¹⁸⁶ For *skína*, see *LP*: 507-8; and *SnE* 1998: 392.

¹⁸⁷ *ÓHLeg* 1982: 196. Cf. Chase 2007: 23.

¹⁸⁸ According to Chase (2005: 35), similar literary practices were employed by the Hebrew prophets, along with Romans writing on the death of Julius Caesar. Chase also notes analogues in the twelfth-century Latin *Lives of Ethelbert*, king of East Anglia. Moreover he observes that Sigvatr's *Erfridrápa Ólafs helga*, one of the earliest poetic Óláfr accounts, links his death to an eclipse.

¹⁸⁹ Cf. Chase 2007: 23.

Óláfr is identified in the kenning *beiðir baugskjalda* ‘ring-shields’ desirer’ as a warrior, emphasising his role in battles both on earth and in the spiritual realm. The epithets used in stanza 19 for God, *grundar Salvörðr* ‘Guardian of the hall of earth’ and *Harri hauðrtjalda* ‘Lord of earth-tents’, portray Christ as both a Leader and Protector who shows signs of His power on earth.¹⁹⁰ Used here as a title for Christ, the term *vörðr* typically refers to a guardian or protector - usually of people, land, or possessions like ships – and was often employed to describe a king ‘as guardian of his land and people’.¹⁹¹ Heaven is once again identified as a *sal* ‘hall’, reinforcing the courtly image of Christ. These elements in combination once again identify Christ as heavenly King, and Óláfr as both His loyal follower and literary parallel.

According to Chase’s translation of his edited text, Einarr explains in stanza 20 that *miklar jartegnir gerðusk brátt* ‘great miracles were wrought immediately’ following Óláfr’s death on the battlefield.¹⁹² Just as Christ radiated light during His Ascension, *brann ljós yfir líki vísa, þás Guð framði qnd sendis lögskíðs með Sér samdægris* ‘light burned over the body of the leader [Óláfr], when God advanced the soul of the sender of the sea-ski to Himself on the same day’ (stanza 20). The presentation of Óláfr’s relationship to Christ as figural or typological, which persisted as a trope in Old Norse literature from the twelfth century onwards, was primarily used as a means of linking martyred kings to Christ in their roles as leaders in life and healers in the afterlife. The first representation of Christ as Healer occurs in stanza 21, where Einarr calls Christ *Grœðari alls* ‘Healer of all’ as He causes the martyred Óláfr’s fame to spread.

Dýrð lætr dróttins Hǫrða - dragisk mærd þín*ig – hrærða

¹⁹⁰ For further details on the poetic term *harri* meaning ‘king’, see *LP* 240; and *SnE* 1998: 303. For further details on the term *tjald* ‘tent’, see *LP* 568; and *SnE* 1998: 414.

¹⁹¹ Jesch 2001: 49. *Vörðr* ‘guardian’ as a title for Christ was popularized in Christian skaldic verse after Arnórr Þórðarson introduced it in *Magnússdrápa* 10/6 (Arn *Magnðr*^{II}) and *Haraldsdrápa* (Arn *Harðr*^{II} 17/3). Cf. Meissner 1921: 376, and Attwood 1996a: 227. For *vörðr*, see *LP* 629; and *SnE* 1998: 431. Chase observes (2005: 140-1), ‘the image of God as guardian occurs frequently in Old English poetry,’ and that it was popularised in Christian skaldic verse following its use in Arnórr Þórðarson’s God-kenning in *Magnússdrápa* 10 and *Haraldsdrápa* 17. Cf. Meissner 1921: 376.

¹⁹² Chase (2007: 24) notes that there are ‘numerous variant readings’ of this stanza, ‘though in most cases the better choice is clear’.

ítr (munat ǫðlingr betri) alls Grœðari (fœðask).
 Greitt má gumnum létta Guðs ríðari stríðum;
 rǫskr þiggr allt, sem æskir, Óláfr af Gram sólar. (*Geisli* 21)

The glorious Healer of all causes the fame - may the praise poem turn
 itself hither –
 of the lord of the Hǫrðar (a better prince will not be born) to be
 disseminated.
 God's knight can easily blot out strife for men;
 brave Óláfr gets all he wants from the King of the sun.

lord of the Hǫrðar: Óláfr

The description of Christ as *Grœðari* 'Healer' not only identifies Christ as Physician, but also foreshadows the healing miracles attributed to Óláfr in the stanzas that follow.¹⁹³ Einarr further modifies this description of Christ as Healer with the adjective *ítr*, which can mean 'gleaming', 'white', 'glorious', or 'excellent', a detail that conflates light with glory and fame and was used in earlier Norse literature to describe certain Norse pagan figures.¹⁹⁴ Just as Einarr praises Christ as glorious, so too does he disseminate Óláfr's *dýrð* 'fame' through *mærð*, meaning 'praise', 'laud', or an 'encomium', again making use of terminology that evokes the aims of Old Norse court poetry.¹⁹⁵ The poet asserts that a better *ǫðlingr* 'prince' than Óláfr will not be born, demonstrating that this martyr is a subject fitting for a praise poem. The refrain in the second *helmingr*, as in *Geisli* 18, describes Óláfr as *Guðs ríðari* 'God's knight' and *rǫskr* 'brave', reinforcing his image as a medieval knight serving in spiritual battle with Christ. Ultimately, all of his greatness derives from the *Gramr solar* 'King of the sun', a detail that once again obliquely references the image of Óláfr as *geisli* 'light-beam' emanating from the ultimate source of spiritual light, namely Christ. The

¹⁹³ For *grœða* 'to heal', see *LP*: 206.

¹⁹⁴ For *ítr*, see *LP* 322-3; and *SnE* 1998: 329. *Ítr* describes Iðunn with *arma ... ítrþvegna* 'arms...bright-washed' in *Lokasenna* 17, when she embraces her brother's killer; this is a very obscure but heathen detail (*NK*, 100). Þórr is described as *ítr gulli Ullar* 'brilliant stepfather of Ullr' in *Þórdrápa* 18 by Eilífr Goðrúnarson from c. 990. (North 2011b: 579). There is also the kenning for Norway, *itra...Auðs systur* 'gleaming...sister of Auðr', in stanza 6 of Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld Óttarsson's *Hákonardrápa* 6 from c. 995 (Heslop 2012); the kenning expresses that Norway has done the same as Iðunn for Earl Hákon.

¹⁹⁵ For *dýrð*, see *LP* 92; and entry in *ADIP*. According to its entry in *ADIP*, *dýrð* frequently refers to 'treasures' and 'splendour', but also describes the spiritual glory of martyrs as well as holiness. For *mærð*, see *LP* 418; and *SnE* 1998: 360.

combined picture of Christ, then, is a source of Light, Warrior Chieftain, and now Healer as expressed through Óláfr's miraculous healings.

Stanzas 22 to 24 recount the healing of the blind man, who regains sight after his eyes are washed with the bloody water left over from cleaning Óláfr's body. Chase observes that in this instance and in similar types of biblical healing, 'bodily sight is associated with intellectual or spiritual insight', and regaining sight signifies a revelation.¹⁹⁶ Next, stanzas 25 to 26 narrate the healing of a man whose tongue had been cut from his mouth. Einarr explains in stanza 25 that Óláfr's body lay in its original burial place for *tolf mǫnuðr ok fimm nætr* 'twelve months and five nights' before being moved to another site in stanza 26; it is at this new burial site that the man regains his speech, an event that reaffirms Óláfr's sainthood and his role as healer.

Einarr's focus on healing is followed by a series of stanzas celebrating Óláfr's continued involvement in battles on earth, prefaced by the epithet *fǫður Magnúss ins góða* 'the father of Magnús the Good' for Óláfr in stanza 27, along with the refrain that identifies him as *Guðs ríðari* 'God's knight'. Stanza 28 begins with Óláfr's appearance to his son, Magnús the Good, in a dream that ultimately ensures Magnús's success at the battle of Lyrskovshede in stanza 29. Stanza 30 praises Óláfr's involvement in the battle, stating, *rauns, at snjallr spjalli Lausnara gaf frǫmum arfa sínum sigr* 'it is evident that the valiant confidant (Óláfr) of the Redeemer (Christ) gave his outstanding heir victory'. Einarr similarly celebrates the military victory of Óláfr's nephew, Gutthormr Gunnhildarson, in his fight against Margarðr to secure the spoils from a raid in stanzas 31 through 34. Chase notes that Gutthormr had donated a silver cross in honour of St Óláfr, 'which would have been visible in the cathedral at Niðarós as Einarr recited his *drápa*', rendering these a fitting narrative for the poem's original context.¹⁹⁷ Following these battle narratives, stanzas 35 and 36 present the story of a woman whose master, a count in Denmark, makes her bake bread on St Óláfr's day. She prays for retaliation, and consequently the bread turns grey and the count is blinded; Einarr explains in stanza 36 that this is the

¹⁹⁶ Chase 2007: 26.

¹⁹⁷ Chase 2007: 32.

reason why *hefir hǫtið snjalls hildings verit haldin of alla Danmǫrk* ‘the feast of the valiant king has been kept throughout all Denmark’ ever since. Rather than affirming his saintly role as healer, this series of miracles presents Óláfr as a Norwegian ruler who continues to hold sway in both wartime success and the private observance of his feast. These events allow for Óláfr, even after his death, to share in common with Christ the roles of King and Warrior Chieftain.

Einarr returns to accounts of Óláfr’s miraculous healings, first in stanzas 37 through 38 and then in stanzas 40 through 41. Both sets of stanzas feature men who gain miraculous speech after their tongues had been cut from their mouths. In the first of these accounts a man named Kolbeinn, who had eaten food supposedly from the plate of the king’s mother, is punished for this theft by having his tongue removed. Having received his punishment, Kolbeinn *sótti heim harmskerðanda* ‘sought the home of the harm-diminisher (Óláfr)’ in stanza 38, where *fekk hann bæði mál ok tungu* ‘he received both speech and tongue’. In the second miraculous account from stanzas 40 and 41, a man named Halldórr is attacked by a group of Wends who cut out his tongue, but he is healed during his visit to Óláfr’s shrine. Both narratives conclude with stanzas – 39 and 42, respectively – that praise Óláfr and identify God as the source of his miraculous healings. Just as Óláfr serves as an extension of Christ’s revelatory light, so too does he serve as an extension of Christ’s physical and spiritual healing abilities.

Stanzas 43 to 50 explore narratives and miraculous events surrounding Óláfr’s sword Hneitir, whose name means ‘cutter’. Intriguingly, narratives about Hneitir after Óláfr’s death have no precedent in earlier prose legends, and may have come from an unrecorded oral tradition.¹⁹⁸ Stanza 43 introduces the sword and highlights the role it played at the battle of Stiklarstaðir. Hneitir comes into the possession of a Swedish man in stanza 44, and is subsequently *fundinn í liði Girkja* ‘found in the retinue of the Greeks’, among whom the sword’s first miracles are witnessed. Stanza 45, which attributes the narrative to Einarr’s Norwegian contemporary Eindriði the Young and features a refrain, marks the end of the *stefjabálkr*, and the *slæmr* begins in stanza 46 with the assertion that

¹⁹⁸ Chase 2007: 43.

ljós raun kemr of ræsi ‘clear evidence comes forth about the chief’ through the numerous miracles made possible by Christ, *Þess’s lið læknar* ‘that One (Christ) who heals people’.

In stanzas 47 through 49 a Greek soldier discovers, over the course of three nights, that Hneitir miraculously moves from under his head to lie elsewhere on the ground while he sleeps. A Byzantine emperor takes notice of the sword, and in stanza 50 has it placed in a church *of altári* ‘above the altar’ and ornamented with gold as a sign of its sacred quality. Stanza 51 proclaims that Óláfr *gerir björt tǫkn* ‘makes clear miracles’ in battles in Greece, furthering his fame as both king and saint. Yet another miracle in battle, this time involving the bloody conflict between the Varangians under the Byzantine emperor and the Petchenegs, takes place in stanzas 52 through 56. The small group of Varangians that bravely push forward and call on Óláfr for assistance in the battle in stanzas 53 to 54 ultimately gain victory through the martyr’s miraculous help, reaffirming his shared role with Christ as a warrior chieftain.

Einarr prepares to tell his audience another healing miracle, explaining in stanza 57 that Christ as the world’s Healer allows for the battle-prominent king Óláfr to accomplish his works. Einarr introduces Óláfr’s miracles in *nýr óðr* ‘new poetry’ and celebrates the *verk* ‘works’ he completed after his martyrdom as he prepares for the miracle account in stanzas 58 to 61.

Nús oss, þaus vann vísir, verk fyr þjóð at merkja
 nauðr í nýjum óði, næst; ríðrat þat smæstu.
 Krapt skulum Guðs (en giptu) gunnstyrks lofi dýrka,
 (lér hjaldrfrǫmum hárar heims Læknir gram þeima). (*Geisli* 57)¹⁹⁹

Now it is necessary for us to make known to people, in new poetry,
 the works which the king completed next; that is not least important.
 The strength of the battle-strong God we shall honour with praise,
 while the world’s Healer gives great luck to the battle-prominent king.

world’s Healer: Christ
 battle-prominent king: Óláfr

¹⁹⁹ I have modified Chase’s edition of the Old Norse text by using brackets instead of commas to differentiate clause-boundaries.

As in stanza 2 in *Geisli*'s opening, Einarr's use of *óðr* 'poetry' here carries with it both Christian and Norse literary precedents, and to some extent continues the skaldic tradition of courtly praise by celebrating this martyred king in his continued role as warrior chieftain through Christ.²⁰⁰ He describes Óláfr as *vísi*, a term meaning 'leader', 'director', 'ruler', or 'king' that also appears in *Harmsól*, *Líknarbraut*, and *Lilja* in reference to Christ.²⁰¹ The second *helmingr* turns its focus to Christ as the source for Óláfr's battle prowess, reminding the audience that *skulum dýrka lofi kraptr gunnstyrks Guðs en giptu* 'we shall honour with praise the power of the battle-strong God with praise'. The word used metaphorically of God's strength, *kraptr*, means 'strength or power'. *Kraptr* is also related to the noun *krapti* that properly means 'a crooked bar, such as ribs and knees in a ship'; while these two terms were used distinctly from one another, the use of *kraptr* perhaps obliquely hints at the nautical meaning of *krapti* and foreshadows the ship imagery of Christian skaldic poems to follow, in which Christ is portrayed as the Captain of a ship.²⁰² The stanza thus highlights the warrior king characteristics shared by Christ and Óláfr.

Einarr then describes Christ as *Læknir heims* 'world's Healer' and identifies Him as the source of great luck for the *hjaldrframr gramr* 'battle-prominent king' Óláfr. The description of Christ as *Læknir heims* or 'Healer of the world' is fitting in a stanza that introduces one of Óláfr's healing miracles, and relates back to the epithet for Christ from *Geisli* 21, *Grœðari alls* 'Healer of all'.²⁰³ As Chase observes, 'the kenning here suggests that God heals Óláfr's bodily suffering by granting him a heavenly existence', and Óláfr is able to provide physical healing to the faithful as a martyr.²⁰⁴ Einarr's use of *læknir*, which refers to a 'leech' or 'physician', points to the clear understanding of the Christian literary metaphor of Christ as *Medicus* 'Physician', which is found in both biblical and liturgical texts of the period and served as literary influences

²⁰⁰ For *óðr*, see *LP* 441; and *SnE* 1998: 366. For more analysis related to *óðr*, see analysis of *Geisli* 2 earlier in this chapter.

²⁰¹ For *vísi*, see *LP* 625; and *SnE* 1998: 430.

²⁰² For *kraptr*, see *LP* 345; and *SnE* 1998: 338. For *krapti*, see *LP* 345. For further information on the representation of Christ as Captain of a ship, see analysis for *Harmsól* 12 in chapter three and *Líknarbraut* 33 in chapter four.

²⁰³ For *læknir*, see *LP*: 386.

²⁰⁴ Chase 2005: 143.

for the author of *Geisli*.²⁰⁵ The juxtaposition of healing and battle in this stanza may serve as a means of communicating that the healing power of mercy is one and the same with the spiritual battle against death and sin, and it is in this manner that Einarr prepares the audience to hear a miracle of healing attributed to Óláfr through Christ.

Stanzas 58 to 61 recount the story of the English priest Ríkharðr, who was attacked after being suspected of having an affair with Þóra Gutthormsdóttir, the mother of King Sigurðr munnr. Having been accused of the crime, Ríkharðr receives numerous injuries in stanzas 59 and 60, among them a broken leg, eyes knocked from their sockets, and his tongue being cut from his mouth. He goes to a peasant's home in stanza 61, where he prays to Óláfr, is visited by the saint and is subsequently healed. These stanzas thus conclude the alternating healing and battle miracles attributed to Óláfr after his death, which comprise the majority of the poem.

Einarr offers general praise of Óláfr's blessedness and miracles in stanzas 62 through 64 as he approaches the poem's conclusion. He acknowledges the specific context in which the poem was presented in stanza 65, making mention of the archdiocese of Niðarós's establishment in 1152, as well as the consecration of Jón Birgisson as the cathedral's first archbishop by the visiting Cardinal Nicholas Breakspear.²⁰⁶ He also makes mention of the wood from the Cross, which was a relic brought by King Sigurðr Jórsalafari ('Jerusalem-traveller') to Niðarós in 1110. Stanzas 66 through 68 praise Óláfr and explain that those who recount *Geisli*'s narrative might be released from the torment of Hell (stanza 68). Einarr proclaims that he will receive *Guðs blessan* 'God's blessing' as reward for the poem in stanza 69 and implies that he ought to also

²⁰⁵ Christ is called *Medicus* in: Matthew IX. 12 *At Ille audiens ait: 'Non est opus valentibus medico sed male habentibus'* (*Vulg* 1979, Matthew IX.12) 'But when he [Jesus] heard this, He said, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick'' (*NRSV*, Matthew IX.12); Mark II.17 *Et Iesus hoc audito ait illis: 'Non necesse habent sani medicum sed, qui male habent; non veni vocare iustos sed peccatores'* (*Vulg* 1979, Mark II.17) 'When Jesus heard this, He said to them, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but the sinners'' (*NRSV*, Mark II.17); and Luke V.31 *Et respondens Iesus dixit ad illos: 'Non egent, qui sani sunt, medico sed, qui male habent'* (*Vulg* 1979, Luke V.31) 'Jesus answered, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick'' (*NRSV*, Luke V.31). In liturgical texts, He is called *medicus bonus*, *medicus caelistis*, *medicus salutaris*, and *medicus verus* (Manz 1941: 292, no. 588-91).

²⁰⁶ Chase 2007: 60.

receive a reward from the leaders present in stanza 70, suggesting that Sigurðr the elder would have compensated Einarr if he were still alive. Stanza 71 concludes the poem, with Einarr declaring that he has carried out the task of composing this praise to Óláfr and instructing Eysteinn, *segið, hvé leystak ítran brag* ‘say how I have performed the glorious poem’. Even in its conclusion the audience is reminded of the tradition of courtly praise associated with skaldic verse, placing the representations of Óláfr and Christ within this framework.

Conclusions

Geisli offers an intriguing glimpse into one of the literary contexts in which Christian skaldic verse survived and thrived: hagiographical narrative. As a poem that, to a great extent, focuses its praise on a Norwegian king, its subject is largely fitting for skaldic poetry based on its earliest courtly functions. Einarr presents Óláfr as a praiseworthy king and martyr, and Christ as the exalted King of heaven, inviting the audience to view both figures in the context of a courtly setting. The performance of *Geisli* within the cathedral at Niðarós, effectively God’s court or great hall, and before the Norwegian rulers of the day, offers a pleasing fusion of political and religious leadership that is also reflected in the miracles attributed to Óláfr and, by extension, Christ. Ultimately, the representations shared by both Christ and His knight Óláfr produce descriptions that combine Christian and heroic literary tropes and associate both individuals with themes of light, courtly relationship, and the related concepts of generosity and healing.

Perhaps the most prominent representations in *Geisli* are those of St Óláfr as *geisli* ‘light-beam’ and Christ as *Ljós* ‘Light’. Not only does the poem’s title demonstrate the importance of this image, it also quickly establishes that Einarr intends to highlight the characteristics that Óláfr and Christ share with one another. The Virgin Mary, like Óláfr, is also described as an avenue for Christ’s divine light in stanza 2 and referred to by the Old Norse equivalent of the popular Marian epithet *stella maris* ‘star of the sea’, further emphasising the importance of light as a representation of Christ from an early stage in Christian skaldic composition. The opening stanzas develop the idea that Óláfr’s spiritual achievements are an emanation of Christ’s power and glory, a concept that

carries through to the juxtaposition of the eclipse at both Óláfr's death and Christ's Crucifixion in stanza 19, each marking the departure of spiritual light from the world. As the poem progresses, the audience is continually reminded via refrains of Christ's sovereignty over heaven as figured by the sun. Among the primary influences for the association of Christ and His followers with light are Scripture, liturgy, and Christian writings that were popular during the period of the poem's composition. Apart from the description of Christ as *ítr* 'glorious', which has also been used to describe certain Old Norse mythological figures in other writings, the portrayal of Christ as Light in *Geisli* seems to draw influence exclusively from Christian writings. In essence, light is presented throughout this poem in a decidedly Christian manner.

Working within a poetic framework that was originally developed for the praise of rulers, Einarr's attention to both Christ and Óláfr's roles as Warrior Chieftain throughout the work is highly appropriate to the original purpose of this poetic style. *Geisli* develops the representation of Christ as a King engaged in spiritual battle, with St Óláfr serving Him as as a retainer of sorts as he offers miraculous assistance in battles after his death. Given the parallels that Einarr draws between the sainted Norwegian king and Christ, the audience is frequently invited to perceive Christ specifically as King in the contemporary Norwegian sense. That said, the titles *Jǫfurr* and *Dǫglingr* both refer to roles of leadership in the Scandinavian political past, suggesting that Christ might also be reimagined and admired in an Old Norse literary context. The terms *hirð* and *drótt*, used in *Geisli* of Christ's followers, further contribute to the representation of Christ as Ruler in a courtly context, and the explicit reference to Óláfr as *Guðs ríðari* 'God's knight' indicates the chivalric literary influence from Europe. Óláfr and Christ work together to secure spiritual victories through miracles, thus carrying out a King-retainer relationship reflecting the idealised devotion of a *comitatus* to their ruler in heroic literature. Even Óláfr's miracles, made possible through Christ, frequently involve securing battle victories for his relatives and those who venerate him. Óláfr valiantly fights alongside his men during his reign, and likewise Christ engages in spiritual battle alongside the martyred Norwegian king. The representation of Christ as Warrior Chieftain, while certainly based somewhat on Christ's leadership roles throughout

Scripture, also draws influence from Norse and European literary traditions, as well as political relationships of the period.

Connected to the representation of Christ as Warrior Chieftain is the generosity He extends to His followers. Specifically, Einarr describes the reward that he as skald will receive for his poem as a kind of gift giving, a concept he hopes his audience of rulers will note and similarly carry out as reward for his work. However, Christ as King not only rewards, but also protects and sustains His people. He is described as both *Vqrðr* 'Guardian' (stanza 19) and *Grœðari* 'Healer' (stanza 21), epithets that indicate His ability to both protect and help His followers. The title *Grœðari* in particular relates to Óláfr's numerous miracles of healing, but is also a multivalent term that evokes the concept of growth and opens the possibility of linking healing to agricultural images. The use of *Læknir* in stanza 57 more explicitly presents Christ as Physician, again fitting well with the numerous miraculous healings attributed to Óláfr and recounted throughout the poem. Themes of generosity, protection, and healing become increasingly important in later Christian skaldic verse, and their presence in this early poem reveals that they were a part of Christ's identity in skaldic poems from His earliest appearances. In the case of *Geisli*, gift giving draws on Scandinavian social traditions to express Christ's abundance of mercy, while His role as Healer seems to derive largely from Christian literary tradition.

The overarching agenda of *Geisli* is to join together two cultures in the figures of Óláfr and Christ, who are unified by their common characteristics throughout the poem. In doing so, Einarr strikes a diplomatic balance between Norse and Christian literary precedents, praising a Norwegian king in a manner fitting to the cathedral setting while also affirming the suitability of both martyr and Christ as subjects for skaldic verse. While a useful starting point for the scope of this thesis, as a hagiography *Geisli* falls into a different category from the homiletic and didactic poems that are discussed in the chapters that follow, as they turn their focus even more towards Christ and His relationship with humanity. Nevertheless, this work offers a helpful introduction to some of the representations of Christ found in the *Harmsól*, *Leiðarvísan*, *Líknarbraut*, and *Lilja*, and indeed offers its own unique response to Christ's portrayal.

Chapter Three - Gamli kanóki's *Harmsól*

Described by Turville-Petre as ‘the finest Icelandic poem of its age’ for both its technical and aesthetic qualities, Gamli kanóki’s mid-twelfth-century composition *Harmsól* is the oldest of the didactic or homiletic poems in this study.²⁰⁷ This 65-stanza *drápa* in *dróttkvætt* metre has a strong penitential theme, as indicated in its name, which translated means ‘Sun of Sorrow’. As a *drápa*, the poem’s symmetrical structure consists of a 16-stanza *upphaf*, a 25-stanza *stefjabálkr* divided equally between two *stefs*, and a 20-stanza *slæmr*.²⁰⁸ The *upphaf* begins with the poet’s request for God’s help, as well as for the attention and silence of the audience, in stanzas 1 through 5. Gamli kanóki continues with a focus on human inadequacy subtly structured around the *Confiteor* in stanzas 7 to 16, and specifically addresses the poet’s own spiritual shortcomings.²⁰⁹ The dual purposes of *Harmsól*, to praise Christ and to exhort readers to repentance, are united in the poem’s *stefjabálkr*, which recounts Christ’s life beginning with the Nativity and culminating in the Second Coming and Last Judgement. More specifically, the content of the *stefjabálkr* includes a narrative of Christ’s life from the Nativity to the Crucifixion, particularly focussing on the penitent thief and meditating at the foot of the Cross with simple diction and austere descriptions in stanzas 21 to 27; the Resurrection and Ascension in stanzas 28 and 29; and a promise of the Second Coming and Judgement in stanzas 31 to 40, which includes descriptions of both punishments and rewards in store for humanity at that time in stanzas 38 to 40.²¹⁰ Gamli kanóki concludes the *stefjabálkr* by urgently imploring his audience to seek immediate penitence in stanzas 41 to 46. The poem’s *slæmr* in stanzas 47 to 65 begins with three exemplary biblical figures who were penitent and sought reconciliation with God: King David (stanzas 48-9), St Peter (stanzas 50-1) and Mary Magdalene (stanza 52). The *slæmr* concludes in stanzas 53 through 65 with the poet

²⁰⁷ Turville-Petre 1953: 162.

²⁰⁸ The first *stef* in the *stefjabálkr* occurs at stanzas 20, 25, and 30, and the second *stef* occurs at stanzas 35, 40, and 45.

²⁰⁹ Attwood 2007: 70.

²¹⁰ Regarding the plain and direct narrative of stanzas 21 to 27, see Attwood 2007: 70.

asking Christ and Mary for mercy and mediation on behalf of both humanity and Gamli himself, as well as with a final request for the audience to pray for the author's soul. As Attwood observes, *Harmsól* can be read as 'a versified sermon, in which the narrator urges his *systkin* 'brothers and sisters' to repentance.'²¹¹ Ultimately, this poem is designed to cultivate a penitent spirit, making the reader receptive to the mercy Christ extends to everyone in the poem's closing stanzas.

There are several tantalising linguistic and thematic similarities between *Harmsól* and Christian skaldic poems such as Einarr Skúlason's *Geisli*, *Leiðarvísan*, and other works classified as liturgical, homiletic, hagiographic, and hymnodic, although Attwood has observed that there are no traceable direct sources.²¹² The presence of numerous and varied kennings for God demonstrates Gamli's skill as a skald and reveals 'an intimate appreciation of the power and beauty of the weather' as an Icelandic literary quality in the midst of representing biblical figures.²¹³ In the process of drawing together Christian literary precedents with influences from Norse culture, the author of *Harmsól* has blended a variety of traditions and experiences to produce a transformed retelling of Christ's life, with nuances to Christ's representation that merit careful consideration.

Harmsól survives on fols 12r-13v of the c. 1400 manuscript AM 757 a 4^o (B) and is attributed to Gamli kanóki, who is named in a marginal note on l. 42 of 12r: *Harmsól er gamle orti kanoke* 'Harmsól, which canon Gamli composed'.²¹⁴ Gamli's name also appears in the prose text preceding *Jóns saga postula*, where he is credited with composing the second *drápa* to St John in Þykkvabær. The prose introduction to the four stanzas of Gamli's *Jónsdrápa* in *Jóns saga postula* reveals that he was *Gamli kanunk austr í Þykkvabæ* 'canon Gamli in the east at Þykkvabær', which effectively locates the poem's composition in Iceland.²¹⁵ Based on the monastery's founding date and the

²¹¹ Attwood 2007: 70.

²¹² Attwood 2007: 71.

²¹³ Attwood 2007: 71.

²¹⁴ Translation from Attwood 2007: 70.

²¹⁵ *Jón*⁴ 1874: 510. According to Steinunn Kristjánsdóttir, Inger Larsson, and Per Arvid Åsen (2014: 562), 'monasteries and nunneries operating in Iceland during medieval times are

description of Gamli as *bróðir* in the fourth stanza, which could imply his role as canon, we may speculate that he lived around the mid- to late-twelfth century.²¹⁶ This places the composition date both for *Jónsdrápa* and *Harmsól* not long after Einarr Skúlason's *Geisli* in the mid-twelfth century, a speculative date that is explored further in the paragraph that follows. Though we have some sense of the author's identity and role in society, the original audience remains more of a mystery, with possibilities including a cloistered community or laypeople more generally.²¹⁷

Both Skard and Attwood have observed that *Harmsól* is part of an interconnected group of twelfth-century *drápur* that share dictional and structural parallels, the others being Einarr Skúlason's *Geisli*, *Plácitusdrápa*, and *Leiðarvísan*.²¹⁸ It is difficult to say when these poems were composed in relation to one another, and there are only a few scant details that allow for approximate dating: these include the dating of AM 673 b 4^o – one of the earliest surviving Icelandic manuscripts and the only one to include *Plácitusdrápa* – to c. 1200 by Louis-Jensen, and *Geisli*'s composition date of around 1153.²¹⁹ Finnur Jónsson has also suggested a c. 1200 or a late-twelfth-century date for *Harmsól* based on the coexistence of *ór-* and *ár-* forms in words like *vára* in stanzas 18, 21, and 57, and the *tjalds : alla* rhyme in stanza 65.²²⁰ In any case, a twelfth-century dating for *Harmsól* is generally accepted.

Since AM 757 a 4^o (B) is badly damaged and difficult to read in its present state, modern editions rely on a combination of this manuscript, transcriptions, and editions of the poem. One such alternative resource, Brynjólfur Snorrason's transcript in Lbs 444 4^{ox} (444^x), is the bundle of working papers for Sveinbjörn Egilsson's 1844 printed edition of the four Christian poems; another is Jón

assumed to have belonged to either the Augustinian or the Benedictine orders'; thus, Gamli likely operated within one of these orders.

²¹⁶ Haki Antonsson 2012: 92.

²¹⁷ Haki Antonsson 2012: 93. Cf. Attwood 2005: 53 and Berg 2010: 44-46.

²¹⁸ Skard 1953 and Attwood 1996b. Though *Plácitusdrápa* shares an important connection with poems in this thesis, and certainly merits further scholarly attention, there is not enough space in this thesis to properly focus on all relevant poems. As previously addressed in the Introduction to this thesis, I have chosen the five poems that appear here as helpful examples of the changing portrayal of Christ over the course of Christian skaldic verse.

²¹⁹ Attwood 2007: 71. Cf. Louis-Jensen 1998: 89. For further details about dating *Geisli*, see the poem's introduction in chapter two.

²²⁰ *LH* II, 115.

Sigurðsson's transcription in JS 399a-b 4^{ox}, which is based on the 444^x transcription.²²¹ In both cases, Sveinbjörn Egilsson has heavily annotated these transcriptions and thus contributed substantially to our understanding of the poem. In the way of other versions of the text, there are notes by Sveinbjörn Egilsson in 444^x in which he works out a prose arrangement for the text; a transcription of B with annotated speculative reconstructions by Rydberg in 1907; a transcription by Finnur Jónsson in *Den norsk-islandske skjaldedigtning* that relies heavily on Rydberg; and folios 1 to 26 of the clean print copy for Sveinbjörn Egilsson's 1844 edition in Lbs 1152 8^{ox} (1152^x).²²²

Sveinbjörn Egilsson produced the first modern edition of *Harmsól* in *Fjögur gømul kvæði* as a teaching text for the Latin School at Bessastaðir, drawing from 444^x and 399a-b^x.²²³ Hjalmar Kempff's edition from 1867 is based on Sveinbjörn's printed edition, as well as his interpretations in the *Lexicon poeticum antiquae linguae septentrionalis* (1860). A diplomatic transcription of *Harmsól* appears in Rydberg's 1907 doctoral dissertation, and there are also editions by Finnur Jónsson in *Den norsk-islandske skjaldedigtning* and by E. A. Kock in *Den norsk-isländska skaldediktningen*. The most recent editions of *Harmsól* include Elizabeth Black's annotated diplomatic transcription in her Oxford BLitt dissertation;²²⁴ Katrina Attwood's annotated diplomatic transcription of B and a normalised edition in her doctoral thesis;²²⁵ and Attwood's 2007 edition for *Poetry on Christian Subjects*, which serves as the basis for stanzas quoted in this thesis.²²⁶

From the very start of the poem, Gamli kanóki underlines humanity's need for salvation through Christ, as a source both of spiritual healing and legal representation. Stanza 1 begins with the poet's request that God open up for him *hlið óðborgar góðu heilli* 'the gate of the poetry-stronghold with good fortune', explaining that he considers God's words the *bót miska* 'remedy for misdeeds' and thereby associates humanity's misdeeds with disease, injury,

²²¹ Attwood 1996a: 32-3.

²²² Attwood 2007: 72.

²²³ Sveinbjörn Egilsson 1844: 1-34.

²²⁴ Black 1971.

²²⁵ Attwood 1996a: 83-102 (diplomatic transcription) and 222-302 (normalised edition).

²²⁶ Attwood 2007.

and death.²²⁷ In stanza 2 he laments that no man can find *maklig orð* ‘sufficient words’ to praise God, and asks that God send His *hreinan anda* ‘pure spirit’ in stanza 3, *þanns of fœri heðan munar grand mitt* ‘the one which may take from this place my injury of mind’.²²⁸ Gamli then beseeches God in stanza 4 for *hollrar miskunnar ok eirar* ‘wholesome grace and clemency’, explaining in stanza 5 that Christ commands all men *at tína ǫll lýti sín með iðran fyr lærdum mǫnnum* ‘to recount all their sins with repentance before scholarly men (clergy)’ because He promises *sannri líkn ok syknu fyr vás ok galla* ‘true relief and acquittal for fatigue and destruction’. These opening stanzas make clear that humanity is not only diseased by sinfulness, but also lacks a case for their own righteousness. It is only through Christ that His followers might be healed and reconciled with God, and these concepts serve as an important basis for Christ’s defining characteristics throughout the rest of the poem.

Due to its penitential nature, *Harmsól* frequently makes use of legal terminology to characterise Christ and His relationship with humanity. A number of stanzas focus on the importance of good counsel, as well as the primacy of those who are tasked to know and proclaim the law. One such mention of counsel appears in reference to the Second Coming in stanza 6, where the speaker warns that *ósǫgð hætt róð ... koma upp fyr allri skepnu á øfsta dómi*, ‘all unconfessed, perilous counsels ... will be revealed at the Last Judgement’.

Oss verðr ey, nema þessum aldr várn boðum haldim
 (menn búisk mǫrgu sinni) meiri ógn (við þeiri),
 hver þvít hætt róð bǫrva hljóms á øfsta dómi
 upp fyr allri skepnu ósǫgð koma lǫgðis. (*Harmsól* 6)

Our terror will ever grow, unless we keep these commands
 [during] our lifetime (let men prepare for this many a time),
 since all unconfessed, perilous counsels of the trees of the tune
 of the sword will come up before all creation at the Last Judgement.

²²⁷ For *bót* ‘remedy’ ‘compensation’, or ‘atonement’, see *LEI* 2000: 415; *SnE* 249; and the entry in *ADIP*. According to *ADIP*, *bót* can also refer to ‘weregild’ when stated in the plural.

²²⁸ Though *hreinn* is used in this particular instance to describe the Holy Spirit, this adjective was used to describe Christ from as early as the eleventh century in stanza 27 of Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld Óttarsson’s *Erfidrápa Óláfs Tryggvasonar*.

trees of the tune of the sword: warriors

The first *helmingr* warns that our *ógn*, meaning ‘terror’ or ‘threat’, will grow if we do not keep God’s *boðum* ‘commands’ during our lifetime.²²⁹ The meaning of *boð* varies according to context, though in this case it specifically means ‘commandment’.²³⁰ The urgency of the command is observable in the term’s metaphorical meaning, which is based on its legal usage: ‘a summons, being an arrow, axe, or the like sent to call people to battle or council’, which symbolised both the haste with which action should be taken and the punishment that awaits for those who do not comply.²³¹ God’s commandments can thus be understood as a call to action by the One to whom humanity is beholden; negligence of this call and obligation will result in punishment. The frequent use of *boð* in *Harmsól* indicates that this poet understood Christ’s relationship with humanity in part as a kinship bond with legal implications, as might be observed in relationships between an Icelandic *goði* and his *þingmenn*.

The second *helmingr* follows this train of thought as the poet beseeches his audience to prepare themselves in life, since *ósögð hætt rjóð* ‘unconfessed, perilous counsels’ of men will be made known at the *efsta dómi* ‘Last Judgement’. The word *dómr*, meaning ‘judgement’, appears frequently throughout the Christian skaldic corpus in reference to the Last Judgement, and likewise *ráð* frequently identifies various types of ‘counsel’ in Christian skaldic poetry.²³² Good counsel in Old Norse literary culture encompasses the qualities of wisdom and leadership, while poor counsel is not only foolish but also profoundly dangerous as it could result in unfavourable rulings or even needless bloodshed through unresolved feuding. Drawing influence from this familiar Icelandic cultural value, the poet presents a dichotomy between God’s *boð* ‘commands’ or good counsels, and the *hætt rjóð* ‘perilous counsels’ of sinfulness, thus emphasising the importance of preparing for the Last

²²⁹ For *ógn*, see *LP* 443; and *SnE* 1998: 367.

²³⁰ For *boð*, see entry in *ADIP*; *LP* 55; and *SnE* 1998: 248. Notably, *boð* only occurs in *Harmsól* 6, 8, 38; and *Lilja* 14, among the Christian skaldic poems.

²³¹ Entry for *boð* in *ADIP* and *IED* 71.

²³² For *dómr*, see *LEI* 2006: 270; *SnE* 1998: 257; entry in *ADIP*; and *LP* 82. For *ráð*, see *LEI* 2006: 273; *LEI* 2000: 420; *SnE* 1998: 371; *LP* 457; *KLE* 247; and entry in *ADIP*.

Judgement. Christ is not only perceived as Judge, but also humanity's best source for wise counsel and reconciliation with God.

Drawing from a similar lament in Psalm XXIV.7, Gamli turns his attention on his own sinfulness in stanza 7, where he admits that he turned his back on Christ inwardly *pás illt ráð villti mik* 'when evil counsel led my heart astray'.²³³ The phrase *illt ráð* or 'evil counsel' is used here to describe the sin and ignorance of his youth, which he subsequently rectifies by returning to Christ. He explains in stanza 8 that his *ófríð verk* 'ugly works' as a younger man went against God's *blíðum boð* 'pleasing commands', which led to his spiritual fruitlessness: *barkat bráðgort blóm á verkum* 'I did not bear quickly-ripened blooms on account of my works'.²³⁴ The lack of ripened fruit relates to the concept of sinfulness as disease and injury, but also opens up interpretations of Christ as Nourisher in an agrarian setting. In stanza 9 the poet laments that he *hratat í allan þann dauða* 'fell into the total death' of a sinful soul, explaining in stanza 10 that he has *unnit þunglig særi* 'sworn heavy oaths' and corrupted himself and others through bragging. He further admits in stanza 11 that he is guilty of judging others for sins of which he himself is guilty.

Gamli continues to lament his personal failings, turning in stanza 12 to his taking of Communion in the midst of sinfulness. He laments his uncleanness and, though undeserving, beseeches Christ for help. In the process of asking for assistance, he also presents heaven in nautical terms and Christ as the Captain of a ship, details that add to His characterisation as Warrior Chieftain in new and intriguing ways.

Bergðak brjósti saurgu (byrjar hlunns) sem munni,
 (hreins) ok holdi þínu (huggóðr Jofurr) blóði.
 Þó sék, Þengill skýja þrifskjótr (meginljótir
 hagir sýnask mér mínir margir) þar til bjargar. (*Harmsól* 12)²³⁵

²³³ Psalm XXIV. 7: *delicta iuventutis meae et ignorantias meas ne memineris. Secundum misericordiam tuam memento mei tu, propter bonitatem tuam. Domine (Vulg 2011, Psalm XXIV.7)* 'the sins of my youth and my ignorances do not remember. According to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodness' sake, O Lord' (*Vulg 2011, Psalm XXIV.7*). Cf. Attwood 2007: 79.

²³⁴ I have modified Attwood's edition of the Old Norse text so that its word forms accord with my sentence's grammar.

²³⁵ I have modified Attwood's edition of the Old Norse text by using brackets instead of commas and dashes to differentiate clause-boundaries.

I tasted, with an unclean heart and mouth (merciful Chief of the launching-roller of the fair sailing wind) Your body and blood. Nevertheless, O prosperity-swift Captain of the clouds, (many of my affairs seem to me extremely ugly) I look there for help.

'launching-roller of the fair sailing wind': ship of heaven, whose Prince is Christ

Harmsól 12 contains one of the earliest examples of seafaring imagery associated with Christ in extant Christian skaldic verse, with a more oblique reference already observed in my analysis of *Geisli* 57 from chapter two. Christ is identified as *Jǫfurr* 'Chief', specifically *Jǫfurr hlunns hreins byrjar* 'Chief of the launching-roller of the fair sailing wind'.²³⁶ The somewhat odd description of heaven as *hlunnr*, a term used symbolically for a ship in poetic contexts, specifically refers to either a roller or a wooden plank used for launching ships.²³⁷ Despite this highly technical meaning, the poet's intended portrayal of heaven as a ship remains clear. Add to this *byrr* 'fair sailing wind', which 'always denotes the wind on the sea', and the maritime themes become even more apparent.²³⁸ The Christ-kenning *brifskjótr Þengill skýja* 'prosperity-swift Captain of the clouds' similarly evokes the image of ship swiftly travelling across the sea, with Christ setting the course at its helm. Exclusively a poetic term, *þengill* refers to the 'captain of a *þing*', 'a king', or 'prince', and thus adds to the perception of Christ not only as a King, but also as a Captain guiding His followers safely through the tempestuous seas of sinfulness in this world. Overall, the stanza presents Christ in a sustaining role both through the sacrament of Communion and acting as Guide and Protector.

The image of the Church as a ship first appeared in the work of Tertullian (c. AD 160-c. 220), and medieval Christian literature such as the poetry of Venantius Fortunatus describes Christ as the Captain of a ship navigating the treacherous seas of sin to salvation.²³⁹ Despite its reliance on ships for

²³⁶ For *jǫfurr* 'king' or 'warrior', see *LP* 329; and *SnE* 1998: 331.

²³⁷ For *hlunnr*, see *LP*: 264; *SnE* 1998: 313; and entry in *ADIP*.

²³⁸ For *byrr*, see *SnE* 1998: 254; and the entry in *ADIP*.

²³⁹ Marchand 1976: 238-50. Cf. Haki Antonsson 2012: 119; and Evans 1964: 29. For more information about ship symbolism, particularly in Christian literature, see Lehmann 1936-7, Schnier 1951, Herder 1972, Judson 1964, and Russell 1983. For a discussion of ship imagery in Old Norse literature, see Cucina 2010.

resources and connections to other cultures, the historical context of medieval Iceland has surprisingly little relevance to seafaring. Miller describes the society of Commonwealth Iceland as ‘pastoral and agricultural, not maritime’, relying on ships from the Continent for vital resources and cultural influence.²⁴⁰ Norwegian traders, who owned and captained the ships between Iceland and the Continent during the period of *Harmsól’s* composition, largely controlled Icelandic commerce and travel to and from the Continent. Consequently, Iceland saw ships as their lifeline and link to Continental Europe. Navigation through the treacherous seas of sinfulness also fits well with the dangers of travelling to and from Iceland, where the sea ‘was not considered to be navigable by ordinary warships’.²⁴¹ In a country surrounded by waters that were navigated almost exclusively by Norwegian merchants, on whom its people relied for vital physical and cultural resources, the image of Christ as a ship’s Captain might have held extra poignancy for the poet and his presumably Icelandic audience.

Gamli kanóki’s personal penitence continues in stanza 13 as he describes the temporary satisfaction he finds in hiding his sins from mankind, yet admits to his ultimate inadequacy before Christ at the Last Judgement. He explains that he filters his deeds to the world so that his accomplishments are emphasised and his sins are hidden, but realises this will not deceive Christ.

Létk í ljós fyr gautum láðs nokkurar dáðir
laxa fróns, en leyndak lǫskum þótt, sem máttak,
seggja kind at sýndisk, (setrs) þokka mun betri,
(Vísí hár) an værak (vel kunnum því, sunnu). (*Harmsól* 13)

I let certain deeds to come to light before the men of the land
of the land of the salmon, but I covered my weaknesses as best I
could,
so that I should seem to mankind much better than I was
(high Captain of the seat of the sun, we were [i.e. I was] well
pleased with that).

land of the salmon: river, in which gold is the land of the river; the men of
gold refers to humanity
seat of the sun: heaven, of which God is high King

²⁴⁰ Miller 1990: 16. Cf. Thompson 1965: 53.

²⁴¹ Jón Jóhannesson 1974: 222.

The poet expresses his ideas in this stanza through the contrast between darkness and light, and concealing and revealing. While he let certain *dáðir* ‘deeds’ come *í ljós* ‘to light’ among humankind, he also *leyndak lǫskum* ‘covered weaknesses’ as well as he could manage. Acknowledging Christ’s revelatory nature in the kenning *Vísi setrs sunnu* ‘Captain of the seat of the sun’, Gamli explains that concealing his sinfulness from mankind is only temporarily satisfying, since he cannot conceal his misdeeds from Christ. The verb *leyna* appears multiple times throughout the Christian skaldic corpus in reference to the concealment of spiritual identities, not just pertaining to humanity but also the devil and Christ.²⁴² Gamli explains in the second *helmingr* that he covers his *lǫskum* ‘weaknesses’ so that he would *sýndisk* ‘appear’ to be a better person, further emphasising the disparity between what is apparent to the world and what the poet conceals from humanity.²⁴³ Despite his efforts to seem righteous to others, the poet is ultimately unable to hide his sinfulness from Christ’s revelatory light.

In addition to these more obvious expressions of concealment and revelation, Gamli also references the glittering quality of gold when explaining that he allows certain deeds to come to light to those around him. The humanity-kenning *gautar fróns laxa láðs* ‘men of the land of the land of the salmon’ in the first *helmingr* obliquely references mythological gold hidden in the *laxa láð* ‘land of the salmon’ or river, a detail that would have conjured up the image of glittering gold for the poem’s original audience. As Jesch explains, ‘in the legend told by Snorri (and in *Nibelungenlied*) the treasure of the Niflungs was thrown into the Rhine, so that gold can be called the ‘fire’ or ‘sun’ (because it shines) of any kind of water’.²⁴⁴ O’Donoghue similarly notes that there are numerous kennings for gold that ‘describe it as the fire, gleam or ember of the wave, sea or river’, and frequently relate to the story of the treasure hoard deposited in the River Rhine by the Niflungs.²⁴⁵ Though the gold kenning in

²⁴² For *leyna* ‘to conceal’, see *LP* 143. The *Geisli* poet, for example, notes that Óláfr *leyndi* ‘concealed’ his spiritual goodness from humanity during his lifetime. This verb is also used to express how God has concealed each man’s death-day in *Harmsól* 44.

²⁴³ For *sýna*, see *LP* 556; and *SnE* 1998: 409.

²⁴⁴ Jesch 1991: 161.

²⁴⁵ O’Donoghue 2008: 134-5.

stanza 13 does not explicitly describe light reflecting off of gold, past literary descriptions certainly evoke this image. The identification of humanity as ‘men of gold’, as this kenning might be interpreted, is perhaps a comment on how all humanity attempts to showcase their good deeds as if they were shining gold while concealing their sinful natures from one another.

Despite fearing the eternal repercussions of sinfulness, Gamli admits in stanza 14 *óttuðumk miðr Yðra reiði an gumna* ‘I dreaded Your (God’s) anger less than men’s’, and adds in stanza 15 that he would often promise to turn away from sinfulness, only to return to it again. He then expresses the overwhelming and encompassing nature of his sinfulness in stanza 16, lamenting his inability to recount all his misdeeds, which are so numerous that they entangle him:

Hefr, at hvern of rifjak, Harri minn, til fjarri,
grandi firðr, þanns gerðak geig, es sék þik eigi;
elsku kuðr, alls Yðvarr, Qðlingr, hefik, rððla,
aumligr þræll í qllum afgerðum mik vafðan. (*Harmsól* 16)²⁴⁶

It is far [from the case] that I can go into every injury
I have committed when, O my Lord, removed from sin, I do not see you;
since I, Your wretched slave, have entangled myself
in all misdeeds, O love-renowned Prince of heavenly bodies.

In the first *helmingr* Gamli laments that his sins are too numerous to say. He calls each of his sinful actions a *geigr*, meaning a ‘harm’, ‘hurt’, ‘mishap’, or ‘misfortune’, which invites the audience to imagine his sin as a spiritual injury.²⁴⁷ If editors like Sveinbjörn Egilsson and Attwood have correctly emended it, the verb *rifja* means ‘to rake’ or ‘spread out’, which may mean that the poet perceives his sins as a yield of crops from his rebellious nature.²⁴⁸ He recognises that he reaps what he sows, and laments that the yield is abundant. Christ, by contrast, is described as being *grandi firðr* ‘removed from sin’, with the poet once again making use of the term *grand*, which can also be

²⁴⁶ I have modified Attwood’s edition of the Old Norse text by using a semi-colon instead of comma to differentiate clause-boundaries between the first and second *helmingr*.

²⁴⁷ For *geigr*, see entry in *ADIP*; and *LP* 175.

²⁴⁸ From Attwood 2007: 88 and Sveinbjörn Egilsson 1844: 18 n. 22. For *rifja*, see *LP* 466; and *SnE* 1998: 377.

understood as a ‘hurt’ or ‘injury’.²⁴⁹ He explains that he committed these injuries when he did not see Christ, indicating his spiritual blindness, and adds in the second *helmingr* that this blindness was a result of entangling himself *í qllum afgerðum* ‘in all misdeeds’. While the stanza does not explicitly represent Christ as Healer, it certainly establishes the idea of sinfulness as an injury to the poet and humanity generally. Christ as Healer is able to remedy that injury through salvation.

The representation of Christ as Ruler also comes into play in stanza 16, where He is described as both *Harri* ‘Lord’ and *Qðlingr* ‘Captain’.²⁵⁰ Unlike *Geisli*, which celebrates Óláfr’s role as Christ’s *þegn* or *ríðari* ‘knight’, here the poet perceives himself as unworthy of such a relationship. Gamli calls himself a *þræll*, a term that not only literally refers to a ‘thrall’, ‘servant’, or ‘slave’, but also reflects his penitential attitude in the metaphorical meaning of ‘a servile, mean fellow, and then a cruel, wicked wretch’.²⁵¹ The relationship defined here between Christ and humanity both maintains Christ’s role as King or Warrior Chieftain, also fits extremely well within the penitential context of *Harmsól* generally.

Stanza 17, which marks the beginning of the poem’s *stefjabálkr*, develops the representation of sin as a legal offence against God that can only be reconciled through Christ’s mercy and sacrifice. Having contemplated his personal sinfulness over numerous stanzas, Gamli broadens the call for penitence to include all of mankind, explaining through a direct address to God that *hverr greppr, sás gerra unna þér, es grunnúðigr* ‘every man who does not love You is simple-minded’.

Hverr es greppr, sás gerra, grunnúðigr, þér unna
(slíkr hqfum synða auki sótt), heimstqðu Dróttinn.
Þú biðr qð, en aðrir, almáttigr Guð, sátta,
ýta ferð at yrði aldýr, sqkum valda. (*Harmsól* 17)²⁵²

²⁴⁹ For *grand*, meaning ‘injury’, ‘hurt’, ‘evil’, or ‘offence’, see *LP*: 198; *SnE* 1998: 293; and entry in *ADIP*.

²⁵⁰ For *harri*, see *LP* 240; and *SnE* 1998: 303. For *qðlingr*, see *SnE* 1998: 440.

²⁵¹ For *þræll*, see *LP* 648; and *SnE* 1998: 437.

²⁵² I have modified Attwood’s edition of the Old Norse text by using brackets instead of commas to differentiate clause-boundaries.

Every man who does not love You is simple-minded,
 (such an increase of sins has visited us [me]) Lord of the world.
 Almighty God, You ask mankind for settlement,
 so that the race of men might become blessed, but others cause
 offences.

Lord of the homestead: God

Gamli presents humanity's sinfulness in a distinctly legal light, explaining that God asks for *sátta* 'settlement', yet there are some who continue to cause *søkum* 'offences'. *Sátt* refers to a 'legal settlement' often involving some kind of monetary compensation in place of other forms of punishment, and appears elsewhere in Christian skaldic verse as a means of expressing the reconciliation that Christ brings about between God and sinful humanity.²⁵³ *Søk*, meaning 'offence', 'guilt', or 'crime', appears in the law phrase for 'a plaint', 'suit', or 'action in court', and in this context ought to be interpreted specifically as sins.²⁵⁴ Gamli frames God's relationship with humanity as a legal one, with Christ as an Arbitrator of sorts. Those who do not love God and turn down Christ's settlement are considered *grunnúðigr* 'simple-minded', particularly since such an *auki synda* 'increase of sins' has visited mankind. The stanza also makes use of the word *synd*, a term that seems to have been borrowed with the arrival of Christianity and is used exclusively to mean 'sin', but properly means 'negation' or 'denial', 'no doubt referring to denial by oath of compurgators'.²⁵⁵ The overwhelming message is that, viewed from a legal perspective, humanity falls short spiritually without Christ's reconciling role.

Having contemplated the sinfulness rife throughout the world, Gamli next turns his attention to Christ, beginning with a stanza celebrating the Incarnation. Perhaps drawing influence from the descriptions of Christ's humanity and divinity in the fifth-century *Carmen Paschale* by Sedulius, he observes that

²⁵³ For *sátt*, see *LEI* 2006: 274; *LEI* 2000: 421; and *SnE* 2000: 421. *Skaldskaparmál* 39 of Snorri's *Edda* describes the settlement made for the death of Óttar: *Tók Hreiðmarr otrbelginn ok mælir við þá at þeir skulu fylla belginn af rauðu gulli ok svá hylja hann allan, ok svá skal þat vera at sætt þeira* 'Hreiðmar took the otter skin, and ordered them to fill the skin with red gold and also to conceal the outside completely and this would be the settlement between them' (Old Norse text from *SnE* 1998: p. 45, lines 19-21).

²⁵⁴ For *søk*, see *LEI* 2006: 275; *LEI* 2000: 421; *SnE* 1998: 411; *LP* 525; and entry in *ADIP*.

²⁵⁵ For *synd*, see *IED* 763.

Christ conceals His identity through this event, as though He were covering or clothing Himself.²⁵⁶ An aside in the second *helmingr* reminds the audience of the poem's strong legal focus, celebrating that the Incarnation destroys the harm awaiting sinful humanity at the Last Judgement.

Ítr, lýstir Þú ástar, élserkjar Gramr, merki
 láðs við lyptimeiða linns í hérvist Þinni.
 Guð, rétt guðdóm Yðvarn (glatask mein af því) hreinan
 (hqlða liðs) at hylja, hár, manndómi vörum. (*Harmsól* 18)

Glorious Warrior-King of the storm-shirt, You made manifest tokens of Your love
 towards the lifting-branches of the land of the serpent of Your dwelling here.
 High God, You decided to cover Your pure godhead (the harm
 of the troop of men/women is destroyed because of that) with our humanity.

'land of the serpent': gold, whose 'lifting branches (men/women)' are
 rewarded warriors

Once again Gamli explores themes of revelation and concealment, as well as spiritual combat. Whereas the poet perceives himself as entangled and injured in the sinfulness that he vainly attempts to conceal from others, sinless Christ covers Himself with humanity as if arming for spiritual battle. The Christ-kenning in the first *helmingr*, *ítr Gramr élserkjar* 'glorious Warrior-King of the storm-shirt', vividly describes Christ in a manner that suggests His human flesh may be construed as battle gear.²⁵⁷ The 'armour of God' in Ephesians VI.11-17 likely serves as a key influence for this image, and texts such as Passus XVI of *Piers Plowman*, in which Christ puts on armour before fighting the devil, demonstrate that similar ideas emerged in fourteenth-century English literature; in both cases,

²⁵⁶ From *Carmen Paschale*, which describes Christ removing the last of His humanity at the Crucifixion, as if it were clothing, so that He can clothe Himself in divinity at the Resurrection: *Deponens habitus, proprium suscepit amictum, / Scilicet humanae positurus tegmina carnis / Et sumpturus item, nil iam ut mutabile ferret / Post mortem propria cum maiestate resurgens* (5:172-5, ed. Huemer 1885: 127) 'Laying aside his clothing, he took on his own covering: as though, being about to lay aside the covering of human flesh and take on the same flesh again, already he would not wear anything mutable: rising, after death, in his own majesty' (Modern English translation from Ó Carragáin 2005: 5).

²⁵⁷ For more information about *ítr* and *gramr*, see analysis for *Geisli* 18 and 21 in chapter two.

those armed and fighting for God are ultimately victorious.²⁵⁸ Given that *élserkr* is a *hapax legomenon*, its use in all likelihood is not only intentional but aimed at conjuring an association with both the heavenly realm and spiritual battle. Gamli goes on to observe that Christ made manifest His *merki*, a term meaning a ‘field sign’, ‘tab’, ‘banner, or ‘war-standard’, in other words, a clear display of the Incarnation.²⁵⁹ In an aside in the second *helmingr*, Christ’s followers are described as *lið*, which bears a range of meanings in skaldic verse, such as ‘troop’, ‘retinue’, or even ‘fleet’ in special circumstances, and further affirms their *comitatus* relationship with Christ.²⁶⁰ Gamli explains that humanity’s *mein* ‘harm’, in reference to sinfulness and the judgement it merits, *glata* ‘is destroyed’ because He covered Himself in humanity and entered the world. The use of *glata* ‘to destroy’ or ‘slay’ relates back to the poet’s reference to Christ as *Gramr* ‘Warrior-King’ in the first *helmingr*, while the use of *mein* ‘harm’ once again presents sin as an injury of sorts, serving as a reminder of Christ’s role as Healer.²⁶¹ Taken together, the details of this stanza point to an interpretation of Christ as a battle-ready Warrior Chieftain, with humanity as His retinue.

Christ’s Incarnation as a means of deception also plays an important role in stanza 18. In the second *helmingr* Christ conceals His true identity as He enters the world through the Incarnation, having decided *hylja* ‘to cover’ His *hreinan guðdóm* ‘pure Godhead’ with our humanity. The use of the verb *hylja*, which means ‘to conceal’ or ‘cover so as to hide’, adds to the idea of Christ arming Himself for spiritual battle and suggests that His humanity may, in part, be used as a means of deception.²⁶² Christ’s concealment of His divinity serves as an intriguing contrast to the poet’s concealment of his sinfulness, and the detail hints at theological concepts surrounding the devil’s rights and ransom theory that contributes to Christ’s representation as Beguiler in later Christian skaldic poems such as *Líknarbraut* and *Lilja*. In *Harmsól* overall, however, Christ as Beguiler plays only a minimal role.

²⁵⁸ Despite the passage’s emphasis on suffering and sacrifice in Langland’s narrative, the dominant tone of the knight-image in B XVIII is triumphant (Waldon 1986: 71).

²⁵⁹ For *merki*, see entry in *ADIP*; *LP* 402; and *SnE* 1998: 355.

²⁶⁰ Jesch 2001: 187-8.

²⁶¹ For *glata*, see *LP* 186 and *IED* 203. For *mein*, see *LP* 399; *LEI* 2000: 419; and entry in *ADIP*.

²⁶² For *hylja*, see *SnE* 1998: 325; and *LP* 303-4. See *Lilja* 39 in chapter six for another instance in which *hylja* is used to describe God’s concealment of Christ’s divine identity.

The narrative of Christ's life continues in stanza 19, as He is born into the world and gladly bears *alla óstyrkð ok meinlæti* 'all frailties and agonies' on His body through His death on the Cross, leading into a refrain of praise in stanza 20. Christ's injuries at the Crucifixion are detailed in stanza 21, where He is addressed directly and called *vegligr Angrstríðir* 'magnificent grief-Fighter', an epithet that contrasts His physical sufferings on the Cross with His success in the spiritual battle taking place. Gamli then recounts the story of the penitent thief in stanzas 22 through 24, with the thief addressing Christ and asking for mercy in the first two stanzas, and receiving it in stanza 24. The poet concludes in stanza 25 with the promise that Christ gives *hæsta hollostu, lausn ok ynði með Sér* 'the highest faith, redemption and happiness with Him', followed by the poem's refrain. This story, which is not included in the other Christian skaldic poems in this thesis, contributes to the penitential theme of this poem by offering a biblical example of repentance leading to salvation. Gamli next considers in stanza 26 whether any man might be *svá harðgeðr* 'so hard-minded' that he *mætti standa ógrátandi hjá þinni kvöl* 'may stand unweeping beside Your torture', once again emphasising the poem's penitential aims. Stanza 27 celebrates the Harrowing of Hell, when Christ freed humanity *ór harðri gnótt harms* 'from a harsh abundance of sorrow', and stanza 28 praises how His Resurrection gladdened *ráðvísa fira, þás Yðvarr dauði hryggði áðr* 'counsel-wise people, whom Your death had formerly distressed'. These stanzas not only summarise Christ's life, sacrifice, and Resurrection, but also illustrate the rewards of a penitential spirit.

Stanza 29, which paraphrases the account of Christ's fully revealed glory at the Ascension in Acts 1.9-11, differs from the biblical narrative in its vivid description of Christ's divine identity as a form of clothing or adornment.²⁶³ Rather than covering Himself in humanity as He does in at the Incarnation,

²⁶³ Acts 1.9-11: *Et cum Haec dixisset, videntibus illis, elevatus est, et nubes suscepit Hum ab oculis eorum. Cumque intuerentur in caelum eunte Illo, ecce duo viri astiterunt juxta illos in vestibus albis, qui et dixerunt: 'Viri Galilaei, quid statis aspicientes in caelum? Hic Iesus, qui assumptus est a vobis in caelum, sic veniet quemadmodum vidistis Eum euntem in caelum'* (Vulg 1979, Acts 1.9-11) 'When He had said this, as they were watching, He was lifted up, and a cloud took Him out of their sight. While He was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you to heaven, will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven'' (NRSV, Acts 1.9-11).

Christ instead is *skrýddr holdi* ‘clothed with holy flesh’ at the Ascension’ in a manner that reveals His divine nature, and is celebrated as the supreme and exalted King of heaven.

Leitt í lopt upp, Dróttinn (litu gǫrla þat vitrir)
 himins fylgjandi, helgu holdi skrýddr, af foldu.
 Áðr trúir ǫld ok síðan aldýran þik stýra,
 Skríngeypnandi, skepnu, skýstalls, sælu allri. (*Harmsól* 29)²⁶⁴

Helping Lord of heaven, You passed up (wise men saw that fully)
 into the sky from earth, clothed with holy flesh.
 Shrine-Holder of the cloud-platform, mankind believes before
 and since that You, all-glorious, steer all the bliss of creation.

‘Cloud-platform’: sky, whose ‘shrine’ is the sun, whose ‘holder’ is Christ.

Editors have argued over the interpretation of this stanza, primarily in how the verb *skrýða* functions within it. Attwood explains that Finnur Jónsson interprets *fylgjandi* in the first *helmingr* as the present participle of *fylgja* ‘to accompany’, thereby ‘amplifying *skrýddr* in the expression *skrýddr, fylgjandi helgu holdi*, which he paraphrases as *forklaret fǫlgende dit hellige legeme* ‘transfigured (or glorified) following your holy body.’²⁶⁵ Kock, like Attwood, disagrees with this interpretation, citing similar language in *Líknarbraut* and *Lilja* that is used to describe Christ’s Incarnation, and favours the reading of *skrýddr helgu holdi* ‘clothed with your holy flesh.’²⁶⁶ The editorial choices made by Kock and Attwood are the most convincing here, in part because their reading seems to be clear and consistent with clothing imagery in other parts of the poem, as well as later Christian skaldic verse such as stanza 8 of the fourteenth-century hagiographical poem *Kátrinardrápa*.²⁶⁷ The choice of *skrýða* ‘to clothe’, in contrast with the use of *hylja* ‘to cover’ in the sense of concealment in stanza 18, indicates that Christ has publicly revealed His true identity by clothing Himself in

²⁶⁴ I have modified Attwood’s edition of the Old Norse text by using brackets instead of dashes to differentiate clause-boundaries.

²⁶⁵ Attwood 2007: 98. Cf. *Skj* B.

²⁶⁶ *NN* § 2111. Cf. Attwood 2007: 98.

²⁶⁷ *Kátrinardrápa* 8: *Mildingr foldar mána skrýddi sannan Guðdóm mannligu holdi* ‘the Prince of the land of the moon [God] adorned the true Godhead with human flesh’.

helgu holdi ‘holy flesh’.²⁶⁸ The use of *hold*, meaning ‘flesh’ or ‘meat’, is striking as a description for Christ’s divine identity, since it typically refers to the tangible flesh or body ‘as the perishable part of a man’ and further emphasises the idea of humanity and divinity as interchangeable coverings for Christ.²⁶⁹ Gamli adds to this account of the Ascension that *vitrir lítu þat gǫrla*, ‘wise men saw that fully’; the verb *líta* ‘to see’ alongside the adjective *gǫrla* ‘fully’ indicates that Christ’s divinity is not merely perceived but completely made known to humanity. *Harmsól* 29 thus transforms the use of clothing imagery in the poem, demonstrating that it can be used to express both concealment and revelation.

In addition to associating Christ with light, stanza 29 also expresses His leadership and supreme authority over all creation. Gamli’s descriptions of Christ as *Skríngeypnandi skýstalls* ‘Shrine-holder of the cloud-platform’ and *aldýran* ‘all-glorious’ both add to the majesty of His Ascension, and present His supreme authority over the heavens as cathedral and the sun as its shrine. When addressing Christ in the second *helmingr*, Gamli concludes with the proclamation, *stýra allri sælu skepnu* ‘[You] steer all creation’. The verb *stýra* ‘to steer’ metaphorically means ‘to rule’, ‘govern’, or ‘lead’, but also invites the audience to imagine Christ as the Captain of a ship.²⁷⁰ As Jesch notes, the basic meaning of *stýra* ‘is the action of holding the tiller and directing the course of the ship, but it can also refer to in a more general way to the war-leader’s command of his fleet’.²⁷¹ The description of humanity as *skepna* ‘creation’ can also refer to ‘a shape’ or ‘form’ and seems to relate to the theme of Christ’s ability to shape His identity (or perceived identity) at the Incarnation and the Ascension.²⁷² Emphasis on Christ’s ability to steer, shape, and govern points to Christ’s representation as the glorified and sovereign King of heaven, fully revealing His divinity and commanding all things.

Having assumed His place as the King in heaven, Christ is praised in stanza 30 by *allr ítr herra sveitar engla ok menn á jörðu* ‘all the glorious troop of

²⁶⁸ For *skryða*, see *LP* 513 and *IED* 559.

²⁶⁹ For *hold*, see entry for *ADIP*; *LP* 271; and *SnE* 1998: 315.

²⁷⁰ For *stýra* ‘to steer’, see *SnE* 1998: 404-5; and *LP* 543. For examples of Christ as *Stýri* ‘Steerer’, presumably of a metaphorical ship, see *Harmsól* 27 and *Leiðarvísan* 21.

²⁷¹ Jesch 2001: 174.

²⁷² For *skepna*, see *LP* 504.

the host of angels and men on earth' and called the *Vǫrðr salar fjalla* 'Guardian of the hall of the mountains', represented once again as Warrior Chieftain and Guardian of His troops.²⁷³ Stanza 31 foretells the Second Coming, when humanity will rise from their graves *við inn mesta ugg* 'with the most fear' to be judged by heaven's Ruler. Adding to *Harmsól's* assortment of legal terms pertaining to humanity's relationship with Christ, stanza 32 refers to the Last Judgement itself as a *þing*, an assembly format familiar in both Iceland and Norway in various guises. Gamli reminds his audience of humanity's inadequacy before God's judgement, thus reinforcing the poem's penitential theme.

Engr mun alls á þingi ísheims vesa þvísa
jóskreytandi ítrum óttalauss fyr Dróttni,
éla vangs þvít englar Jǫfurs skjalfa þá sjalfir
(ógn tekr mǫttug magnask) mæts við ugg ok hræzlu. (*Harmsól* 32)²⁷⁴

Not a single steed-adorned of the ice-world
will be fearless before the glorious Lord at this assembly,
since the angels themselves of the excellent King of the field of snow-
showers
(mighty terror will begin to increase) will quake then with fear and dread.

steed of the ice-world: ship on the sea, of which the adorners are sea-farers
field of snow-showers: heaven, whose King is God

Christ as God appears as supreme Judge, with His reconciling actions taking second place in order to emphasise the fearsome aspect of the event. The stanza's depiction of Christ's potential to exercise powerful wrath on those gathered, as Attwood observes, can also be found in Icelandic sermons on All Saints' Day²⁷⁵ and the Holy Spirit²⁷⁶, as well as in biblical passages like Joel

²⁷³ I have modified Attwood's edition of the Old Norse text by changing word forms to accord with the sentence's grammar.

²⁷⁴ I have modified Attwood's edition of the Old Norse text by using brackets instead of dashes to differentiate clause-boundaries.

²⁷⁵ *þar es óttesva mikill oc andvare at þeim dóme at þa skialfa englar guþs oc aller helger meN* 'there will be such great fear and apprehension at the Judgement that the angels of God and all holy men will quake' (*Hómísl* 1872: 45).

²⁷⁶ *eNda muno skialfa aller helger, mikil mon þa ógn í heime vera. es conungr kǫmr reiþr* 'to finish, all the saints will quake, there will be great dread in the world, when the king comes in wrath' (*Hómísl* 1872, 214).

II.1.²⁷⁷ While the general subject matter would have been familiar to the poem's Christian audience, Gamli's use of *þing* also draws the event into a Scandinavian legal context. As used in this instance, the noun *þing* refers to 'an assembly', 'meeting', or 'a general term for a public meeting', and often specifies those gatherings held 'for the purposes of legislation ... including courts of law'.²⁷⁸ The use of this term thus harkens back to Scandinavian legal systems, just as the description of Christ as *Jǫfurr* 'Warrior Chieftain' evokes earlier Scandinavian leaders and invites the audience to imagine Christ in a familiar literary milieu.²⁷⁹

At the time of *Harmsól's* composition, the nature of a *þing* varied depending on the region and country in which it was held. In the twelfth century Norwegian *þings* served as gatherings for leaders and followers, whether it was the king and his representatives, or regional leaders and the general population.²⁸⁰ Icelanders, by contrast, governed themselves through a combination of local assemblies and the annual *Alþing* gathering, in which a group of representatives called *goði* from the four Quarters of the country met to settle the country's important legal matters. Since Iceland was governed without a monarch until 1262-64, this meeting served as the central legal force and supreme judicial authority of the country. In the sense that it functioned as the highest legislative and judicial gathering in Iceland, the *Alþing* seems like a clear point of comparison with the Last Judgement. The poem's likely site of composition in Iceland also supports this interpretation.

Turville-Petre notes that Iceland's legal practices persisted largely unchanged for centuries beyond the conversion.²⁸¹ However, authority did shift away from Icelanders between the eleventh to the fourteenth century, when the *Alþing* and general governance in Iceland gradually incorporated the Norwegian king and his appointed officials into its processes. Between 1262 and 1264,

²⁷⁷ Attwood 2007: 101. Joel II.1: *Canite tuba in Sion; ululate in monte sancto meo. Conturbentur omnes habitatores terrae quia venit dies Domini, quia prope est* (*Vulg* 2012b, Joel II.1) 'Blow ye the trumpet of Zion; sound an alarm in my holy mountain. Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble because the day of the Lord cometh, because it is nigh at hand' (*Vulg* 2012b, Joel II.1).

²⁷⁸ For *þing*, see *LEI* 2000: 422; *LEI* 2006: 275; *SnE* 1998: 434; and Zoëga 2004 [1926]: 14.

²⁷⁹ For more information on *jǫfurr*, see earlier analysis for *Geisli* 5 in chapter two.

²⁸⁰ Lönnroth 2003: 167.

²⁸¹ Turville-Petre 1953: 71.

when Norway annexed Iceland, all Quarters in Iceland had become part of the Norwegian king's domain, marking the end of the Free State.²⁸² The symbolic centre of Icelandic legal practice, the Lawspeaker, was eventually replaced by a Norwegian royal lawman, while the *Alþing* replaced its Fifth Court and Quarter Courts with a central court of law modelled on the Norwegian *lawthing*.²⁸³ By the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, the Icelandic legal system became, in some degree, subject to the Norwegian king, who held a higher legal authority than the assembly itself and whose men were appointed to positions within that legal system. Though this increasingly centralised leadership does not emerge until after *Harmsól's* composition, the use of *þing* in later Christian skaldic verse confirms that the image of Christ as wise Counsellor and Judge at a legal assembly continued to be a useful point of reference for authors and audiences during this period.

In addition to a strong legal focus, stanza 32 also makes use of nature-based images that evoke both strength and prosperity. The description of heaven within the Christ-kenning *Jǫfurr vangs éla* 'King of the field of snow-showers' as *vangr*, which means a 'plain' or 'field', symbolises Christ's mercy through agricultural growth and prosperity.²⁸⁴ However, this expression of nurturing generosity is tempered with signs of overwhelming power. The kenning *jóskreytandi ísheims* 'steed-adorned of the ice-world', which depicts humanity as seafarers navigating the treacherous waters of the world, alongside the aforementioned heaven-kenning in *Jǫfurr vangs éla* 'King of the field of snow-showers', uses the strength of natural elements to reflect the imposing strength of Christ at Judgement. The ice and snow in these kennings may even refer to the chill of rejection that the unrighteous fear to face on that day. Through these references to nature's potential to both give and take away life, the poet vividly expresses the wonder and dread that will be experienced at the Last Judgement.

The narrative of the Last Judgement continues in stanza 33, where the poet explains that Christ's wounds and blood will appear *fyr hrygggu augliti ossu*

²⁸² Hastrup 1985: 232.

²⁸³ Lönnroth 2003: 389.

²⁸⁴ For *vangr*, see *LP* 592; and *SnE* 1998: 421.

‘before our sorrowful faces’, a detail that relates back to Gamli’s penitential focus on the Crucifixion in stanzas 20 through 26. Gamli once again reminds the audience of humanity’s sinfulness and inadequacy before God in stanza 34, lamenting *at vér fœrim fátt framm of varnir í glammi orða at dómi* ‘that we will bring forth defences badly in a din of words at the Judgement’ if we have not made peace for our sins. Humanity is divided in stanza 36, where Gamli notes that Christ’s penitent followers will be drawn *óttlaust af því móti til ynðis ok sælu* ‘without fear from that meeting to delight and bliss’; stanza 37 similarly warns that *allt gengr drengjum við kjör heilags Krists* ‘all will go for men according to the determination of holy Christ’, and immediately adds that Christ’s abundant bliss should never leave our minds. The focus then turns to the unrepentant, who are sent to Hell and face *óvísligar píslir* ‘uncertain torments’ (stanza 38) and *fleira angr an tunga ór megi segja frá því* ‘more anguish than our tongue is able to express’ (stanza 39).²⁸⁵ The juxtaposition of rewards for the righteous and punishment for the unrepentant serves as an urgent reminder to prepare for the Judgement, and is followed by a refrain of praise to God as the King of heaven in stanza 40.

Having reminded the audience of humanity’s need for salvation, Gamli urgently implores each person in stanza 41 to try *sættask við Harra láðs byrjar* ‘to reconcile himself with the King of the land of the breeze’, reiterating the concept of humanity’s need for reconciliation through *sátt* ‘settlement’ as expressed in *Hamsól* 17. He warns that no one may be saved *nema bæti verk gǫr af venju* ‘unless he makes reparation for works done out of habit’ (stanza 42), again suggesting that God is owed compensation for the offences of sinfulness. To stress humanity’s immediate need for reconciliation, the poet observes that men *esat heitit lǫngu lífi* ‘are not promised long life’ (stanza 43) and that God has *hefr leyndá* ‘has hidden’ each person’s *dánardægri* ‘death-day’ (stanza 44), which plays into the poem’s themes of concealment and

²⁸⁵ I have modified Attwood’s edition of the Old Norse text by deleting a comma for the smoother flow of the sentence.

revelation.²⁸⁶ Gamli states in stanza 45 that only Christ can offer unfailing help to humanity and concludes with a refrain, marking the end of the *stefjabálkr*.

Harmsól moves into its concluding section in stanza 46, where it is explained that the *slæmr mun síðan sýna þjóð dæmi miskunnar* ‘*slæmr* will then show people models of mercy’ found in Scripture that exemplify penitence. Gamli is quick to point out in stanza 47 that he is nothing like the exemplary figures that he praises, and that *sófr sótt aukumsk í slíku* ‘painful sickness increases for me because of this’, expressing his need for Christ’s spiritual healing. The first model of mercy is King David, who *tók síðan skjóta siðabót ept synðir* ‘later made swift moral atonement after his sins’ of adultery and murder as briefly explained in stanza 48. Gamli praises David’s penitential spirit in stanza 49, and describes Christ’s mercy as treasures bestowed on the king.

Drengur réð brátt at beiða Buðlung ept hag þungan
 hǫppum reifðr, sem hœfði, himinríkis sér líkna.
 Fekk an fyrr af sökva fríðr Landreka síðan
 (hann réttisk svá) sunnu sætrs vingjafar mætri. (*Harmsól* 49)²⁸⁷

The bold man, enriched with successes, resolved soon after his
 grievous burden
 to ask the King of the kingdom of heaven for mercies for himself, as
 was fitting.
 The noble one received then more glorious gifts of friendship than
 before
 (he righted himself in this way) from the land-Protector of the treasures
 of the seats of the sun.

‘treasures of the seat of the sun’: heavenly bodies, of which Christ is the ‘land-Protector’

As a king and admired leader, David is referred to as *drengur reifðr hǫppum* ‘the bold man enriched with successes’, highlighting his accomplishments as a political leader. The verb *reifa*, used here in the sense ‘to enrich’, properly

²⁸⁶ The concept of God concealing information from humanity has a Latin parallel in *Disticha Catonis*. II, 2: *Mitte arcana dei caelumque inquirere quid sit, / [An di sint caelumque regant, ne quaere doceri] / cum sis mortalis quae sunt mortalia cura* ‘Avoid asking what are the secret things of God and heaven; [do not seek to be told whether gods exist and rule the heaven] since you are human, worry about human things’ (*Dist.* II, 2; Translation from Wills and Würth 2007: 397).

²⁸⁷ I have modified Attwood’s edition of the Old Norse text by using brackets instead of dashes to differentiate clause-boundaries.

means ‘to swaddle’ and perhaps suggests that David is adorned by his fame, thus adding to the theme of metaphorical clothing and adornment in the poem.²⁸⁸ Gamli’s use of *drengr* identifies David as a loyal follower of Christ, which in turn contributes to Christ’s representation as Warrior Chieftain.²⁸⁹ Jesch has noted that the meaning of *drengr* shifted in the eleventh century from a member of the *comitatus* on a quasi-equal footing with his leader, to a supporter or a mere fighting-man in a context which gave more prominence to the leader, the *dróttinn*.²⁹⁰ Syrett’s analysis of the term *drengr* reveals that both *drengr* and *þegn* are frequently used in skaldic verse to refer to a man serving a leader in a military capacity, even though by this period a *drengr* would have more likely been a high-ranking royal official.²⁹¹ Thus, in this context, King David is identified as being in a *comitatus* relationship with Christ, and is himself subject to the King of heaven. The shifting meaning of *drengr* is a significant detail, indicating a literary link between the earlier warrior chieftains and Norwegian monarchs of the medieval period. This goes some way towards explaining the fluidity of Christ’s depiction as both a Chieftain and King leading His retinue in battle, since their essential symbolic functions are connected in skaldic literary practice.

King David is further praised for resolving to request God’s mercy, which Gamli presents as a noble action towards the *Buðlung himinríkis* ‘King of the kingdom of heaven’.²⁹² The second *helmingr* seems to depict David in a chieftain-*þegn* relationship with Christ, when he receives the glorious *vingjǫf* ‘gift of friendship’ from the *Landreki* ‘land-Protector’ or ‘King’.²⁹³ David’s repentance

²⁸⁸ For *reifa*, see LP 461; LEI 2006: 273; and SnE 1998: 375; and IED 490.

²⁸⁹ For *drengr*, see SnE 1998: 258; LP: 84 and IED: 105.

²⁹⁰ Jesch 2001: 222.

²⁹¹ Syrett 2000: 261 and *passim*. Syrett (2000: 247-8) further observes that *Skáldskaparmál* in *Snorra Edda* offers the most explicit description of a *dreng*’s characteristics, which include being an itinerant young man who serves a leader while he acquires wealth and fame. Cf. Finnur Jónsson 1931: 186-7.

²⁹² For *ríki* ‘kingdom’, see SnE 1998: 377.

²⁹³ For *vingjǫf*, see LEI 2000: 422; LP 618; and Zoëga 2004 [1926]: 492. For *landreki*, see LP 356; and SnE 1998: 341. The connection between friendship and gift-giving is evident in the eleventh-century poems *Haraldsdrápa* and *Magnússdrápa* by Arnórr Þórðarson jarlaskáld: *Gjǫfvinr vildra Sygna* ‘gift-friend of cherished Sygnir’ (*Haraldsdrápa* 9), and *auðvin okkrum* ‘our wealth-friend’ (*Magnússdrápa* 4). Additionally, the title *landreki* ‘land-ruler’ is also used of a king in stanza 21 of the eleventh-century *Erfidrápa Óláfs helga* by Sigvatr Þórðarson: *landreki hers inn fremri* ‘better land-ruler of the army’.

effectively creates a system of loyalty in which Christ becomes the source of abundant wealth for His retainer.²⁹⁴ The use of *vingjafar* in this stanza demonstrates the value of friendship and relates to the idea of *amicus Dei* ‘friend of God’, which according to Jón Viðar Sigurðsson was a central concept in the Early and High Middle Ages, and appears in Christian texts such as Wisdom VII.27²⁹⁵ and James II.23.²⁹⁶ Old Norse hagiographies also use the corresponding epithet *Guðs vinr* ‘friend of God’ to describe saints, indicating that the concept was a familiar one.²⁹⁷ According to Chase, calling a *jarl* or lesser chieftain ‘the close friend or confidant of a more powerful man’ was a customary form of praise, indicating that friendship represented an alliance and personal bond that exceeded the typical standards of loyalty.²⁹⁸ This understanding of the relationship was particularly strong in Iceland, where friendship acted both as a personal and legal means of binding one person to another.²⁹⁹ Eddic wisdom poetry, such as *Hávamál*, equally demonstrates a literary precedent for the link between friendship and rey giving.³⁰⁰ This simple

²⁹⁴ For *vingjof*, see *LEI* 2000: 422; *LP* 618; and Zoëga 2004 [1926]: 492.

²⁹⁵ Wisdom VII.27: *Et, cum sit una, omnia potest, et permanens in se omnia innovat et per nationes in animas sanctas se transfert. Amicos Dei et prophetas constituit* (*Vulg* 2011, Wisdom VII.27) ‘And, being but one, she can do all things, and remaining in herself the same. She reneweth all things and through nations conveyeth herself into holy souls she maketh the friends of God and prophets’ (*Vulg* 2011, Wisdom VII.27).

²⁹⁶ James II.23: *et suppleta est Scriptura dicens: ‘Credidit Abraham Deo, et reputatum est illi ad iustitiam’, et amicus Dei appellatus est* (*Vulg* 1979, James II.23) ‘Thus the scripture was fulfilled that says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness’, and he was called the friend of God’ (*NRSV*, James II.23).

²⁹⁷ Jón Viðar Sigurðsson 1999: 125. For further information on the concept of friendship in the Middle Ages, see Althoff 1990: 88-133; Althoff 1989: 289-290; Bagge 1986: 153-155; Barth 1986: 42-50, 71-81; Bullough 1991; Burke 1981: 72-74; Charles-Edwards 1976: 180-87; Clark and Clark 1989: 26-44; Duby 1985: 34, 64-65, 120-121, 131-132; Eisenstadt and Roniger 1984: 106-12; Helle 1972; Karras 1988: 305-320; McGuire 1988: 369-382; McGuier 1987: 137; Nolte 1990: 136-144; Sahlins 1983: 383-399; Schlesinger 1953: 236-237; Schmidt 1977; Skydsgaard 1981; and Sprandel 1988: 70-75.

²⁹⁸ Chase 2005: 133. Cf. Meissner 1921: 362; and footnote in Jón Viðar Sigurðsson 1999: 124. Other instances in which Óláfr as Christ’s follower is described as *vinr* ‘friend’ include: *Geisli* 9 (*vin Tyggja røðuls* ‘friend of the Sovereign of the sun’), and *Geisli* 64 (*heitfastr Jofurr veitir dýrðar vin sínur* ‘the oath-firm King of the storm-hall gives honour to his friend’).

²⁹⁹ Byock 2001: 192.

³⁰⁰ For example, *Hávamál* 42: *Vin sínom / scal maðr vinr vera / oc gjalda gíof við gíof; / hlátr við hlátri / scyli hólðar taca, / en lausung við lygi* ‘To his friend / a man should be a friend / and repay gift with gift; / Laughter with laughter/ should men take, / but [repay] a lie with a falsehood’ (Old Norse text from *NK*, 23). According to von See (2001: 369), *Hávamál* is part of the literary project to ‘lay the foundations of a specifically Norse culture’; he explains that this poem presents Óðinn ‘as a genuinely Norse teacher of wisdom and morality’, placing this work ‘on par with the Biblical Solomon and Cato the Roman (390-96)’.

detail of gift giving in friendship, alongside David's identification as *drengr*, reinforces the personal link he shares with Christ in a chieftain-*þegn* relationship.

Stanza 50 turns its attention to St Peter, who had denied Christ at His arrest but ultimately repented and *þvegít vandla glœp með gráti* 'washed his misdeeds away fully with weeping'; consequently he possesses greater *várkunnir malmrunnum* 'mercy for sword-trees (warriors)' (stanza 51), extending mercy after Christ's example. Stanza 52 recounts the penitence of Mary Magdalene, who received mercy when she washed Christ's feet with her tears, and was released *frá ǫllum misgerðum hennar* 'from all her misdeeds' because she *treystisk Guði* 'trusted God'. Having praised these biblical figures for their penitent spirits, Gamli turns the focus back on himself in stanza 53, asking God to strengthen him and never cast him to the winds, *ef iðrumk glœpa* 'if I repent of misdeeds'. He beseeches Christ in stanza 54 to heal the wounds inflicted by sin and death. In so doing, he combines the representations of Christ as legal Authority and Healer in interesting ways:

Sólu veittak Sættir, (sárns minn ...)
 bana hættligar benjar, bragna kyns, fyr synðir.
 Nú beiðum þik, þjóðar þrekfœðandi, grœða
 andar sór, þaus óru ósvífr glata lífi. (*Harmsól* 54)³⁰¹

Reconciler of the kindred of heroes (painful is my ...),
 I have given [my] soul death-dangerous wounds for [my] sins.
 Now we bid You, strength-Nourisher of the people,
 to heal the soul's wounds which, overbearing, destroy our life.

'kindred of heroes': mankind, of whom Christ is 'Reconciler'

Addressing Christ as *Sættir kyns bragna* 'Reconciler of the kindred of heroes', Gamli draws a connection between sin and injury as he acknowledges that he has made *hættligar benjar* 'death-dangerous wounds' *fyr synðir sólu* 'for [my] sins of soul'.³⁰² Though *ben* 'wound' is used here to refer to a spiritual injury, it can also refer to a physical 'mortal wound' in legal contexts, perhaps implying

³⁰¹ I have modified Attwood's edition of the Old Norse text by using brackets instead of dashes to differentiate clause-boundaries.

³⁰² A Scandinavian rulers are described using the noun *sættir* 'reconciler' in the tenth-century Lausavísur by Einarr skálaglamm Helgason (stanza 1a).

that sin may be perceived as a deadly injury committed against God.³⁰³ The poet, addressing Christ in the second *helmingr*, begins *nú beiðum þik* ‘now we bid You’, making use of the verb *beiða* ‘to bid’, which may be considered legal terminology as it is in some contexts.³⁰⁴ He asks Christ, who is here called *þrekfœðandi þjóðar* ‘Strength-Nourisher of the people’, *græða andar sór* ‘to heal the soul’s wounds’ which *glata lífi* ‘destroy life’, again requesting spiritual healing.³⁰⁵ In combination, these details bring together the representations of Christ as a Healer and Legal Authority as a means of emphasising humanity’s urgent need for Christ’s mercy.

In stanza 55 Gamli laments the fickleness of the world, which he once considered a friend, and whose inhabitants are now *lastauðgir* ‘sin-rich’. He explains that he is reluctant to abandon *til fasta ljót lastaverk æligs móðs* ‘too firmly the hideous vices of a wretched soul’, and therefore beseeches Christ for peace and mercy (stanza 56). He asks Christ to judge him *heldr meir af þinni dýrri miskunn an réttlæti* ‘rather more out of Your precious grace than righteousness’ (stanza 57), rhetorically asking Christ in stanza 58 where else we might expect shelter from sin, *nema vilir Sjálfr líkna þínum lastauknum þræli* ‘unless You Yourself wish to have mercy on Your sin-heaped servant’. Gamli then enters into a direct address to the Virgin Mary, which begins in stanza 59 and features a number of traditional Marian epithets. Stanza 60 praises Mary both for her power and glory, describing her first as *alskírt hqfuðmusteri ins hæsta Hildings himins birti* ‘altogether bright chief temple of the highest Chief of heaven’s brightness’, and then as *kastali Grams hauðrs glyggs* ‘castle of the King of the land of the wind’.

Vættik oss með ótta, alskírt himins birti
 hqfuðmusteri ins hæsta Hildings, af þér mildi,
 hauðrs, þvít hugga fríðir hug minn siðir þínir,
 Grams kastali inn glæsti glyggs, en vart líf hryggvir. (*Harmsól* 60)

I fearfully hope for mercy from you to us, altogether bright
 chief temple of the highest Chief of heaven’s brightness,

³⁰³ For *ben* ‘mortal wound’, see entry in *ADIP*; *LEI* 2006: 270; *SnE* 1998: 242; and *LP* 41.

³⁰⁴ For *beiða* ‘to ask for’ or ‘summon (on a charge)’, see entry in *ADIP*; *LEI* 2000: 415; and *LP* 39.

³⁰⁵ For *fæða* ‘to feed’, ‘to bring up’, ‘to give birth to’, see *LP* 163; and *SnE* 1998: 283.

because your fine faith comforts my mind, while our way of life
mourns, most splendid castle of the Warrior King of the land of the wind.

highest Chief of heaven's brightness: Christ, who is Chief of the sun, and whose
chief temple is Mary.

Attwood notes that representations of Mary as both a temple and fortress have a basis in the Old Testament typology of *templum Domini* 'temple of the Lord' and *solium Salomonis* 'throne of Solomon', 'whereby Solomon's temple is a type or allegorical figure of the Virgin and she in turn is a type of the Church.'³⁰⁶ Mary's mercy and comfort function as a symbolic refuge from sin, and Gamli's descriptions of her as a temple and castle present her in both a nurturing and protecting role, serving as an extension of Christ's role's as Healer, Nourisher and Warrior Chieftain. Indeed, both of the titles used for Christ in this stanza, *Hildingr* 'Chief' and *Gramr* 'Warrior-King', emphasise His role as a Leader in a spiritual battle.³⁰⁷ Like Óláfr in *Geisli*, the Virgin Mary functions in this stanza as an extension of Christ's characteristics.

The quality of brightness is twice emphasised in stanza 60, first in the Mary-kenning *alskirt hofuðmusteri* 'altogether bright Chief Temple', and then in the Christ-kenning *Hildingr himins birti* 'Chief of heaven's brightness'. The use of the noun *musteri* 'temple' in reference to Mary is interesting when considered alongside her brightness, since the idea of a gleaming temple is very un-Icelandic, at least in the landscape of the period.³⁰⁸ The adjective *skírr* can mean 'clear', 'bright', or 'pure', and metaphorically 'cleansed from guilt'; in other contexts *skírr* is also used to describe Norse mythological figures, as well as the colour of barley in harvest, making it a term with both religious and agrarian associations.³⁰⁹ In the Christ-kenning *Hildingr himins birti* 'Chief of heaven's brightness' the verb *birti* literally means 'pure' or 'bright', and once again associates Christ with revelatory light.³¹⁰ Mary's connection to light is even

³⁰⁶ Attwood 2007: 127. Cf. Schottmann 1973: 47-52, 76.

³⁰⁷ For *hildingr*, see *LP* 248-9; and *SnE* 1998: 309. For *gramr*, see *SnE* 1998: 293; and *LP* 198.

³⁰⁸ The usages here could be linked to Byzantine or Italian mosaics, as well as common images of the New Jerusalem. For more on these potential influence, see Osborne 2013.

³⁰⁹ For *skírr*, see *LP* 508; *SnE* 1998: 392; and *IED* 551. This adjective also occurs in stanza 39 of the eddic poem *Grímnismál*, where the wolf Sköll pursues the *scírleita goði* 'fair-faced goddess' (*NK*, 65, and Dronke 2011: 121).

³¹⁰ For *birta*, see *LP*: 47.

evident when she is addressed as *glæsti kastali* ‘most splendid castle’, with *glæsa* ‘splendid’ meaning ‘to make shining’ or ‘embellish’.³¹¹ Thus, her connection with light and associated purity seems to be a key characteristic that also serves as an extension of Christ as Light.

Gamli continues the address to Mary in stanza 61, describing her as *blíðr hofðingi snóta* ‘mild chieftain of women’ and praising her for the salvation she ensures for all who worship her. Speaking to his audience in stanza 62, the poet next beseeches *hvern helgan mann* ‘every holy man’ to grant him *hald ok árnán* ‘support and intercession’ with God so that he will not go unatoned at the Last Judgement. Christ’s associations with light and the legal matters reemerge in stanza 63, where the poet acknowledges Christ’s role as humanity’s Pardoner in guiding his life towards salvation, *svát ek skiljumk aldri frá Yðr í ítru ljósi* ‘so that I will never be separated from You in glorious light’.

Gamli names *Harmsól* in the poem’s penultimate stanza, as is common with this subgenre of Christian skaldic verse, and hopes that his audience will ask Christ *mér miskunnar ok eirar* ‘for mercy and compassion for me’. The poem concludes with a stanza addressed to Christ, asking that no man be without His mercy, and that all purified men be drawn to heaven. Despite its emphasis on mercy, the language in this stanza focuses on imagery to do with battle and protection, as Christ is called both *Vqrðr skýtjalds* ‘Warden of the cloud-tent’ and *angrlestandi Jofurr sunnu* ‘sorrow-injuring Chief of the sun’.

Án lát engan þína (angrlestandi) mesta
mann (deilir þat máli) miskunn (Jofurr sunnu).
Vqrðr, laða skatna skírða, skýtjalds, saman alla,
ítr, þars aldri þrjóti unaðsgnótt ok frið, Dróttinn. (*Harmsól* 65)³¹²

Let no (that is of greatest importance) man be
(O sorrow-injuring) without Your great mercy (Chief of the sun).
Guardian of the cloud-tent, draw together all purified men,
glorious Lord, where happiness and peace will never end.

‘Chief of the sun’: Christ

‘Guardian of the cloud-tent’: heaven, of which Christ is ‘Guardian’

³¹¹ For *glæsa*, see *LP* 189-90.

³¹² I have modified Attwood’s edition of the Old Norse text by using brackets instead of dashes and commas to differentiate clause-boundaries.

The phrase *angrlestandi* ‘sorrow-injuring’ reflects an Old Norse poetic practice in which concepts relating to peace are conveyed through images of warfare; as Byock explains, it is a part of ‘the new Christian spirit that strove to imbue this militancy with gentler sentiments of noble sacrifice’.³¹³ Christ’s ability *lesta* ‘to injure’ *angr* ‘sorrow’ leads to humanity’s reconciliation with God.³¹⁴ The emphasis on humanity’s need for God’s *miskunn* ‘mercy’, and the description of heaven as a place where *unaðsgnótt ok frið* ‘an abundance of happiness and peace’ will never end, indicates that *angr* should be interpreted in this instance as ‘sin’, though it may also refer to sorrow and physical injury.³¹⁵ *Lesta* specifically means ‘to break up, injure’, or ‘wreck’, and here paradoxically expresses Christ’s nourishment of mankind through his injuring of sorrow.³¹⁶ *Harmsól*, like *Geisli*, invites its audience to imagine Christ as Warrior Chieftain in spiritual battle, reinforcing the notion that His followers are His retinue, and makes explicit that He is battling against sin expressed as sorrow and injury. At the same time, stanza 65 also expresses Christ’s abundant gifts of happiness and peace that He mercifully extends to His followers.

Light-imagery also permeates this final stanza. The Christ-kenning *Jøfurr sunnu* ‘Chief of the sun’ associates Christ’s rule of heaven with light, and may hint at the common literary connection made between the *sunna* ‘sun’ and Christ as *sonr* ‘son’.³¹⁷ Christ is called *ítr Dróttinn* ‘glorious Lord’, once again making use of an adjective that can mean ‘shining’ or ‘gleaming’.³¹⁸ Saved men are described as *skírða* ‘purified’, with the verb *skíra* metaphorically meaning ‘to baptise’ or ‘christen’ but more literally ‘to purify’ as it is associated with brightness and clarity.³¹⁹ The concept of spiritual purity reflects the representation of Christ as Light, in this case entering the world through His

³¹³ Byock 2001: 164.

³¹⁴ For *lesta*, see LP 369 and IED 385.

³¹⁵ For *miskunn*, see LP 406; entry in ADIP; and Zoëga 2004 [1926]: 299. For *gnótt*, see LP 192 and entry for ADIP. For *angr*, see entry in ADIP; LP 12; and Zoëga 2004 [1926]: 16.

³¹⁶ For *lesta*, see LP 368.

³¹⁷ For *sunna*, see LP 546; and SnE 1998: 406. For *sonr*, see SnE 1998 399; and LP 525.

³¹⁸ For more information, see analysis of *Geisli* 21 in chapter two.

³¹⁹ For *skíra*, see LP 508.

righteous followers. *Harmsól* thus ends with a message of hope for the penitent, that they will receive Christ's mercy and enter heaven.

Conclusions

Although written in the same century as *Geisli*, and evidently connected to or influenced by it in some way, in its fundamental purpose *Harmsól* is very different from Einarr Skúlason's hagiographical poem. Whereas *Geisli* seeks to praise Christ and the martyred King Óláfr as spiritually victorious and similar in their representations, *Harmsól* deliberately highlights the differences between Christ and humanity through its focus on sinfulness and the need for penitence in order to attain salvation. One is addressed to an audience of dignitaries and marked for a particular occasion at the cathedral at Niðarós; the other is addressed to a more general and possibly Icelandic audience of *systkin* 'brothers and sisters' and evidently performed a didactic purpose. *Harmsól* offers a different perspective on the representations of Christ already found in *Geisli*, but also adds legal and agricultural descriptions to His portrayal.

Harmsól, like *Geisli*, indicates Christ's association with light in its formal title. In this case *Harmsól* 'Sun of Sorrow' plays with the commonly accepted image of the sun as a symbol of Christ's sovereignty, as well as the similarity between *sunna* 'sun' and *sónr* 'son' that implies the title 'Son of God'. The element of *harmr* 'sorrow' in this title, which indicates the poem's penitential agenda, helps to explain why Gamli kanóki's poem is more subdued than the praise-focused *Geisli* in its use of light imagery throughout the work. Whereas Einarr aimed to glorify Óláfr's miracles in his martyrdom and identify Christ as their ultimate source, *Harmsól* instead focuses on personal introspection and recognition of humanity's dark sinfulness.

Harmsól is the first Christian skaldic poem to use *ljós* 'light' as part of a *heiti* in reference to Christ, and like *Geisli* it reuses the adjective *ítr* 'glorious' that had been used previously to describe Norse gods and heroic figures. Gamli kanóki introduces the association of brightness not just with light, but also with a metaphysical enlightenment and revelation. For example, when revealing His divine identity at the Ascension in stanza 29, Christ is described as *skryddr* 'clothed' in holy flesh, suggesting an adornment intended to display truth rather

than conceal it. Similarly, in stanza 60 Mary's holiness is made clear through the epithet *alskirt hǫfuðmusteri* 'altogether bright chief temple'; Mary is not just an avenue for Christ's light, but also His abode that shines forth His righteousness. *Harmsól*, more explicitly than *Geisli*, links light with purity as well as baptism, a set of connections that recur in later examples of Christian skaldic verse.

The theme of concealment, particularly in the description of Christ's Incarnation as a covering of His divine identity, and the failed attempts of humanity to conceal their sinfulness from Christ, also play a crucial role and serve as a foil to the moments of revelation at the Ascension and Last Judgement. The poet stresses that mankind cannot conceal sinfulness from God, whereas Christ successfully conceals His divine identity as a means of reclaiming humanity and returning His followers to salvation. The terms *hylja* 'to cover' and *skryða* 'to adorn' invite the audience to view identity – or apparent identity – as a type of clothing that may either hide the truth or reveal it for all to see. These concepts further confirm the representation of Christ as Light, contrasting His revealed holiness with humanity's (unsuccessfully) attempted concealment of their sinfulness and Christ's control over the perception of His human and divine identities as He seeks to reclaim humanity.

Just as *Geisli* presents Christ as a Warrior Chieftain with numerous similarities to King Óláfr and vice versa, so too does *Harmsól* present Christ as a Ruler that guides His kingdom, rewards His subjects, and engages in spiritual battle. This is in part conveyed through His relationship to King David, who is called *drengr*, which in the poem's twelfth-century context refers to a *þegn*-like royal officer in service to the King, in this case Christ. Gamli frequently presents himself as unworthy of such a relationship with Christ, instead calling himself Christ's *aumligr þræll* 'wretched slave' as a means of emphasising his sinfulness and carrying out his own penitence; nevertheless, this identity still affirms Christ's role as King. Christ's bestowal of *vingjafar* 'gifts of friendship' on His followers also strongly implies this courtly relationship, and the description of the angels as Christ's *lið* 'troop' indicates a loyal battle retinue accompanied by Christ's *merki* 'battle-standard'. *Harmsól* 12 and 29 develop the representation of Christ as the Captain of the ship of heaven, navigating the treacherous waters of sinfulness and safely transporting His followers to

salvation. Christ's ability *stýra* 'to steer' all creation (stanza 29) similarly conveys both leadership and navigation. The Christian precedent for Christ captaining the ship of salvation in the work of Venantius Fortunatus helps to explain its appearance here, though it may also recall Norwegian seafaring or even the original journey by sea of Icelandic settlers to their family home that gave this representation significance. Though not as common a depiction of Christ, the role of a ship's Captain plays a noteworthy part in expressing Christ's leadership, reflecting as it does both Norse and Christian literary traditions.

As a poem that engages in penitential reflection on humanity's sinfulness and the need for reconciliation through Christ's sacrifice, *Harmsól* tends towards a strong legal focus. Consequently, Gamli kanóki draws on legal terminology that not only portrays Christ as humanity's Judge, but also evokes legal practices and concepts familiar in the twelfth-century Scandinavian world. The characterisation of Christ as Judge at a *þing* or 'legal assembly' in *Harmsól* presents scenes of the Last Judgement as the formal gatherings organised in both Iceland and Norway to varying degrees. Humanity's sins, presented as offences and crimes against God, indicate that reconciliation must be sought with God and can only be gained through *sátt* 'settlement', in the form of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross. The wording of *Harmsól*'s stanzas associates the process of seeking repentance and attaining salvation with legal protocols of the period, and in particular the use of *þing* may have invited earlier audiences to imagine the Last Judgement more tangibly as a gathering familiar to them and associated with legal processes on both local and national scales. The legal elements of the poem may also partly be indebted to doctrinal debates of the day over the devil's right to a fallen humanity, though Gamli kanóki does not pursue this as far as the later Christian skalds whose work will be addressed in this thesis.

Humanity's sinfulness not only appears as a legal breach against God, but also as an injury committed by and afflicting all of humanity. By communicating that all people are woefully inadequate in their righteousness and injured through sinfulness, Gamli kanóki builds up the concept of Christ as Healer, which was established and symbolically implied in *Geisli* through Óláfr's miraculous healings. In stanza 54, for example, the poet describes sins as *hættligar benjar* 'death-dangerous wounds' and asks Christ *græða andar sór* 'to

heal the soul's wounds'. In the same stanza Christ is called *Þrekfæðandi* 'Nourisher of strength', an epithet that aligns well with the poem's later description of heaven in stanza 65 as a place where *unaðgnóttir ok friðr* 'an abundance of happiness and peace' will never end. The representations of Christ as Healer and Nourisher in *Harmsól* play a fairly important role in stressing humanity's need for salvation, but as the next few chapters will reveal these portrayals gain increasing importance in later Christian skaldic verse.

As a homiletic and didactic poem, *Harmsól* offers a more extended and varied focus on Christ's relationship with humanity than the hagiographical *Geisli*. In particular, the juxtaposition of concealment and revelation, and that of legal judgement alongside healing and nourishment, becomes crucial to the way in which Christ is presented, as a new set of perspectives on Christ and His relationship with humanity and sinfulness are more fully developed, and in some cases introduced for the first time in Christian skaldic verse. As we shall see in the chapters that follow, each of these concepts also informs to varying degrees the representation of Christ in later homiletic and didactic Christian skaldic poetry.

Chapter Four - *Leiðarvísan*

The twelfth-century *Leiðarvísan*, a 45-stanza *drápa* in *dróttkvætt* metre, is a homiletic and didactic poem that functions as both a celebration and contemplation of the way or path to salvation that Christ made possible through His death on the Cross. Its title, as identified in the poem's penultimate stanza, means 'Way-Guidance' and may serve as a reference to Christian pilgrimage or the path of a Christian life. As with other *drápur*, the poem has a symmetrical structure beginning with a 12-stanza *upphaf*, followed by a 21-stanza *stefjabálkr*, and finally a 12-stanza *slæmr*.³²⁰ The *upphaf* itself includes the standard invocation to God for inspiration and bids for silence from the audience (stanzas 1-5); the arrival in Jerusalem of the Letter from Christ that was scrutinised by wise men (stanzas 6-7); an enumeration of punishments for not observing the Sabbath and holy days, or failing to pay tithes (stanzas 8-10); and the promise of reward for the baptised who observe Sunday as a holy day (stanzas 11-12). The *stefjabálkr* is organised around biblical events that are presented as having taken place on a Sunday, in order to demonstrate the importance of observing Sunday as a holy day. The subsections include the Genesis events of the Creation and the story of Noah (stanzas 14-16); Exodus events surrounding Moses and the Israelites (stanzas 18-20); Christ's early life at the Annunciation, Birth and Baptism (stanzas 22-4); Christ's miracles at Cana and the feeding of the Five Thousand (stanzas 26-8); and Christ's entry into Jerusalem, the Resurrection, and Pentecost (stanzas 30-2). With these examples in place, the poet turns his attention to himself and the audience in the poem's *slæmr*, repeating his request for God's inspiration (stanza 34); stressing the importance of Sunday observance as the Second Coming and Judgement approaches (stanzas 35-6); beseeching the poem's audience to pray while promising deliverance to the faithful (stanzas 37-40); and culminating the poem in prayers by and for the poet (stanzas 42-5).

³²⁰ The first *stef* in the *stefjabálkr* occurs at stanzas 13, 17, and 21, and the second *stef* occurs at stanzas 25, 29, and 33.

Leiðarvísan is based on the Sunday Letter or ‘Epistle from Heaven’ traditions, in which, as Attwood summarises, ‘Christ enjoins his followers, on pain of various cruel torments, to respect the sanctity of Sunday, to observe the festivals of the church and (in some versions) to fulfil various obligations of the Christian life’.³²¹ The Sunday Letter tradition in its varying textual forms was popular throughout the Middle Ages, with extant versions in Latin and vernaculars from between the sixth and fourteenth centuries. Priebisch suggests that the tradition’s similarities with theological writings from Caesarius of Arles Martin of Bracara may point to sixth-century Spain or Southern Gaul as the genre’s point of origin.³²² Attwood, however, notes that this is not conclusive, observing that the theme was so simple and so widespread over Europe that ‘versions of the Letter may well have appeared more or less independently in widely differing countries and cultures as and when the perceived need for it arose’.³²³ Whatever its origin, this subgenre was designed to remind audiences to keep the Sabbath and, more generally, keep steadily on the path of a Christian life.

The Sunday List, which appears in *Leiðarvísan*’s 21-stanza *stefjabálkr*, recounts scriptural and pseudo-scriptural events that take place on Sundays and is an element that occurs in some but not all extant versions of the Sunday Letter.³²⁴ Attwood notes that there are three recensions of the Sunday Letter, and based on the presence of the Sunday List *Leiðarvísan* is closest to the first recension.³²⁵ She has also observed thematic similarities between *Leiðarvísan* and a number of Old English and Latin Sunday Letter texts that were either

³²¹ Attwood 2007: 137.

³²² Priebisch 1936: 26-34. Cf. Haines 2010 54-57.

³²³ Attwood 2007: 137-8. For accounts of the history and reception of the Sunday Letter in Western Europe, see Delehaye 1899; Priebisch 1936; and Lees 1990. For accounts of the history and reception of the Sunday letter in later eastern recensions, see Bittner 1906. For an overall history of the Sunday Letter, and how its dissemination may be linked to the Crusades, pilgrim journeys, and travelogues, see Attwood 2003: 59-67.

³²⁴ Attwood 2007: 138-9. For information about the textual relationships between surviving Latin, Old English, and Old Irish versions of the Sunday Letter and Sunday List, see Lees 1990.

³²⁵ Attwood 2003: 68-77. For Attwood’s analysis of the Sunday List rescensions, see Attwood 2003: 68-77.

definitely or possibly known in Scandinavia, though there are no indications of influence between these texts and *Leiðarvísan*.³²⁶

The Sunday Letter tradition appears in two other Old Norse literary works beyond this poem, both of which pertain to pilgrimages to Jerusalem. One of these, the prose *Leiðarvísir* 'Itinerary', recounts a twelfth-century pilgrimage to Jerusalem by 'Níkulás', who is most frequently identified as Níkulás Bergsson, author of *Jónsdrápa postula* and *Kristsdrápa* and abbot of the Benedictine house at Munkaþvéra from soon after 1155.³²⁷ Mention of the Letter appears in the longer version of *Leiðarvísir* when the speaker, while guiding pilgrims through a church, identifies the altar where the original Letter supposedly first arrived: *Þar suðr frá því við vegginn er alltari sancti Simeonis, þar kom ofan brefit gull-ritna* 'South of there [the main sepulchre] by the wall is the altar of St Simeon, where the letter written in gold came down'.³²⁸ In part due to the similarity of the title of this itinerary and *Leiðarvísan*, and the likelihood that both poems were composed by skalds in monastic circles, critics sometimes attribute the anonymously composed *Leiðarvísan* to Níkulás Bergsson, though this cannot be proven conclusively.³²⁹ The other Icelandic text that mentions the Letter, the fourteenth-century *Kirialax saga*, describes the Church of the Holy Sepulchre: *Þar stendr Simions kirkia, ok er þar vardveittr hanndleggr hans yfir alltari; þar kom ofan bref þat er Sialfr Drottinn ritadi Sinum haundum gullstaufum um hin Helga sunnudag* 'St Simeon's chapel is there, and his armbone is preserved above the altar; the letter about holy Sunday which the Lord Himself wrote in golden letters with His own hand came down there'.³³⁰ It is clear from these texts that the Sunday Letter would have been a familiar Christian literary genre, particularly in relation to Christian pilgrimage.

Despite the lack of an attributed author, the poem does offer some hints that partially contextualise its composition. Based on the relationship

³²⁶ For a detailed overview of possible analogues of Sunday Letter texts, see Attwood 2007: 139. Notably, none of these is likely to be a direct source for *Leiðarvísan*.

³²⁷ For those in favour of this attribution, see Hill 1983; Hill 1993a; Hill 1993b; and Attwood 2007: 138. For an alternative attribution to abbot Níkulás Sæmundsson of Þingeyrar, see Riant 1865: 80.

³²⁸ *AÍ* I: 26-7. Translation from Attwood 2007: 138.

³²⁹ Kedar and Westergaard-Nielsen 1978-9: 195; and Astås 1993: 390. Cf. Attwood 2007: 138.

³³⁰ Kálund 1917: 65, quoted in Kedar and Westergaard-Nielsen 1978-9: 210.

Leiðarvísan shares with Christian *drápur* from the same period, particularly through the lexical and structural parallels found in Gamli kanóki's *Harmsól*, Einarr Skúlason's *Geisli*, and the anonymously composed *Plácitusdrápa*, Attwood dates *Leiðarvísan* to the second half of the twelfth century.³³¹ The anonymous poet offers a further hint within the poem when he thanks a *gøfugr prest* 'noble priest' identified as Rúnolfr in stanza 43 for helping with the poem's composition. Based on this reference two priests mentioned in a *Prestatal* of 1143, both with the first name Rúnolfr, have been identified as a potential familiar of the author.³³² Since both men had an interest in skaldic verse, and also had similar access to the priestly community and its scholarship, it is not clear which Rúnolfr it might have been. This information does, however, help to further confirm the proposed composition date of the second half of the twelfth century.

The complete poem survives on folios 10r l. 39 to 11r l. 38 in AM 757a 4^o (B) of c. 1400, though as with other poems preserved in this manuscript legibility is affected by wearing, lacunae, and darkening on the pages. The late-fifteenth-century manuscript AM 624 4^o (624) also contains the first thirty-five stanzas of *Leiðarvísan*, and is thought to be a copy from B.³³³ While 624 tends to be more legible and better preserved than B, there are a number of textual misunderstandings, miscopyings, and incorrectly ordered words and phrases.³³⁴ For this reason, Attwood's edition from 2007 relies on a combination of B, 624 in particular cases, and a number of later transcriptions.³³⁵

³³¹ Attwood 2007: 139. Cf. Skard 1953; and Attwood 1996b.

³³² Attwood 2007: 139. The two Rúnolfrs are the nephew of Bishop Ketill Þorsteinsson of Hólar (bishop 1122-5) named Rúnolfr Dálksson, and the son of that same bishop named Rúnolfr Kerilsson (d. 1186) (*DI* I: 180-94).

³³³ Kálund 1888-94, II: 179.

³³⁴ Attwood 1996a: 41.

³³⁵ Attwood 2007: 140. One such transcription is found in the bundle of loose papers comprising 444 4^{ox} (444^x), which includes what may have been Sveinbjörn Egilsson's working papers for the printed edition of four Christian poems from 1844. According to Attwood, the transcriber was likely Brynjólfur Snorrason, who was an Icelandic student at the Arnamagnæan Institute in Copenhagen from 1842 to 1850 (Attwood 1996a: 32-3). Jón Sigurðsson's transcription in JS 399a-b 4^{ox} (399a-b^x) is an identical copy of 444^x, and both of these have been annotated by Sveinbjörn Egilsson. There are also additional texts related to *Leiðarvísan* in 444^x: Konrað Gíslason's (1860) diplomatic transcription of stanzas 1, 2, and 35 from 624 on a single paper bifolium (444(1)^x); Jón Sigurðsson's untitled diplomatic transcription of 624 with annotations by Jón and Sveinbjörn Egilsson (444(2)^x); and Sveinbjörn Egilsson's heavily annotated and partially normalised transcription of 624 (444(3)^x). In addition to these resources, Attwood also

Leiðarvísan opens with five stanzas in which the poet prepares to deliver the poem to his audience. He begins by stating *ek sem inni Þinn óð* 'I compose Your poem inwardly', attributing the work to God Himself and asking for *sanni orðgnótt* 'true word-abundance', and indicating that poetic eloquence is one of God's gifts to humanity.³³⁶ In this he reflects the Sunday Letter tradition of identifying God as the author of the content to follow, and the poet as the avenue by which He communicates. The invocation continues with the poet asking the *Dróttinn orðgnóttar* 'Lord of word-abundance' that his *málgoðn* 'speech-organs' be moved into praise, and that his audience *þagni* 'keep silent':

Fyrr kveðk frægjan Harra fagrgims, þanns ræðr himni,
 háas at hróðri þessum hreggranns an kyn seggja.
 Æstik aflamestan orðgnóttar mér Dróttinn;
 hrærð skulu mín til mærdar málgoðn, en lið þagni. (*Leiðarvísan* 2)

I call upon the famous King of the fair jewel of the high storm-house,
 the one who rules heaven, [to hear] this praise-poem before the kinsfolk of
 men.

I ask the most powerful Lord of word-abundance for myself;
 my speech-organs shall be moved into praise, and let the people keep
 silent.

fair jewel of the high storm-house: the sun in heaven, whose famous King is Christ

The poet makes use of several elements that evoke a courtly context as he prepares to compose a poem that will spread the fame of his patron Ruler, Christ. He describes *Leiðarvísan* as a *hróðr* or 'encomium' and asks that his speech-organs be stirred *til mærdar* 'into praise', making use of terminology that

uses Rydberg's 1907 transcription as a reference point for her edition, since Rydberg's transcription, despite its annotated reconstructions, is fairly reliable. Other editions include folios 53-69 of Sveinbjörn Egilsson's print copy for his 1844 edition, Lbs 1152 8^{ox}; the 1844 edition itself; Reidar Astás's annotated Norwegian translation from 1970; Attwood's 1996 doctoral thesis; and Attwood's 2007 edition for *Poetry on Christian Subjects*, which serves as the basis for stanzas quoted in this thesis.

³³⁶ I have modified Attwood's edition of the Old Norse text by changing word forms to accord with the sentence's grammar. Attwood (1996b: 227 and 235) suggests that *orðgnótt* 'word-abundance' is part of both a popular rhyming pair and a group of words unique to Christian *drápur*. *Orðgnótt* also occurs in *Arnórr jarlaskáld's Magnússdrápa* 5, a fragment of verse potentially composed by Ormr Steinþórsson, *Geisli* 10, and *Leiðarvísan* 1 and 4. Cf. Chase 2005: 134.

identifies fame as an important value of traditional skaldic verse.³³⁷ The description of Christ as *frægja Harri fargims há s hreggranns* ‘famous King of the fair jewel of the high storm-house’ also fits within this framework, as the skald spreads the fame of his Ruler in hopes of receiving a reward for his work.³³⁸ The description of the sun as the *fargim* ‘fair-jewel’ of heaven within this kenning may further suggest that the poet has transposed the worldly reward of glittering gold for the light of heaven, a fitting gift from His heavenly Patron. In this way the Germanic tradition in secular verse has been updated to suit Christian literary practice, while also emphasising how Christ can provide abundantly for His followers.

In addition to presenting Christ within a courtly framework that suggests His representation as King, stanza 2 also highlights His association with light. The Christ-kenning *Harri fargims há s hreggranns* ‘King of the fair jewel of the high storm-house’ combines the twelfth-century abode of the storm motif with the common Christian skaldic description of the sun as the *fargim* ‘fair-jewel’.³³⁹ This description of heaven as a storm-house also presents Christ’s power as overwhelming and uncontrollable by humanity, perhaps expressing Christ’s ultimate and awe-inspiring authority as He stirs inspiration within the poet. Thus, Christ embodies the beauty and power associated with light and the heavens.

The poet continues his request for eloquence in stanza 3, asking the Father and Son *rétta slétt óðarlag* ‘to straighten out a smooth poem-form’, and the Holy Spirit to *vel vandan verka minn* ‘strengthen my difficult work well’. He is eager to present this poem, once again reminding the audience that Christ has *gefít oss orðgnótt* ‘given us [me] word-abundance’ (stanza 4), and asks that they *gefi hljóð at brag* ‘give hearing to the poem’ (stanza 5) in the closing stanza of the invocation. The *upphaf* continues with the beginning of the Sunday Letter narrative in stanza 6, where the poet explains that God *sendi bréf af himni, sollit gollstøfum* ‘sent a letter from heaven, swollen with golden letters’ to help the

³³⁷ For *hróðr* ‘praise-poetry’, see LP 285; and SnE 1998: 319-20. For *mærð* ‘praise’, see LP 418; and SnE 1998: 377.

³³⁸ For *frægr*, see LP 155; and SnE 1998: 280.

³³⁹ Attwood 2007: 142. For *gim*, see LP: 181; and SnE 1998: 288.

people of Jerusalem. The description of the letters as ‘swollen’, which may also be construed as ‘ornamented’, relates back to the word-abundance the poet requests from Christ and suggests that this request is fulfilled through the Sunday Letter itself. The letter, which according to stanza 7 was discovered on a Sunday and later translated, brings about an expectation of grace in its recounting of miraculous and praiseworthy events throughout salvation history. The poet explains *verðr vítr, sás vensk á dýrðir* ‘he will become wise, who acquaints himself to glories’, highlighting the value of this list as both a means of spreading Christ’s fame and helping humanity gain wisdom through it. Once again, the traditional expectations of courtly praise poetry are reinforced in a model that presents Christ as the celebrated Ruler.

Stanza 8 continues with a paraphrase of the letter’s warning against working on the Sabbath, followed by a direct quotation attributed to God warning humanity against spiritual disobedience: *Flestir menn, þeirs vinna dag Minn, hljóta víst mest angr af því* ‘Most men, who work on my day, will certainly undergo the most grief from it’. The warnings continue in stanzas 9 and 10, where the poet explains that *verða hætt* ‘it will become perilous’ (stanza 9) for those who do not observe the Sabbath, and quotes God’s message that he will cast *eldum í alla liðu virða* ‘fires into all the limbs of men’ (stanza 10) who work on holy days and fail to pay their appropriate tithes. The descriptions of separation from God as being filled with grief, perilousness, and the pain of burning in Hell present the punishments for sinfulness as injuries of the spirit, from which humanity needs to be healed. Having issued these warnings, the poet offers some solace in stanza 11, explaining that those who do observe the Sabbath will receive *ár ok hreinan frið með ǫllum tíri* ‘abundance and pure peace with all honour’, in contrast to the torments of Hell. Once again the *Leiðarvísan* poet works with themes of abundance and light to symbolise Christ’s strength and purity. He concludes the *upphaf* in stanza 12 by reiterating that the Lord’s Day needs to be observed, and those who doubt that God’s

words will ever be destroyed has the truth *dulðr* ‘concealed’ from them, presenting this doubt as a spiritual blindness to Christ’s revelatory truth.³⁴⁰

The *stefjabálkr* begins in stanza 13, where the poet composes a refrain in praise of God before proceeding to the poem’s version of the Sunday List. This list of miraculous events begins with God’s creation of *hreina engla* ‘pure angels’ in stanza 14, an event that appears in the apocryphal *Book of Jubilees* II.2 and also features in Sunday Lists from other versions of the Sunday Letter tradition.³⁴¹ The second *helmingr* of stanza 14 adds that God *setti þann dag til hvíldar* ‘set that day for rest’ when He *skóp skepnu* ‘formed creation’, identifying this as the first Sabbath day. Christ, who is described as *fimr* ‘dexterous’, then *setti fastan frið meðal láðs ok himna* ‘set firm peace between earth and heavens’ in stanza 15, an event which Attwood notes has no direct parallels in other Sunday lists and may obliquely refer to the Fall of Lucifer from Isaiah XIV.12-20.³⁴² The story of Noah’s flood from Genesis VI.9-IX.17 follows in stanza 16, with the safe return to land taking place on a Sunday. Each of these examples, which together comprise the first stage of salvation history, establishes God’s earliest praiseworthy works and promise of humanity’s redemption. The poet then explains that God *lætr seggjum qðlask gótt líf* ‘makes it possible for men to attain a good life’ and offers a refrain in stanza 17, reminding the audience that they too are called to this life and will be blessed for observing the Sabbath.

Continuing the Sunday List, stanzas 18 to 20 relate stories from Exodus, each of which demonstrates God’s faithfulness to His followers and points ahead to Christ’s gift of salvation. The Israelites follow *lagavísu* *Móisi* ‘law-wise Moses’ out of Egypt and between the parted waters of the Red Sea in stanza 18, an account that is based on Exodus XII.31-42. The poet describes the *heiðit folk* ‘heathen folk’ comprising Pharaoh’s army as rushing *með hreysti* ‘with boldness’, perhaps suggesting a degree of bravery, into the Red Sea and ultimately to their death. In stanza 19 Moses, who like Óláfr in *Geisli* is called

³⁴⁰ For other instances of *dylja* in reference to the concealment of spiritual truth, see *Lilja* 15 and 39.

³⁴¹ Attwood 2007: 153. Cf. Charles 1913: II, 13; and Lees 1985: 140; and Attwood 2003.

³⁴² Attwood 2007: 154.

Goðs vinr ‘God’s friend’, receives *tíu orð laga* ‘ten words of law’ and then fasts; the account, which combines Exodus XX.3-17 and XXXIV.28, demonstrates that Moses is rewarded for his loyalty to God through pious behaviour and identified as wise in God’s laws, specifically the Ten Commandments.³⁴³ The relationship established between Christ and Moses, like that between Christ and Óláfr, bears some similarities to the chieftain-*þegn* construction and identifies Moses as a friend of God.

Stanza 20 turns its attention towards God’s gifts to the Israelites, and expands on the concept of God as the source of abundant nourishment. The stanza recounts (out of chronological order) two events from Exodus: the water flowing from the rock at Horeb in Exodus XVII.5-6, and the raining down of manna from heaven in Exodus XVI.1-36. God, who is called *Dróttinn dáðsterkr* ‘the deed-strong Lord’ in the first *helmingr*, adorns His days with *framverkum* ‘works of success’ when he accomplishes these two miracles for the wandering Israelites.

Sinn skreytti dag Dróttinn dáðsterkr framaverkum,
 rekkum*s rann til drykkjar reint vatn fram ór steini.
 * Ráðmegninn lét rigna risnufimr af himni
 mat, þeims manna heitir, margri þjóð til bjargar. (*Leiðarvísan* 20)

The deed-strong Lord adorned His day with works of success,
 when pure water ran forth from the stone as a drink for men.
 The Strong-in-counsel, quick with hospitality, caused to rain from heaven
 that provision which is called manna, as a help to many people.

As with other miraculous events recounted in this poem, this stanza emphasises God’s fame in terms familiar within the skaldic tradition. The verb *skreyta*, meaning ‘to adorn’ or ‘dress fine’, comes from the noun *skraut* ‘ornament’ and here describes God adorning the Sabbath with miraculous events in a manner that suggests these represent His wealth of mercy distributed to the Israelites as His loyal retainers.³⁴⁴ The noun *verk* ‘work’ in this context refers to a miracle, and the success associated with God’s works

³⁴³ As mentioned in the analysis for *Harmsól* 49 in chapter three, *vinr* is also used to identify Óláfr in *Geisli* 9 and 64.

³⁴⁴ *Skreyta* shares similarities with the verb *skryða* ‘to clothe’, which describes Christ’s revealed divine identity at the Ascension in *Harmsól* 29.

suggests that they merit praise delivered within a skaldic framework. The poet's further description of God in the second *helmingr* as *Ráðmegninn* 'the Strong-in-counsel' who is *risnufimr* 'quick with hospitality' adds to Christ's representation as a generous King or Chieftain, as the qualities of good counsel and hospitality are among those valued in a Leader within this social context.

The first of these 'works of success', the miracle of water flowing from the stone, emphasises God's generous outpouring of mercy towards humanity. The second, where God causes manna *rigna* 'to rain' from heaven, similarly celebrates God's *risna* 'hospitality' and *matr* 'provision' as expressed in the flow of nourishment to His followers.³⁴⁵ In both cases, God provides abundantly for the Israelites by transforming death into life, and foreshadows the abundant grace Christ provides through His death on the Cross to redeem mankind. Attwood observes that these particular miracles have traditionally been associated with New Testament passages that figure Christ as the source of life-giving water and the Bread of life, reaffirming the representation of Christ as the Provider of spiritual nourishment.³⁴⁶ Not only is Christ's mercy symbolically expressed through the abundant flow of water and food, these events are praised in a manner that emphasises God's hospitality. Thus this stanza adds to the portrayal of Christ as Warrior Chieftain and the generous and abundant Nourisher of humanity.

The flowing of Christ's mercy as represented by flowing water, while based on Christian literary precedents, also shares common ground with Old Norse mythology. Citing a stanza by Eilífr Guðrúnarson in the *Kristskeningar* section of *Skáldskaparmál* 52, Snorri explains in the *Snorra Edda* that *Forn skáld hafa kent Hann við Urðar brunn ok Róm* 'Ancient skalds associated Him

³⁴⁵ For *risna*, see LP 467 and IED 498. For *matr* 'food', see LP 466; SnE 1998: 353; and entry in ADIP.

³⁴⁶ Attwood 2007: 159. John IV.13-14: *Respondit Iesus et dixit ei: 'Omnis, qui bibit ex aqua hac, sitiet iterum; qui autem biberit ex aqua, quam ego dabo ei, non sitiet in aeternum, sed aqua, quam dabo ei, fiet in eo fons aquae salientis in vitam aeternam'* (Vulg 1979, John IV.13-14) 'Jesus said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life' (NRSV, John IV.13-14). John VI.35: *Dixit eis Iesus: 'Ego sum panis vitae. Qui venit ad Me, non esuriet, et qui credit in Me, non sitiet umquam'* (Vulg 1979, John VI.35) 'Jesus said unto them, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to Me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in Me will never be thirsty' (NRSV, John VI.35).

[Christ] with the wellspring of the Norns and with Rome'; to contextualise this, in Norse myth one of the three Norns is named Urðr, and all three sisters live near a well underneath Yggdrasill at the centre of the universe.³⁴⁷ Abram speculates that Eilífr may have come across the medieval conception of Jerusalem being the centre of world, with Christ as its King, and subsequently conflated the Norse and Christian narratives in one image.³⁴⁸ The flow of water as representative of healing and renewal may also be related to the death of the Norse god Baldr as recounted in the *Snorra Edda*. When Baldr dies everything in the world apart from the giantess Þökk – thought to be Loki in disguise – weeps, a detail that O'Donoghue interprets as evidence that Baldr symbolises 'the spring, the thaw,' and 'new life after the sterility of winter'.³⁴⁹ Baldr's symbolic role and Christ's mercy towards mankind are both expressed through the image of flowing water to represent hope, and Christ's association with the *Urðar brunnr* 'wellspring of the Norns' suggests that life-giving water may have linked Him with particular aspects of Old Norse mythology. Significantly, the proposed composition date of c. 1225 for *Snorra Edda*, in which both of these examples appear, postdates *Leiðarvísan* and thus cannot conclusively demonstrate that these associations would have been familiar to the poet. Further complicating factors include the stanza's unknown context, its speculated composition date around Iceland's version in the early eleventh century, questions around whether this is a Christian composition, and whether this Christian interpretation is valid; all of this means that the basis of this argument is somewhat tenuous.³⁵⁰ Nonetheless, here and in later Christian skaldic poems that address similar themes, these Old Norse mythological

³⁴⁷ Old Norse text from *SnE* 1998: 76, ll.25-6. For information about *brunnr* 'wellspring', and the mythological *Urðar-brunnr*, see *SnE* 1998: 515; and the entry in *ADIP*. Cf. *Vǫluspá* 19: *Asc veit ec standa / heitir Yggdrasill, / hár baðmr, ausinn / hvítaauri. / Þaðan koma duggvar / þærs í dala falla, / stendr æ yfir, grœnn / Urðar brunni* 'I know that an ashtree called Yggdrasill stands there, / a high tree, sprinkled / with white soil. / From there come the dews / that fall in the dales, / it stands forever green, over / Urðr's well' (Old Norse from *NK*, 5). Christ's presence by the *Urðar brunnr* 'wellspring of the Norns' may be an expression of His omniscience and omnipotency, since the Norns were responsible for determining the length of each person's life on earth. This instance, then, may arguably have little to no bearing on the expression of Christ's mercy through the flow of water or blood.

³⁴⁸ Abram 2011: 150-51.

³⁴⁹ O'Donoghue 2008: 76. For some similarities between the weeping of creation at the deaths of Christ and Baldr, see Abram 2011: 220.

³⁵⁰ For more information about the questions surrounding this stanza, see Faulkes 1998: 201.

details alert us to the possibility that Christ may also be associated with agriculture and fertility in His role as Nourisher and abundant Provider.

Following a refrain of praise to God in stanza 21, the poet moves to New Testament events beginning with the Angel Gabriel's visit to Mary at the Annunciation in stanza 22. Christ's volition and purposeful steps to redeem humanity are emphasised as He *lét berask* 'allowed Himself to be born' in stanza 23 and allowed John *skíra Sik* 'to baptise Him' in stanza 24. The poet notes that the Holy Spirit *lagði krismu í lesni Dróttni* 'placed chrism in the headband of the Lord' (stanza 24) as was commonly practiced in baptisms of the medieval period, thus placing this event within a familiar framework for the poem's audience.³⁵¹ Christ is again praised through a second refrain in stanza 25, marking the beginning of several stanzas pertaining to Christ's miracles during His life on earth. The miracles highlighted by this Sunday List include His transformation of water into wine in stanza 26 and the feeding of the multitude in stanzas 27 and 28, once again expressing Christ's abundant mercy through the provision and nourishment He extends to His followers. These events prompt the poet to declare that *Kristr es opt kuðr at krapti* 'Christ is often known for might' (stanza 28), returning to the praise-focused nature of this poem as Christ's deeds are equated with His show of strength in spiritual battle. The poet then praises Christ through a refrain in stanza 29, proclaiming that the *snjallr sólar Salkonungr [e]s einn Hjalpari allra* 'valiant King of the sun's hall is alone the Helper of all' and thus reminding the audience of His role as generous and sovereign Ruler over the hall of the heavens. The representation of Christ as Warrior Chieftain continues with His entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday in stanza 30, where people laid cloths and palms *fyr óhræðinn, ríkjan Qðling lophjalms* 'before the fearless, mighty Ruler of the sky-helmet'. Described as *snjallastr Faðir allra* 'the most valiant Father of all' in stanza 31, He is celebrated for both the Harrowing of Hell and rising from death *með sigri* 'with victory' at the Resurrection, with these events presented as Christ's active engagement in spiritual battle. The account of Pentecost in stanza 32, which identifies the Apostles as *ærir Qðlings* 'the messengers of the Ruler', continues the portrayal

³⁵¹ Attwood 2007: 162.

of Christ as Warrior Chieftain as His followers loyally carry out His work on earth through the Holy Spirit. Stanza 33 concludes the *stefjabálkr* with a refrain, marking the transition into a new era of Christian history.

The *slœmr* begins in stanza 34, with the poet coming to Christ *af aumu* ‘from a poor state’ and admitting, *verðk einhlítr at engu orði, nema Goð beini* ‘I will be fully sufficient for not one word, unless God helps’ by redeeming him for his sinfulness. The narrative then moves ahead to the Second Coming and Last Judgement in stanza 35, where the poet presents the division of humanity and calls all listeners to seek reconciliation with God. Christ’s sovereignty, as expressed by His authority over the sun, continues to be an important characteristic here as He divides humanity at the Last Judgement:

Pats rétt, at dag Dróttins Døglíngr myni hingat
 lopts ok lýðum skipta ljósgíms koma af himnum.
 Oss skyldi sú aldri ógnartíð in stríða
 (drótt biði Sikling sáttu sólvangs) ór hug ganga. (*Leiðarvísan* 35)³⁵²

It is true that the King of the loft of the light-jewel will come
 hither from the heavens on the Lord’s day and divide people.
 That severe menacing time should never (let the people ask
 the King of the sun-plain for settlement) go out of our hearts.

light-jewel: sun, whose loft is heaven, whose King is Christ
 plain of the sun: heaven, whose Ruler is Christ

The stanza’s two Christ-kennings, *Døglíngr lopts ljósgíms* ‘King of the loft of the light-jewel’ and *Siklingr sólvangs* ‘King of the sun-plain’, represent the heavenly realm through the sun and thereby associate Christ with light. The description of heaven as *sólvangr* ‘sun-plain’ also imagines His domain in agricultural terms, perhaps suggesting that heaven represents the gift of abundant spiritual nourishment that humanity will receive from their King. The titles for Christ in both instances, *Døglíngr* ‘King’ and *Siklingr* ‘Ruler’, are used exclusively in poetic contexts, Christian skaldic verse as well as eddic, and are also used with

³⁵² I have modified Attwood’s edition of the Old Norse text by using brackets instead of dashes and commas to differentiate clause-boundaries.

reference to famous rulers throughout.³⁵³ In addition to these reminders of Christ's hospitable rulership over His followers, the audience is warned that this *ógnartíð* 'menacing time' of the Last Judgement should not leave their minds, and that they ought to turn to Christ for *sátt* 'settlement', expressing humanity's need for reconciliation with God in legal terms.³⁵⁴ Christ's representation here, while continuing to associate Him with the light of heaven, largely focuses on His roles as supreme King and Judge. Returning to the poem's focus on the Sabbath, this stanza is designed to demonstrate to the poem's audience the importance of repentance and leading a good Christian life.

The poet continues His praise of Christ as Ruler in stanza 36, proclaiming the glory of the Lord's Day as higher than all other feast days. He offers praise of God's miraculous events throughout Christian history, describing them as *høfuðmerki* 'chief war-standards', and effectively portrays Christ as a courageous Warrior Chieftain engaged in spiritual battle.

Dag metr Sinn at sǫnnu snjallastr Konungr allra
 eljunkuðr of aðrar alfríðar hátíðir.
 Dýrka dýrligs verka dáðsterks høfuðmerki
 (rétt segjum) dag Dróttins drjúgmǫrg himintǫrgu. (*Leiðarvísan* 36)³⁵⁵

The most valiant King of all, known for endurance, rates His day
 in truth higher than other most glorious feast days.
 Very numerous chief war-standards of works exalt the day
 (we say it correctly) of the precious, deed-strong Lord of the heaven-shield.

'chief war-standards of works': testimony of deeds, as found in holy writings
 'heaven-shield': heaven, of which Christ is 'Lord'

Every detail in this stanza continues to build Christ's representation as a Warrior Chieftain, praising His victory in spiritual battle. The first *helmingr*, for example, proclaims that God is *snjallastr Konungr allra* 'the most valiant King of all' and *eljunkuðr* 'known for endurance', celebrating His boldness in battle. In the second *helmingr* He is called *dáðsterkr Dróttinn himintǫrgu* 'deed-strong Lord of

³⁵³ For *dǫglingr*, see *SnE* 1998: 262, 451; *LP* 94; and entry in *ADIP*. For *siklingr*, see *SnE* 1998: 386, 505; *LP* 495; and *IED* 528.

³⁵⁴ See analysis of *Hamsól* 17 in the previous chapter for more information about *sátt* as a legal term.

³⁵⁵ I have modified Attwood's edition of the Old Norse text by using brackets instead of dashes and commas to differentiate clause-boundaries.

the heaven-shield’, suggesting that Christ has accomplished famous deeds. Even the presence of the term *targa* in the kenning *Dróttinn himintǫrgu* ‘Lord of the heaven-shield’, which refers to ‘a targe’ or ‘a kind of round shield’, infuses Christ’s realms with the trappings of war.³⁵⁶ The celebration of courage and accomplishments evokes the praise-poems of kings in earlier skaldic verse, and the use of *merki* – meaning a ‘field sign’ or ‘banner’ – aligns Christ’s glory with that of the famous leaders of Old Norse literature.³⁵⁷ The Last Judgement represents the final stage of spiritual warfare in which Christ’s ultimate victory becomes realised, making this a fitting accompaniment to the two previous stanzas.

The poet explains in stanza 37 that humanity must love *œztum Hríjóðanda angrs þjóðar* ‘the highest Destroyer of the anguish of the people’ in order to receive the hope of peace, presenting Christ as sin’s Combatant while also indicating that His followers will enjoy His hospitality in heaven. Stanza 38 states the hope that Christ will lead all humanity from judgement and *heim til hallar himna* ‘home to the hall of the heavens’, again associating Christ’s realm

³⁵⁶ For *targa*, see *SnE* 1998: 414.

³⁵⁷ For *merki*, see entry in *ADIP*; *LP* 402; and *SnE* 1998: 355. Attwood translates *merki* as ‘testimonies’ in the 2007 edition of this poem. This term also appears *Harmsól* to refer to a sign (stanza 18) or token (stanza 53); in stanzas 32 and 52 of *Liknarbraut*, referring to signs; and in *Lilja* it refers variously to wonders (stanza 5), miracles (stanza 23), and signs (stanzas 40 and 87). In later Christian skaldic poems the meaning branches out further: such new meanings include ‘feat’ (*Allra postula minnisvísur* 8), ‘symbol’ (*Drápa af Máriugrat* 33), and ‘standard’ (*Pétrsdrápa* 48). Though the interpretation in these poems largely refers to signs or miracles, *merki* also occurs in praise poems to Scandinavian rulers in the context of banners to display political standing, often in a battle context. (See, for example, stanza 18 of the eleventh-century *Magnússdrápa* by Arnórr Þórðarson jarlaskáld; stanza 18 of the eleventh-century *Porfinnsdrápa* by Arnórr Þórðarson jarlaskáld; stanza 7 of the eleventh-century *Nesjavísur* by Sigvatr Þórðarson; stanza 4 of the eleventh-century *Lausavísur* by Þjóðólfr Arnórsson; stanzas 10 and 13 in the stanzas about Magnús Ólafsson in *Danaveldi* by Þjóðólfr Arnórsson; stanza 2 of the twelfth-century *Haraldsdrápa* by Einarr Skúlason; stanza 19 of the twelfth-century *Erfikvæði* about Magnús berfœttr by Gísl Illugason; stanza 17 of the twelfth-century *Eiríksdrápa* by Markús Skeggjason; stanzas 33, 52, and 64 of the thirteenth-century *Háttatal* by Snorri Sturluson; stanza 9 of the thirteenth-century *Hrynhenda* by Sturla Þórðarson). *Merki* also refers to standards in a number of praise poems to Scandinavian rulers. See, for example, stanza 8 of the tenth-century *Hákonardrápa* by Guthormr sindri; stanza 5 of the eleventh-century *Kálfsflokkur* by Bjarni gullbráskáld Hallbjarnarson; stanza 11 of the eleventh-century *Erfidrápa Óláfs helga* by Sigvatr Þórðarson; stanza 5 of the eleventh-century stanzas about Magús Ólafsson in *Danaveldi* by Þjóðólfr Arnórsson; stanza 3 of the twelfth-century *Ingadrápa* by Einarr Skúlason; stanza 19 of the twelfth-century *Rekstefja* by Hallar-Steinn; stanza 5 of the twelfth-century *Sigurðarbálkr* by Ívarr Ingimundarson; stanza 24 of the twelfth-century *Lausavísur* by Rognvaldr jarl Kali Kolsson; stanza 4 of the twelfth-century *Búadrápa* by Þorkell Gíslason; stanzas 8 and 11 of the thirteenth-century *Hrynhenda* by Óláfr hvítaskáld Þórðarson; stanza 14 of the thirteenth-century *Hákonarkviða* by Sturla Þórðarson.

with a great hall. Stanza 39 reminds the audience that, in order to be judged favourably, everyone must pray penitentially and shun *flærð* ‘deceit’ so that they may go *fljótt í fríða dýrð með Dróttni* ‘quickly into magnificent glory with the Lord’.³⁵⁸ They are then encouraged to strive to ask Christ for a heavenly abode with the promise that the *glöð þjóð, sú s getr gæði, lifir óttalaus með Dróttni* ‘glad people, that gains good things, will live fearlessly with the Lord’ (stanza 40). In stanza 41 the poet asks that Christ may preserve humanity from the *eldi ok myrkrum* ‘fire and darkness’ of Hell, in contrast to the peace and light of Heaven, and that they may instead enter God’s sanctuary when *Stýrandi alls skilr beima* ‘the Steerer of all separates men’, reiterating the importance of following the path of a good Christian life and perhaps suggesting the image of Christ as a Captain steering His crew to safe harbours.³⁵⁹ The poet requests in stanza 42 that the *ítr Yfirstillir túns rítar himins* ‘glorious Over-Moderator of the field of the shield of heaven’ keep him from harm and instead grant him mercy, since Christ gives *fastan frið* ‘steadfast peace’ as humanity’s Protector from spiritual harm.

As the poet approaches the end of this work, he offers thanks to Rúnolfr, identified as a *göfugr prestur* ‘worshipful priest’ who advised him *hvé settak grundvöll at óði* ‘how I should set the foundation of the poem’ (stanza 43), which suggests that this poem was composed within an Icelandic religious community.³⁶⁰ He then states in stanza 44 that he has exhausted his speech-organs – adding that *mest hóf þarf at flestu* ‘the greatest moderation is necessary in most things’ – and in typical fashion of the didactic subgenre of skaldic poetry states the poem’s title in this penultimate stanza. The poet bids his audience in the final stanza to behold the end of the poem and glorify God. He observes that people talk about his poem positively, and hopes that God will invite men away from judgement and instead to His dwelling in heaven.

Nú skal drótt á lok líta	(lopthjalms dögum optar
dýrkim Döglings verka	dáðhress) bragar þessa.
Heim laði dýrr frá dómi	dags hallar Gramr allan

³⁵⁸ See stanzas 17 and 45 of *Lilja* in chapter 6 for further uses of *flærð*.

³⁵⁹ See the discussion of *Harmsól* 29 in chapter three for analysis of the verb *stýra* ‘to steer’ and Christ’s role as Captain.

³⁶⁰ For the possible historical identity of Rúnolfr, see Attwood 2007: 177.

(þjóð hjali kersk of kvæði) kristinn lýð til vistar. (*Leiðarvísan* 45)³⁶¹

Now shall the King's bodyguard behold the end (let us glorify more often than [there are] days the works of the deed-hearty King of the sky-helmet) of this poem.

May the glorious Warrior-King of day's hall invite from judgement (may people chatter cheerfully about the poem) all Christian folk to His dwelling place.

'sky-helmet': heaven, of which Christ is King

'day's hall': heaven, of which Christ is Warrior-King

Stanza 45 emphasises Christ's Warrior Chieftain role, identifying Him as both *Doglingr* and *Gramr*, which as observed in analysis in chapter two are typical titles for kings and warrior chieftains in Old Norse literature.³⁶² Christ's followers are called His *drótt* 'retinue', a term that can refer to a 'household' or 'people', but most frequently identifies 'a retinue' or 'the king's bodyguard' in a way that still, in spite of more than a millennium, seems to align with the *comitatus* described in chapters thirteen and fourteen of Tacitus's *Germania*.³⁶³ Although, as Attwood observes, the audience would not have been courtly but rather a lay or mixed audience in a monastic or ecclesiastical setting, the stanza does invite a symbolic interpretation of Christ's roles in relationship with humanity.³⁶⁴ These details, combined with the descriptions of heaven as a hall, this work as a *bragr* or 'poem in praise of its Ruler', and the further description of *Leiðarvísan* as a *kvæði* meaning 'poem or song', evoke the earlier courtly setting of Christian skaldic verse.³⁶⁵ Even in its conclusion, this poem invites interpretation as a courtly work of praise, with a decided focus on Christ as Warrior Chieftain.

³⁶¹ I have modified Attwood's edition of the Old Norse text by using brackets instead of dashes and commas to differentiate clause-boundaries.

³⁶² For *drótt*, see *SnE* 1998: 259-60; *LP* 87; and *IED* 107. For *doglingr*, see *SnE* 1998: 262, 451; *LP* 94; and entry in *ADIP*. For *gramr*, see *SnE* 1998: 293; and *LP* 198. The phrase *Dáðhress Doglings lophjálms* 'of the deed-hearty King of the sky-helmet' also appears in stanzas 30 and 45. For earlier analysis of *doglingr* and *gramr* in this thesis, see stanzas 5 and 18 of *Geisli* in chapter two.

³⁶³ For *drótt*, see *SnE* 1998: 259-60; and *LP* 87.

³⁶⁴ Attwood 2007: 178.

³⁶⁵ For *bragr*, see entry in *ADIP*; *LP* 58; and *SnE* 1998: 249. For *kvæði*, see *LP* 351 and *IED* 365. *ADIP* lists the first definition for *bragr* as 'pinnacle/ornament (the paragon) with respect to eloquence' or 'the art of poetry'.

Conclusions

As a poem likely composed in the second half of the twelfth century, *Leiðarvísan* provides a useful point of comparison to both Einarr Skúlason's *Geisli* and Gamli kanóki's *Harmsól*. Due to the poet's anonymity, little can be known about *Leiðarvísan*'s original context. Despite this lack of information, we nonetheless have access to a text that offers further insight into the representations of the Christ that prevailed in Christian skaldic poetry during this period.

Leiðarvísan uses light and dark in a variety of ways that further develop the representation of Christ as Light. Numerous Christ-kennings, such as *Doðlingr lopts ljósgims* 'Prince of the loft of the light-jewel' and *Siklingr sólvangs* 'King of the sun-plain' from stanza 35, communicate His sovereignty over heaven as symbolised by the sun. The Christ-kenning *Harri farggims háshreggranns* 'King of the fair jewel of the high storm-house', develops a further connection between light and beauty through its use of the term *farggim* 'fair-jewel' to describe the sun, while also expressing Christ's ultimate authority through the menacing image of the heaven as a storm-house. This same description also seems to equate heavenly light with earthly riches, perhaps identifying the heavenly treasure the poet hopes to receive from Christ as reward for his work. *Leiðarvísan* distinguishes between the *ljós* 'light' and *friðr* 'peace' of Christ in heaven on the one hand, and the *eldr* 'fire' and *myrkr* 'darkness' found in Hell on the other; this distinction recurs in later poems, emphasising the dichotomy between righteousness and evil through light and dark. Like *Geisli*, and unlike *Harmsól*, the primary focus of this poem is praise rather than penitence, and consequently Christ's light receives far more attention than the darkness of Hell.

Like *Geisli* and *Harmsól*, *Leiðarvísan* frames the poem and Christ in a courtly context in many respects. In stanza 2, the poet calls *Leiðarvísan* *sá hróðr* 'this praise-poem', and stanza 45 similarly describes the poem as a *bragr*, meaning 'a poem in praise of its ruler'; both of these terms also frequently identify Scandinavian praise poetry that was previously offered to Kings and other prominent leaders. Numerous titles for Christ throughout *Leiðarvísan* indicate His role as King or Ruler; these include *frægja Harri* 'famous King'

(stanza 2), as well as *Døglíngur* ‘Dag’s descendent’ (stanzas 1, 35, and 45) and *Siklíngur* ‘King’ (stanzas 13, 14, 17, 21, 26, 30, and 35), which are also used to describe earlier rulers in eddic and skaldic literature. The audience, presumably a Christian one, is called a *drótt* ‘retinue’ in stanza 45, and Christ their *Gramr* ‘Warrior-King’, once again confirming the King-*þegn* relationship shared between Christ and humanity. The poem also hints at Christ’s engagement in spiritual battle in stanza 36, where He is called *daðsterkr Dróttinn himintorgu* ‘deed-strong Lord of the heaven-shield’, and the holy writings about the Last Judgement are described as *merki* ‘war-standards’. All of these details in combination point to the representation of Christ as Warrior Chieftain, celebrated for his deeds in the traditional praise-poetry format of a courtly setting.

The theme of abundance lends itself naturally to a poem that recounts and praises the great and miraculous events that take place throughout Christian history. The poet’s request for inspiration from *Dróttinn orðgnóttar* ‘the Lord of word-abundance’ (stanza 2) in the opening stanzas establishes eloquence as a spiritual gift that God generously distributes to the poet. As in *Geisli* Christ’s outpouring of mercy is expressed through miraculous events, in this case events from both the Old and New Testament that demonstrate God’s triumphs and accomplishments throughout Christian history. The flowing of water from the stone of Horeb and the raining of manna from heaven in stanza 20 particularly evoke God’s abundant mercy: not only do they develop the vivid symbolism of flowing provisions as a sign of nourishment and generosity, they also serve as theological foreshadowing for Christ’s outpouring of mercy at the Crucifixion. Even the miracles that the poet chooses to highlight in Christ’s life – namely the transformation of water into wine and the feeding of the multitude in stanzas 26 to 28 – represent Christ’s mercy as His ability to nourish His followers, both physically and spiritually. The image of flowing water as it relates to Christ may also have an eddic literary precedent, specifically Christ’s association with the *Urðar brunnr* ‘wellspring of the Norns’ as mentioned in the Christ-stanza by Eilífr Guðrúnarson and quoted in *Skáldskaparmál* of *Snorra Edda*. As observed by O’Donoghue, there also seems to be a compelling similarity between Baldr as a symbol for new life and Christ’s abundant and merciful nature. Whether or not such mythological links can be accepted,

Christ's representation as a Provider of abundant nourishment remains an important aspect of this poem, reminding its audience that those who observe the Sabbath and pay their tithes will be abundantly rewarded.

Unlike *Geisli* and *Harmsól*, *Leiðarvísan* makes almost no mention of Christ's role as Judge. The only notable exception to this is the account of the Second Coming and Last Judgement in stanzas 35 and 36, where the audience is urged to seek *sátt* 'reconciliation' with God. Little else in this brief mention of the Judgement points to Christ's legal role, with the focus instead on Christ's sovereignty over heaven and His engagement in spiritual battle. What the poet does emphasise for his audience are the punishments in store for those are sent to Hell, and the rewards for those who adhere to a Christian life and are sent to heaven. As a poem designed to highlight miraculous events and spiritual victories throughout Christian history, *Leiðarvísan's* diminished representation of Christ as Judge gives way instead to His representations as Light, Warrior Chieftain, and Provider of abundant spiritual nourishment.

Though *Leiðarvísan* develops some of the representations of Christ found in *Geisli* and *Harmsól*, its lack of attention to Christ's legal role alongside its interest in themes of nourishment and outpouring reflect a departure from *Geisli* and *Harmsól* in the poet's primary objectives for how his audience ought to respond. The next two homiletic and didactic poems reviewed in this thesis, *Líknarbraut* and *Lilja*, also present Christ in a number of roles that draw on a complex combination of Christian literary traditions and Norse cultural influences. These portrayals, as we shall see, not only reflect developments in Christian literary practices, but perhaps also a re-emerging interest in Norse mythological literature.

Chapter Five - *Líknarbraut*

Líknarbraut is an anonymously composed *drápa* in *dróttkvætt* metre from the late thirteenth century. Its title, which translates as ‘Way of Grace’, reflects the poem’s devotional focus on the Cross and its numerous symbolic forms as humanity’s path to salvation.³⁶⁶ Centring on Christ’s Passion and the virtues of the Cross, the poet uses a variety of images to symbolise the way in which the Cross grants us access to Christ’s mercy. Even the poem’s structure offers a hint of its life-affirming message, with its 52 stanzas corresponding to the number of weeks in a year, and frequent references to God’s abundance. Tate proposes, on the basis of its subject matter, influences from both Icelandic homilies and Latin-based Christian texts, and its ‘close connection to the Good Friday liturgy,’ that *Líknarbraut* was likely composed as a verse sermon.³⁶⁷ Whatever the context, the poem’s strong association with literary themes from this period in Christian history is evident throughout the work.

Líknarbraut has a somewhat puzzling organisation for its 52 stanzas, with the poem consisting of a 12-stanza *upphaf* (stanzas 1-12), a 17-stanza *stefjabálkr* (stanzas 13-29), a 16-stanza *adoratio crucis* section (stanzas 30-45), and the 7-stanza *slœmr* (stanzas 46-52).³⁶⁸ The *upphaf* opens with an invocation, as the poet introduces the poem with a mixture of sorrow and joy in the first 11 stanzas, and praises Christ for the Incarnation and Passion in stanza 12. The section comprising the *stefjabálkr* traces biblical narrative from the Crucifixion through to the Last Judgement. Stanzas 14 to 16 detail the torments inflicted on Christ at the Crucifixion and are followed by a contemplation of Mary’s grief, Christ’s torments, and the spear that pierces His side in stanzas 18 to 20. The Harrowing of Hell, Resurrection, and Ascension are described in

³⁶⁶ Tate 2007: 228. The poem’s title appears both in the beginning right margin of the surviving manuscript, and in the penultimate stanza.

³⁶⁷ Tate 2007: 229.

³⁶⁸ For more information on the confusion over *Líknarbraut*’s peculiar metrical organisation, see Tate 1986: 580, and De Vries 1964-7: II, 76. It may be possible that the poet began the *stefjabálkr* at stanza 13 so that descriptions of the Crucifixion would correspond with the weeks surrounding Easter in the 52-week calendar. This may explain the slightly lopsided nature of this *drápa*’s various sections.

stanzas 22 to 24, and the *stefjabálkr* concludes in stanzas 26-28 with the appearance of the Cross at the Last Judgement, followed by a refrain in stanza 29.

The *adoratio crucis* in stanzas 30 to 45, which marks the beginning of the poem's *slœmr*, is influenced by a number of other texts, among them the Good Friday liturgy, the Reproaches, and the hymns *Pange lingua* and *Vexilla regis* from Venantius Fortunatus. Its subsections include exempla that depict the Cross as key, flower, ship, ladder, bridge, scales, and altar (stanzas 31-37); a list of the virtues and powers of the Cross (stanzas 38-41), likely based on the Icelandic homily *De sancta cruce*; and the medieval poetic prose topos of the address of Christ from the Cross (stanzas 43-45).³⁶⁹ The poet concludes his work by calling for the audience to pray as he prays for mercy in stanzas 46 to 48. As reward for this composition, he asks God for later recompense in stanzas 49 to 50, hinting at the gift-giving culture associated with skaldic compositions. He identifies the poem's title in the penultimate stanza, and in the final stanza asks the Cross to continue shining, reminding the audience of the poem's primary focus.

This thirteenth-century work survives in AM 757 a 4^o (B) from c. 1400, the same manuscript as *Harmsól* and *Leiðarvísan*. The authorship is not specified, and consequently scholars must hypothesise the date of composition based on circumstantial evidence, such as borrowings from *Harmsól* and *Leiðarvísan*; its influence on *Lilja* and on Árni Jónsson's *Guðmundardrápa* from the mid-fourteenth century; a reduced frequency of kennings; specific linguistic features; and 'iconographic and emotional concord with contemplative Franciscan Passion poetry' from the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.³⁷⁰ These features make the second half of the thirteenth century a likely period for the composition of this poem.

AM 757 a 4^o (B) serves as the basis for the normalised text of this poem. However, since there are numerous lacunae and defects in the manuscript, the nineteenth-century transcription in JS 399 a-b 4^{ox} has been used for around 70

³⁶⁹ For the Icelandic homily *De Sancta Cruce*, see *Hómísl* 1993: 18r, and *Hómísl* 1872: 39, and *HómNo* 105. Cf. Tate 2007: 273.

³⁷⁰ Tate 2007: 229. Cf. Tate 1974: 28-33; Tate 1986: 580; and Holtsmark 1965: 554.

restorations to the text. There is a transcription of JS 399 a-b 4^{ox} in Lbs 444 4^{ox} with marginal notes by Sveinbjörn Egilsson, as well as the printer's copy in Lbs 1152 8^{ox}. The edition used for stanzas quoted in this thesis is George S. Tate's 2007 edition from *Poetry on Christian Subjects*.³⁷¹

Líknarbraut opens with two stanzas in which the poet requests that God give him *sanna orðgnótt* 'true word-abundance' (stanza 1) and *dýra munnshöfn* 'dear mouth-possession' (stanza 2), emphasising the importance of eloquent communication on the speaker's behalf and identifying God as its ultimate source.³⁷² The *Líknarbraut* poet then asks that Christ incline His *hreina heyrn miskunnar* 'pure hearing of mercy' to the speaker's prayers, as expressed through these stanzas, so that mercifulness *skíni* 'may shine' upon him.

Hneig, er veitir vægðir vígrunni, miskunnar
hreina hugðubænum heyrn þína, Guð, mínum;
allr týnumz ek ella, ítr, sem þú mátt líta,
Guð, nema gæzku saðrar gipt þín of mér skíni. (*Líknarbraut* 3)

God, [You] who grant leniency to the battle-bush,
bend Your pure hearing of mercy to my loving prayers;
otherwise I am completely lost, as You, glorious God,
may see, unless Your gift of true mercifulness shine upon me.

battle bush: a variant of a tree-kenning that refers here to a soldier, or more generally man

The emphasis on mercy is evident in this stanza's use of three different terms to express the same concept: *vægð* 'leniency', *miskunn* 'mercy', and *gæzka* 'mercifulness'.³⁷³ Numerous details within this stanza further develop the representation of Christ and His mercifulness as Light, connecting the concept with the image. The poet's request to God for His *hreina heyrn miskunnar* 'pure hearing of mercy' in the first *helmingr* links righteousness with light, since *hreinn* 'pure' can also mean 'white' or 'bright'.³⁷⁴ These verses act as an intermediary between stanza two, which focuses on hearing, and the light imagery found in stanza four. The poet then explains in the second *helmingr* that, unless God's

³⁷¹ Tate 2007: 229.

³⁷² The *Leiðarvísan* poet makes a similar request to God in the poem's opening two stanzas.

³⁷³ For *vægð*, see *SnE* 1998: 430. For *miskunnar*, see *LP* 406. For *gæzka*, see *IED* 222.

³⁷⁴ For *hreinn*, see *LP* 278-9; *SnE* 1998: 318; and *IED* 283.

gipt saðrar gæzku of mér skíni ‘gift of true mercifulness shine upon me’, he would be *allr tynumz* ‘completely lost’. This connection between listening and mercy functions as a gift which *skíni* ‘may shine’ on the poet, further confirming the interrelated nature of purity and the light associated with Christ. The use of the adjective *ítr* ‘glorious’ to describe God, as noted in the analysis of *Geisli* 21 in chapter two, potentially resonates with earlier descriptions of Norse mythological figures and associates Christ with light through its alternate meanings, though the word choice could also have been partially dictated by metre.³⁷⁵ The use of *skína* ‘to shine’ in the second *helmingr* similarly promotes the idea of Christ and His mercy as Light gifted to humanity.³⁷⁶

The invocation continues this symbolism in stanza 4, as the poet asks for the light of Christ’s spirit to shine in the hall of his heart and dispel his sinfulness, so that he might become eloquent and his message strong:

Þrifgæðir, lát, þjóðar, Þíns anda mér skína
 ástarljós, sem ek æsti, albjart í sal hjarta,
 þat er misverka myrkrum, munar, hrindi, svá blindi
 míns, ór mælsku túni, móðs vandliga hrjóði. (*Líknarbraut* 4)

Prosperity-Endower of the people, let the all-bright love-light
 of Your spirit shine in the hall of my heart, as I request,
 that which may banish misdeeds’ murkiness from my homefield
 of eloquence, [and] so push the blindness from my weary mind.

prosperity-Endower: Christ
 homefield of eloquence: breast, from which poetry is composed

³⁷⁵ For *ítr*, see *LP* 322-3; and *SnE* 1998: 329. *Geisli* 66 offers an example of *ítr* being used in the sense of ‘bright’: *Landsfolk lúti himni Salkonungs ítrum lim* ‘Let the land-folk bow before the bright limb of the King of heaven’s hall’. That said, in the period of *Líknarbraut*’s composition, and in the century preceeding, *ítr* tends to mean ‘glorious’ or ‘splendid’ in both Christian skaldic poems and skaldic stanzas composed about Scandinavian rulers; such uses seem to be less associated with light and more with glory. For twelfth-century examples, see *Harmsól* (stanzas 4, 8, 18, 26, 30, 32, 50, 63, and 65), *Leiðarvísan* (stanzas 13, 17, 21, 24, 32, and 42), *Plácitusdrápa* (stanzas 14, 28, 32, 35, 39, 44, 46, 50, 51, 54, 57, 58, and 59), Hallar-Steinn’s *Rekstefja* (stanzas 1, 2, and 8), Þorkell hamarskáld’s *Magnússdrápa* (stanza 5), Sigmundur ǫngull’s *Lausavísur* (stanza 1), Markús Skeggjason’s *Eiríksdrápa* (stanza 3), and Ármóðr’s *Lausavísur* (stanza 12). For thirteenth-century examples, see *Líknarbraut* (stanzas 8, 22, 29, 33, 39, and 50), and Snorri Sturluson’s *Háttatal* (stanzas 13, 30, 52, and 66). Given the evidence of usage in twelfth- and thirteenth-century poems – including other stanzas of *Líknarbraut* itself – it is possible that the mythological resonances were no longer recognised in the word *ítr*.

³⁷⁶ For *skína*, see *LP* 507-8; and *SnE* 1998: 392.

One of the dominant themes in this stanza is the contrast between the light of Christ and the darkness of sinfulness. Each *helmingr*, while essentially expressing the same idea, is distinguished from the other by the use of light and dark. In the first *helmingr* the poet asks that the *albjart ástarljós* ‘all-bright love-light’ of God’s spirit *lát skína* ‘shine’ in his heart, while in the second he rephrases his request to focus on banishing the *myrkrum misverka* ‘misdeeds’ murkiness’ and pushing away the *blindi* ‘blindness’ from his mind. The act of Christ’s light dispelling the darkness of the soul is a Psalmic motif, and also appears in liturgical hymns by Ambrose such as *Aufer tenebras mentium* ‘Remove the darkness of our minds’ and *Tu lux, refulge sensibus* ‘You light, shine upon our senses’.³⁷⁷ The clear divide between the darkness of sinfulness and the light of righteousness and purity continues to be an important theme in Christian skaldic poems; in particular blindness as ignorance to spiritual truth plays an important role here and in *Lilja*’s descriptions of the devil.³⁷⁸

The other dominant theme of stanza 4 is one of nourishment and healing that in part defines Christ’s relationship with humanity. The poet asks Christ the *Þrifgæðir* ‘Prosperity-Endower’, whose epithet implies abundant spiritual wealth and mercy, to clear away misdeeds *míns túni mælsku* ‘from my homefield of eloquence’ as if preparing the poet to cultivate the *sanna orðgnótt* ‘true word-abundance’ requested in the opening stanza.³⁷⁹ A similar conception of the mind as the ground from which speech may organically grow and flourish occurs in stanza 5 of Egill Skallagrímsson’s *Sonatorrek*, ‘On the difficulty of avenging sons’, from c. 960:

Þó munk mitt ok móður hrør
 fǫður fall fyrst of telja;
 þat berk út ór orðhofi
 mæðar timbr, máli laufgat. (Egill Skallagrímsson’s *Sonatorrek* 5)³⁸⁰

³⁷⁷ AH: 51, 28 and 50, 10. Also, Psalm XVII.29: *Deus meus, illumina tenebras meas* (Vulg 2011, Psalms XVII.29) ‘O my God, enlighten my darkness’ (Vulg 2011, Psalms XVII.29). Cf. Tate 2007: 233.

³⁷⁸ For an instance in Christian skaldic verse where Lucifer is described as blind, see *Lilja* 9 in chapter six of this thesis.

³⁷⁹ For *þrif*, see LP 645 and IED 745. For *gæðir*, see LP 211 and IED 222. For *tún*, see LP 573-4 and IED 644-5.

³⁸⁰ Text from North 2011a: 178.

Though I must tell first of my mother's
corpse and my father's fall;
I carry out the timber of praise
from the word-temple, made leafy with speech.

Torfi Tulinius takes these ideas to be late Christian inserts based on a biblical passage from Numbers XVII, in which leaves and a single fruit grow from Aaron's rod in what was understood as a *prefiguration* for Christ being 'conceived in the unspoiled womb of Mary'; given *Sonatorrek's* textual corruptions and obscurity this interpretation cannot be entirely ruled out.³⁸¹ Through his own use of agrarian imagery, the *Líknarbraut* poet effectively asks God to ensure the fertility and fruitfulness of his spiritual wellbeing. The description of the poet's mind as *móðr* 'weary' further implies that sinfulness is here perceived as an injury or illness which Christ as Healer can remedy.³⁸² Thus the qualities of Christ in this stanza are those of light, nourishment, and healing.

The agrarian themes of *Líknarbraut* become even more pronounced in stanza 5. The poet continues his opening invocation, exhorting Christ *dreifa* 'to sprinkle' his *lyndis láð* 'mind's land' with *dýru himnesku sáði* 'precious heavenly seed' so that he may abundantly produce *sannan ávöxt af Yðru óþornuðu korni* 'true fruit from Your unwithered seed'. The concept of the mind as a land on which the heavenly seed can be sprinkled is the poet's creative expression of the divine inspiration he requests from Christ:

Dreifðu láðs ok lofða Lífstýrir, mér dýru,
leyfðar kendr, í lyndis láð himnesku sáði,
ár svá at ávöxt færak, alls Kannandi, sannan,
elsku kuðr, af Yðru óþornuðu korni. (*Líknarbraut* 5)

Life-Steerer of land and men, acknowledged in praise,
sprinkle my mind's land with precious heavenly seed,
so that I may bring forth an abundance, true fruit
from Your unwithered seed, O love-renowned Tester of all.

mind's land: breast

³⁸¹ Torfi Tulinius 2009: 709-710.

³⁸² For *móðr*, see *LP* 410-11 and *IED* 435.

Tester of all: Christ

In the first *helmingr*, the poet asks Christ, here called *Lífstýrir* ‘Life-Steerer’, *dreifa* ‘to sprinkle’ his mind’s *láð* ‘land’ with *himnesku sáði* ‘heavenly seed’.³⁸³ The poet uses the verb *dreifa*, meaning ‘to scatter’ or ‘disperse’, in the sense of sowing seeds to express the metaphorical sowing of divine inspiration.³⁸⁴ The seeds fall onto his *lyndis láð* ‘mind’s land’ which, as Guðrún Nordal notes, is a representation of the mind ‘dominant in chest-kennings in the thirteenth-century’ and potentially influenced by symbolism found in contemporary Christian writings of the period.³⁸⁵ The Christ-epithet *Kannandi alls* ‘Tester of all’ in the second *helmingr* relates to the Parable of the Sower from Mark IV.3-20, in which the Sower (representing God) distributes seeds over both good and poor soil to demonstrate how those receptive to Christ will bear spiritual fruit. In this sense, Christ is a Tester of the poet’s receptivity to the *dýru himnesku sáði* ‘precious heavenly seed’ that will produce *ár, sannan ávöxt af yðru óþornuðu korni* ‘an abundance, true fruit from your unwithered seed’, or the spiritual gift of poetic inspiration.³⁸⁶ The noun *ár* ‘abundance’ serves as an equivalent to the Latin *annona* meaning ‘plenty’ or ‘a year’s yield of crops’, and can be used in reference to both a calendar year and the abundant harvest of a year; in the context of *Liknarbraut*, this term serves as an important indicator of the poet’s conception of spiritual gifts as the natural produce of a well-cultivated mind, which is further reflected in the poem’s mirroring of the 52-week calendar year with its 52 stanzas.³⁸⁷ Stanza 5 contains the first use in Christian skaldic verse

³⁸³ A similar kenning describes an earthly ruler in stanza 3 of the eleventh-century *Bandadrápa* by Eyjólfur dáðaskáld: *folkstýrir* ‘folk-steerer’. The related title *stjóri* ‘steerer’ appears twice in Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld Óttarsson’s *Erfidrápa Óláfs Tryggvasonar*: *stjóra gumna* ‘the steerer of men’ (stanza 9), and *dýrr stjóri dróttar* ‘glorious steerer of the retinue’ (stanza 23).

³⁸⁴ For *dreifa*, see LP 84 and entry in ADIP. According to the entry in ADIP, *dreifa* can also specifically refer to the sowing of seeds in some instances, and generous distribution in others.

³⁸⁵ Nordal 2001: 258. Nordal (2001: 258 and 300) observes ‘similar imagery in Christian writings of the period, in *Elucidarius*, the homilies, or scientific writing’, and also notes that kenning constructions such as this are prescribed in thirteenth-century grammatical treatises. For other related examples, see *Liknarbraut* 7 (*rann hugar* ‘house of the mind’) and *Liknarbraut* 40 (*tún hyggju* ‘of thought’s field’).

³⁸⁶ For *sáð*, see LP 484; and SnE 1998: 380.

³⁸⁷ For *ár*, see the entry in ADIP, LP 29 and SnE 1998: 235. Ó Carragáin (2005: 79) notes that there is a strong tradition in Christian literature of exploring the significance in the timing of spiritual events in human history; the intentional nature of the Incarnation and Passion, for example, is highlighted by the assertion that both events took place on the same day thirty-three

of the noun *ávøxt*, which can be construed here as ‘fruit’, ‘produce’, or ‘growth’ and further encourages the audience to imagine poetic inspiration as the yield from Christ’s nourishment of the poet’s mind.³⁸⁸ The resounding message of this stanza, as communicated through the representation of the mind being sown with poetic inspiration, is that Christ offers spiritual nourishment to His people, who are rewarded with an abundant yield of spiritual gifts.

In addition to sharing similarities with the Parable of the Sower in Mark IV.3-20, the stanza likely draws influence from several other Christian literary sources. I Corinthians III.7-9, for example, identifies God as the source of abundant crops, and Paasche notes that the Old Icelandic homily on ember-days offers a very similar picture of spiritual nourishment to stanza 5: *sva scolom vér nu haLda þa. at vér náem andlego áre í hiortom ǫrom...Þa keomr orþa sáþ Hans I hugscoz iorþ óra* ‘thus we should now hold them [i.e. ember-days] that we might receive a spiritual abundance in our hearts...Then the seed of His word will come into our mind’s ground’.³⁸⁹ However, the interest in Christ’s associations with fruitfulness may also have something to do with the perceived link between the Norse gods, kingship, and fertility. While Adam of Bremen identifies ‘Fricco’ (since taken to be Freyr) as the god most closely associated with fertility, Óðinn gained the association with fertility later from a link to kings who had ties to the land.³⁹⁰ The Óðinn connection is based on ‘sacral kingship’,

years apart. Both events were celebrated in the Middle Ages on 25 March (Cf. Ambrosiaster, CSEL 50:100; and Loi 1971: 53). As mentioned in this chapter’s introduction, the poet may have chosen to begin descriptions of the Crucifixion in stanza 13 because this roughly corresponds with the time of year in which Christ’s Passion is observed in the 52-week calendar.

³⁸⁸ For *ávøxt*, see entry in *ADIP*; *LP* 32; *LEI* 2000: 422; and *SnE* 1998: 432. According to *ADIP*, *ávøxt* not only applies to a fruitful crop, a fruitful womb, or general growth and development, but can also be construed metaphorically as a yield or interest from an investment.

³⁸⁹ Paasche 1914: 127. Old Norse text from *Hómísl* 1993: 16v-17r; and *Hómísl* 1872: 36. Translation from Tate 2007: 235. As noted by Paasche (1948: 127), other related titles for Christ in church Latin include *verus et summus Agricola* ‘true and supreme Husbandman’, *Sator universi* ‘Sower of the universe’, and *Auctor spiritualium fructum* ‘Creator of spiritual fruits’. Cf. Tate: 235. I Corinthians III.7-9: *itaque neque qui plantat, est aliquid, neque qui rigat, sed qui incrementum dat, Deus. Qui plantat autem et qui rigat unum sunt; unusquisque autem propriam mercedem accipiet secundum suum laborem. Dei enim sumus adiutores: Dei agricultura estis, Dei aedificatio estis* (*Vulg* 1979, I Corinthians III.7-9) ‘So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each. For we are God’s servants, working together; you are God’s field, God’s building’ (*NRSV*, I Corinthians III.7-9).

³⁹⁰ Schjødt 2010: 183. Cf. Steinsland 1991: 119-29. For information on Freyr and fertility according to Adam of Bremen, see a Modern English translation of his work in Tschan 2002:

the idea that the ruler shared a connection with the divine and was responsible for 'ensuring the community's needs were met through supernatural means'.³⁹¹ Schjødt has argued that Óðinn's roles as initiate and initiator, as well as the 'personal' guardian god of rulers could have coexisted with the view that kings were the offspring of Freyr, and could have made Óðinn well-suited to be the god of kings and rulers.³⁹² Þjóðólfr's ninth-century poem *Ynglingatal*, which appears in the thirteenth-century *Ynglinga saga* from Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla*, provides an intriguing narrative about Swedish King Dómaldi, who as a descendent in the Ingvi-freyr line, and one who had been cursed by his stepmother, was sacrificed by his people after they had endured several years of famine under his reign.³⁹³ According to details in *Ynglinga saga*, Freyr appears as an ancestral king with the implication that, 'just as he produced welfare and prosperity, his descendants would also secure welfare and prosperity'.³⁹⁴ Both North and Abram note that Snorri Sturluson understood the king's death as sacrifice for the land's fertility, as when King Dómaldi was identified as the cause of famine and sacrificed in order to produce a good crop in the coming year.³⁹⁵ These cultural associations may have informed the way in which the spiritual nourishment and provision from Christ as King was perceived

207. Schjødt also notes that Freyja, Freyr's sister, shares a sexual relationship with him in some narratives and is similarly a goddess of fertility. Cf. Näsström 2003.

³⁹¹ Abram 2011: 91-2.

³⁹² Schjødt 2010: 183. Cf. Sundqvist 2002; and North 1997: 260.

³⁹³ The account of King Dómaldi's death appears in three texts: Þjóðólfr's *Ynglingatal* from c. 890; Snorri's thirteenth-century *Ynglinga saga* in *Heimskringla*, where *Ynglingatal* also appears; and the Latin *Historia Norvegiae*. Lars Lönnroth, in his assessment of Old Norse versions of the narrative, concludes that the 'theme of the king's relation to *ár ok friðr* was...of importance both in *Ynglinga saga* and in *Heimskringla*, as a whole, but it is not a recurring motif in *Ynglingatal*' (Lars Lönnroth 1986: 87; Cf. North 1997: 266).

³⁹⁴ Schjødt 2010: 185. North 1997: 265. For the account from *Ynglinga saga*, see *ÍF* 26: 30-2 (chs. 14-15).

³⁹⁵ North 1997: 265; and Abram 2011: 92. Cf. Hollander, ed. 1964: 19. For recent discussions of 'sacral kingship' within Old Norse religion, see Steinsland 1991 and 2000, and Sundqvist 2002 and 2005. Agrarian associations with kingship may also feature in the Old English poem *Beowulf*. As North (1997: 194) observes, the name *Beow* itself is a personification of 'barley' and suggests that the use of *Beowulf* in the poem's opening lines was a scribal error. He further explains that the poet uses *blæd* to either mean 'fame' or 'blade', depending on whether the vowel is long or short, and in the latter case 'the image of a leaf springing wide is more properly an allusion to growing barley' (North 1997: 194-6). Based on these details, and the use of *Beow* alongside *Scyld* in royal genealogies, the names seem to suggest a connection between rulers and agrarian success, from which O'Donoghue (2008: 92) concludes that these figures originally represented 'fertility deities of some kind, transformed by time and/or the poet of *Beowulf* into kings'.

by a Norse literary audience, perhaps resonating with the perceived roles of mythological figures in bringing about prosperity.

Continuing in the agrarian thread, the poet begins stanza 6 with the hope that the spiritual fruits of this poem might benefit the souls of his audience. He asks God that humanity might not suffer from a perversion of His laws *at grandí kind gumna* ‘to the injury of the offspring of men’ (stanza 6), a statement that implies Christ’s roles as humanity’s Protector and Healer. The poet next highlights Christ’s association with light in stanza 7 when, addressing the *Hildingr hauðrs mána hvéls* ‘Ruler of the earth of the moon’s wheel’, he states that *öll þín orð eru bjartari ok fegri gulli ok gimsteinum ór völlum* ‘all Your words are brighter and more beautiful than gold and gems from the fields’, alluding to heavenly treasures as expressed in Jeremiah XLI.8 and Matthew XIII.44 while also associating brightness and beauty with Christ as the King of heaven.³⁹⁶ In stanza 8 he asks *bræðr ok systir* ‘brothers and sisters’ to pray so that God *virðiz vera nálægr mínum málum* ‘might consent to be close to my speech’, and is at once sorrowful and glad in stanza 9 as he begins *þenna blíðan hróðr* ‘this joyful praise’. He explains in stanza 10 that his sorrow is on account of Christ’s Passion, a sacrifice which the poet can never requite, and his gladness on account of grace, *sú er hlauz lýð af krossi ok dauða Logðungs himinríkis* ‘which was distributed to the people from the Cross and from the death of the King of the kingdom of heaven’. He calls for each man to strive *alls meira af hreinum ástum* ‘all the more out of pure loves’ in stanza 11, since Christ, called *Þverrir svíka* ‘Diminisher of treacheries’, extends mercy to humanity *hverja stund* ‘every hour’ (stanza 11).³⁹⁷ Despite the poet’s lament of his own sinful state, his representation of Christ in these opening stanzas inspires more hope than

³⁹⁶ Tate 2007: 237. Jeremiah XLI.8: *Decem autem viri repperi sunt inter eos qui dixerunt ad Ishmael, ‘Noli occidere nos, quia habemus thesaurus in agro frumenti et hordei et olei et mellis’. Et cessavit et non interfecit eos cum fratribus suis (Vulg 2012a, Jeremiah XLI.8)* ‘But ten men were found among them that said to Ishmael, ‘Kill us not, for we have stores in the field of wheat and barley and oil and honey’. And he forbore and slew them not with their brethren’ (Vulg 2012a, Jeremiah XLI.8). Matthew XIII.44: *Simile est regnum caelorum thesauro abscondito in agro, quem qui invenit homo abscondit et prae gaudio illius vadit et vendit universa, quae habet, et emit agrum illum (Vulg 1979, Matthew XIII.44)* ‘The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field’ (NRSV Matthew, XIII.44).

³⁹⁷ I have modified Tate’s edition of the Old Norse text by changing word forms to accord with my sentence’s grammar.

dread. He is praised as both the merciful Healer of the injuries caused by sin, and Warrior King who will destroy sin and protect His people.

The poem's *upphaf* concludes in stanza 12 with a drawing together of the Incarnation and Crucifixion in a manner that portrays Christ in His preparations for spiritual battle. The *Líknarbraut* poet makes use of the term *skrýða* 'to clothe' in reference to Christ's apparent identity in this stanza. However, instead of clothing Himself in His holy flesh at the Ascension as described in *Harmsól* 29, here Christ dresses Himself with flesh at the Incarnation, as if arming Himself for His ultimate battle against the devil.

Sá * baztr frá mey mæztri Mildingr beraz vildi
 heiða tjalds ok holdi hjálmpnýddan Sik skrýddi;
 en nauð á Sik síðan sjálfráði tók dáða
 víst fyr vára löstu Vísi Sjálfr með píslum. (*Líknarbraut* 12)

The best Liberal Man of heath's tent willed to be born from
 the most precious maiden and dressed Himself, helmet-adorned, with
 flesh;
 and later the Leader Himself, voluntarily with regard to His deeds,
 took distress upon Himself with tortures, certainly for our faults.

heath's tent: heaven, of which Christ is the 'Liberal Man' or 'Prince'

The poet chooses two epithets for Christ that support this Warrior Chieftain representation: He is first called *Mildingr* 'Liberal Man', expressing His generosity towards His followers, and then *Vísi* 'Leader', characterising Him distinctly as a Ruler even in the midst of His apparent vulnerability both at birth and the Crucifixion.³⁹⁸ Christ at the Incarnation is described as being *hjálmprýddr* 'helmet-adorned', a compound that makes use of the terms *hjalmr* 'helmet' and *prýða* 'to adorn', and presents His humanity possibly as a concealment with the intent to deceive but more likely as an arming for spiritual conflict.³⁹⁹ The description invites audiences to picture humanity as Christ's clothing, and specifically as a helmet, which as Tate observes was 'a royal as

³⁹⁸ For *mildingr*, see *LP* 405; and *SnE* 1998: 356. For *vísi*, see *LP* 625; and *SnE* 1998: 430.

³⁹⁹ For *hjalmr*, see *SnE* 1998: 311; and entry in *ADIP*. For *prýða*, see *LP* 452. I agree with Tate's (2007: 244) interpretation that the language of clothing and armour fits well with the rest of the poem and should therefore be retained. In contrast to Tate's edition, the meaning of *prýða* is emended in both *Skj* and *Skald* to be 'equipped with help, salvation'.

much as a warrior adornment in the Middle Ages'.⁴⁰⁰ However, the poet communicates more than just Christ's engagement in spiritual battle through this account of the Incarnation. Mary's pregnancy, though straightforwardly related here, is expressed through the verb *bera*, which in this context means 'to give birth to', but can also refer to the yield of a crop or the shining forth of light.⁴⁰¹ Thus through this small detail in a stanza largely focussing on Christ's role as Warrior Chieftain, there are also glimpses of His associations with light and abundant nourishment.

The *Líknarbraut* poet's expression of Christ's role as Warrior Chieftain in stanza 12 shares details in common with portrayals of Christ in both Old English Christian poetry and the Old Saxon *Heliand*, though the description of the Incarnation as a clothing or arming does not appear in either corpus of literature.⁴⁰² Christ arming Himself for spiritual battle as expressed in stanza 12 fits with the chivalric trope in which 'a renowned and formidable knight rides to a tourney in disguise so that his adversaries will not recognise him and consequently decline to encounter him in the lists'.⁴⁰³ An example of this can be found in the Middle English poem *Piers Plowman* (B XVIII), when Jesus takes the arms of *humana natura* secretly in order to deceive the devil. In contrast to the trope where a disguise is used to avoid battle with an adversary, in *Líknarbraut* Christ arms Himself so that the devil does not perceive His divinity when they battle. Perhaps, then, stanza 12 expresses the Incarnation by drawing on this chivalric trope, which is slightly modified to combine the portrayal of Christ as Warrior Chieftain and Beguiler.

⁴⁰⁰ Tate 2007: 244.

⁴⁰¹ For *bera*, see entry in *ADIP*; *LP* 42-3; and *SnE* 1998: 242-3. In Christian skaldic poetry, *bera* is only used in the following stanzas with the meaning 'to be born': *Geisli* 2, *Harmsól* 19, *Leiðarvísan* 23, *Máriudrápa* 16, *Máriudrápa* 33, *Allra postula minnisvísur* 9, and *Kátrínardrápa* 9. More frequently, the verb *bera* means 'to bear' or 'carry', either literally or metaphorically; Christian skaldic poems that use *bera* in this sense include *Geisli* (stanzas 8 and 9), *Harmsól* (stanzas 11 and 64), *Plácitusdrápa* (stanzas 13, 20, 21, 39, and 41), *Leiðarvísan* (stanza 37), *Líknarbraut* (stanzas 10, 15, 32, 41, and 51), *Sólarljóð* (stanza 78), *Lilja* (stanzas 88, 91, and 99), *Máriudrápa* (stanza 20), *Heilagra meyja drápa* (stanzas 5, 17, 21, 25, and 41), *Drápa af Máriugrat* (stanzas 7, 13, 14, 19, 22, and 29), *Máriuvísur II* (stanzas 8, 9, 10, 17, 18, and 21), and *Pétrsdrápa* (stanzas 4, 9, 20, and 38).

⁴⁰² Tate 2007: 244. Though Christ is represented as Warrior Chieftain in Old English and Old Saxon Christian verse, he is never presented in these literatures as being helmet-adorned, making this a unique representation in Old Norse Christian verse.

⁴⁰³ Waldron 1986: 67.

The representation of Christ in stanza 12 may have also drawn some influence from representations of Old Norse mythological figures. In the eddic *Grímnismál* 46, for example, Óðinn states, *Hétomc Grímr, / hétomc Gangleri, / Herian ok Hiálmberi* ‘I named myself Covering, / I named myself Wanderer, / Warrior and Helmet-Bearer’, describing himself in similar terms to Christ’s ‘helmet-adorned’ state at the Incarnation.⁴⁰⁴ Gade observes another Icelandic literary precedent, that *huliðshjálm* ‘helmet of concealment’ often means rendering one ‘invisible by sorcery’.⁴⁰⁵ In Sturla Þórðarson’s *Hákonarkviða* 3, Christ makes this happen to one of His followers, and elsewhere He does it to Himself:

Hafði Krístr of konungsefni
 huliðshjálm heilli góðu,
 þá er allvalds ór ófriði
 frægðarson fagnandi kom. (Sturla Þórðarson, *Hákonarkviða* 3)⁴⁰⁶

Christ put over the king’s heir
 a helmet of concealment by good luck,
 when the sovereign’s renowned son
 came rejoicing from strife.

The topos of a young prince hiding from persecutors is also known in the Legendary Sagas, for example Helgi and Hróarr in Chapters Two to Three of *Hrólfs saga kraka*. The image of clothing a person with invisibility demonstrates that metaphorical clothing, as it appears in poems to do with Christ, was a commonly understood trope in Old Norse poems outside of the Christian skaldic genre, and could indicate Christ’s intent to deceive the devil through the concealment of His divine nature in *Líknarbraut*.

The contemplation of Christ’s accomplishments through the Incarnation and Crucifixion is followed by a refrain in stanza 13. This marks the beginning of the poem’s *stefjabálkr*, which praises Christ as well as the *krossmark* ‘Cross-sign’ that *vinnr krapt alls bezt* ‘achieves power best of all’ for humanity. The poem then moves into an extended description of Christ’s afflictions at the

⁴⁰⁴ Old Norse text from *NK*, 66.

⁴⁰⁵ Gade 2009: 701. Cf. *Fritzner: huliðshjalmr; Fóstbræðra saga, ÍF* 6: 167; *ÓTHkr, ÍF* 26: 312.

⁴⁰⁶ Gade 2009: 701.

Crucifixion beginning in stanza 14, where *grimmúðgastir gumnar* ‘the most grim-minded men’ tormented Him *framar en flestir gumnar megi hyggja* ‘more than most men might contemplate’. Stanza 15 recounts Christ’s Flagellation in a manner that, as Tate notes, bears a remarkable similarity to a passage from the Old Icelandic Lenten Sermon and encourages penitent reflection on His physical sufferings.⁴⁰⁷ In stanza 16, the poet vividly describes Christ being nailed to the Cross, highlighting the sounds and sight of Christ’s various injuries.

Nisti ferð í frosti fárlunduð við tré sáran
 (vasa Hann verðugr písla) várn Græðara járnum.
 Glymr varð hár af hömrum heyrðr, þá er nagla keyrðu
 hjálms gnýviðir Hilmi hófs í ristr ok lófa. (*Líknarbraut* 16)⁴⁰⁸

The malice-minded host did nail to the tree in frost
 our wounded Saviour (He wasn’t worthy of torment) with irons.
 High clatter was heard from hammers, when the din-trees of the helmet
 drove nails into the instep and palms of the Prince of moderation.

din-trees of the helmet: trees of battle, that is, warriors
 Prince of moderation: Christ

This stanza simultaneously expresses the violence enacted upon Christ at the Crucifixion and the redemption made possible through this event. The epithet for Christ in the first *helmingr*, *sárr Græðari* ‘wounded Saviour’, offers an intriguing conceptual contrast as it juxtaposes Christ’s injuries alongside His role as the Healer of mankind.⁴⁰⁹ The sounds of men driving nails into Christ’s palms and insteps in the second *helmingr* emphasises the violence of the event, making the second Christ-epithet, *Hilmir hofs* ‘Prince of moderation’, even more poignant. This epithet serves as a complex representation of Christ’s actions at the Crucifixion: on the one hand, He is moderate and measured in His actions compared to the men who crucify Him, but on the other He continues to be identified as being in battle through the use of *Hilmir*, which Tate notes is

⁴⁰⁷ Tate 2007: 246. Cf. *Hómísl* 1993: 49v; and *Hómísl* 1872: 109.

⁴⁰⁸ I have modified Tate’s edition of the Old Norse text by using brackets instead of dashes to differentiate clause-boundaries.

⁴⁰⁹ For *sár* ‘wound’, see *LP* 484; and *SnE* 1998: 382. For *græða*, see *LP* 206.

etymologically linked to *hjalmr* ‘helmet’.⁴¹⁰ Despite sustaining injuries as the object of attack, Christ remains at once Healer and Warrior Chieftain.

The poet offers another refrain in stanza 17 in which he calls Christ *Árstillir* ‘abundance-Instituter’, a compound that may have been based on the biblical epithet *dominus messis* ‘Lord of the harvest’ found in Matthew IX.38 and Luke X.2 and adds to the agrarian depiction of Christ as Nourisher.⁴¹¹ The poem then continues with a narrative of the Crucifixion designed to inspire a penitential spirit through its focus on suffering. Drawing from the *stabat mater dolorosa* motif, stanza 18 focusses on Mary, who *bar kiðr vátar af gráti* ‘bore cheeks wet with weeping’ when Christ died.⁴¹² The poet then turns his attention in stanza 19 to the audience’s own contemplation of the Crucifixion, asking *hvat megi heldr of græta hvern mann, er kannar þat?* ‘What might be more able to make weep each man who contemplates it?’ Stanza 20 then recounts the moment at the Crucifixion when Christ is pierced in the side with a spear, describing the flow of water and blood from His side while emphasising Christ’s abundant mercy.

Enn und hægri hendi hyggjublíðr á síðu
hlaut af hvössu spjóti høfugt sár Konungr jøfra.
Árveitis rann ýta eirsanns ór ben þeiri
(hugum skyldu þat höldar heyra) vatn ok dreyri. (*Líknarbraut* 20)⁴¹³

Yet on His side under the right hand the thought-gentle
King of princes received a heavy wound from a sharp spear.
Water and blood flowed out of that wound of the mercy-true
abundance-Granter of men (men should hear that in their thoughts).

⁴¹⁰ Tate 2007: 247-8. The familiar biblical idea of the *galea salutis* ‘helmet of salvation’ found in Ephesians.VI.17 is a likely influence for the use of this image. For *hilmir*, see LP 503; and *SnE* 1998: 309.

⁴¹¹ Tate 2007: 248.

⁴¹² The depiction of Mary’s grief at her Son’s death on the Cross appears as early as the sixth century in Syria; however, it did not emerge in western European literature until around the thirteenth century (Warner 1985: 209). As Warner observes, ‘the cult of the *Mater Dolorosa* begins to rise in Italy, France, England, the Netherlands, and Spain from the end of the eleventh century, to reach full flowering in the fourteenth’ with increased interaction between eastern and western Christianity (Warner 1985: 210). Thus, even though the thirteenth-century *Stabat Mater*, one of the best-known examples of this tradition, may not have served as a direct parallel for the *Líknarbraut* poet’s work, the motif certainly had an opportunity to reach Scandinavia by this period.

⁴¹³ I have modified Tate’s edition of the Old Norse text by using brackets instead of dashes to differentiate clause-boundaries.

King of princes: Christ
 abundance-Giver of men: Christ

The epithet for Christ in the first *helmingr*, *hyggjubliðr Konungr jofra* ‘thought-gentle King of princes’, contrasts with the violence of receiving *høfugt sár af hvøssu spjóti* ‘a heavy wound from a sharp spear’, again emphasising the paradox of Christ’s death that brings life to humanity.⁴¹⁴ The representation of Christ as abundant Nourisher becomes clearer in the second *helmingr*, where *vatn ok dreyri rann ór þeiri ben eirsanns Árveitis ýta* ‘water and blood flowed out of that wound of the mercy-true abundance-Granter of men’. In keeping with the agricultural theme of the poem, the poet also makes use of the term *ár* ‘abundance’ in this second Christ-epithet in conjunction with the flow of His water and blood.⁴¹⁵ Just as the water flowing from the stone and the raining of manna from heaven in *Leiðarvísan* 20 is seen as symbolic of God’s abundant mercy, so too does the flowing of *vatn* ‘water’ and *dreyri* ‘blood’ from Christ’s *sár* or *ben* – both meaning ‘wound’ – communicate the same idea.⁴¹⁶

Christ’s wounds as He hung on the Cross held a number of symbolic connotations in medieval Christian writings. The detail that he was pierced *á síðu und hægri hendi* ‘on his side under the right arm’ is a common medieval literary tradition that tends to signify the founding of the church.⁴¹⁷ Regardless of how the symbolism of the wound is construed, one interpretation that remains consistent among theologians is that the blood and water flowing from Christ’s side signifies His ability to provide abundant grace. Venantius Fortunatus’s *Pange lingua* communicates this idea, celebrating that the blood and water flowing from Christ’s side at the Crucifixion cleanses the universe: *mite corpus perforator; sanguis, unda profluit, / terra, pontus, astra, mundus quo lauantur flumine* ‘His tender body is pierced, and blood and water flow from

⁴¹⁴ For *sár*, see *LP* 484; and *SnE* 1998: 382. For *spjót* ‘spear’, see *SnE* 1998: 400.

⁴¹⁵ For *ár*, see the entry in *ADIP*; *LP* 29; *SnE* 1998: 235; and *IED* 44.

⁴¹⁶ For *vatn*, see *LP* 595; and *SnE* 1998: 422. For *dreyri*, see *LP* 85; *SnE* 1998: 259; and entry in *ADIP*. For *sár*, see *LP* 484; and *SnE* 1998: 382. For more information on the cult of the Cross and its sanctification through being drenched in Christ’s blood, see Frolow 1961: 48-49.

⁴¹⁷ Tate 2007: 251. Cf. Måle 1958: 190-5. For an interpretation of piercings on the left side, see Gurewich 1957, 358-62. For late medieval Icelandic Passion poems with similar content, see *Rósa* 106 and *Gimsteinn* 55 (*ÍM* I.2, 29; I.2, 93; I.2, 316).

it. In its flood earth, sea, sky and the universe are cleansed'.⁴¹⁸ Stanza 20 thus draws on Christian literary precedents for the representation of Christ as the Provider of abundant mercy, particularly as symbolised by the flow of blood and water. Tate observes that even the description of Christ as *eirsannr* 'mercy-true' points to *Líknarbraut's* theme of abundant grace, compounding words that can be construed as 'mercy' and 'justice' to suggest that Christ's justice is a merciful one.⁴¹⁹

Though less direct than the Christian literary influences, there may also be parallels with a few specific Old Norse mythological narratives. Christ's being wounded *spjóti* 'with a spear' at the Crucifixion bears similarities to *Hávamál* 138 to 140, in which Óðinn hangs himself on Yggdrasill and is wounded with a *geiri* 'spear' in order to take up runes and drink the mead of poetry.⁴²⁰ While the *Hávamál* passage does not focus on the flow of blood when Óðinn is pierced with a spear, Evans has noted the themes of sacrifice that these narratives share in common.⁴²¹ In another Norse mythological narrative about the mead of poetry, this one from *Skáldskaparmál* in *Snorra Edda*, the flow of blood from Kvasir directly results in the gift of poetic inspiration:

Hann fór víða um heim at kenna mǫnnum frœði, ok þá er hann kom at heimboði til dverga nokkvorra, Fjalars ok Galars, þá kǫlluðu þeir hann með sér á einmæli ok drápu hann, létu renna blóð hans í tvau ker ok einn ketil, ok heitir sá Óðreyrir, en kerin heita Són ok Boðn. Þeir blendu hunangi við blóðit ok varð þar af mjǫðr sá er hvern er af drekkv verðr

⁴¹⁸ Latin passage from Walpole 1922: 164-73; Modern English translation from Brittain 1962: 124-25. For more information on the cult of the Cross and its sanctification through being drenched by Christ's blood, see Frolow 1961: 48-49.

⁴¹⁹ Tate 2007: 251.

⁴²⁰ *Hávamál* 138-140: *Veit ec, at ek hecc / vindgameiði á / nætr allar nío, / geiri undaðr / oc gefinn Óðni, / siálfr siálfom mér, / á þeim meiði / er mangi veit, / hvers hann af rótom renn. / Við hleifi mic sældo / né við hornigi, / nýsta ec niðr; / nam ec upp rúnar, / œpandi nam, / fell ec aptr þaðan. / Fimbullióð nío / nam ec af inom frægja syni / Bǫlþors, Bestlo fǫður, / oc ec drycc of gat / ins dýra miaðar, / ausinn Óðrerir!* 'I know that I was hung / on a wind-swept tree / all of nine nights, / wounded with a spear / and given to Óðinn / myself to myself, / on the tree / of which no one knows / from which roots it derives. They did not encourage me with a loaf of bread, / or with a horn of ale, / I looked downward, enquiring; / I took up runes, / shouting out I caught them, / I fell back from there. / Nine mighty songs / I took from the famous son / of Bolþorn, Bestla's father, / and I got a drink / of the glorious mead, / sprinkled with Óðrerir!' (Old Norse from *NK*, 40). Cf. the discussion of *Vǫluspá* 19 as related to *Leiðarvísan* 20 for another account of Yggdrasill with themes of sacrifice and abundant mercy.

⁴²¹ Evans 1986: 29-32. Cf. O'Donoghue 2008: 31. Evans (1986: 29-34) qualifies this comparison by observing that some of the details in stanzas 138 to 140 may possibly be related to Norse pagan beliefs and practices.

skáld eða frœðamaðr. Dvergarnir sǫgðu Ásum at Kvasir hefði kafnat í mannviti fyrir því at engi var þar svá fróðr, at spyrja kynni hann fróðleiks. (*Skáldskaparmál* G57)⁴²²

He [Kvasir] travelled throughout the world, teaching men knowledge. And once he came by invitation to the dwarves Fjalar and Galar. Then they asked him for a private talk, but they killed him, letting his blood flow into two vessels and one cauldron, that [cauldron] called Óðreyrir, and the vessels called Són and Boðn. They [the dwarves] blended honey with the blood, and from this came the mead that makes whoever drinks it a skald or a scholar. The dwarves told the Æsir that Kvasir had choked on his own understanding because there was not one there learned enough to ask him questions.

According to this account the mead of poetry, which is the source of all poetic inspiration, originally came from Kvasir's blood blended with honey when he was murdered. In the case of both Óðinn and Kvasir, a life needed to be sacrificed in order for the gift of wisdom and inspiration to be obtained and extended to humanity. Whether the details of these narratives from the *Edda* and *Snorra Edda* were developed prior to the introduction of Christianity, shaped by the Christian context in which they were recorded, or some combination of these two actions, they do affirm the connection between the gift of poetic inspiration and the sacrifice of a higher being. In this sense, these Norse myths bear enough similarity to Christ's gift of abundant mercy through His sacrifice and wounds at the Crucifixion to merit mention. However, given that these narratives do not bear similarities in numerous other respects, these comparisons ought to be considered with caution.

Following Christ's death and a refrain in stanza 21, stanza 22 recounts Christ's battle against Lucifer and his devils at the Harrowing of Hell. This narrative lends itself to representations of Christ as Light and Warrior Chieftain, as he breaks into the darkness of Hell to liberate humanity.

Kvaliðr sté öllum æðri	ítr Gramr til helvítis
dægra láðs ept dauða	djöfla rann at kannu.
Leysti Sinn at sönnu	só/hallar Gramr allan
lýð fyr lífstré þjóðar	líknarstyrkr frá myrkrum. (<i>Líknarbraut</i> 22)

⁴²² *SnE* 1998: p. 3, lines 17-25.

The tormented glorious Warrior-King of day's land, higher than all,
 descended after death to Hell to explore the house of devils.
 The mercy-strong Warrior-King of sun's hall freed truly all His people
 from darkness by means of the life-tree of mankind.

day's land: sky or heaven, of which Christ is Warrior-King

house of devils: Hell

sun's hall: sky or heaven, of which Christ is the mercy-strong Warrior-King

life-tree of mankind: the Cross

This stanza is among the earliest examples from Christian skaldic verse in which both the term *djǫfull* 'devil' and the Harrowing of Hell sequence appears.⁴²³ The presence of the devil, and his associations with darkness in contrast to Christ's light, becomes increasingly important in later Christian skaldic poems, particularly here and in *Lilja* where the concept of the devil's rights is more fully explored and developed. The poet's descriptions of Christ as *ítr Gramr dægra láðs* 'glorious Warrior-King of day's land' and *líknarstyrkr Gramr sólhallar* 'mercy-strong Warrior-King of sun's hall', in addition to implying that Christ is spiritual light in the darkness of Hell, also represent Him as a victorious leader in battle. In the second *helmingr*, the poet explains that Christ *leysti* 'freed' mankind from their punishment and torture in Hell. The term *leysa*, which means 'to loosen' or 'untie', can also mean 'to redeem' or 'purchase' in a legal sense and seems to imply the poet's adherence to the ransom theory, in which Christ's death serves as payment to redeem mankind.⁴²⁴ Christ is thus represented as Light, Warrior Chieftain, and legal Authority in combination, with the devil directly juxtaposed in his associations with darkness, inferiority, and legal inadequacies.

Christ completes His victory over sin and death in stanza 23, which celebrates His Resurrection. The poet marks this event with praise of Christ's battle prowess in the spiritual realm, describing Him using epithets that together showcase His victorious strength over sorrow, darkness, and death, and reinforce His representation as Warrior Chieftain.

⁴²³ For *djǫfull*, see LP 81. According to the entry in *ADIP*, *djǫfull* also frequently refers to an evil spirit that occupies a living being or lives within an idol.

⁴²⁴ For *leysa*, see *LEI* 2000 419; *LEI* 2006: 272; *SnE* 1998: 345; and *LP* 369. For more information about the nuances of ransom theory as a theological concept, see Marx 1995: 10-12.

Lík fór Kennir keykja kraptis með önd til graptar
 Sitt, ok sæll reis Dróttinn sólar hauðrs af dauða.
 Urðu allir fyrðar Angrhegnanda fegnir,
 áðr þá er elsku Fæðis aldyggs bani hryggði. (*Líknarbraut* 23)

The Knower of strength went to the grave to quicken His body
 with breath, and the blessed Lord of sun's land rose from death.
 All men became glad at the sorrow-Punisher, those whom
 the death of the faithful Nourisher of love previously grieved.

Knower of strength: powerful man, Christ
 sun's land: heaven, whose blessed Lord is Christ
 sorrow-Punisher: one who punishes sorrow, Christ
 Nourisher of love: Christ

The first of these Christ-epithets, *Kennir krapta* 'Knower of strength', makes use of the noun *kraptr*, which properly means 'a crooked bar, such as ribs and knees in a ship', but should be understood here in its metaphorical sense of 'power' or 'strength'.⁴²⁵ The epithet is carefully juxtaposed with the paradoxical concept of Christ going *til graptar keykja lík Sitt* 'to the grave to quicken His body'. Tate observes that *keykja* 'to quicken' is a verb 'rich in Christological significance' and conceptually related to the Latin *vivifico* 'to quicken, give life' found in John V.21, Romans IV.17, and Romans VIII.11.⁴²⁶ Together, these lines express Christ's volition and intent to combat sinfulness through His death on the Cross. The poet also expresses the Resurrection as a metaphorical sunrise, referring to Christ as *Dróttinn sólar hauðrs* 'Lord of the sun's land' and again portraying Christ as Light. The second *helmingr*, as noted by Tate, is thematically similar to the Old Icelandic Resurrection homily, which describes

⁴²⁵ For *kraptr*, see *LP* 345; and *SnE* 1998: 338. See *Geisli* 57 in chapter two for another instance in which *kraptr* expresses God's strength.

⁴²⁶ Tate 2007: 253. Tate also observes that this is the only instance of *keykja* in Old Norse poetry. John V.21: *Sicut enim Pater suscitavit mortuos et vivificavit, sic et Filius, quos vult, vivificavit.* (*Vulg* 1979, John V.21) 'Indeed, just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whomever He wishes' (*NRSV*, John V.21). Romans IV.17: *sicut scriptum est: 'Patrem multarum gentium posui te' -, ante Deum, cui credidit, qui vivificavit mortuos et vocat ea, quae non sunt, quasi sint'* (*Vulg* 1979, Romans IV.17) 'as it is written, 'I have made you the father of many nations' – in the presence of God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist' (*NRSV*, Romans IV.17). Romans VIII.11: *Quod si Spiritus Eius, qui suscitavit Iesum a mortuis, habitat in vobis, qui suscitavit Christum a mortuis, vivificabit et mortalia corpora vestra per inhabitantem Spiritum Suum in vobis.* (*Vulg* 1979, Romans VIII.11) 'If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through His Spirit that dwells in you' (*NRSV*, Romans VIII.11).

the joy of Christ's followers who had previously been saddened by His death.⁴²⁷ This thematic parallel, though, does not account for the description of Christ in stanza 23 as *Fæðir elsku* 'Nourisher of love', an epithet that returns to the poem's agrarian theme. Christ is also called *Angrhegnandi* 'sorrow-Punisher' in the same *helmingr*, juxtaposing spiritual battle with mercy in a manner that demonstrates both have been achieved through Christ's death and Resurrection.

Following the Ascension in stanza 24 and a refrain in stanza 25 highlighting Christ's glorified place in heaven, the poem turns to the scene of the Last Judgement in stanza 26. The Cross appears in glory before humanity, who are described here as warriors hastening *til alþingis* 'to the Alþing' with a sense of dread.

Enn mun kross dýrð kynnaz (kemr ótti þá) Dróttins
fyr hnigstöfum hjörva hljóms at efsta dómi.
Meiðr skal hvern ór hauðri hringmóts til alþingis
fremðarráðs á Fæðis fund hvatliga skunda. (*Líknarbraut* 26)⁴²⁸

The glory of the Lord's Cross will yet be made known (fear will come then)
before the declining-staves of the sound of the swords at the Last Judgement.
Each pole of the sword-meeting shall hasten quickly from out of the earth
to the Alþing to meet the Nourisher of famous counsel.

declining-staves of the sound of the swords: warriors
pole of the sword-meeting: warrior
Nourisher of famous counsel: Christ

The Cross represents both Christ's mercy and justice, and commonly appeared in scenes of the Judgement during the medieval period. With this symbol of justice in place, the verse continues with all mankind hurrying to meet the *Fæðir fremðarráðs* or 'Nourisher of famous counsel'. Christ's association with *ráð* once

⁴²⁷ Tate 2007: 254. From *Hómísl* 1993, 34r, and *Hómísl* 1872, 72: *Sa vas oc margfaldr fognopr í þessom heime af upriso criz es tóko ástmeN hans. þeir áþr vǫro hryGver oc daprer af dauða hans* 'Thus was there also great joy in this home concerning the resurrection of Christ when He met His beloved [followers]. They were previously grief-stricken and forlorn because of His death'.

⁴²⁸ I have modified Tate's edition of the Old Norse text by using brackets instead of dashes to differentiate clause-boundaries.

again places value on good counsel and judgement, and the title Nourisher relates to the agrarian themes of the poem. Tate suggests that, '[a]dapted to Christ, the kenning is enriched, more capable of simultaneously suggesting the semantic range of each of its elements'.⁴²⁹ This openness of interpretation allows the audience to imagine Christ both in His representation as an abundant Nourisher, as well as a legal Authority providing counsel that will place humanity in good stead at the Last Judgement.

Líknarbraut stands out for being the only poem across the entire Christian skaldic corpus to use *alþing*, a term meaning Iceland's annual parliament or general assembly, in reference to the Last Judgement.⁴³⁰ *Þing*, the more general term for a gathering, also appears in *Harmsól* 32 and *Lilja* 72 in reference to the Last Judgement. While Tate has observed that in an Icelandic poem the use of *alþingi* 'cannot but evoke [Iceland's] general assembly, the highest court in the land,' he tempers this assertion with the reminder that 'in Norway the compound has a less specific sense, simply 'a general meeting'.⁴³¹ Although there are no other references in Christian skaldic verse to the Last Judgement as an *alþing*, the term's appearance in *lausavísa* 7 of Hǫrðr Grímkelsson's *Harðar saga* to identify Iceland's general assembly indicates that it was used with deliberate purpose.⁴³² This shows that there is some literary evidence for interpreting the Last Judgement as a kind of ultimate Alþing, given the infrequency of its usage and the term's specific meaning in *lausavísa* 7. Notably, the idea of a *mót*, which appears in the man-kenning *meiðr hringmóts* 'of the sword-meeting' in the second *helmingr*, neatly reiterates the concept behind the *alþing* in the first *helmingr*.

The poem continues with an account of humanity witnessing *svipur ok spjót með dreyra Krists Sjálfs* 'the whips and spear with the blood of Christ Himself' in stanza 27, reminders of Christ's sufferings and sacrifice made for humanity's salvation at the impending Judgement. The poet explains that the righteous will be invited by Christ *frá dómi til himins dýrðar* 'from the Judgement

⁴²⁹ Tate 2007: 257.

⁴³⁰ For *þing*, see *LEI* 2000: 422; *LEI* 2006: 275; *SnE* 1998: 434; and Zoëga 2004 [1926]: 14.

⁴³¹ Tate 2007: 257.

⁴³² Tate 2007: 257. Cf. HǫrðG Lv 7^V (*Harð* 14). Significantly, these are the only two occurrences of *alþing* in skaldic verse.

to heaven's glory', while the wicked will be consigned *til fjanda at brenna of aldir* 'to fiends to burn forever' (stanza 28). All of these details are aimed at not only inspiring fear and awe at the thought of God's Judgement, but also showcasing the Cross as instrumental in making humanity's redemption possible. The poet then observes that *þegnar alfegnastir hljóta ey alt it góða í sælu með ítrum Vörð sólar slóðar* 'very joyful thegns gain forever every good thing in bliss with the glorious Guardian of the sun's path' and offers a refrain in stanza 29, marking the end of the poem's *stefjabálkr*.

Addressing the Cross directly in stanza 30 as *dýrt píslartré, drifit blóði* 'dear torture-tree, sprayed with blood', the poet prepares for the next section of the poem based on the *adoratio crucis*. Stanza 31, which begins a seven-stanza catalogue of images representing the Cross, starts by describing the Cross as the *lykill* 'key' to heaven for humanity, who are *sykn* 'acquitted' through the death of humanity's *Læknir* 'Healer'.

Heill ver kross, er kallaz, Krists mark, himins vistar
lýðs af Læknis dauða lykill mannkyni syknu;
örr því at upp lauk* Harri élskráns fyr þik Sínum,
áðr þá er læst var lýðum, lífs höll vinum öllum. (*Líknarbraut* 31)

Hail Cross, Christ's sign, which is called the key of heaven's dwelling
for mankind, acquitted through the death of humanity's Healer;
for the generous Lord of the storm-shrine opened by means of you
life's hall for all His friends, which was earlier locked to men.

Christ's sign: the Cross
key of heaven's dwelling: the Cross
mankind's Healer: Christ
the storm-shrine: heaven, of which Christ is the generous Lord
life's hall: heaven

Several representations of Christ are at work in this stanza. The use of *sykn*, a term meaning 'not under legal penalty' or 'reprieved', refers here to the acquittal of humanity for their sins and shows the strong link between spiritual righteousness and legal terminology, particularly as it relates to the Last Judgement.⁴³³ The inclusion of this specifically legal term presents Christ's

⁴³³ For *sýkn*, see *LEI* 2006 275; *LEI* 2000: 421; *LP* 555 and *IED* 613-4.

sacrifice as a legal action to cancel the punishment for sin and bring about reconciliation with God. The use of *Læknir* ‘Healer’ as an epithet for Christ portrays the Crucifixion as a means for Christ to function as Physician, tending to spiritual injuries and diseases so that humanity’s righteousness might be restored.⁴³⁴ The overall focus of the stanza is the depiction of the Cross as the key possessed by Christ that opens the gates to the hall of heaven, which were previously *læst lýðum* ‘locked to men’. Between the description of Christ as *Harri* ‘Lord’ and heaven as *lífs höll* ‘life’s hall’, the stanza also presents Christ as a Warrior Chieftain inviting His followers into the great hall of heaven. Through these various details, then, Christ’s representation in stanza 31 ranges from that of legal Authority, Healer, and Warrior Chieftain, all of which relate back to His sacrifice on the Cross.

The second of the seven stanzas in this *adoratio crucis* sequence presents the Cross symbolically as both a ship and a blossom, images that have precedents in medieval Christian literature from the period of composition. They invite both nautical and agrarian interpretations of the Cross’s role in bringing about redemption, and consequently also describe Christ on-board the ship of the Cross, and offering spiritual nourishment to humanity.

Heims, bart hvössum saumi, hjálpsterkr, friðarmerki,
lýðr at lausn of næði, limu Krists við þik nista.
Mátt af dreyra Dróttins dags reitar því heita
blíðs ok bitrum dauða blómi helgra dóma. (*Líknarbraut* 32)

O help-strong one, peace-sign of the world, you bore the limbs of Christ pinned to you with sharp nail-stitching, so that people reach redemption. Therefore you can be called blossom of holy relics from the blood and bitter death of the blithe Lord of the day’s furrow.

help-strong one: the Cross
peace-sign of the world: the Cross
blossom of holy relics: the Cross
the day’s furrow: heaven, of which Christ is Lord

The first *helmingr* suggests a representation of the Cross as a ship on which Christ has been pinned at the Crucifixion. Described as *hjálpsterkr* ‘help-strong

⁴³⁴ For *læknir*, see LP 386 and IED 403.

one' and *friðarmerki heims* 'peace-sign of the world', the Cross not only functions as a victorious display of Christ's sacrificial actions, but also the means by which humanity may reach *lausn*, meaning 'liberation', 'ransom', or 'redemption'.⁴³⁵ The description of the nails on the Cross as *hvass saumr* 'sharp nail-stitching' makes use of the term *saumr*, meaning 'needle-work' or 'sewing' in reference to a ship's nails.⁴³⁶ The stitches could be interpreted as both the nails along a ship, in this case the Cross, and the wounds that paradoxically bring harm to Christ so that He might heal the world. While these details do not explicitly identify Christ as the Captain of the ship of the Cross, the audience is certainly invited to construe the Cross as a ship that, along with Christ, serves as humanity's means of reaching redemption.

The poem's agricultural theme becomes apparent in the second *helmingr*, where Christ is called the Lord *dags reitar* 'of the day's furrow'. *Reitr*, which means 'furrow', 'path', or 'land', communicates the idea of heaven as an agricultural plot of land that Christ tends and causes to thrive.⁴³⁷ The second *helmingr* also features the first instance in Christian skaldic poetry where a spiritual object or person, in this case the Cross, is identified as *blómi* 'blossom'.⁴³⁸ The image dominating this section is that of the Cross as the *blómi helgra dóma* 'blossom of holy relics', which is watered by the blood of Christ; this image has its roots, so to speak, in a number of poems about the Cross or the Passion where Christ and His blood are presented as a flower and often specifically a rose.⁴³⁹ Popular Christian literature such as Fortunatus's *Pange lingua* frequently used the image of a flower in reference to the Passion, with the metaphor applied in subtly different ways.⁴⁴⁰ The typical understanding of

⁴³⁵ For *lausn*, see *LEI* 2000: 418; *SnE* 1998: 343; *LP* 359; and entry in *ADIP*. The entry and *ADIP* further reveals that *lausn* can also refer to legal decisions, as well as formal reimbursement. This could relate to the poet's perception of the devil's rights to humanity, and specifically ransom theory.

⁴³⁶ For *saumr*, see *LP* 481; and *SnE* 1998: 382.

⁴³⁷ For *reitr*, see *LP* 462.

⁴³⁸ For *blómi*, see entry in *ADIP*; and *LP* 54. According to *ADIP*, *blómi* can also refer to 'growth, prosperity, beauty, magnificence, splendour, crowning glory' and 'honour'. *Blómi* is used more frequently in reference to the Virgin Mary. In *Harmsól* 8, this term is used to describe the yield of good deeds, but does not describe an individual.

⁴³⁹ Tate 2007: 264. Cf. Bulst 1956: 128; and Szövérfy 1976: 15.

⁴⁴⁰ From Venantius Fortunatus's *Pange lingua: Crux fidelis, inter omnes arbor una nobilis - / nulla talem silva profert flore fronde germine* 'Faithful Cross, tree alone notable among others –

the image is that of Christ as the flower, as seen in interpretations of Isaiah XI.1 and a number of late medieval poems, though here the Cross itself seems to be the blossom and Christ its source of spiritual nourishment.⁴⁴¹

While the *Líknarbraut* poet undoubtedly based the image of the Cross as blossom on Christian literary precedents, this stanza's representation of the Cross may share some similarities with the representation of the ash tree Yggdrasill in *Völuspá* 19. As mentioned in this chapter's analysis of *Líknarbraut* 20 the concept of this mythological tree, 'which nourishes the world with the dew that falls from it', perhaps resonates with the Crucifixion and Christ's blood streaming from His body as He hangs on the Cross.⁴⁴² Óðinn, as presented in *Hávamál* from the *Poetic Edda*, hangs himself on Yggdrasill as a means of mastering runes, magic, and poetry, a sacrifice that makes poetic inspiration possible.⁴⁴³ This bears similarities to Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, since both sacrificial actions arguably benefit humanity. The mead of poetry, which according to *Skáldskaparmál* is called 'the blood of Kvasir', 'the drink of the dwarves', 'the contents of Óðrerir', 'Suttung's mead' or 'Hnitbjörg's liquid', may be viewed as a deliberate, if debased, parallel to Christ's divine mercy as symbolised through his outpouring of blood in *Líknarbraut* 32.⁴⁴⁴ O'Donoghue, who suggests the similarity between Óðinn on Yggdrasill and Christ on the Cross, notes that the mead of poetry itself is frequently expressed as

no forest produces such a one in flower, foliage, or seed' (Latin text from Bulst 1956: 128; Modern English translation from Szövérfy 1976: 15). For another hymn that uses this image, see *AH* 9, 28: *O Crux, ave frutex gratus / coeli flore fecundatus / Rubens agni sanguine* 'Hail, Cross, pleasing stalk, made fruitful with the flower of heaven, reddening with the blood of the Lamb' (Modern English translation from Tate 2007: 263-4). In later Icelandic poetry, Jón Arason presents the Cross at Réttarholt (1548) in a similar manner: *Má það einginn maðr skýra / mektar blóm hvert krossinn er* 'No man can express / what a flower of might the Cross is' (Jón Sigurðsson and Guðbrandr Vigfússon 1858-78, II, 574).

⁴⁴¹ Isaiah XI.1: *Et egredietur virga de radice Iesse, et flos de radice eius ascendet* (*Vulg* 2012a, Isaiah XI.1) 'And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and flower shall rise up out of his root' (*Vulg* 2012a, Isaiah XI.1).

⁴⁴² O'Donoghue 2008: 17-8. For *Völuspá* 19, see earlier analysis of *Líknarbraut* 20 in this chapter, as well as analysis for *Leiðarvísan* 20 in chapter 4.

⁴⁴³ Abram 2011: 76-77.

⁴⁴⁴ O'Donoghue 2008: 28. From *Skáldskaparmál*: *Af þessu kyllum vér skáldskap Kvasis blóð eða dverga drekku eða fylli eða nakkvars konar lqg Óðreris eða Boðnar eða Sónar eða farskost dverga...eða Suttunga mjöð eða Hnitbjarga lqgr* (*SnE* 1998: p. 4, lines 1-5) 'For this reason we call poetry Kvasir's blood, the drink or intoxication of the dwarves, or some kind of liquid of Óðrerir, Bodn, or Son...It is also called Suttung's mead or Hnitbjörg's liquid' (Translation from Byock 2005: 84-5).

‘unpleasant bodily fluids: spit, blood, vomit and faeces’.⁴⁴⁵ Though bodily fluids are linked with otherworldly gifts in both instances, the components of the mead of poetry do not have the same symbolic value of life giving and nourishment that blood and water do in Christian literature. Abram notes ‘the very real possibility’ that Snorri re-worked some of the myths in *Snorra Edda* ‘to suit the needs of his narrative, his Christian outlook, and his aesthetic preferences’, and this may help to explain some of the thematic parallels with Christianity.⁴⁴⁶ However, von See argues that the literary aim of both *Skáldskaparmál* and *Gylfaginning* in *Snorra Edda* was not to draw attention to similarities between Christianity and earlier Norse pagan beliefs, but rather to present Norse culture in a manner that would be unthreatening to the Christian culture in which Snorri was writing.⁴⁴⁷ Whether the mythological narratives about Óðinn and the mead of poetry would have been recognised by the poet or his audience as associated with Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross, the image of the Cross as a blossom certainly invites readers to imagine the Cross as a tree and understand Christ’s sacrifice as nourishment leading to the flourishing of spiritual fruit.

The *adoratio crucis* continues in stanza 33, with the detailed description of the Cross as a warship navigating the treacherous waters of evil to reach heaven, which is called the *strönd fóstrlands* ‘shore of our foster-land’. Unlike stanza 32, which only subtly suggests the image of the Cross as a ship to which Christ is pinned, this representation makes the nautical themes much more explicit.

Skeið ert fróns und fríðum farsæl Konungs þrælum
 fljót ok farmi ítrum fóstrlands á vit strandar.
 Þú snýr böls hjá bárum (boðar kasta þér lasta)
 lýðs und líknar auði lífs hafnar til stafni. (*Líknarbraut* 33)⁴⁴⁸

You are a voyage-prosperous, swift warship underneath beautiful
 servants
 of the King of earth and bearing a splendid cargo towards the shore of
 our foster-land.

⁴⁴⁵ O’Donoghue 2008: 29.

⁴⁴⁶ Abram 2011: 221.

⁴⁴⁷ For more information, see von See 2001: 367-93.

⁴⁴⁸ I have modified Tate’s edition of the Old Norse text by using brackets instead of dashes to differentiate clause-boundaries.

You turn your prow past the waves of evil (billows of vices toss you)
to life's haven bearing the wealth of grace for mankind.

King of earth: Christ, whose beautiful servants are comprised of humanity

The Cross is presented as a *skeið*, which is a large longship that is distinguished from other ship types such as *knerri* or *buza* and, according to Jesch, 'clearly connotes a warship'.⁴⁴⁹ Described as *farsæl* 'voyage-prosperous' and *fljót* 'swift', the ship bears both *fríðum þrælar Konungs frons* 'beautiful servants of the King of earth', as well as *ítrum farmi* 'a splendid cargo'. Based on these details, Christ's role is somewhat unclear. As Tate suggests, He could be perceived as either the Cargo or the Captain, since there are Christian literary precedents for both.⁴⁵⁰ The second *helmingr* further develops the ship analogy, saying that the Cross turns its *stafn* 'prow' *hjá bárum bqls* 'past the waves of evil' and *boðar lasta* 'billows of vices', and also suggests that the cargo cited in the previous *helmingr* was the *auðr líknar lýðs* 'wealth of grace for mankind'. Whether Christ is the Cargo, the Captain, or both, His ability to save humanity is once again the centre of focus, with the Cross playing an essential role in bringing about redemption. However, I would argue in favour of perceiving Christ as Captain, guiding the warship of the Cross that carries the precious cargo of grace. We may thus understand this ship imagery as an extension of the idea of Christ as Warrior Chieftain, guiding His retinue through dangerous waters to the safety of heaven.

Líknarbraut 33 also specifies that the ship's ultimate destination is *fóstrland* 'the foster-land', a description of heaven that only appears here in the

⁴⁴⁹ Jesch 2001: 123-4. For *skeið*, see *SnE* 1998: 390; and *LP* 503. According to the Jón Jóhannesson (1974: 222), 'the sea between Norway and Iceland was not considered to be navigable by ordinary warships, nor had any other nation outside Scandinavia acquired sufficient skill in navigation to pose a threat to Iceland'. Thus, as observed in the analysis for *Harmsól* 12 in chapter three, we may think of ship imagery more as a literary trope, rather than a detail reflecting the daily lives of Icelanders during the period of composition.

⁴⁵⁰ Tate 2007: 265. For *farmr* 'cargo', see *LP* 122; *SnE* 1998: 270; and entry in *ADIP*. There may also be a Norse mythological connection to Christ in the term *farmr* 'cargo' as one of the names for Óðinn is *Farmaguð* 'God of cargoes' (*SnE* 2005: 21, l.30). It is worth noting that Þórr was also the god of farmers and sailors in some narratives, suggesting another potential literary parallel (Larrington 1996: xv. Cf. Abram 2011: 130).

whole Christian skaldic corpus.⁴⁵¹ The notion of heaven as humanity's adoptive home – one of which we are not initially a part, but where we are accepted as God's kin – is an interesting representation of this spiritual concept, and invites the audience to imagine Christ as a foster-Father to humanity as a sign of His peace and their salvation. Since the foster-father system existed throughout the medieval period in Iceland and Scandinavia generally, it may have contributed to the understanding of heaven in this particular poem.⁴⁵² In a stanza focusing on Christ's representation as Warrior Chieftain, the idea of heaven as a foster-land further develops this concept by describing humanity's entry into heaven in terms of a political arrangement that serves as a sign of peace between two communities. Though humanity is separated from God through sinfulness, Christ has freed them from Hell through His sacrifice and invited them to live eternally in His heavenly hall.

Another set of metaphorical images from the catalogue in the *adoratio crucis* are explored in the next four stanzas. The Cross is described as a *stigi* 'ladder' offering *góða stétt af grundu á himna* 'a good path from the earth to the heavens' in stanza 34, and then as the *bezt brú til ástar af grundu* 'best bridge to love from the ground' in stanza 35. In both cases, the Cross represents a pathway to salvation and reconciliation with God, perhaps suggesting that Christ plays a guiding role in this process. In stanza 36 the Cross serves as a means of weighing the price of the world *í hvössum skálum friðar* 'in sharp scales of peace', and it is the *altári* 'altar' on which the Lamb of God was sacrificed at the Crucifixion in stanza 37. These representations focus on God's judgement and sinfulness as a legal breach, reminding the audience of their need for Christ's Crucifixion as a settlement paid for their sinfulness.

Having completed the catalog of the images in stanzas 31 to 37, the poem continues its section based around the *adoratio crucis* with an extended focus on the Cross. Stanza 38 explains that, following the Crucifixion, the Cross gains power over devils and causes them to flee before *yðrum göfgum mætti ok krapti*

⁴⁵¹ Notably, *fóstrland* can also mean 'native land'. This interpretation, while different from the one offered in the main text, can also be argued as a theologically sound interpretation since God is understood as the Father and Ruler of all creation in Christian literature.

⁴⁵² For more information on fosterage, see Goody 1983: 106-12.

‘your glorious might and power’, reflecting Christ’s spiritual victory at the Harrowing of Hell and Resurrection. In stanza 39 the Cross once again seems to take on some of the warrior chieftain qualities associated with Christ, as it liberates men in glorious victory. Addressing the Cross directly, the poet praises its ability to simultaneously *lemja angr* ‘attack grief’ and increase good *Dróttins liði* ‘for the Lord’s retinue’.

Crúx, lemið angr en æxlið alt gótt liði Dróttins;
 sýndr ert seggja kindum, sigtrúr í gný vigra.
 Opt ert éls í höptum ítr lausn viðum rítar;
 guma forðar þú gerla grandí holds ok andar. (*Líknarbraut* 39)

Cross, you thrash grief but cause all good to increase for the Lord’s retinue;
 you are visible to men’s kindred, victory-faithful in the clash of spears.
 Often you are a glorious liberation to the trees of the shield’s storm in fetters;
 you save men fully from injury of flesh and spirit.

‘clash of spears’: battle

‘trees of the shield’s storm’: trees of battle, that is, warriors

The term for Christ’s retinue, *lið*, frequently refers to a military ‘troop’, specifically the troop of a king’s household.⁴⁵³ Used alongside the title *Dróttinn* for Christ, this identification invites the relationship between Christ and humanity to be interpreted as a *comitatus*. The poet goes on to celebrate the Cross’s visibility to warriors in the midst of battle, calling it *sigtrúr í gný vigra* ‘victory-faithful in the clash of spears’, perhaps likening it to a war-standard or sign that encourages the troops. Those men were previously imprisoned *í höptum* ‘in fetters’ receive from the Cross *ítr lausn* ‘glorious liberation’, and are saved from *grandí holds ok andar* ‘injury of flesh and spirit’.⁴⁵⁴ The characteristics of both a victorious liberator and healer, which are applied to the Cross in this instance, bear similarities to portrayals of Christ here and in other Christian skaldic poems. Altogether, the stanza paints a vivid picture of spiritual battle in which the Cross

⁴⁵³ For *lið*, see *LP* 374 and *IED* 387.

⁴⁵⁴ For *lausn*, see *LEI* 2000: 418; *SnE* 1998: 343; *LP* 359; and entry in *ADIP*. For *grand*, see *LP* 198; *SnE* 1998: 293; and *IED* 211.

leads the righteous to victory through its involvement in bringing about redemption.

Having praised the Cross for the ways in which it helps and heals Christ's followers, the poet then turns attention towards his own sinful state. He asks the Cross, here called *heims prýði* 'world's ornament', for healing and protection for himself and all humanity, presenting Christ as the world's Physician.

Veit mér líkn, er læknað ljóna kind frá blindi
hyggju túns ok hreinsar, heims prýði, kyn lýða.
Ert fyr hvers manns hjarta hreins við öllum meinum
hæstr ok harðri freistni hlífiskjöldr í lífi. (*Líknarbraut* 40)

Grant me balm, O world's ornament, you who cure men's offspring
from the blindness of thought's field and purify the kin of men.
You are the highest protective-shield before the heart of each
pure man against all injuries and hard temptations in life.

World's ornament: Cross
thought's enclosure: breast

In the first *helmingr* the poet asks to be granted *líkn* 'balm' from you (the Cross) *er læknað ljóna kind frá blindi hyggju túns* 'who cure men's offspring from the blindness of thought's field' and *hreinsar kyn lýða* 'purify the kin of men'. The juxtaposition of spiritual blindness with the light of purity relates back to the poet's earlier request in *Líknarbraut* 4 for Christ to push blindness from his weary mind, thereby linking ignorance of divine truth with spiritual illness. Healing also plays an important part in this stanza's description of the Cross. Though the details in this *helmingr* could possibly invite the interpretation of the Cross as physician, it may be more appropriate to imagine Christ as the Physician who can offer merciful healing by means of the Crucifixion. Tate has noted a relationship between the noun *líkn*, which can mean 'mercy, relief,' or 'comfort', and the verb *lækna* 'to heal', which he suggests the poet connected conceptually through consonance and proximity to reinforce the link between Christ's mercy and spiritual healing.⁴⁵⁵ This section of the stanza seems to be influenced in part by the Icelandic homily *De sancta cruce*, which calls the Cross

⁴⁵⁵ Tate 2007: 276. For *líkn*, meaning 'mercy, compassion, relief, comfort, help', see entry in *ADIP*; and *LP* 375-76; and *SnE* 1998: 347. For *lækna*, see *LP* 386. For *sótt*, see *LP* 527.

læcning víp sóttom ‘a cure for illnesses’, inviting the audience to interpret the Cross as a kind of medicine administered by Christ the Physician.⁴⁵⁶ Numbers XXI.9, which depicts what is traditionally considered a type of the Crucifixion, is explored in *Veraldar saga* and also interprets the Cross in a similar manner:

Eitrormr sa er i tre hieck er hver vard heill er til leit. merkir Jesvm
Christvm hanganda a krossinv, er grædar oll sár anda vora.

The brazen serpent which hung on the wood, as each one was
healed who looked upon it, signifies Jesus Christ hanging on the
Cross, who heals all the wounds of our souls.⁴⁵⁷

Thus, the Cross serves as the means by which Christ the Physician heals humanity from the sinfulness that blinds their thoughts. The stanza also offers a brief nod to the poem’s agrarian theme: within the kenning for the human breast (*hyggju túns* ‘of thought’s field’), the word *tún* literally means ‘hedge’, and can be interpreted more broadly as a ‘hedged plot, field’ or ‘enclosure’.⁴⁵⁸ The subtle nod to agricultural imagery once again demonstrates the connected concepts of Christ as Healer and Nourisher.

The second *helmingr*, in contrast to the first, depicts the Cross as *hlífiskjöldr við öllum meinum ok harðri freistni* ‘a protective-shield against all injuries and hard temptation’, which, as Tate observes, relates to the concept of the Cross as *praesidium* ‘protection’ in hymns.⁴⁵⁹ This depiction of the Cross also appears in the Icelandic homily *De sancta cruce: heilagr cros er hlífskioldr víp méinom ... en efling víp allre freístne* ‘a shield against injuries ... and strength against all temptation’.⁴⁶⁰ The poet’s statement that pure men will be

⁴⁵⁶ *Hómísl* 1993, 18r; *Hómísl* 1872, 39; cf. *HómNo*, 105. Cf. *AH* 8, 24 where the Cross functions as *medicina corporalis / christianis et mentalis* ‘physical and spiritual medicine for Christians’ (Tate 2007: 276).

⁴⁵⁷ Jakob Benediktsson 1944: 84. Numbers XXI.9: *Fecit ergo Moses serpentem aeneum et posuit pro signo, quem cum percussi aspicerent, sanabantur* (*Vulg* 2010, Numbers XXI.9) ‘Moses therefore made a brazen serpent and set it up for a sign, which when they that were bitten looked upon it, they were healed’ (*Vulg* 2010, Numbers XXI.9).

⁴⁵⁸ Tate 2007: 276. Cf. Zoëga 2004 [1926]: 444; and Guðrún Nordal 2001: 256, where this kenning is translated ‘field of the mind’. For *tún*, see *LP* 573-4 and *IED* 644-5.

⁴⁵⁹ Tate 2007: 276.

⁴⁶⁰ *Hómísl* 1993, 18r; *Hómísl* 1872, 39; cf. *HómNo*, 105. Tate (2007: 275-6) also notes the similarity the Latin hymn, *Christi crux et passio / Nobis est praesidio, / Si credamus* ‘Christ’s Cross and Passion are to us for a protection if we believe’ (*AH* 54: 223; Modern English translation from Tate 2007: 276), and the Middle English lyric, *Crux est... / a targe to weren fro*

protected against *mein*, which can refer to a ‘harm’, ‘disease’, ‘wound’ or ‘hardship’ but in this religious context specifically refers to ‘sin’, emphasises that Christ will not only heal the sins of the past but also continue to actively guard humanity against spiritual afflictions.⁴⁶¹ The stanza thus communicates that humanity will be healed from its past sinfulness and continue to receive protection through Christ and the Cross.

The *adoratio crucis* continues in stanza 41 with a description of the Cross as the *hneigistólpi alls heims hjálpar* ‘bowing post of all the world’s help’ whose sign *nú skína of kyn beima* ‘now shines upon the kin of men’, suggesting it serves as a metaphorical emanation of Christ’s mercy. Stanza 42 then paints a scene of awe and terror, as Christ sets his *sigrstoð* ‘victory-pillar’ before humanity so that everyone may see how He *á krossi réttir seggjum faðm Sinn* ‘on the Cross stretched out His embrace to men’, juxtaposing Christ’s Warrior Chieftain depiction with a focus on his mercy and love for humanity. Christ then seems to address humanity directly from the Cross, showing His *góð sár* ‘good wounds’ and bidding each man, *sjaí hingat til píninga* ‘look here at tortures’ (stanza 43). He continues his address in stanza 44, drawing attention to His role as wounded Healer.

Ér meguð undir stórar yðars Græðis sjá blæða;
þær eru sýnt, þó at sárar, saklausum Mér vaktar,
mín því at mildi raunar mest ok yðrir lestir
veldr því, at verða skyldi Vísi lýðs fyr píslum. (*Liknarbraut* 44)

You may see your Healer’s great wounds bleed;
they are, though painful, clearly made to flow from Me guiltless,
for in truth my grace and your transgressions most cause it,
that the Prince of the people should be subjected to torments.

Christ refers to Himself as *yðvarr Græðir* ‘your Healer’, which connects medical metaphors with the agrarian, since the root word *græða* can mean ‘to grow’, ‘nourish’, or ‘heal’.⁴⁶² The most immediate interpretation of Christ’s role is that of Healer, since the stanza plays on the paradox of the wounded Physician; but

detly woundes ‘The Cross is a shield to protect from deadly wounds’ (Brown and Robbins 1943, no. 23; Modern English translation from Tate 2007: 276).

⁴⁶¹ For *mein*, see LP 399; LEI 2000: 419; and entry in ADIP.

⁴⁶² For *græða*, see LP 206.

given the larger themes of growth and abundance in this poem, the alternative interpretations of *grœða* also contribute to its meaning in this stanza. The complex thematic threads of Christ's nourishment and healing of mankind thus become more intertwined with one another. Christ explains that both our *lestir* 'transgressions' and His *mildi* 'grace' cause His wounds to visibly bleed, serving as the source of humanity's salvation at the Last Judgement. The use of *søk* 'offence' in the description of Christ as *saklauss* 'guiltless' particularly frames the Crucifixion as a means of attaining legal reconciliation with God, and the description of Christ as Healer contrasts with His wounded state while also indicating that His wounds will spiritually nourish humanity. The poet continues to juxtapose Christ's divine authority with His humbled state in the final lines, where he explains that the *Vísi*, meaning 'Captain' or 'Prince', should be subjected to *písl* 'torture' in order to bring about redemption.⁴⁶³

Christ's address from the Cross, as well as the *adoratio crucis* section of the poem, concludes in stanza 45 with a call for humanity to turn away from cruel injury and *þjóna dáðum* 'do homage with deeds'. The poet commences the *slæmr* in stanza 46, asking his audience to keep the torments that Christ endured *fyr várs hjarta sjónir með tárur* 'before our heart's sight with tears', hinting at the symbolic image of divine truth as revelatory light. He laments in stanza 47 that he is unsuited for the task of composing a poem praising Christ and the Cross *fyr lundfasta löstu* 'because of mind-firm faults', and asks Christ to hear his prayer in stanza 48. The poet then celebrates Christ's role as *Angrstríðandi* 'grief-Fighter' in stanza 49, presenting Him as a Warrior Chieftain, and praises Him for previous gifts as he asks for further recompense for this praise poem.

Vilda ek af þér, aldar Angrstríðandi, síðarr
enn fyr óðgerð mína eiga gjöld með leigum.
Áðr hefi ek önnur gæði eirsamr, hlotit meiri
þín, en ek þér fá launat (þat óttumz ek) Dróttinn.

(*Líknarbraut* 49)⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁶³ For *vísi*, see *LP* 625; *SnE* 1998: 430; and *IED* 718. For *písl*, see *LP* 451; and *SnE* 1998: 371.

⁴⁶⁴ I have modified Tate's edition of the Old Norse text by using brackets instead of dashes to differentiate clause-boundaries.

I would like from you, grief-Fighter of mankind, later
 still to gain payment with wages for my poetry-making.
 Already have I received other and greater blessings from You
 than I can repay You, O merciful (that frightens me) Lord.

grief-Fighter of mankind: Christ

The overarching representation of the relationship between Christ and the poet in this stanza is defined by the reward system from a courtly setting, with a slight modification by the poet to exalt Christ's gifts as being unmatched and spiritual in nature. The request seems to fit with the tradition of skalds requesting reward for courtly compositions from their patrons, even in poetry of the heathen period. The poet cleverly applies this Norse literary trope to its Christian context, presenting Christ as the Ruler for whom the verses are composed, and his own reward as salvation in the heavenly realms. The stanza centres around transaction, as the poet explains that he would like to gain *gjǫld með leigum* 'payment with wages' for his *óðgerð* 'poetry-making', but that he has already received *meiri gæði en ek þér fá launat* 'greater blessings than I can repay You'.⁴⁶⁵ In making his request the poet identifies his reward with the noun *leiga*, which can mean 'wages' or 'dues', implying that a somewhat business-like transaction is taking place.⁴⁶⁶ However the fact that the exchange is uneven, leaving the poet eternally indebted to Christ and unable to match the gift of salvation with his poetry, prompts him to say, *þat óttumz ek* 'that frightens me'.⁴⁶⁷ Despite this awareness of humanity's profound inadequacy, this more legal understanding of the poet being rewarded by Christ may somewhat reflect medieval notions of a poet composing for His patron, and once again contributes to Christ's representation as King or Warrior Chieftain.

The poet continues his request for recompense in stanza 50, asking of Christ, *lát mik víst hitta fyr þetta þitt lof laun, þau er mestu varðar of aldir* 'let me certainly gain for this Your praise, those rewards which are of greatest worth forever' before proceeding into the concluding stanzas of the poem. The penultimate stanza, which identifies the poem's title in the manner typical in

⁴⁶⁵ For *laun*, see LP 359.

⁴⁶⁶ For *leiga*, see SnE 1998: 344; and LEI 2006: 272; LP 266; and entry in ADIP.

⁴⁶⁷ For *ótti* 'fear', see LP 448-9; and SnE 1998: 370.

Christian skaldic poems such as *Harmsól* and *Leiðarvísan*, describes *Líknarbraut* as *ljós* 'bright' and expresses the poet's hope that it will be good for all who hear it, according to their needs.

Framm bar ek foldar humra (fæ ek heitis svá leitat)
 leiðar (ljósu kvæði) Líknarbraut fyr gauta.
 Sæll lát oss ok allri Angrskerðandi verða
 þjóð, sem þurft vár beiðir þenna hróðr at góðu. (*Líknarbraut* 51)

I have presented 'Líknarbraut' ['Way of Grace'] (thus I find a name for the bright poem) before the men of the path of the land of lobsters. Blessed strife-Diminisher, let this praise be for the good of us and all people, as our need entreats.

land of lobsters: seabed, whose 'path' is the sea, whose 'men' are fishermen,
 and here generally refers to humanity
 blessed strife-Diminisher: Christ

Literally meaning 'Road to Healing' or 'Way of Grace', *Líknarbraut* emphasises the poet's hope for guidance down a righteous path and ties into the idea of Christ illuminating the way to salvation, as exemplified in biblical passages such as Isaiah XLII.16⁴⁶⁸ and John XIII.12.⁴⁶⁹ The description of *Líknarbraut* as *ljós kvæði* 'a bright poem' implies that, as an inspired work, it is another emanation of Christ's revelatory light into the world, clarifying the path to salvation. The poet's description of his audience in the first *helmingr* as 'men of the path of the land of lobsters', or fisherman, perhaps obliquely refers to Christ's call for his disciples to become 'fishers of men' in Matthew IV.19 and actively spread to others what they have learned. In the second *helmingr* the poet addresses Christ as *sæll Angrskerðandi* 'blessed strife-Diminisher', reminding the audience once again of Christ's spiritual victory through His death on the Cross and His

⁴⁶⁸ Isaiah XLII.16: *Et ducam caecos in viam quam nesciunt, et in semitis quas ignoraverunt ambulare eos faciam. Ponam tenebras coram eis in lucem, et prava in recta; haec verba feci eis et non dereliqui eos* (Vulg 2012a, Isaiah XLII.16) 'And I will lead the blind into the way which they know not, and in the paths which they were ignorant of I will make them walk. I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight; these things have I done to them and have not forsaken them' (Vulg 2012a, Isaiah XLII.16).

⁴⁶⁹ John XIII.12: *Iterum ergo locutus est eis Iesus dicens: 'Ego sum Lux mundi; qui sequitur Me, non ambulabit in tenebris, sed habebit lucem vitae'* (Vulg 1979, John XIII.12) 'Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, 'I am the Light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life' (NRSV, John VIII.12).

role as Warrior Chieftain.⁴⁷⁰ The poem concludes in stanza 52 with the hope that the sign of the Cross will shine *í várri atferð alla stund á grundu* ‘in our behaviour at all times on earth’ so that we might obtain *æztan fögnuð eilífrar vistar unaðs* ‘the highest joy of the eternal dwelling of happiness’, thus completing the poem with a reminder of the hope that the Cross offers to humanity.

Conclusions

The late-thirteenth century *Líknarbraut*, like *Harmsól* and *Leiðarvísan* from the previous century, is a part of the homiletic or didactic tradition of Christian skaldic verse. As with its predecessors, the poem itself is based largely on specific Christian literary traditions that shape its purpose and scope. As a devotional poem celebrating the Cross, *Líknarbraut*’s representations of Christ are marked by a focus on His use of the Cross, and to some extent by representations of the Cross itself that bear a striking resemblance to Christ’s own characteristics. Setting the Cross at its centre means that this poem lends itself to examinations of the Last Judgement, as the anonymous poet draws from a variety of relevant Christian texts including the Good Friday liturgy, the Reproaches, and the poems *Pange lingua* and *Vexilla regis* to produce the *adoratio crucis* in stanzas 30 to 45. The result is a poem filled with numerous images that cumulatively contribute to its unique representation of Christ.

As in all of the poems previously discussed, Christ’s representation as Light plays an important role throughout *Líknarbraut*. Stanza 3 establishes the connection between light and purity, as the poet asks that Christ incline His *hreina heyrn miskunnar* ‘pure hearing of mercy’ to the speaker’s prayers so that mercifulness *skíni* ‘may shine’ upon him. Sinfulness is represented as the *myrkr misverki* ‘murkiness of misdeeds’ and the *blindi* ‘blindness’ of a weary mind that can only be cleared away by Christ, whose *albjart ástarljós* ‘all-bright love-light’ will shine in the poet’s heart. The Harrowing of Hell in stanza 22 presents the

⁴⁷⁰ The noun *skerðir* ‘diminisher’ is applied to a ruler in stanza 6 of the tenth-century *Erfidrápa Óláfs Tryggvasonar* by Hallfreðr vandræðaskáld Óttarsson: *herskerðir* ‘army-diminisher’.

clash between Christ and Lucifer as light overpowering the darkness of Hell, further conveying the conflict between good and evil through the light–dark dichotomy. As in *Harmsól*, themes of concealment and revelation also play an important role. When Christ *skrýddi Sik, hjálmprýddan* ‘dressed Himself, helmet-adorned’ with flesh in stanza 12, the description could be interpreted both as an arming for spiritual battle and a covering over of Christ’s divinity. The first of these interpretations certainly squares well with the portrayal of Christ as a Warrior Chieftain, while the second perhaps points towards the representation of Christ as Beguiler, which is more fully explored through Christ’s relationship to Lucifer in *Lilja*.

Numerous details in *Líknarbraut* express Christ’s leadership and generosity in a manner that hearkens back to the earlier courtly setting of skaldic verse. As in *Geisli* and *Harmsól*, the poet references his work within the poem and asks that, in exchange for his *óðgerð* ‘poetry-making’, he receive *gjöld með leigum* ‘payment with wages’ (stanza 49). The transaction proposed here serves as the spiritual equivalent of the king or chieftain rewarding a member of his court, situating Christ and humanity within this framework. Individual followers of Christ are represented in *Harmsól* as both a *þræll* ‘servant’ (stanza 16) and member of a *lið* ‘retinue’ (stanza 18), both of which imply Christ’s status as either King or Warrior Chieftain. Christ goes by a variety of epithets that imply leadership, including *Mildingr* ‘Liberal Man’, *Vísi* ‘Captain’, and *Fœðir fremðarráðs* ‘Nourisher of propitious counsel’. As previously mentioned, the poet presents the Incarnation as a sort of spiritual battle in stanza 12, when Christ *skrýddi Sik, hjálmprýddan* ‘dressed Himself, helmet-adorned’, with flesh; his spiritual victory is realised in stanza 23 at the Resurrection where He is called *Angrhegnandi* ‘sorrow-Punisher’. Celebration of Christ’s active combat against sin, and the paradox of gaining victory through death on the Cross, thus contributes to His representation as Warrior Chieftain.

Líknarbraut, like *Harmsól*, offers an extended metaphor that presents Christ as the Captain of a ship. In stanza 33 the Cross is described as a *skeið* ‘warship’ that is *farsæl* ‘voyage-prosperous’ and *fljót* ‘swift’, and carries *ítrum farmi* ‘a splendid cargo’ *á vít strandar fósturlands* ‘towards the shore of our foster-land’. The suggestion of a foster-family relationship between Christ and humanity is an intriguing one, as it draws from a practice that was common for

solidifying political relationships in Scandinavian countries from this period. Perhaps the implication of this phrasing is that Christ's followers, in accepting God as their divine foster father, secure Christ's mercy and may enter the hall of heaven. Once again, the representation of Christ is that of a diplomatic Leader, and one that navigates His followers through the perils of life to a heavenly home.

Depictions of the Last Judgement in *Líknarbraut* are similar to those in *Harmsól* in their use of terms that are frequently employed in Scandinavian legal contexts of the period. *Ráð* 'counsel' is used as a means of identifying Christ's wisdom and legal counsel throughout the poem, just as it is in earlier Christian skaldic poems. *Líknarbraut*, like *Harmsól*, refers to the Last Judgement as a *þing*, though *Líknarbraut* also refers to the event as an *alþing*; this latter word choice makes use of a particular term for a legal gathering in Scandinavian countries, the most prominent of these being the annual Icelandic *Alþing*, and invites the audience to associate the Judgement with this large-scale event. Through Christ's sacrifice humanity is *syknu* 'acquitted', according to stanza 31, which both relates to spiritual righteousness and the legal sense of an outlaw being declared a free man. In a similar vein, Christ's sacrifice is also described as a *lausn*, meaning 'absolution' or 'liberation', in stanza 32. Thus *Líknarbraut*, with its emphasis on the Cross's role in securing humanity's salvation, presents Christ simultaneously as a wise Counsellor, the Authority through whom acquittal may be acquired, and the Presider over a legal gathering akin to the Icelandic *Alþing*. In addition to forming this particular image of Christ, the legal terminology may also indicate a developing interest in theological concepts to do with salvation. For example, Christ's freeing of humanity at the Harrowing of Hell is expressed through the verb *leysa*, which means 'to loosen', 'redeem', or 'purchase' in a legal sense, and may imply the poet's familiarity with the ransom theory, a concept which will be explored more fully in the chapter on *Lilja*.

Just as Christ's legal role features prominently in *Líknarbraut*, so too does His role as Healer. The poet associates sinfulness with illness and injury in stanza 6, where he explains that a perversion of God's laws are *at grandí gumna kund* 'to the injury of mankind', and that Christ offers humanity protection from these injuries. Stanza 16 describes Christ somewhat

paradoxically as *sárr Groeðari* ‘wounded Saviour’, healing humanity from sin through His death on the Cross. Later, in stanza 31, He is called *Læknir* ‘Healer’, making His role as spiritual Physician more explicit. Returning to Christ’s woundedness as the source of this healing, the poet symbolises Christ’s abundant mercy through the blood and water that pour from His side at the Crucifixion in stanza 20; as in stanza 6, here the poet identifies Christ’s *ben* ‘wound’ as the source of spiritual healing in a manner similar to the *Pange lingua*’s expression of Christ’s mercy.

The poem’s title itself, *Líknarbraut* ‘Way of Grace’, makes use of the term *líkn*, which can refer to both ‘grace’ and ‘a balm’ and pertains to the healing function in which the Cross participates with Christ. In stanza 40 the poet beseeches the Cross *hreinsa kyn lýða* ‘to purify the race of men’, asking that it protect the people’s hearts against *öllum meinum* ‘all injuries’ and *harðri freistni* ‘hard temptation’. The poet asks for *líkn* from the Cross, *er læknar ljóna kind frá blindi hyggju túns* ‘you who cure men’s offspring from the blindness of thought’s field’; this description draws on both the light and dark dichotomy found in these poems, as well as the image of the human heart as a field that needs to be tended in order to become spiritually fruitful. Thus the qualities of healing normally applied to Christ here become characteristics of the Cross in many sections of this poem.

As indicated in the representation of the heart as a field in stanza 40, agricultural images and themes of nourishment unite to form a vivid concept of Christ as abundant Provider to humanity. Christ’s epithet *brifgæðir* ‘Prosperity-Endower’ in stanza 4, combined with the poet’s reference to his own heart as the *tún mælsku* ‘homefield of eloquence’, among other details, help to develop the agricultural theme. This continues in stanza 5, which certainly draws some influence from the Parable of the Sower and Venantius Fortunatus’s *Pange lingua* as the poet asks Christ *dreifa* ‘to sprinkle’ his mind’s *lád* ‘land’ with *himneska sáði* ‘heavenly seed’ so that the *sannr ávøxtr* ‘true fruit’ might be brought forth. Related to the metaphor in stanza 5 is the association of holiness and righteousness with a blossoming flower, particularly as a symbol for the Virgin Mary, the Cross, and Christ. In stanza 32, for example, the Cross is presented as the *blómi helgra dóma* ‘blossom of relics’ that is watered by the blood of Christ, which could mean that either Christ’s blood, Christ Himself, or

both are the bloom on the tree of the Cross. There is certainly a Christian literary precedent for this representation, though the image may perhaps have evoked for some the eddic mythological narrative of Yggdrasill that nourishes the world with its dew. Christ's role as Nourisher is evident in such epithets as *Fœðir elsku* 'Nourisher of love' at the Crucifixion in stanza 23, and *Fœðir fremðarráðs* 'Nourisher of famous counsel' at the Last Judgement in stanza 26. One of the recurrent terms, and indeed themes, of *Líknarbraut* is *ár*, which refers to 'abundance' and 'plenty' in relation to spiritual fruitfulness and Christ's mercy throughout the work. Thus the poet not only presents Christ as a Healer but also Nourisher that promotes the growth of blessings for humanity.

Overall, the various portrayals of Christ's relationship with humanity as established in earlier Christian skaldic poems, and the images used to symbolise particular aspects of these roles, become much more developed in *Líknarbraut*. The most significant developments seem to be the representations of Christ as the Healer of injurious sins, as well as an abundant Provider of nourishment in an agricultural context. These elements seem to be particularly influenced by the poem's focused praise of the Cross and its role in humanity's salvation. These new elements continue to reshape Christ's fluid representations, and lay new foundations on which later skaldic poems develop their versions of Christ. This indicates that, even with roughly a century separating the composition of *Líknarbraut* from *Geisli*, *Harmsól*, and *Leiðarvísan*, elements to do with light, familiar legal terms and practices, and the chieftain-*þegn* relationship still carried powerful resonances in the thirteenth century. All of these themes will continue to develop in the poem *Lilja*, alongside the emergence of a few new elements that address contemporary literary and theological practices.

Chapter Six - *Lilja*

Bishop Finnur Jónsson cited an adage in 1774 that reflects the opinions of most editors who have worked with this poem: *Öll skáld villdu Lilju kuedit hafa* 'All poets wish they had composed *Lilja*'.⁴⁷¹ As a 100-stanza poem in *hrynhent* metre, *Lilja* maintains some metrical qualities of skaldic verse while it also actively departs from others in order to accommodate a Latin literary tradition; the result is a work reflecting the complex influences of sometimes conflicting literary styles that have been fused together to develop a new skaldic metre.⁴⁷² Chase observes that *Lilja* differs significantly from early skaldic poetry in its comparative lack of exotic vocabulary and kennings, focusing instead on expressing salvation history clearly to the audience.⁴⁷³ The poem is comprised of a 25-stanza *upphaf*, a 50-stanza *stefjábalkr* divided between two refrains, and a 25-stanza *slæmr*, but its organisation also reflects 'a circular pattern that is reconciled with the tripartite form and emphasis on the number 33' that were popular in medieval Latin verse.⁴⁷⁴ The 100 verses of the poem also reflect the significance attached to the number ten in medieval Christian thought, and is further associated with the Virgin Mary since it was commonly known that the *Ave Maria* consists of 100 characters in Latin.⁴⁷⁵ The title *Lilja* 'Lily' itself refers to the Virgin Mary who, alongside Christ, plays a key role in salvation history and throughout much of the poem. The biblical narrative extends from the Creation to the Last Judgement, and within that framework, Lucifer, Gabriel, Mary, and Christ are all quoted directly at various intervals. Although it is difficult to sum up the theme of this poem, Chase perceives the whole work as an exploration of salvation, while Tate notes its particular interest in the conflict between Christ and the devil.⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷¹ Finnur Jónsson 1772-8: II, 398. Cf. Chase 2007: 561.

⁴⁷² Gade 2002: 866; Lie 1952; and Lie 1962. For details regarding the language of *Lilja*, and how this contrasts with the earlier Christian skaldic poems that appear in this thesis, see Chase 2007: 555.

⁴⁷³ Chase 2007: 558.

⁴⁷⁴ Tate 1984: 568-569. Cf. Clunies Ross 2007: liii; Kuhn 1983: 337-41; and Hill 1970: 561-67.

⁴⁷⁵ Chase 2007: 559.

⁴⁷⁶ Chase 2007: 556; and Tate 1984: 568.

The *upphaf*, which establishes the fall of humanity, introduces the poem and recounts Christian history from Creation to the eve of the Incarnation. It begins with praise of the Trinity in stanza 1, which is preceded by prayers to Christ and Mary for eloquence in stanzas 2 to 3, and the poet's expressed desire in stanza 4 to compose a poem for Christ like those composed by skalds for their rulers in the past. He lists numerous reasons for composing this poem in stanza 5, and then begins to tell the story of salvation starting with the creation of the angels in stanza 6. Events in Christian history that are highlighted from this point through to the end of the *upphaf* include the fall of Lucifer (stanzas 7-9), the creation of the world and Adam and Eve (stanzas 10-14), the devil's envy of Adam and Eve and his deception that leads to the Fall (stanzas 15-20), and a reflection on God's sending Christ for reconciliation (stanzas 21-25). The first section of the *stefjabálkr* (stanzas 26-50) narrates Christ's life, with subsections devoted to the Annunciation and Incarnation (stanzas 27-31), Christ's birth and life to age 30 (stanzas 33-37), Lucifer's soliloquy (stanzas 39-43), and the devil's resolve to kill Christ following the Temptation in the desert and the miracles Christ subsequently performs (stanzas 45-49). The second section of the *stefjabálkr* spans time from the Passion to the Last Judgement and is organised in the following manner: the account of Christ's Passion with a focus on Mary's suffering (stanzas 52-57); Christ's death on the Cross (stanzas 58-60); the Harrowing of Hell and the poet's celebration of Christ's beguiling of the devil (stanzas 61-66); the Resurrection, Ascension, and Pentecost (stanzas 67-68); and the Second Coming and Last Judgement (stanzas 70-74). The poet then turns attention to himself in stanzas 75 to 78, examining his own sinfulness in a penitential manner. In the *slæmr* the poet addresses God (stanza 79), Jesus (stanzas 80-85), and Mary (stanzas 86-95) to ask for pardon and intercession, and the poem ultimately concludes with a dedication to Christ (stanza 96), the poet's thoughts on poetic theory (stanzas 97-98), and a repetition of the first stanza at the end of the work (stanza 100).

Lilja's structure has drawn the interest of numerous scholars who have interpreted the meaning behind its number of stanzas and organisation. In some cases, these theories are based on the significance of numbers in medieval Christian texts. For example, Alexander Baumgartner perceived the

drápa structure of the poem as ‘an analogy to the triptychs of medieval visual art’, which not only creates a pleasing balance but may also obliquely allude to the Trinity.⁴⁷⁷ Hill also perceives the poem as being designed around a three-part structure that marks three distinct sections of Christian history: Creation to the Incarnation (stanzas 1-33); the life of Christ and Harrowing of Hell (stanzas 34-66); and the Resurrection to the Last Judgement (stanzas 67-99, though technically these final stanzas encompass more than that).⁴⁷⁸ The 100 stanzas are also significant, since the number 100 was associated in medieval Christianity both with perfection and the number of letters in the angelic salutation from Luke: *Ave Maria, gracia plena, dominus tecum, benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jhesus Cristus, Amen* ‘Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you, blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus Christ’.⁴⁷⁹ None of these possibilities exclude the others, and all of them may have contributed to the poet’s composition plan for *Lilja*.

The poem’s date of composition is typically placed between 1340 and 1360, although there is not much direct evidence for arriving at a precise date.⁴⁸⁰ What is known is that the poem exhibits linguistic changes that took place after 1300, but more significantly it shares material in common with Abbot Arngrímur Brandsson’s *Guðmundardrápa*, which states its composition date as 1345 in stanza 49. Chase argues that both poems were composed around the same time on the grounds that the borrowed material reads more naturally in *Lilja*, and that details such as the ‘allusion to the *Anima Christi* prayer’ in stanza 81, ‘the image of the Virgin of the Mantle’ in stanza 86, and ‘the theme of double intercession’ in stanza 87 were relatively new literary developments in 1345.⁴⁸¹ The poem’s popularity in the centuries following its composition is evident in the lack of early manuscript copies, numerous surviving manuscripts of a later date, and the impossibility of connecting these manuscripts in a

⁴⁷⁷ Chase 2007: 560; Baumgartner 1884: 30-31.

⁴⁷⁸ Hill 1970; Cf. Chase 2007: 561.

⁴⁷⁹ Chase 2007: 559. The *Ave Maria* is based on the biblical passage Luke 1:42.

⁴⁸⁰ Tate 1984: 568.

⁴⁸¹ Chase 2007: 555.

stemma.⁴⁸² As Clunies Ross has observed, *Lilja*'s use of *hrynhenda* metre helped to popularise this verse form, and the poem itself 'still had imitators into the sixteenth century'.⁴⁸³

There are numerous possible analogues for *Lilja*, though these are difficult to identify. The poet's knowledge seems to span not only the standard liturgical, theological, and rhetorical texts of the Middle Ages, but also some texts that emerged and became popular in the fourteenth century. Among the possible textual influences that were popular in the fourteenth century are the *Meditationes Vite Christi*, the *Anima Christi* prayer, the cult of the blood of Christ, and the image of the *Madonna misericordiae*.⁴⁸⁴ Chase notes that *Lilja* reflects the piety and the theology of the fourteenth century 'in its regard of Mary's intercession as an integral aspect of Christ's redemption of fallen humanity', a detail made particularly apparent in the poet's contemplation of the Last Judgement.⁴⁸⁵

Lilja's textual history and record of survivals are very complex. The earliest surviving manuscript is Holm perg 1 fol, Bergsbók (Bb), which dates from around the fourteenth or fifteenth century; it lacks a formal title, but does include a heading – *Dette Er Itt Merckeligt Rim, och kaldis denn Lilliaë*, 'This is a remarkable poem, and it is called *Lilja*' – which was added at a later date.⁴⁸⁶ Authorial attribution emerges in later manuscripts, beginning in the sixteenth century with AM 622 4^o and its marginal heading which reads, *Hier hefur Liliu brodur Eysteinn*, 'Here begins Brother Eysteinn's *Lilja*'.⁴⁸⁷ Opinions of the author's identity diverged by the early seventeenth century, with Jón Egilsson's *Biskupa-Annálar* (1605) placing brother Eysteinn at the monastery in Þykkvabær, and other manuscripts identifying him as a Franciscan monk from Niðarós.⁴⁸⁸ Since *Bb* is the earliest surviving manuscript where *Lilja* appears intact, it serves as the basis for Chase's 2007 edition and, by extension, the

⁴⁸² For a comprehensive list of manuscript survivals for *Lilja*, see Chase 2007: 556-8.

⁴⁸³ Clunies Ross 2005: 206. Cf. Jón Helgason 1936-8; and Jón Þorkelsson 1888.

⁴⁸⁴ Chase 2007: 561.

⁴⁸⁵ Chase 2007: 561. Cf. Lane 1973; and Williamson 2000.

⁴⁸⁶ Chase 2007: 554.

⁴⁸⁷ Chase 2007: 554.

⁴⁸⁸ Storm 1888: 489. Cf. Tate, 1984: 569. For further information about the complexities of identifying *Lilja*'s author, see Chase 2007: 554-55.

quoted stanzas in this thesis.⁴⁸⁹ Additionally, there are several other manuscripts and witnesses that serve as a point of reference for the 2007 edition by Chase, listed in the footnote below.⁴⁹⁰ The two earliest manuscripts, Bb and 720a, have no clear transmission relationship, nor indeed do the other manuscripts.⁴⁹¹ This may suggest that *Lilja* was a particularly popular text and widely disseminated far beyond what survives.⁴⁹²

In the first of the introductory stanzas, *Lilja* praises the Trinity, describing it as *sönn eining í þrennum greinum* ‘true unity in three parts’ and celebrating its presence in all times and places. In the second stanza, the poet asks God *hreinsa brjóst og leið með listum líflig orð* ‘to purify my soul and lead with skill lively words’, so that he may compose a worthy poem.⁴⁹³ He then makes the

⁴⁸⁹ There are numerous later manuscripts containing *Lilja*, either in part or altogether, beyond the core manuscripts used for the Chase 2007 edition. These include: Adv 21 8 10^x, AM 136 4^o, AM 695 a 4^{ox}, AM 706 4^{ox}, AM 707 4^{ox}, AM 714 4^o, AM 715 a 4^{ox}, AM 715 b 4^{ox}, AM 717 h 4^{ox}, AM 104 8^{ox}, Holm papp 23 fol^x, Holm papp 64 fol^x, ÍB 104 4^{ox}, ÍB 159 8^{ox}, ÍB 200 8^{ox}, ÍBR 16 8^{ox}, ÍBR 74 8^{ox}, JS 260 4^{ox}, JS 399 a-b 4^{ox}, JS 406 4^{ox}, JS 413 8^{ox}, Lbs 221 4^{ox}, Lbs 804 4^{ox}, Ls 848 4^{ox}, Lbs 953 4^{ox}, Lbs 966 4^{ox}, Lbs 1745 4^{ox}, Lbs 2289 4^{ox}, Lbs 2293 8^{ox}, and UppsUB R 547 4^{ox}. There are also numerous editions of *Lilja*, which include: *Skj; Skald; Guðbrandur Þorláksson* 1612; Páll Hallsson 1773; Finnur Jónsson 1772-8; Eysteinn Ásgrímsson 1858; Eiríkur Magnússon 1870; de Rivière 1883; Wisén 1886-9, I; Finnur Jónsson 1893, 1913a, 1913b; Guðbrandur Jónsson 1933, 1951, 1992; Sigurður Nordal 1937; Einar Bragi 1961; Gunnar Finnbogason 1974, 1988; Taillé 1989; Jón Torfason and Kristján Eiríksson 2000. Latin editions include Páll Hallsson 1656, 1733; Finnur Jónsson 1772-8; Eysteinn Ásgrímsson 1858, 1859; Eiríkur Magnússon 1870; and de Rivière 1883. Danish editions include Páll Hallsson 1656; Finn Magnúsen 1820; and von Holstein-Rathlou 1937. Norwegian editions include Paasche 1915; Orgland 1977; and Ødegård 1980. There is one Swedish edition by Åkerblom 1916. German editions include Studach 1826; Baumgartner 1884; Meissner 1922; and Lange 1958a. English editions include Eiríkur Magnússon 1870; Pilcher 1950; and Boucher 1985. French editions include de Rivière 1883; and Taillé 1989. And there is one Czech edition by Walter 1924. Cf. Chase 2007: 561-2.

⁴⁹⁰ These include fragment VIII of AM 720 a VIII 4^o from c. 1400 (720a VIII) (Kålund 1889-94, 2, 146; and Jensen 1983, Ixix-Ixiii); the sixteenth-century AM 99 a 8^o (99a) (Kålund 1889-94, 2, 390; and *ÍM* I, 189); AM 622 4^o from before 1549 (622) (Kålund 1889-94, 2, 34-7; Jón Helgason 1953, 162; and Vésteinn Ólason 1993, 306); AM 713 4^o, a collection of religious verse from c. 1540 or later (713) (Kålund 1889-94, 2, 128-31; *ÍM* I.2, 35-7; and Jón Helgason 1953, 162); stanzas 1-6 in AM 720 b 4^o from c. 1600 (720b) (Kålund 1889-94, 2, 147-8); *Ein ny wiisna bok med mörgum andlegum viisum og kvædum, Psalmum / lof sønguum og rijjum / teknum wr Heilagre Ritningu*, edited by Bishop Guðbrandur Þorláksson and printed at Hólar in 1612; DKNVSB 41 8^{ox} from the seventeenth century (41 8^{ox}) (Jónas Kristjánsson 1967; and Midbøe 1960: 1, 232); the eighteenth-century transcription AM 705 4^{ox} (705^x) (Kålund 1889-94, 2, 121, 148-9; and *ÍM* I.2, 189); and the eighteenth-century vellum manuscript BLAdd 4892 (4892) (Eiríkur Magnússon 1870, xxii-xxvii; Jón Þorkelsson 1896, 205-6; *ÍM* I.2, 112; British Library 1977: 269).

⁴⁹¹ Chase 2007: 556.

⁴⁹² For further information about each of these manuscripts, and their potential relationships with one another, see Chase 2007: 557-8. Cf. *ÍM* for a proposed stemma.

⁴⁹³ I have modified Chase’s edition of the Old Norse text by deleting commas for the smoother flow of the sentence.

same request to the Virgin Mary in stanza 3, *að fyrir þína umsjá renni riettfæðugt mál í sliettum vísu af raddartólum mínum* ‘that with your overseeing proper speech may run in smooth verses from my voice-tools’. Chase describes these two stanzas as ‘a Christian version of the traditional self-conscious skaldic exordium’, much like the openings of the previous Christian skaldic poems reviewed in this study that ask for both inspiration and readiness in delivering the poem.⁴⁹⁴ Following these bids for inspiration from Christ and Mary, the poet clarifies in stanza 4 how he plans to compose this poem. Explaining that *fyrri menn, er af sínum bókum kunnu slungin fræðin, forn og klók, sungu með danskri tungu mjúkt lof af kóngum sínum* ‘earlier men, who from their books knew intricate knowledge, ancient and clever, sang in the Nordic tongue humble praise of their kings’, he resolves to craft a poem in this medium to praise the *allsvaldanda Kóngi* ‘all-ruling King’ (stanza 4). This prefacing statement prepares the audience for changes to a familiar poetic genre, used here to clearly communicate the message of Christianity in contrast to the more cryptic skaldic poems of the past.

In stanza 5 the poet lists a variety of reasons that compel him *færa fögr stórmerkin Drottins verka í frásögn* ‘to convey the magnificent feats of the Lord’s works in a narrative’, including praise for God’s mercy and penitence for sin. This leads into the account of the creation of heaven and earth adorned *með brysva þrennum stiettar eingla* ‘with three times three ranks of angels’ in stanza 6, marking the beginning of Christian history in this poem. In stanza 7 the poet describes Lucifer, whose name means ‘light-bearer’ or ‘morning star’, in his good and glorified state, on the cusp of the moment when his pride leads to his fall.

Mektarfullr, er af bar öllum í náttúruskærleik sínum,
 skapaður góðr og skein í prýði Skapara næstr í vegsemd hæstri.
 Eigi liet sier alla nægjaz eingill mekt, þá er hafði feingið;
 með ofbeldi öðlaz vildi æðra sess og virðing bæði. (*Lilja* 7)⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹⁴ Chase 2007: 559.

⁴⁹⁵ The lack of *aðalhending* (‘perfect rhyme’) is somewhat problematic, as it disrupts the normal flow of the metre. This perhaps serves as an example of the poet’s preference for clarity of message over adhering to traditional skaldic literary practice.

The one full of might, who in his natural brightness surpassed all,
[was] created good and shone in magnificence, in highest honour next to
the Creator.

The angel did not let all the might, which he had received, suffice for him;
with pride he wanted to win for himself both a higher seat and reputation.

For the first time in Christian skaldic verse Lucifer is described in detail, in part by highlighting his brightness before the fall. This language for Satan hearkens back to Isaiah XIV.12: *Quomodo cecidisti de caelo, Lucifer, qui mane oriebaris? Corruisti in terram, qui vulnerabas gentes?* 'How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, who didst rise in the morning? How art thou fallen to earth, that didst wound the nations?'⁴⁹⁶ Though Lucifer possesses *náttúruskærleik* 'natural brightness' before his fall, it is *með ofbeldi* 'with pride' that he wanted to win *bæði æðra sess og virðing* 'both a higher seat and regard'. The term *skærr* 'bright', which the poet also uses in reference to Mary and righteous humanity in other instances, indicates that his identity was associated with light before the sinful thoughts of pride entered his mind. Despite the fact that he was *skapaður góðr og skein í prýði* 'created good and shone in magnificence', he developed jealousy for Christ's greater light and consequently lost his own brightness.⁴⁹⁷ Through these details, the stanza makes clear the hierarchy of Christ as the ultimate source of light, which Lucifer fails to recognise appropriately.

Although the terminology is not identical, there appears to be a similar description of Loki in *Gylfaginning* 33 from *Snorra Edda*: *Loki er fríðr ok fagr sýnum, illr í skaplyndi, mjök fjölbreytinn at háttum* 'Loki is pacifying and fair to look at, but his natural disposition is evil, accustomed to being very changeable'.⁴⁹⁸ The passage offers the tantalizing possibility that Loki was presented in a similar manner to Lucifer, though as mentioned in the analysis for *Líknarbraut* 32 in chapter five, *Gylfaginning* may have been composed so as to avoid drawing comparisons between Christianity and Old Norse myth.⁴⁹⁹ Whether the description from *Snorra Edda* is pre-Christian or partly derived from Christian literary depictions of Lucifer remains unknown, the possible

⁴⁹⁶ *Vulg* 2012a, Isaiah XIV.12.

⁴⁹⁷ For *skærr* 'bright', see *LP* 551. For *prýða* 'to adorn', see *LP* 452.

⁴⁹⁸ Quoted Old Norse text from *SnE* 2005: 26, lines 37-8.

⁴⁹⁹ von See 2001: 367-93.

connection is nonetheless worth considering. As will be seen later in this chapter, Lucifer's characteristics bear similarities to Loki's in other respects.⁵⁰⁰

Stanza 8 highlights the growth of Lucifer's pride, as *með æstum ofsa fýstiz hann að viðlíkjaz Guðs yfrið ríkum eingetnum Syni* 'with raging arrogance he wanted to match himself with God's exceedingly powerful only-begotten Son'. Consequently, Lucifer fell in stanza 9 like a *blývarða* 'plumb bob' *í djúpeik jarðar* 'into the depth of the earth' where his allegorical daughter, called Pride, torments him with fire. The poet makes use of both biblical references and popular Christian allegory of the period, concluding with the observation that those who embrace Lucifer and Pride are themselves ignorant of spiritual truth.

Svá er greinanda; á samri stundu sem eingillinn tók að spillaz,
 söktiz hann með sínum grönnum sem blývarða í djúpleik jarðar,
 blindan þar sem föður sinn fjandann feikt ofbeldið kvelr í eldi;
 fávíss er sá, er feðgin þessi faðma vill en siðunum spilla. (*Lilja* 9)

So it is to tell; at the very moment when the angel began to destroy himself,
 he sank down like a plumb bob with his comrades into the depth of the
 earth,
 where terrible pride torments her blind father, the fiend, in fire;
 ignorant is he who wants to embrace this father and daughter and destroy
 his morals.

Lucifer is referred to as *eingillinn* 'the angel', and his followers are called *sinn grannar* 'his comrades', establishing them as clear, though ultimately unequal, opponents to Christ and His followers. The depiction of the devil as the leader of a military troop is further confirmed by Chase's observation that the description of Lucifer sinking like a *blývarða* 'plumb bob' echoes Exodus XV.10, in which Pharaoh's army drowns in its pursuit of the Israelites through the Red Sea.⁵⁰¹ Lucifer is called *fjandann* 'fiend' and the *blindr föður* 'blind father' of *feikt ofbeldið* 'terrible pride', who in a personified form torments him. The poet uses *blindr* 'blind' to express spiritual blindness that not only contrasts with the representation of Christ as Light, but also indicates Lucifer's ignorance of God's

⁵⁰⁰ See *Lilja* 42 for another potential connection with Loki.

⁵⁰¹ From Exodus XV.10: *Submersi sunt quasi plumbum in aquis vehementibus* (*Vulg* 2010, Exodus XV.10) 'They sunk as lead in the mighty waters' (*Vulg* 2010, Exodus XV.10).

plans.⁵⁰² Lucifer's relationship with his daughter Pride arguably has its origins in the epithet 'Father of Lies' from John VIII.44,⁵⁰³ which in turn influenced the medieval epithets *pater superbiae* 'Father of Pride' and *pater invidiae* 'Father of Envy', as well as passages in *Mikjál's saga* and Book I of the *Revelaciones* of S. Birgitta.⁵⁰⁴ It is these allegorized characteristics that blind the once shining Lucifer and make him *fávíss* 'ignorant' or 'little-wise' of God's plans.⁵⁰⁵ The poet's focus on such details continues to play an important role in representing Christ as both Light and Beguiler throughout the course of this poem, contrasting divine revelation with darkness, spiritual blindness, and ignorance.

Following the narrative of Lucifer's fall, the poet returns to his account of Creation. Stanza 10 summarises the first six days of Creation, with each created element mentioned in passing. The creation of Adam, by contrast, is allotted much more attention, beginning in stanza 11 where a soul is sent to breathe life into a human body. Adam is named in stanza 12, and identified as having *ráð alls í heimi með frelsi og náðum* 'control over everything in the world, with freedom and peace'. God then creates Eve in stanza 13, and gives them *vísa vist paradísar og æru, vald og ástir* 'a certain abode in paradise and honour, strength and love', indicating the great favour He bestows on them within all creation. In stanza 14 He commands Adam and Eve not to take a bite of the forbidden apple, warning *skuluð deyja ef eigi efnið einfalt boð með*

⁵⁰² For *blindr*, see entry in *ADIP*; *LP* 52-3; and *SnE* 1998: 247.

⁵⁰³ John VIII.44: *Vos ex patre Diabolo estis et desideria patris vestri vultis facere. Ille homicida era tab initio et in veritate non stabat, quia non est veritas in eo. Cum loquitur mendacium, ex propriis loquitur, quia mendax est et pater eius* (*Vulg* 1979, John VIII.44) 'You are from your father, the devil, and you choose to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies' (*NRSV*, John VIII.44).

⁵⁰⁴ Chase 2007: 571. From *Mikjál's saga: for hann til ok horaðiz gerandi ser dottur, er dramsemi heitir æ síðan...Þvilika framfærslu feck dramsemi feðr sinum, at hon fletti hann or himnarikis fegrö ok setti niðr i diupp helvitis til endalausrar pislar* 'he [Lucifer] went there and whored, creating a daughter for himself, who ever since has been named Pridefulness...Pridefulness was such a help to her father that she stripped him of the fairness of heaven and set him down in the depth of Hell for everlasting torment' (Unger 1877, I, 677-8; Modern English translation from Chase 2007: 572). From Book I of the *Revelaciones* of S. Birgitta: *de duabus dominis, quarum una nominabatur Superbia et altera Humilitas...Super primam est dominus ipse diabolus, quia sibi dominatur* 'regarding two ladies, one of whom was called Pride and the other Humility...the devil is master of the first lady [*Superbia*] because he has dominion over her' (*Revelaciones* 1.29 in Searby 2006: 101; Undhagen and Jönsson 1977-2001, I, 324; Modern English translation from Chase 2007: 572). For information on the use of this motif in the fourteenth century, see Bloomfield 1952: 183.

⁵⁰⁵ For *fávíss*, see *LP* 125.

dyggleik hreinum ‘you shall die if you do not fulfill the single command with pure fidelity’. This establishes the relationship between God and humanity within a legal framework, and consequently lays the foundation for Christ’s representation as a legal Authority in relationship with His followers.

Stanza 15 depicts the devil’s jealousy of the favour humanity enjoys from God as he prepares to deceive Adam and Eve. In order to accomplish this, he conceals his identity and magically forms speech inside a serpent, evoking both the biblical narrative in Genesis as well as a combination of Norse pagan practices and shapeshifting in mythological narrative.

Þrútnar, svellr og unír við illa eingill, bann það er hafði feingið,
fyrða sveitin fædd á jörðu fái þar vist, er sjálfr hann misti,
og bruggandi dauðans dreggjjar, duldiz hann fyrir augsjón manna;
fjólkunnigr í einum innan ormi tók hann mál að forma. (*Lilja* 15)

The angel who had received that ban swells, puffs up, and is displeased that the company of men brought up on earth should receive an abode there where he himself lost one, and, brewing the dregs of death, he concealed himself from the eyes of men; skilled in black magic, he set about forming speech from inside a serpent.

The stanza commences a multi-stanza section (stanzas 15-18) that, as Peter Foote argues, is an Icelandic reworking of Geoffrey of Vinsauf’s *Poetria Nova*.⁵⁰⁶ The focus on Lucifer’s jealousy of humanity’s abode compared with his fall from grace also has thematic parallels in passages from the Old Norse texts *Elucidarius* and *Stjórn*, both of which are translations of Christian material.⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰⁶ Foote 1982: 119-21. From Geoffrey of Vinsauf’s *Poetria Nova: Inde, / Quid faceret versans, serpentis imagine sumpta, / Rectus et erectus veniens clam venit ad Evam, / Affari non ausus Adam* ‘Then, pondering what he might do, taking the form of a serpent, advancing straight and erect, he came in secret to Eve, not daring to speak to Adam’ (Latin passage from Faral 1924: 242; Modern English translation from Nims 2010: 61).

⁵⁰⁷ From the Old Norse *Elucidarius: hann ovunde þat es þau scvldo koma til þess uegs es hann uas fyr rekenn fyr ofmetnop ausjón* ‘he resented that they should receive the honour he had lost because of his arrogance’ (*Eluc* 1992: 21-1). From *Stjórn: þiat hann var þegar samdægris fullr af fjanda sem hann var skapadr, ok fyrir þann skyld at sua sem Lucifer uar brott rekinn af himneskri paradís. aufunadi hann manninum at uera i iardneskri paradís. uitandi þat at hann mundi þadan brott reckinn. ef hann gengi af guds bodordi* ‘since he was at filled with evil on the same day he was created, and because Lucifer was banished out of the heavenly paradise, he

The poet describes Lucifer in *Lilja* 15 as the *eingill er hafði feingið það bann* ‘angel who had received that ban’, making use the legal term *bann*, which is related to outlawry and associates separation from God with this Scandinavian legal practice of societal exclusion.⁵⁰⁸ Enviously observing humanity in the place of favour that he lost, Lucifer *brútnar, svellr og unír* ‘swells, puffs up, and is displeased’, and resolves to deceive them as a means of securing their downfall. Notably, this is the only instance in Christian skaldic verse that describes the devil taking the form of a serpent in Eden. In relation to this depiction, one striking difference between the account in *Poetria nova* and *Lilja* 15 is the emphasis on magic and language in the skaldic interpretation; while the devil deceives by *serpentis imagine sumpta* ‘taking the form of a serpent’ in the *Poetria nova*, *Lilja* 15 never directly states this, saying instead that the devil *duldiz* ‘concealed’ himself by using magic to form speech within a serpent. The term *dylja*, meaning ‘to conceal’, describes Lucifer disguising his identity and presents the action as a covering rather than a physical transformation.⁵⁰⁹ As will become apparent through the course of this poem, Lucifer will also experience ignorance to the concealed truth of Christ’s divinity, a deception that contributes to Christ’s representation as Beguiler.

The poet’s description of Lucifer *bruggandi dauðans dreggjar* ‘brewing the dregs of death’ is based on a common topos found in both Germanic and Latin texts, with an example of this being the Easter hymn *Rex aeternae domine: quem diabolus deceperat, / hostis humani generis, / per pomum ligni vetiti / mortis propinans poculum* ‘[Adam,] whom the devil, the enemy of humankind, had deceived, giving him the cup of death to drink by means of the fruit of the forbidden tree’.⁵¹⁰ The verb *brugga*, which literally means ‘to brew’, also takes on its metaphorical meaning ‘to contrive’ or ‘fabricate’ in this stanza, where it

resented that humanity were in earthly paradise, knowing the he would be banished away from there if he strayed from God’s command’ (Unger 1862: 34).

⁵⁰⁸ For *bann*, meaning ‘ban’ or ‘sentence of excommunication’, see entry in *ADIP*; *LEI* 2000: 415; *LP* 34; and *IED* 51.

⁵⁰⁹ For *dylja*, see *LP* 90-1 and entry in *ADIP*. According to the entry in *ADIP*, *dylja* can refer to ignorance and delusion, both by another person and by oneself. See *Leiðarvísan* 12 and *Lilja* 39 for other instances in which humanity and the devil are described as ignorant through the use of *dylja*.

⁵¹⁰ *DH* 175; cf. *AH* 51, 6. Cf. Chase 2007: 581.

describes Lucifer's act of deception.⁵¹¹ The concocting of this deadly cup is accompanied by Lucifer's disguise, which he can produce because he is *fjōlkunnigr* 'skilled in magic'.⁵¹² This invocation of magic emphasises the sinister nature of the devil's duplicity, but also introduces the term *fjōlkunnigr*, which refers to pagan magic in the prose text *Íslendingasögur*.⁵¹³ As Meylan observes, Old Norse Christian texts of this period make a distinction between miracles, which are attributed to God and His followers, and *fjōlkunnigr*, which can include among its meanings 'sorcery' and 'shape-shifting' and is used in a derogatory fashion for devils and false prophets alike in order to discredit their actions.⁵¹⁴ While this finding does not do much to reveal whether *fjōlkunnigr* referred to particular practices in the *Lilja* poet's mind, it demonstrates that Old Norse beliefs were to some extent perceived as the antithesis to Christianity, and that they were something to be associated with the devil's deceptive nature.

In addition to identifying Lucifer's concealment as one achieved through sorcery, the poet also depicts him carrying out these deceptions through a serpent, a detail couched in biblical narrative with some strong Norse mythological associations. The term *ormr* means 'snake' or 'serpent' as it is used here, but it can also refer to a 'worm' or 'dragon'.⁵¹⁵ However *ormr* is translated, the association of serpents with Hell and punishment in the afterlife exists in both popular Christian literature as well as Old Norse mythological texts. Haki Antonsson has noted that Icelandic wood-panels from the early twelfth century depicted a Hell in which the devil sat on a throne of serpents or dragons, while humans were being attacked by the same creatures; he also observes that such images of Doomsday 'must have been a familiar sight for the Þingeyrar monks, as it is almost certain depictions of serpents and dragons adorned the nearby Hólar Cathedral'.⁵¹⁶ Serpents found in Old Norse mythology

⁵¹¹ For *brugga*, see entry in *ADIP*; *LP* 66; and *IED* 82.

⁵¹² For *fjōlkuningr*, see *SnE* 1998: 274; and *LP* 137. *Fjōlkuningr* is used of the devil again in *Lilja* 44; the term in this context is meant to describe Lucifer as 'clever', while Christ's cleverness is described using a different set of vocabulary that distinguishes the two.

⁵¹³ Meylan 2011: 108.

⁵¹⁴ For a detailed exploration of *fjōlkunnigr*, see Meylan 2011: 109-117.

⁵¹⁵ For *ormr*, see *LP* 439; and *SnE* 1998: 369.

⁵¹⁶ Haki Antonsson 2012: 87. Cf. Selma Jónsdóttir 1959; and Hörður Ágústsson 1989b.

include those that gnaw at the roots of Yggdrasill,⁵¹⁷ as well as Þórr's nemesis, the *Miðgarðsormr* 'World-Serpent' that encircles the world and carries the potential for ultimate destruction.⁵¹⁸ Given the cosmic struggle in the latter example, it is tempting to associate the *Miðgarðsormr* with Lucifer, and Þórr in turn with Christ, bearing in mind that the model of St George and the Archangel Michael versus the Dragon at the Apocalypse also loomed in the literary imaginations of writers and audiences during this period.⁵¹⁹ Though the poet's use of *ormr* is clearly based on the serpent in the book of Genesis, *Lilja* 60 elaborates on the topic of deception in a manner that reveals the potential for Old Norse mythological parallels, which in turn informs perceptions of Christ in His battle against the devil.

Once Lucifer has concealed his true identity, he speaks to Eve in stanza 16 and asks why she and Adam are permitted to eat from all but the *sætast blóm* 'sweetest fruit' that God forbade. She explains that they have been warned against wandering off the *leiðir lífs* 'paths of life' and rushing into the *stíettir dauðans* 'ways of death', but he has anticipated her response. In the next stanza, he tempts Eve further by asserting that she and Adam will not die, but rather will become Godlike if they eat the fruit.

⁵¹⁷ The serpents that gnaw at Yggdrasill are mentioned in a prose passage from *Gylfaginning* in *Snorra Edda: En svá margir ormar eru í Hvergelmi með Níðhogg at engi tunga má telja* 'There are so many serpents in Hvergelmir with Níðhogg that no tongue may number them' (*SnE* 2005:18, ll.35-7). Snorri also quotes a stanza that critics have identified as stanza 34 of *Grímnismál: Ormar fleiri / liggja undir asci Yggdrasils, / enn þat uf hyggi hverr ósviðra apa; / Góinn oc Móinn, / - þeir ero Grafvitnis synir - / Grábacr oc Grafvölluðr; / Ofnir oc Sváfnir / hygg ec at æ scyli / meiðs qvisto má* 'More serpents / lie beneath Yggdrasill's Ash / than any dimwit fool may imagine; / Góinn and Móinn, / - they are sons of Grave-Wolf - / Grey-Back and Grave-Field; / Ofnir oc Sleep-Maker - / I think they will for ever / damage the twigs of the tree' (*NK*, 64).

⁵¹⁸ Identified as one of Loki's children, the *Miðgarðsormr* is thrown into the ocean by Óðinn in *Gylfaginning: ok óx sá ormr svá at hann liggir í miðju hafinu of ǰll lǰnd ok bítr í sporð sér* 'and the serpent grew so large that it lies in the middle of the ocean around all lands biting its tail' (*SnE* 2005: 27, ll. 13-14). Þórr's encounter with the *Miðgarðsormr*, which ultimately results in the serpent being cut free by the giant Hymir, appears in the following prose passage from *Gylfaginning: Þar lét Þórr koma á ǰngulinn oxahǰfuðit ok kastaði fyrir borð, ok fór ǰngullinn til grunns. Ok er þá svá satt at segja at engu ginti þá Þórr minnr Miðgarðsorm en Útgarðaloki hafði spottat Þór þá er hann hóf orminn upp á hendi sér* 'There Þórr baited the hook with the head of an ox and cast it overboard, and the hook went to the bottom. And then it is truly said that this time Þórr tricked the *Miðgarðsormr* no less than *Útgarðaloki* tricked Þórr when he raised the serpent with his hand' (*SnE* 2005: 44, ll. 34-37). The *Miðgarðsormr*, in his conflict with Þórr, is referred to as *ormr* 'serpent' in the eddic stanza *Vǰluspá* 56: *Þá kǰmr inn mǰeri / mǰgr Hlǰðyniar, / gengr Óðins sonr / við úlf vega* 'Then comes the glorious son of Hlǰðyn, / Óðinn's son steps / to attack the wolf [i.e. serpent]' (*NK*, 13)

⁵¹⁹ Rowe 2006: 169.

Liettliga þar (svá ljósin váttu liettleika í svaranna reikan)
 því treystiz hann framt að freista flærðum settr og talar með prettum:
 'Eigi munu þið Ádám deyja andlitshvít, þó að eplið bítið,
 heldur munuð með heiðr og valdi hosk og rík við guðdóm líkjaz.'
 (Lilja 17)⁵²⁰

Easily there (thus the lights affirm the levity in the wavering of her replies),
 he dared this, filled with deceit, to tempt impertinently and speaks with
 tricks:

'You and Adam, white of face, will not die, though you eat the apple,
 rather, wise and powerful, you will be like the Godhead with honour and
 might.'

The first *helmingr* includes an aside noting that *ljósin* 'the lights', in reference to the Apostles, who serve as extensions of Christ's light, affirm the *liettleika í reikan svaranna* 'levity in the wavering of her replies', a description of Eve which Foote believes is based on Geoffrey of Vinsauf's words *minus fortem credentum* 'unstable in faith'.⁵²¹ It is thus *lietlliga* 'easily' that Lucifer, *settr flærðum* 'filled with deceit', resolves *að freista framt og talar með prettum* 'to tempt impertinently and speaks with tricks'.⁵²² The verb *freista* means 'to tempt' or 'test', particularly in a religious sense, and can be applied to testing carried out both by good and evil figures.⁵²³ *Prettr* more specifically means 'a trick' and identifies deceptions devised by devils rather than Christ.⁵²⁴ As with previous stanzas pertaining to Lucifer, the devil's deception of mankind continues to be identified as fraudulent, evil, and distinct from Christ's deception of the devil later in this poem. Lucifer flatters Eve in the second *helmingr*, referring to both her and Adam as *andlitshvít* 'white of face', and promising that, instead of death, eating the apple means that *munuð líkjaz við guðdóm með heiðr og valdi* 'you will be like the Godhead with honour and might'.⁵²⁵ Lucifer thus applies the praise typically given to Christ instead to Eve and Adam as a means of filling them with pride and tempting them to disobedience.

⁵²⁰ I have modified Chase's edition of the Old Norse text by using brackets instead of dashes to differentiate clause-boundaries.

⁵²¹ Foote 1982: 121. Cf. Faral 1924: 242; and Nims 2010: 61.

⁵²² For *flærð* 'deceit, cunning', see LP 451 and entry in ADIP.

⁵²³ For *freista*, see LP 151; SnE 1998: 279; and IED 172.

⁵²⁴ For *prettr*, see LP 451 and IED 479.

⁵²⁵ For *hvítr*, see LP 302; SnE 1998: 325; and KLE 422-3.

Eve, who was *mjög auðgint* ‘very easily persuaded’, eats the fruit and convinces Adam to do so as well in stanza 18, which prompts the poet to observe that Lucifer *gat í fyrstu blindað feðgin vár með nógu dári* ‘managed in the beginning to blind our parents with ample trickery’, noting the connection between sin, darkness, and ignorance that runs throughout this work. Because of their *sárar syndir* ‘sore sins’, God drives them away in stanza 19 to wander through the *velsum heimi* ‘wretched world’.⁵²⁶ The narrative moves from the Fall of Adam and Eve to the spread of sin throughout the fallen world in stanza 20, describing its growth and dissemination in agricultural terms.

Remman brast af rót í kvistu; rann þá glæpr af hverjum til annars;
leið svá heimr um langan tíma lífs andvani en fullr af grandí.
Liættir hvorki ugg nie ótta, eftir mest en þó er að lesti;
opið helvíti búið með bölví bauð sig fram við hvers manns dauða.
(Lilja 20)⁵²⁷

The bitterness burst from root to twigs; then sin ran from one to another;
the world continued thus for a long time, bereft of life and full of injury.
Neither dread nor fear lets up, yet the worst is what comes at the last;
gaping Hell, ready with evil, presented itself at each man’s death.

The first *helmingr* in particular describes sin as a plant growing *af rót í kvistu* ‘from root to twigs’ in the fallen world, as well as an injury that fills the world.⁵²⁸ Much like a disease, *rann glæpr af hverjum til annars* ‘sin ran from one [person] to the next’, an interpretation bolstered by the world’s fallen state, *lífs andvani en fullr af grandí* ‘devoid of life and full of injury’. The noun *grand*, translated here as ‘injury’, is used poetically to mean ‘evil’ or ‘guile’, and thus applies to sinfulness while also suggesting physical harm.⁵²⁹ The second *helmingr* then turns to the future of all fallen men, with *opið helvíti* ‘gaping Hell’ greeting each person at his death. The implication, then, is that those who promote the growth and diseased spread of sinfulness, rather than fostering the seeds of

⁵²⁶ I have modified Chase’s edition of the Old Norse text so that its word forms accord with sentence’s grammar.

⁵²⁷ I have modified Chases’s edition of the Old Norse text by using brackets instead of dashes to differentiate clause-boundaries.

⁵²⁸ For *rót*, see LP 471.

⁵²⁹ For *grand*, see LP 198; and SnE 1998: 293.

righteousness from Christ, will instead be faced with gaping Hell. This stanza thus establishes humanity's need for Christ as both Healer and Nourisher.

Having lamented the growing abundance of injurious sin, in *Lilja* 21 the poet meditatively asks what can possibly revive a world that is dead and burdened by sin:

Heimr er dauðr, en hvað er til ráða? Hvar gietr þann, er sier meg
 þjarga?
 Hvergi, því að í synða saurgan sannliga, hverr að þyngir annan.
 Eitt er til, það er eg skal váttá, (á eg grátandi frammi að standa)
 áttú Sjálfr, inn dýri Dróttinn, dugir nú ferð, svá lífguð verði. (*Lilja* 21)⁵³⁰

The world is dead, and what remedy is there? Where is to be found the man who who can save himself?
 Nowhere, because [it is] in the defilement of sins truly that each one burdens the other.
 There is one thing to be done, that which I shall affirm (I must stand forth weeping),
 that You Yourself, the dear Lord, will now help mankind, so that it may be revived.

The format of this stanza is based on Psalm LXXXVIII.48, which is written in the same rhetorical style but does not offer answers to its sobering questions: *Quis est homo qui vivet et non videbit mortem, eruet animam suam de manu inferi?* 'Who is the man that shall live and not see death, that shall deliver his soul from the hand of Hell?'⁵³¹ The poet elaborates on the psalm by observing the *heimr er dauðr* 'world is dead', asking *hvað er til ráða?* 'what remedy is there?', and identifying Christ as the means by which humanity may be revived.⁵³² The language of this stanza focuses on sickness and healing, with Christ reviving humanity from spiritual death. Another concept that appears in this stanza is the burden of sin, *að hverr þyngir annan* 'that each weighs down the other' and symbolises the long history of mankind's sinfulness, which has brought about the death of the world. The poet offers the only viable remedy in the second

⁵³⁰ I have modified Chase's edition of the Old Norse text so that its word forms accord with sentence's grammar.

⁵³¹ *Vulg* 2011, Psalm LXXXVIII.49.

⁵³² The term *ráða*, in addition to meaning remedy, is also a legal term related to seeking counsel and finding a solution. Cf. Chase 2007: 485-6. For *ráð*, see *LEI* 2006: 273; *LEI* 2000: 420; *SnE* 1998: 371; *LP* 457; *KLE* 247; and entry in *ADIP*.

helmingr, where he concludes that it is by Christ that mankind *lífguð verði* ‘may be revived’, thus presenting Christ in the role of Physician.

Stanza 22 looks forward to Christ, depicted as a *lifanda Ljós* ‘living Light’ entering into the world *á settum tíma* ‘at the established time’, when He will take away *víst lifandi og kvaldar andir* ‘truly living and tortured souls’. The poet addresses his tongue in stanza 23, beseeching, *tendraz öll log tala með snilli af Herra þinum* ‘be all kindled and speak with eloquence of your Lord’, and observes it is only through God that his tongue and soul have been unfettered.⁵³³ Following on this reference to Christ’s divine inspiration as a flame kindled within the poet, *Lilja* 24 recommences the biblical narrative with God speaking to the angel Gabriel. He sends the angel on an errand to visit Mary and deliver the message that Christ *vill skryðaz hennar, hlýðinnar, björtu holdi* ‘wants to clothe himself with her, the obedient one’s, bright flesh’.

Nær og fírr með skygnleik skýrum skapandi alt með Syni og
 Anda
 Föðurpersónan, eingli einum erindi býðr, en þessi hlýðir:
 ‘Fljúg, og seg það Mária meyju mætri, þeirri er Eg skal gæta,
 Minn Einkason holdi hennar hlýðinnar vill björtu skryðaz.’
(Lilja 24)

The Father-Person, creating with the Son and Spirit everything near and far with clear sight, assigns an angel an errand, which he obeys: ‘Fly and say to the worthy maiden Mary, to the one whom I shall care for, [that] My only Son wants to clothe Himself with her, the obedient one’s, bright flesh.’

Father-Person: God
 obedient one: Mary

Highlighting the omniscience of the Trinity, the first *helmingr* praises God for *skapandi ... alt nær og fírr með skýrum skygnleik* ‘creating ... everything near and far with clear sight’. The term *skýrr*, meaning ‘clear’, ‘evident’, or ‘manifest’, describes God’s sight in the act of creating the universe and is particularly apt

⁵³³ I have modified Chase’s edition of the Old Norse text by using brackets instead of dashes to differentiate clause-boundaries.

for this poem and its focus on clarity.⁵³⁴ The second *helmingr* quotes God directly as He instructs Gabriel to fly to the Virgin Mary, explaining, *Minn Einkason vill skryðaz hennar, hlýðinnar björtu holdi* ‘My only Son wants to clothe Himself with her, the obedient one’s, bright flesh’. Like *Harmsól* 29 in its account of the Incarnation, Christ’s humanity is perceived as a kind of clothing, communicated through the use of the verb *skryða* ‘to clothe’.⁵³⁵ This clothing could be open to interpretation as either a form of concealment or readying for battle, or perhaps both. Given the poem was composed during a time when the cult of Mary was popular and widespread, the focus on Mary’s bright flesh as a means of clothing Christ at the Incarnation helps to explain the use of *skryða* in the sense of adornment or ornamentation. The description of Mary’s flesh as *bjartr* ‘bright’, which likely implies spiritual purity, is also consistent with the common association of Christ and His followers with light.⁵³⁶ The overall message of this stanza, then, is that both Mary and Christ bring light and clarity into the world. It also demonstrates the associations between light and purity, particularly as they relate to the Virgin Mary.

The poet highlights Mary’s importance in stanza 25, describing her as *glæsilig sem roðnuð rósa runnin upp við lifandi brunna* ‘glorious as a reddened rose run up beside living springs’ and *ilmandi rót lítillætis* ‘the fragrant root of humility’, details that identify her as a source of spiritual nourishment within an agrarian framework.⁵³⁷ This is followed by the poet’s introduction to the *stefjábalkr* in stanza 26, where he admits that *eingin jarðlig tunga fái nú vandað stef þier til handa, sem verðugt væri* ‘no earthly tongue could now fashion a *stef* for You [God] that would be fitting’ before returning to the narrative. Both the angel Gabriel and the Virgin Mary serve as avenues for Christ’s light at the Annunciation in stanza 27.

Leið sigrandi páfugls prýði pentað innan firmamentum
 Gabriél sem geisli sólar gleðiligur í loft in neðri.
 Sendiboði kom sjaufalds Anda (svá er greinanda) að húsi einu;

⁵³⁴ For *skýrr*, see *LP* 516 and *IED* 564. The clear sight of God is contrasted with Lucifer’s spiritual blindness.

⁵³⁵ For *skryða*, see *IED* 559.

⁵³⁶ For *bjartr*, see entry in *ADIP*; *LP* 49; and *SnE* 1998: 245.

⁵³⁷ Mary as the root of humility contrasts with the roots of sinfulness of *Lilja* 20.

sannr meydómrinn sat þar inni sjálft hreinlífið gimsteinn vífa.
(*Lilja* 27)⁵³⁸

Gabriel, surpassing the peacock's magnificence, travelled like a joyful beam of the sun through the firmament into the lower air. The messenger of the sevenfold Spirit came (so it is to be told) to a house; therein sat the true maidenhood, purity itself, the gemstone of women.

the sevenfold Spirit: the Lord, whose messenger is Gabriel⁵³⁹
gemstone of women: Mary

Schottmann notes a similarity between this stanza's first *helmingr* and a pseudo-Augustinian Christmas homily, both in subject matter and description.⁵⁴⁰ The homiletic passage, like this stanza, describes Gabriel as *sigrandi págfugls prýði* 'surpassing the peacock's magnificence'. The *Lilja* poet elaborates the narrative by further describing Gabriel as a *gleðiligur geisli sólar* 'joyful beam of the sun' as he passes *innan pentað firmamentum í en neðri loft* 'through the firmament into the lower air'.⁵⁴¹ Much like Óláfr in *Geisli*, the angel serves as an extension of Christ, who is once again represented as Light. The poet's description of Mary is based on traditional Marian epithets that were popular in Christian literature during this period. She is called *hreinlífið* 'purity itself' and *gimsteinn vífa* 'gemstone of women', which describe her righteousness as both visibly evident in its clarity and highly valuable. The stanza thus emphasises her

⁵³⁸ I have modified Chase's edition of the Old Norse text by using brackets instead of dashes to differentiate clause-boundaries.

⁵³⁹ The phrase *sjaufalds Anda* 'sevenfold spirit' derives from the Latin *septiformis spiritus*, a common epithet for God in early liturgical and theological texts that is based on the biblical passage Isaiah XI.2-3: *Et requiescet super eum spiritus Domini, spiritus sapientiae et intellectus, spiritus consilii et fortitudinis, spiritus scientiae et pietatis. Et replebit eum spiritus timoris Domini* 'And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness. And he shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord' (*Vulg* 2012a, Isaiah XI.2-3). Cf. Chase 2007: 594.

⁵⁴⁰ Schottmann 1973: 202. From the pseudo-Augustinian Christmas homily: *Moxque uolatu rapido secat axem astriferum, nubesque profundas celer adiiit, percussitque lumine noctem. Ipse per medios caeli sinus flammeos artus virbans, ignite aere fertur; et, ueluti cum pavo uersicolor obiectus radiis multifluos colores pinnis creptitantibus fundit, nunc aureo, nunc roseo nunc uiridi, nunc purpureo mixtus honori décor diem mutat picturis infectum et coloribus uariis* 'And soon, with rapid flight, he flew through the star-bearing heavens, and rapidly approached the dense clouds, and cast light through the night. He moved swiftly through the middle heaven, aflame with burning air, and just as a multicoloured peacock displays many changing colours with its rustling wings, splendor mingled with honor transformed the day, colouring it with various hues (Barré 1963: 66; Modern English translation from Chase 2007: 593).

⁵⁴¹ For *prýða* 'to adorn', see *LP* 452. See further analysis for light and adornment in the third chapter's analysis of *Harmsól* 29.

suitability as an avenue for Christ entering the world, and once again affirms Christ's representation as Light.

Gabriel addresses the Virgin Mary in stanza 28, disclosing that *sannr Höfðinginn eingla og manna* 'the true Chieftain of the angels and men' *byggir fyr skæru brjósti þier* 'takes up habitation in your pure breast'. He tells her not to be afraid in stanza 29, and in stanza 30 explains that, because she is chaste, she will not commit sin when Christ *er smíðaðr, hold og bein af hreinum líkam* 'is crafted, flesh and bone from the pure body'. Having reaffirmed Mary's purity, the poet states in stanza 31 that *góð öndin giftiz krafti Guðdóms og huldiz blóði Máríu* 'the good soul was married to the strength of the Godhead and covered itself in the blood of Mary', an event that nature stands still to exalt. The Annunciation concludes with a refrain and call for all hearts to confess in stanza 32.

Moving into the poem's account of the Incarnation, stanza 33 employs one of the most common liturgical and homiletic images for Mary as the mother of Christ: that of a sunbeam shining through clear glass.

Fimm mánuðum og fjórum síðar fæddiz Sveinn af meyju hreinni,
skygnast sem þá er glerið í gegnum geislinn brár fyrir augum várum.
Glóar þar Sól af glerinu heilu; gleðiligt Jóðið skínn af móður,
að innsigli höldnu hennar hreinferðugstra meydóms greina. (*Lilja* 33)

Five months and four later a Boy was born of the pure maiden,
Just as when the sunbeam breaks through the clearest glass before our
eyes.

There Sun glitters from whole glass; the glad Boy shines from the mother,
the seal of the purest distinctions of her maidenhood having been
preserved.

pure maiden: Mary

glad Boy: Christ

The representation of Christ as Light is made explicit in stanza 33, as His birth is recounted through this extended analogy. The poet describes the Incarnation as being *sem þá er geislinn brár í gegnum skygnast glerið fyrir augum várum* 'just as when the sunbeam breaks through the clearest glass before our eyes', and all other details in this stanza serve to develop the analogy as fully as

possible. Christ, born *af hreinni meyju* ‘from the pure maiden’, is described as the *Sól* ‘Sun’ that *glóar af heilu glerinu* ‘glitters from the whole glass’.⁵⁴² The word used in stanza 33 for ‘glass’, *gler*, originally meant ‘amber’ because glass, as an imported material in Scandinavian countries, was not introduced until later in the medieval period; window-panes were initially installed in cathedrals, the earliest instances of this being at cathedrals in Denmark in 1085 and in Skálholt in 1195.⁵⁴³ The more common sources of light in homes were *gluggar*, openings in the roof covered with the comparatively opaque caul, so the analogy used in this stanza seems quite appropriate given the association of early church buildings in the region with glass as a material for construction. Perhaps the poem’s early audiences associated glass windows with material culture brought to them through Christian influence, inviting Mary to be imagined as a kind of cathedral or sanctuary for Christ prior to His birth.⁵⁴⁴

The poet explains in the second *helmingr* that Christ *skínn af móður* ‘shines from the mother’, with *innsigli hreinferðugstra greina meydóms hennar höldnu* ‘the seal of the purest distinctions of her maidenhood having been preserved’.⁵⁴⁵ In this instance, Christ Himself is the sunbeam that breaks through at the Incarnation, deviating from the portrayals of followers such as St Óláfr and Gabriel as light-beams. This image, however, does appear in both Icelandic and Norwegian homily books, as well as the Old Norse poem *Rósa*.⁵⁴⁶ Similar passages also occur in a number of prose texts, including *Máriu saga*⁵⁴⁷; the first book of S Birgitta’s *Revelations* (c. 1340)⁵⁴⁸; *Splendor Patris*

⁵⁴² For *hreinn*, see *LP* 278-9; *SnE* 1998: 318; and *IED* 283. For *glóa* ‘to shine’, see *LP* 188; *SnE* 1998: 290; and *IED* 205. For *sól*, see *LP* 526; and *IED* 579.

⁵⁴³ *IED* 203-4. In his entry for *kyrka*, Magnús Már Lárusson notes that glass windows were mentioned in sources from around 1200, but the only archaeological evidence for this occurs in Skálholt (Magnús Már Lárusson 1964, *Kyrka*, 636-639, esp. 638). For more information about the construction of Niðarós Cathedral, see Bogdanski 2013: 77-106. For definitions of *gler* ‘glass’, see *LP* 184; *SnE* 1998: 290; and entry in *ADIP*.

⁵⁴⁴ Mary is similarly described as a temple in *Harmsól* 60, included in chapter three of this thesis.

⁵⁴⁵ For *skína* ‘clear’, see *LP* 507-8; and *SnE* 1998: 392.

⁵⁴⁶ *Hómísl* 1993, 3r-v; *HómNo*, 133; and *ÍM* I.2, 20 st. 64. See analysis for *Geisli* 1 in chapter two for information about an epistle for the morning Mass of Christmas in the *Glossa Ordinaria*, which depicts Christ as a light-beam and God as the Sun.

⁵⁴⁷ From *Máriu saga: Dróttinn kom at vera með mópur sinni at luktum kviði ok óbrugðnum lium...sem þá er hugr líðr or briósti mannz at samanhölldnum ok luktum munnni ok óbrugðnum vörum, eða sólar geisli skínn í gegnum rauflaust gler* ‘The Lord came to be with His mother in her shut womb and with her virginity unbreached...as when a thought passes from a man’s

*Figura*⁵⁴⁹; a hymn by Peter Pictor⁵⁵⁰; the hymn *Sol, crystallus*⁵⁵¹; and John Bromyard's *Summa Praedicatorum*⁵⁵². This is a case in which the specific influences for Christ's representation as Light are not clear because there are numerous possibilities; however, the concept undoubtedly derived from Christian literary resources.

Stanza 34 celebrates the significance of the Incarnation as an event filled with paradoxes never before seen, *því trúan bauð að sanna senn bæði mæð og móður, mann og Guð* 'because faith proclaimed at the same time both maiden and mother, man and God'. The poem continues the narrative of Christ's life in stanza 35, which covers Christ's birth, as well as His Circumcision as told in Luke II.21.⁵⁵³ The second of these events, in particular, foreshadows Christ's abundant mercy that is poured out for humanity at the Crucifixion.

Þó var ei svá rík, að reifa ríkust móðir ætti góða;

breast though both his mouth is shut and his lips unopened, or as when a beam of sunlight shines through glass that remains without defects' (*Mar* 1871: 28).

⁵⁴⁸ From St Birgitta's *Revelations: Ego sum Creator celi et terre, unus in deitate cum Patre et Spiritu sancto, Ego, qui prophetis et patriarchis loquebar et quem ipsi expectabant. Ob quorum desiderium et iuxta promissionem Meam assumpsi carnem sine peccato et concupiscencia ingrediens viscera virginea tamquam sol spendens per lapidem mundissimum. Quia sicut sol virtrum ingrediendo non ledit, sic nec virginitas Virginis in assumptione humanitatis Mee corrupta est* 'I am the Creator of heaven and earth, one in divinity with the Father and the Holy Spirit, I, who the prophets and patriarchs proclaimed and who they awaited. Because of their longing and according to My promise, I took on flesh without sin or concupiscence and entered the virgin womb like the sun shining through pure crystal. Because just as sun passes through glass and does not harm it, the virginity of the Virgin was not destroyed by her assumption of My humanity' (Undhagen and Jönsson 1977-2001, I.1, 241; Modern English translation from Chase 2007: 601-2).

⁵⁴⁹ From *Splendor Patris Figura: Si crystallus sit humecta / Atque soli sit objecta, / Scintillat igniculum: / Nec crystallus rumpitur, / Nec in partu solvitur / Pudoris signaculum* 'If crystal should be moist and placed in the sun, a spark flashes. But the crystal is not shattered, and neither is the seal of chastity [or the chaste one] broken in giving birth' (Gautier 1894, 10; *AH* 54, 154; Modern English translation from Chase 2007: 602).

⁵⁵⁰ From the hymn by Peter Pictor: *Lumen lucens Patris de lumine / Christus homo prodit de Virgine, / Sic ingressus et egressus per aulam uirginiam / Vt sol splendens nec incendens per fenestram uitream, / Cum nec uitrum splendor solis / Neque matrem causa prolis / Violet ingrediens / Nec corrumpat exiens* 'Light illuminating with the light of the Father, Christ the man was born of the Virgin, His entry and His going out of the virginal hall was as sunlight shining through a glass window, but not disturbing it. For just as the splendor of the sun neither violates glass as it enters, nor breaks it as it leaves, so it is with the offspring of the mother' (van Acker 1972, 119; *AH* 20, 121; Modern English translation from Chase 2007: 602).

⁵⁵¹ Scott 2001: 54-5.

⁵⁵² Bromyard 1518: 199v-200r.

⁵⁵³ Luke II.21: *Et postquam consummati sunt dies octo, ut circumcideretur, vocatum est nomen Eius Iesus, quod vocatum est ab angelo, priusquam in utero conciperetur* (*Vulg* 1979, Luke II.21) 'After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and He was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb' (*NRSV*, Luke II.21).

því var Kóngrinn hörðu heyvi huldr, að mætti firraz kulda.
 Umsníðningar Jésú þrýði átti dagr að fæðing váttar;
 æsíz blóð á líkam ljósan; lagaz minnilig tár af kinnum.

(*Lilja* 35)

Yet the richest mother was not so rich that she might have good swaddling bands;
 therefore the King was hidden in harsh hay, so that he could be saved from the cold.
 The eighth day after the birth shows the magnificence of Jesus's circumcision;
 blood spurts over the bright body; memorable tears run down His cheeks.

In the first *helmingr* the poet explains that Mary was not able to clothe Christ in swaddling bands, so He was instead *huldr hörðu heyvi* 'hidden in harsh hay'. The verb *hylja*, 'to conceal' in the sense of hiding, which Gamli kanóki uses in reference to Christ's Incarnation in *Harmsól* 18, in *Lilja* 35 describes the way in which Mary covered Christ at His birth and protected Him from the cold. The second *helmingr*, in which *blóð æsíz á ljósan líkam* 'blood spurts over the bright body' during Christ's circumcision, continues the biblical narrative to a point that is traditionally interpreted as prefiguring the Passion.⁵⁵⁴ The term *æsa*, translated here as 'to spurt', means 'to stir up' or 'excite' and frequently refers to the wind and waves; this word choice heightens the sense that Christ's blood is flowing abundantly.⁵⁵⁵ The *minnilig tár* 'memorable tears' that run down His cheeks at the Circumcision are traditionally associated with His abundant mercy, reminding us of the water from the rock in Horeb as found in *Leiðarvísan* 20 and foreshadowing (along with the spurting blood) the mixture of water and blood

⁵⁵⁴ Chase 2007: 604. One example in Christian literature where Christ's circumcision is interpreted as a prefiguring for the Crucifixion occurs in the following passage from the *Meditaciones Vite Christi* of Iohannis de Caulibus: *Secundum quod hodie factum fuit, eciam quia incepit Dominus Iesus Suum sacratissimum sanguinem pro nobis effundere. Tempestiue enim cepit pro nobis pati. Qui peccatum non fecit pro nobis penam hodie portare incepit... Audis et hodie quia sanguinem Suum fudit. Fuit enim caro ipsius cum cultello lapideo a matre incise. Nonne ergo campati debet Ei?* 'Today our Lord Jesus began shedding His most sacred blood for us, for he very early began to suffer for us. He who committed no sin Himself, today began paying its penalty for us... You hear also that He shed His blood today; for His flesh was cut by his mother with a little stone knife. Is it not fitting to suffer along with Him?' (Latin from Stallings-Taney 1997: 37-8; Modern English translation from Taney 2000: 30). For *blóð*, see entry in *ADIP*; *LP* 53; *SnE* 1998: 247; and *IED* 69.

⁵⁵⁵ For *æsa*, see *LP* 657-8; and *IED* 759.

that flows from the wound on His side at the Crucifixion.⁵⁵⁶ The description of the *prýði Jésú umsníðningar* ‘magnificence of Jesus’s circumcision’ and His *ljóss líkamr* ‘bright body’ encourages the audience to perceive Christ as symbolically adorned in His mercifulness, and perhaps to associate the brightness of His body with His pure righteousness.⁵⁵⁷ Thus the reader is encouraged to look beyond the immediate narrative at hand and to contemplate Christ’s human sufferings and abundant mercy, understanding that His purity symbolised through light and His ability to spiritually nourish humanity are both expressed here.

The poet next recounts in stanza 36 the offerings of the Magi to Christ from Matthew II.1-8, as well as the Presentation in the Temple from Luke II.22-40 when *kaus Jésús Sjálfr að vísu offraz fyrir oss* ‘Jesus Himself certainly chose to be offered for us’, perhaps also hinting at Christ’s active choice to offer Himself for humanity’s salvation later in life. Christ’s baptism occurs in stanza 37, where John serves as both the baptiser and the *vátrr, er þann dag mátti sjá Brenning Guðs* ‘witness, who that day could see God’s Trinity’. Having presented these key moments in the early stages of Christ’s life that prepare Him for His ministry on earth, this section of the poem concludes with a refrain in stanza 38 before moving to Lucifer’s multi-stanza soliloquy, in which he contemplates Jesus as a remarkable human. Lucifer begins his soliloquy in stanza 39, where the *forni fjandi* ‘old fiend’ admits that he is amazed at the *fæddan Mann* ‘newborn Man’ and is ignorant of His divine identity.

Undraz tók inn forni fjandi fæddan Mann, er skilja var bannað,
 og þvílíkt, sem andinn segði orðin slík af tungu forðum:
 ‘Þykki mier, sem nýjung nökkur nálgiz heim og ættir beima;
 eitthvað klókt mun Drottinn dikta: duldr em eg, því að ferr af huldu.
(Lilja 39)

The old fiend was amazed at the newborn Man, whom he was forbidden
 from understanding,
 and it was as if the spirit said words like these with his tongue long ago:
 ‘It seems to me that some new thing comes near to the world and families
 of men;

⁵⁵⁶ For *tár*, see LP 564; and SnE 1998: 412.

⁵⁵⁷ For *ljós*, see LP 378; SnE 1998: 348; LP 378; and entry in ADIP. For *líki* ‘body’, see LP 375; SnE 1998: 347; and entry in ADIP.

the Lord will be composing something clever: I am ignorant, because it is being kept hidden.'

old fiend: Lucifer
newborn Man: Christ

Lucifer's limited perception of God's plans appears as a narrative detail in both Latin and Old Norse Christian writings. Paasche and Schottmann identify an Old Norse miracle story, found in the homily of Maximus of Turin, as an analogue for this stanza; in it Lucifer observes, *þat er mer blint, hvern veg Hann er getinn* 'I am blind to how He was conceived', indicating the devil's spiritual blindness to Christ's divine nature.⁵⁵⁸ The homily's soliloquy does describe Lucifer's blindness, though it does not mention the cleverness of God's plans as stanza 39 does. The hymn *Pange lingua, gloriosi*, by contrast, serves as an analogue for the concept that God's use of deception against the devil was not only part of the plan, but also necessary: *Hoc opus nostrae salutis / ordo depoposcerat / multiformis proditoris / ars ut artem falleret*, 'Order demanded this work for our salvation, that artifice should bring down the artifice of the many-formed deceiver'.⁵⁵⁹ Though there are numerous Latin texts related to stanza 39, the skaldic poet's word choice frames the speech from a very particular perspective that establishes Christ in His role as Beguiler, deceiving Lucifer in order to bring about redemption for humanity.

Chase observes that this stanza and the ones that follow reflect the patristic idea that Lucifer had 'juridical rights over the human race' after the Fall, and that the Incarnation was a trap laid by God for the devil so that he would lose these rights.⁵⁶⁰ The first *helmingr* explains that Lucifer was *bannað* 'forbidden' from understanding Christ, recalling the use of *bann* in stanza 15 when Lucifer becomes jealous of humanity's exalted state compared to his fallen one. The stanza then moves to the beginning of Lucifer's soliloquy in the

⁵⁵⁸ *Mar* 1871: 186. Translation from Chase 2007: 609. Cf. Paasche 1957: 535 and Schottmann 1973: 201. The three versions of the Old Norse miracle story are printed in *Mar* 1871: 180-8, 473-81, and 1147-9. Chase (1997: 609) notes that the source material for this account includes the miracle of St Hugh in Peter the Venerable's *De Miraculis* (Petrus Cluniacensis, cols 880-1); and a homily of Maximus of Turin (Maximus Taurinensis, *Homilia XXXVII*, cols 303-8).

⁵⁵⁹ *AH*: 2, 44. Cf. Chase 2007: 609.

⁵⁶⁰ Chase 2007: 609. For more information on varying perceptions of the devil's rights in Christian medieval thought, see Marx 1995.

second *helmingr*, where he observes that the Lord *mun dikta eitthvað klókt* ‘will be devising something clever’. An Old Norse variation of the Latin *dicare*, the verb *dikta* specifically means ‘to compose in Latin’ in most contexts, though here its sense is ‘to fabricate’, ‘devise’, or ‘concoct’ to describe God’s carefully laid plans.⁵⁶¹ The adjective *klókr*, used to describe what the Lord is devising, means ‘arch’, ‘clever,’ or ‘wily’ and hints at Christ’s intended deception. Unlike the earlier use of *fjólkunnigr* ‘skilled in magic’ in *Lilja* 15 to describe Lucifer’s cleverness, *klókr* does not have pagan or anti-Christian connotations and is perhaps distinguished as an acceptable form of deception since it is not used of Lucifer anywhere in the Christian skaldic corpus.⁵⁶² Though vaguely aware that something is afoot, Lucifer goes on to lament that he is *duldr* ‘(made) ignorant’, which is derived from the verb *dylja* ‘to conceal’ and similarly reminds the audience of the devil’s concealment of his identity in *Lilja* 15.⁵⁶³ He further explains that the Lord’s plan is being kept hidden from him, making use of the verb *hylja* which, as previously established, means ‘to hide, cover’ or ‘conceal’ and was used in *Harmsól* 18 to describe Christ’s Incarnation. Thus Lucifer the deceiver is himself deceived, with his commonly recognised attributes of cunning and deception applied here to God and His concealment of Christ’s divinity.

Lucifer continues his five-stanza soliloquy in stanza 40, observing *sönn stórmerkin* ‘the true wonders’ of heavenly phenomena and peace *á hverju landi* ‘in every land’ that accompany Christ and cause the devil an *sóttarauka* ‘increase of illness’, and fearing *að remming ráða Hans ríði mier að báðum síðum* ‘that His (Christ’s) strengthening through counsels will bash me from both sides’. In stanza 41 he also expresses his bafflement over the mystery of

⁵⁶¹ For *dikta*, see entry in *ADIP*; and *LP* 80.

⁵⁶² For *klókr*, see *LP* 339 and *IED* 343. A number of terms pertaining to deception are used exclusively of Lucifer in *Lilja*, particularly in stanzas 43 and 45, while *klókr* is used exclusively of cleverness or pliability of wit, and once to express pliability of the body. *Lilja*’s author uses of *klókr* four times throughout his work: first using it to describe the complex learning of earlier skalds as *forn ok klók* ‘ancient and profound’ (*Lilja* 4); next in the devil’s soliloquy to observe that the Lord will be planning something *klókt* ‘clever’ (*Lilja* 39); then to say the *hold er klökt* ‘flesh is weak’, implying that Mary is unable to hold herself up because of grief at the Crucifixion (*Lilja* 54); and finally at the Last Judgement to say that there will be no *klókar varnir* ‘clever defenses’ made before Christ on that day (*Lilja* 72).

⁵⁶³ For *dylja*, see *LP* 90-1; and entry in *ADIP*.

Christ's birth, noting the evidence for His humanity, but also acknowledging that there are details that remain secret to him; he concludes, *aldri fyrr var sá maðr fæddur á foldu, er eg hræddumz næsta* 'never before was that man born on earth whom I feared to such an extent', identifying Christ's presence in the world as a threat to his dominion over sinful humanity. Having observed Christ's worldly sufferings, Lucifer determines in stanza 42 that He must be human like the fallen Adam and resolves *æsa framm flein ódygðar* 'to shoot the dart of faithlessness' to harm Him, a decision which sets in motion the trap that Christ has laid.

'Þyrstir Hann og er fölr af föstum, firriz hlátr, en kann að gráta;
mæðiz Hann og er móður Sinnar mjólku fæddr, en reifum klæddiz.
Finn eg þó, að í slíku sannar sjálf náttúran, manndóm váttar;
fýsir mig því framm að æsa flein ódygðar honum að meini.' (*Lilja* 42)

'He thirsts and is pale from fasts, avoids laughter, but knows how to weep;
He grows exhausted and is fed with the milk of His mother and was clothed
with swaddling-clothes.
And yet I find that nature itself gives evidence of such a thing, testifies to
His humanity;
therefore I wish to shoot forward the dart of faithlessness to His harm.'

Lucifer observes Jesus's piety and evident humanity, noting that He *þyrstir og er fölr af föstum* 'thirsts and is pale from fasts', and also that *firriz hlátr, en kann að gráta* 'He avoids laughter, but knows how to weep'.⁵⁶⁴ He perceives Jesus's dependency on the Virgin Mary, as He not only grows exhausted, but also *fæddr mjólku móður Sinnar en klæddiz reifum* 'is fed with the milk of His mother, and was clothed with swaddling clothes'.⁵⁶⁵ Based on these vulnerabilities, Lucifer concludes that *sjálf náttúran, sannar í slíku, váttar manndóm* 'nature itself gives evidence of such a thing, testifies to His humanity'.⁵⁶⁶ Lucifer's use of the noun *váttar*, a legal term meaning 'testimony' or 'witness', indicates his false belief that he is capable of bringing about Jesus's fall through

⁵⁶⁴ For *þyrstir* 'to thirst', see *LP* 653. For more information on *fasta*, see *LP* 122. According to the entry in *ADIP*, the noun *fasta* 'fast' entered the Old Norse language with the introduction of Christianity. For *gráta* 'to weep', see *LP* 200; and *SnE* 1998: 294.

⁵⁶⁵ For *fœða*, see *LP* 163; and *SnE* 1998: 283. For *mjólku*, see *LP* 407; and entry in *ADIP*. For *klæða*, see *LP* 339; and *SnE* 1998: 336. For *reifar*, see *LP* 461.

⁵⁶⁶ For *náttúra*, see *LP* 423; and *SnE* 1998: 362.

temptation.⁵⁶⁷ He resolves *að æsa framm flein ódygðar að meini honum* ‘to shoot forward the dart of faithlessness to His harm’, making use of the noun *mein* that refers generally to harm but can also mean ‘disease’ or ‘sore’ in a medical sense.⁵⁶⁸ The combination of legal and medical terminology in this paragraph indicates that Lucifer, having considered Jesus’s humanity, was successfully deceived into believing that he was capable of both spiritually and physically harming Him.

Lucifer’s resolve to shoot a dart of faithlessness to Christ’s harm, when compared with the death of Baldr instigated by Loki in *Völuspá* 32, displays some intriguing similarities. The second *helmingr* particularly resonates with the eddic stanza, in which Høðr, at Loki’s suggestion, shoots an arrow of mistletoe at the Christ-like Norse god Baldr.⁵⁶⁹ Although *Lilja* 42 shares no direct verbal parallels with this Eddic poem, the general images and motifs are similar, albeit with nuanced differences in meaning. *Völuspá* 32 describes the mistletoe that kills Baldr as *harmflaug* ‘a shaft of anguish’, while *Lilja* 42 uses *fleinn*, a term that can refer to a barb, arrow, spear, or javelin.⁵⁷⁰ Instead of using *skjóta* ‘to shoot’ as in *Völuspá* 32, the *Lilja* poet uses *æsa*, a verb that also means ‘to shoot’ in this context.⁵⁷¹ This similarity of concepts raises the possibility that Baldr and Christ may have been associated with one another in medieval Norse literature. As several scholars have suggested, Baldr’s death at Loki’s instigation and his subsequent resurrection that results in a renewal of the cosmos in *Völuspá* may parallel Christ’s death brought about by Judas’s action and resulting in humanity’s redemption.⁵⁷² The image invites its audience to

⁵⁶⁷ For *váttr* ‘witness’, see *LEI* 2006: 275; *SnE* 1998: 422; and *LP* 598.

⁵⁶⁸ For *æsa*, see *IED* 759. This is the same verb used to describe blood spurting over Christ’s body at the Circumcision in stanza 35. For *mein*, see *LP* 399; *LEI* 2000: 419; and entry in *ADIP*. Sinfulness is described as *mein* in *Liknarbraut* 40.

⁵⁶⁹ From *Völuspá* 32: *Varð af þeim meiði, / er mér sýndiz, / harmflaug hættlig, / Høðr nam skjóta* ‘It came to pass from that tree, / which seemed slender, / a dangerous harmful dart, / Høðr started to shoot’ (Old Norse text from *NK*, 8).

⁵⁷⁰ For *harmflaug*, see *LP* 229. For *fleinn*, see entry in *ADIP*; *LP* 139; and *SnE* 1998: 275. The entry in *ADIP* for *fleinn* lists one of its possible meanings as ‘leaf’, which is presumably based on the spear-like shape of some leaves.

⁵⁷¹ For *skjóta* ‘to shoot’, see *LP* 509; *SnE* 1998: 393. Chase 2007: 613. For *æsa*, see *LP* 657-8 and *IED* 759.

⁵⁷² For recent proponents of the Christ-Baldr comparison, see: Dronke 1992: 3-24, esp. 15-16; Dronke 2007: 53, 94-95; and Bonnetain, 2000: 73-85, esp. 75-78.

imagine the metaphor for Lucifer's attack vividly, and possibly to recall the Old Norse mythological story of Baldr's death.

The devil's soliloquy concludes in stanza 43, where he recalls his deception of Adam and Eve, believing that Jesus will be just as easy to tempt. His ignorance of God's plan is reaffirmed as he concludes that he will be able *freista* 'to tempt' Jesus to sinfulness through his own abilities of deception.⁵⁷³

'Mier virðiz, sem miklu hærra mætur Guði hann Ádám sæti,
 áðr eg sveik þau Évun bæði ærusnauð í myrkr og dauða.
 Satt er, að fæstir sjá við prettum; svá mun enn um Jésúm þenna,
 því treystumz eg framt að freista; forðum hefir eg slægvittr vorðið.'
 (Lilja 43)

'It seems to me that this Adam, honoured by God, sat much higher, before I betrayed the two of them, him and Eve, honour-bereft in darkness and death.

It is true that very few watch out for a trick; it will go likewise for this Jesus, therefore I trust that I can tempt boldly; previously I have shown myself to be crafty of mind.'

Lucifer's soliloquy contains a number of terms relating to deception that are used exclusively of the devil within Christian skaldic poems. As in *Lilja* 17, the poet uses the noun *prettr* 'trick' in reference to Lucifer's deceptions as he lays his plans to tempt Adam and Eve.⁵⁷⁴ The devil calls himself *slægvittr* 'crafty of mind', a compound which includes the adjective *slægr* meaning 'sly' or 'cunning' and also identifies Lucifer as untrustworthy.⁵⁷⁵ The continued terminological distinction between God's clever plans and the devil's crafty tricks reinforces the fundamental difference between God's deceptions, which are to be respected, and the devil's, which are to be reviled.

The poet offers a refrain in stanza 44, asking Christ to help him avoid the enemy before returning to the narrative at hand. Having resolved to attack Christ, Lucifer begins this process with the Temptation in the Desert in stanza 45. Continuing with the *fleinn ódygðar* 'dart of faithlessness' image from stanza 42, the devil's temptations are portrayed as the firing of *flærðarfullu skeytin*

⁵⁷³ For *freista*, see *LP* 151; and *SnE* 1998: 279.

⁵⁷⁴ For *prettr*, see *LP* 451.

⁵⁷⁵ For *slægr*, see *SnE* 1998: 396.

‘deceit-filled missiles’. However, the poet describes these missiles turning back and lodging in the shooter’s breast, a foreshadowing of Lucifer’s defeat and Christ’s victory through the Crucifixion.

Friett hefir eg, að freistar Drottins föstumóðs á ýmsum löstum
 púkans slægð, er hvern mann hugðiz hrekkjum vanr, í synd að blekkja.
 Vielakrings á vöfðum streingjum vundin oft, en sneruz á lofti,
 skeytin öll hin flærðarfullu fjandans brjóst í gegnum standa. (*Lilja* 45)

I have heard that the slyness of the imp tempts the Lord, fast-weary,
 in various faults, he who, accustomed to mischief, wishes to entice every
 man to sin.

All the deceit-filled missiles of the fiend, deceit-smooth, often fired
 with twisted bow-strings stick his own breast and turn in the air.

In the first *helmingr* the poet explains that the *slægð púkans freistar Drottins* ‘slyness of the imp tempts the Lord’, noting that the devil was *vanr hrekkjum* ‘accustomed to tricks’.⁵⁷⁶ The noun *slægð* ‘slyness’ and the verb *freista* ‘to tempt’ describe the devil’s brand of deception at the Temptation in the Desert, as does the noun *hrekkr* meaning a ‘trick’ or ‘piece of mischief’.⁵⁷⁷ As in stanza 43, these terms are used only in reference to the devil in *Lilja*, once again distinguishing his plans for deception from Christ’s. However, the tables are quickly turned in the second *helmingr* as Lucifer’s *flærðarfullu skeytin* ‘deceit-filled missiles’, which at once hearken back to both Christian patristic literature and the death of Baldr in Norse mythology, are fired with *á vöfðum streingjum* ‘with twisted bowstrings’ that pierce his own breast and *sneruz á lofti* ‘turn in the air’. The arrows being shot at Christ, which represent His temptation by the devil, become Lucifer’s undoing as they turn back on themselves, and symbolically represent Christ’s beguilement of the devil.

As an image that appears frequently in popular Christian literature and artwork of the period, the archer and its various interpretative possibilities are worth examining as a potential influence for this stanza’s shooting imagery. Consideration of shooting as an image in Scripture began well before *Lilja*’s

⁵⁷⁶ Lucifer is referred to as *púki*, a word akin to the English ‘Puck’ meaning ‘devil’ or ‘imp’. It appears here and in *Lilja* 47, but nowhere else in the Christian skaldic corpus. For *púki*, see *LP* 452 and *IED* 480.

⁵⁷⁷ For *hrekkr*, see *LP* 279 and *IED* 283.

composition. As Ó Carragáin has noted, Gregory the Great in his *Moralia in Job*, Book xix, chapter thirty ‘emphasized the multivalence’ of the bow image in Scripture by identifying both positive and negative interpretations.⁵⁷⁸ Augustine before him describes the Scriptures themselves as arrows, which can either ‘inflame the hearts of readers into love of God, or provide the ammunition by which heretics poison souls’, similarly confirming that arrows could represent good or evil according to context.⁵⁷⁹ The second of Augustine’s interpretations resonates with the *Lilja* poet’s depiction of missiles shot by Lucifer in an effort to deceive Christ. The twisting and turning that describes the arrows of deceit also connects this stanza to a popular medieval Christian image associated with the deception of the devil: a fish being caught by bait and hook.⁵⁸⁰ As will become apparent later in this poem, particularly in stanza 60, the bait and hook *topos* is not only carefully developed by the poet, but also carries with it both doctrinal implications and possible Norse mythological influences.

Stanza 46 recounts how *næst tók kenning hins kæra Kristi að renna um bygð* ‘after this news of the dear Christ started to run through the settlement’ as He gathers *lífþjónandi lærisveina* ‘life-serving teacher-servants (i.e. disciples)’ and performs a variety of healings. In stanza 47 Lucifer finds that his army, tricks, and sins are diminishing while *góð dæmin vaxa víða* ‘good examples grow widely’, and he consequently resolves that he must hasten *sveitir sínar að drepa Brjót synda* ‘his host to strike down the Breaker of sins’, identifying Christ as a Warrior and imbuing the situation with a warlike air. Lucifer then entices Judas, described here as a *leiðr dreingr* ‘loathsome warrior’, to carry out his plan.

Leiðan dreing að ljótum ráðum lokkar hann; sá er Jésú manna,
 yfirmorðinginn innan hirðar Júdás nefndr, er óvænt stefndi.
 Mildan Guð við silfri seldi sveitum þeim er Júðar heita,
 fullum upp af grimdar galli; grenjaði þjóstr í þeira brjóstum. (*Lilja* 48)⁵⁸¹

⁵⁷⁸ Ó Carragáin 2005: 141. Cf. *Moralia on Job*, CCSL 143A: 998-1002. For a survey of the *topos* of the drawn bow, see Spitz 1972: 219-23. For an interpretation of the archer on the Ruthwell Cross as an image of the devil, see Ó Carragáin 2005: 143; Farrell 1978: 99; and Henderson 1999: 210-13.

⁵⁷⁹ Ó Carragáin 2005: 141. Cf. *Enarrationes in Psalmos* on Ps. 7:14, CCSL 38: 45-6.

⁵⁸⁰ For more information on the bait and hook *topos*, see Marx 1995: 10-12.

⁵⁸¹ I have modified Chase’s edition of the Old Norse text by replacing a comma in the second line with a semicolon.

He entices a loathsome warrior to an ugly plan; he is of the men of
 Jesus,
 he is the chief murderer within the retinue, named Judas, who was on a
 desperate path.
 He sold generous God for silver to those men who are called Jews,
 filled up with the gall of grimness; fury howled in their breasts.

loathsome warrior: Judas
 the retinue: Christ's disciples

Judas's actions are particularly deplorable because he is identified as *yfirmorðinginn innan hirðar* 'the murderer within the retinue', contextualising him within a Scandinavian social system grounded in loyalty and rendering his treachery all the more heinous.⁵⁸² In the second *helmingr* the poet explains that Judas sold *mildan Guð* 'generous God' for silver, highlighting the shamefulness of his act as a retainer who, instead of repaying his Lord's generosity with honour and a loyalty, has handed Him over to be killed. Judas's identification as the member of a retinue once again reminds the audience of Christ's role as Warrior Chieftain, and this association in turn informs the poet's perception of Judas's actions. The people to whom Judas sells Christ are described as being *fullr upp af galli grimdar* 'filled up with the gall of grimness' as *þjóstr grenjaði í þeira brjóstum* 'fury howled in their breasts', revealing spiritual illness and malnourishment.⁵⁸³ Thus the poet also reminds the audience of the connection between sinfulness and disease, with Christ the only source of healing and flourishing.

Having been traded by Judas for silver, in stanza 49 Christ is found and attacked by *fúsir* 'eager men' who nail Him to the Cross *svá að dreyrinn stökk um* 'so that the blood splattered about [them]'.⁵⁸⁴ The poet offers a penitent refrain in stanza 50, marking the end of the *stefjabálkr*'s first section. He then

⁵⁸² For *hirð* 'retinue', see *SnE* 1998: 310; *LP* 252; entry in *ADIP*; and Zoëga 2004 [1926]: 198.

⁵⁸³ For *gall* 'gall, bile', see *LP* 168 and *IED* 187. For *grimd*, see *LP* 202; *SnE* 1998: 294; and *IED* 215.

⁵⁸⁴ The spurting of Christ's blood at the Crucifixion relates back to the description of His Circumcision in *Lilja* 35 through verbal and thematic echoes. The observation that *blóð æsiz á líkam ljósan* 'blood spurts over the bright body' at the Circumcision resonates with the description of nails being driven into Christ *svá að dreyrinn stökk um* 'so so that the blood splattered about [them]'; similarly, the detail that *minnilig tár lagaz af* 'memorable tears run down' the infant Jesus's cheeks can easily be juxtaposed against the suffering Christ experiences on the Cross.

prepares himself to compose a new *stef* from stanza 51, asking Jesus for his assistance. Returning to the scene of the Crucifixion in stanza 52, the poet emphasises Christ's humility in his description of how He *hneigði háls Sinn og beygði hverjum þræl, er lysti að berja* 'lowered His neck and bent before every slave who desired to attack', offering His soul *fyrir nauðsyn mína* 'because of my need'. Attacks on Christ, the fleeing of His followers, and Mary's tears are the subjects of stanza 53, with the poet penitentially contemplating these sorrows. Mary is once again the focus of stanza 54, with great attention paid to her experience of suffering and grief as *blóðið ór sárum fell fossum niðr á krossinn* 'blood from the wounds fell cascading down over the Cross'; intriguingly, the description provided in the second *helmingr* does not specify Mary as the sufferer, and describes both Mary and Christ's experience, leaving the interpretation ambiguous while drawing the audience more immediately into the scene through vivid imagery. The description of the Crucifixion in these stanzas, with their contemplation on the suffering that both Mary and Christ experience, and the repeated depictions of blood flowing from Christ's wounds, are designed to foster a penitent spirit as the audience is reminded of Christ's abundant mercy made possible through His sacrifice on the Cross.

Stanza 55 offers an intriguing juxtaposition of the Annunciation and Incarnation with the Crucifixion, briefly summarising the beginning and end of Christ's life in a few short lines of poetry.⁵⁸⁵ The stanza is carefully structured so that the end-word of each half-line is used again at the start of the next half-line, furthering the narrative each time.

Rödd eingilsins kvenmann kvaddi;	kvadda af eingli Drottinn gladdi;
gladdiz mæ, þá er Föðurinn fæddi;	fæddan Sveininn reifum klæddi.
Klæddan með sier laungum leiddi;	leiddr á krossin faðminn breiddi;
breiddr á krossinn gumna græddi;	græddi Hann oss, en helstríð mæddi.

(*Lilja* 55)

The voice of the angel spoke to the woman; she who was spoken to by the angel, the Lord made gladdened;
the maiden rejoiced when she gave birth to the Father; the Boy who was born she clothed in swaddling bands.

⁵⁸⁵ For a stanza in another Christian skaldic poem that juxtaposes the Incarnation with the Crucifixion, see *Liknarbraut* 12 in chapter five.

The one clothed [in this] she carried with her for a long time; led
 onto the Cross He broadened his embrace;
 broadened on the Cross He healed men; He healed us, but agony
 wearied Him.

Lilja 55 draws from a variety of influences in both Scripture and medieval Christian literary traditions. As Chase observes, from a stylistic standpoint the influence of the Latin hymn tradition is evident in the stanza's consistent rhyme or anadiplosis.⁵⁸⁶ The first two lines of the first *helmingr* are based on Luke I.46-7, which reads *Et ait Maria: 'Magnificat anima mea Dominum, et exsultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo* 'And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior'.⁵⁸⁷ The poet references a paradox popular among Christian medieval authors when he explains that *fæddi Föðurinn* 'she gave birth to the Father'.⁵⁸⁸ The detail of Christ being led to the Cross occurs in Matthew XXVII.31, Mark XV.20, Luke XXIII.26, and John XIX.17, and its expression of movement also facilitates the narrative transition in the second *helmingr*. The end of the first *helmingr* and the beginning of the second share the image of Christ clothed or, as Laugesen argues, enclosed in a manner that contrasts with the openness when Christ *breiddi faðminn* 'opened his embrace' on the Cross.⁵⁸⁹ This image of Christ with an open embrace during the Crucifixion is common in medieval devotional literature, such as the thirteenth-century penitential hymn *Memorans novissima* and the Icelandic homily for the Feast of the Holy Cross: *Rétte Han fra lér bápar hendr a croffenom. þuiat Han býþr faþm miðcvnar línar. qll þeim er Han elfca* 'He stretches both His arms on the Cross, because He offers the embrace of His mercy to all those whom He loves'.⁵⁹⁰ The poet also presents the paradox of Christ healing humanity through His death at the Crucifixion: *Hann græddi oss,*

⁵⁸⁶ Chase 2007: 625-6.

⁵⁸⁷ Latin text from *Vulg* 1979, Luke I.46-7; Modern English translation from *NRSV*.

⁵⁸⁸ For *fæða*, see *LP* 163; and *SnE* 1998: 283.

⁵⁸⁹ Laugesen 1966: 297-8.

⁵⁹⁰ *Hómísl* 1993: 17v. For the text of *Memorans novissima*, see *AH*: 46, 342. Chase (2007: 626) notes that the open embrace is also used in a discussion of how to catch a unicorn in *Stjórn: þa setia menn eina skæra ok uskadda iungfru moti þi dyri, huer er sinn fadm skal breida moti þi* 'then men set a pure and unsullied maiden before the animal, who shall broaden her embrace to it' (Unger 1862: 70).

en helstrið maeddi ‘He healed us, but agony wearied Him’.⁵⁹¹ Isaiah LIII.5 is responsible for this idea of the wounded Christ healing mankind through His injuries:

Ipse autem vulneratus est propter iniquitates nostras; adtritus est propter scelera nostra. Disciplina pacis nostrae super Eum, et livore Eius sanati sumus

But He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed.⁵⁹²

Once again, Christ fulfils the role of spiritual Physician, with a biblical passage supporting the use of this representation. The verb *græða* ‘to heal’ can also mean ‘to grow’ or ‘nourish’ and thus connects healing with growth and increase.⁵⁹³ Given the stanza’s focus on Mary’s care of Christ in His childhood and His broad embrace from the Cross, themes of both nourishment and healing are highly appropriate and inform Christ’s portrayal here.

Mary’s suffering at the Crucifixion once again becomes the focus of stanza 56. As before her own suffering is very closely related to that of Christ, with the poet explaining that *særðiz bæði sannheilög Sonr og móðir fyrir græðing manna* ‘the truly sacred Son and mother are both wounded for the healing of men’, reminding the audience of the paradox of Christ as the wounded Physician. He then asks his audience, for the sake of Mary’s embrace and weeping, to experience Christ’s salvation in stanza 57. Christ is given *gall blandið með dreggjum* ‘gall mixed with dregs’ before *Öndin leið* ‘the Soul grew tired’ and departed from Him in stanza 58, and in stanza 59 the poet explains that nature trembled and the heavens *týndu ljós* ‘lost light’ at His death. The narrative of *Lilja* culminates in stanza 60 with the moment when Lucifer is caught in the trap that has been laid for him through Christ’s death on the Cross. The stanza concludes with the poet’s personal joy in knowing that the devil has been duped.

⁵⁹¹ For *helstrið* ‘agony, death-strife’, see *LP* 242 and *IED* 255. For *mæða/móðr* ‘to weary, plague’, see *LP* 417 and *IED* 442.

⁵⁹² *Vulg* 2012a, Isaiah LIII.5.

⁵⁹³ For *græða*, see *LP* 206.

En í andláti Jésú sæta oss var flutt, að gægð á krossinn
 fjandinn hafi og friett að syndum, færaglöggr, eg nökkur væri.
 Hlægir mig, að hier mun teygjaz hans forvitni honum til vansa;
 eigi mun nú ormr hinn bjúgi agn svelgjandi á króki fagna.
 (Lilja 60)

And at giving up the spirit of sweet Jesus, we were told that the
 opportunistic fiend
 has eagerly observed the Cross and asked about sins, whether there were
 any.
 I am joyful that here his curiosity would draw him to disgrace;
 now the crooked serpent, swallowing the bait, will not rejoice in the hook.

As in *Lilja* 15 when Lucifer seeks to deceive Adam and Eve, he is here described as *ormr*, ‘serpent’ or ‘snake’. However, unlike the earlier narrative where Scripture specifies the creature is a serpent in the garden, in this instance *ormr* describes the devil metaphorically as a sea creature who, *svelgjandi agn* ‘swallowing the bait’, will not rejoice *á króki* ‘in the hook’.⁵⁹⁴ The poet’s use of the verb *svelgja* ‘to swallow’ may be related to the common image of Hell as the gaping jaw of a beast, but it also appears in *Eiríks saga víðförla* in which Eiríkr and his companion enter a kind of Paradise through a dragon’s mouth.⁵⁹⁵ This *krókr* or ‘hook’ on which the serpent is caught gains special significance when we consider that, in stanza 82, ‘Lucifer uses his ‘bitter crook’ to capture the souls of the dying,’ and thus ‘he is paradoxically impaled on his own weapon’.⁵⁹⁶ The word *bjúgi*, meaning ‘bowed, hooked, crooked’, or ‘bent’ describes Lucifer as the serpent and hearkens back to the dart of faithlessness that turns on itself in stanza 45, thus uniting these symbolic images.⁵⁹⁷ The representation of Lucifer as a sea serpent at this point in the narrative reflects the bait and hook image found in medieval Christian literature, which presents

⁵⁹⁴ Similar language carries through to late medieval Old Norse poetry, including *Niðurstigningsvísur* 27; *Kristbálkur* 13 and 45; *Krossvísur* II 15; and *Krosskvæði* 24. Cf. Wolf 1997: 276-77; and Jón Helgason 1936: 144-56, 262-66, 277-85.

⁵⁹⁵ Haki Antonsson 2012: 121. Cf. Haki Antonsson 2012: 85; Schmidt 1995: 35; and Guðbrandur Vigfússon and Unger 1860-68, I: 33.

⁵⁹⁶ Chase 2007: 630-1. *Lilja* 82: *Pín mig í kvölum og sóttum, áðr en dauðin detti á, Drottinn minn, að eg sie þá síðan því minnur slitinn af bitrum króki fjandans* ‘Torture me with torments and illnesses before death falls on [me], my Lord, that I may later be less ripped apart by the fiend’s biting hook’.

⁵⁹⁷ For *bjúgi*, see *LP* 50; and *IED* 66.

Christ and His humanity as the bait, and the Cross as the hook; together, they lure and ensnare the devil through his desire to tempt and kill Christ.

The bait and hook image appears in Christian literature dating back to the second century, and is also employed as interpolated material in the Old Norse *Niðrstigningar saga*.⁵⁹⁸ The *Evangelium Nicodemi*, which is the primary literary analogue for the twelfth-century *Niðrstigningar saga*, was widely circulated in Scandinavia, as evidenced by numerous manuscript survivals.⁵⁹⁹ The Old Norse-Icelandic renderings of the *Evangelium Nicodemi* all portray the conflict between Christ and Satan, with the figure of Inferus from the Latin source material ‘transposed to a host of devils.’⁶⁰⁰ This change promotes reading a distinct dualism in the narrative, inviting Christ and Satan to be readily compared and contrasted in their conflict with one another. Turville-Petre observes that, in addition to making noticeable emendations such as these, the Old Norse translator of *Niðrstigningar saga* ‘improved’ the text by selecting terminology and phrasing found in Norse mythology, ‘which even in the twelfth century must have seemed archaic’.⁶⁰¹ *Niðrstigningar saga* thus seems in part to be a project aimed at fusing mythological elements into a deuterocanonical Christian text. Consequently, the representation of Lucifer being caught on the hook of the Cross takes on characteristics of Old Norse myth, particularly in connection with Þórr and the Miðgarðsormr.

The first of the two significant interpolations in *Niðrstigningar saga*, occurring before Satan is driven from Inferus, includes an excerpt that makes use of the bait and hook *topos* alongside an Old Norse mythological term in reference to the devil:

⁵⁹⁸ Chase 2007: 630. Cf. Srawley 1956; Aulén 1951: 52-3; Morin 1930: 662; Adriaen 1979: 141; Caratzas 1977; Zellinger 1928: 161-77; and Lucchesi: 1983. *Lilja’s* parallels with *Niðrstigningar saga* have been noted by Fredrik 1915; Magnús Már Lárusson 1955; and Hill 1970: 561-67, esp. 563.

⁵⁹⁹ Wolf 1997: 262. Cf. Magnús Már Lárusson 1955: 159-68; Kirby 1986: 35; and Gschwantler 1968: 145-68. *Niðrstigningar saga* can be found in four medieval Icelandic manuscripts and is itself a translation of the Greek *Descensus Christi ad inferos*, which is one of the sources for the *Evangelium Nicodemi*. For more information about manuscript survivals, see Wolf 1997: 262-3.

⁶⁰⁰ Wolf 1997: 263. Notably, the youngest manuscript, AM 238 fol. V, is the only version that includes Inferus. Cf. Turville-Petre 1953.

⁶⁰¹ Wolf 1997: 266-7. Cf. Turville-Petre 1953: 128; and Paasche 1957: 299.

‘Gildra sú, er at Jórsalum er gör, verð Miðgarðsormi at skaða.’ Hann fal þá öngul, þann er horfinn var agni ok eigi sjá ma, því er i gildrina var lagit, ok svá vaðinn gat hann folginn, svá at eigi of mat sjá.⁶⁰²

That trap, which is ready in Jerusalem, is going to harm the World-Serpent.’ He hid the fishhook inside the bait so that it could not be seen, thus was it laid out upon the trap, and thus he was able to hide the fishing-line, so that it could not be seen.

Here the author lays out the meaning of the bait and hook imagery explicitly, with Christ successfully hiding the *öngul* ‘hook’ and using himself as *agn* ‘bait’ in order to trap the devil. While much of the detail in the earlier portion of this Old Norse interpolation (not included here) is based on Revelation XIX, the bait and hook imagery does not appear in the original biblical passage and was instead developed and popularized in a later patristic works. Apart from sharing the noun *agn* ‘bait’ to describe Christ, the terminology here more explicitly relates to fishing than that in stanza 60, yet the general senses are the same. One striking detail in the passage from *Niðrstigningar saga* is that the trap is laid in order to maim the *mibgarpsormi* ‘World-Serpent’, a title used for the Norse mythological serpent that encircles the world and is nearly caught on a fishing line by Þórr.⁶⁰³ Looking at stanza 22 of *Hymiskviða* from the *Poetic Edda*, the terminology pertinent to the bait and hook image – including *egna* ‘to bait’, *öngul* ‘hook’, *ormr* ‘serpent’, and *agn* ‘bait’ – is nearly identical to this account of Þórr’s struggle against the World-Serpent and certainly maintains thematic consistency.⁶⁰⁴ From this similarity we might draw the conclusion that, at least in some Christian literary circles, Þórr’s struggle with the World-Serpent was somewhat equated with Christ baiting the devil through the Crucifixion.

This connection with Norse myth deserves qualification since, as ‘a medieval commonplace’ based on Job XL.19-21, the bait and hook topos with

⁶⁰² For an extended excerpt from this section, see *Niðrst*¹ 4.19-33.

⁶⁰³ This has been noted by Aho 1966: 154-55; and Gschwantler 1968: 158.

⁶⁰⁴ *Hymiskviða* 22: *Egndi á öngul, / sá er ǫldom bergr, / orms einbani, / uxa höfði; / gein við öngli, / sú er goð fjá, / umgiðrð neðan / allra landa.* ‘He baited the hook, / he who protects men, / the one slayer of the serpent, / with an ox’s head; / he whom the gods despise, / the encircler from below / all lands, / gaped at the hook’ (KLE 322). Abram (2011:31) has noted that *Hymiskviða* is a late poem, though there are earlier versions of the same myth as well. For an overview of the different versions of this myth, see Sørensen 1986: 257-78.

the Leviathan is ‘considerably older than the Þórr and Miðgarðsormr theme’.⁶⁰⁵ One striking difference between Christ baiting the devil and Þórr baiting the Miðgarðsormr is that, in the Norse myth, the world’s stability partly rests on the Miðgarðsormr because his capture risks causing destruction. As O’Donoghue explains, ‘in hooking the World Serpent, Þórr puts the stability of the whole cosmos at risk: our world literally hangs by a thread: the fishing line’.⁶⁰⁶ O’Donoghue has also noted the presence of this mythological account in the Gosforth Cross in Cumbria, in which ‘[w]e can see Thor, armed with his hammer, in a fishing boat with his companion, the giant Hymir, and the fishing line, with its clumsy bait of an ox’s head, dangling over the side’; this object offers an interesting example of syncretism from the period pre-dating *Lilja*.⁶⁰⁷ This contrasts with the conflict between Christ and Lucifer, in which Lucifer’s defeat brings about reconciliation rather than destruction. Nevertheless, both Marchand and Magnús Már Lárusson note the links made between the Leviathan and the Miðgarðsormr in other Old Norse writings, such as a section of the Icelandic *Hómiljubók* based on a homily about Mary Magdalene by Gregory the Great where *miþgarþsormr* is written in superscript above the word *leviaban*.⁶⁰⁸ The homily fully explains the *topos* in the following passage:

Sia gleýpande hvalr merker gróþgan anskota þaN es svelga vill allt maNkyn i dauða. Agn es lagt a ɔngol en hvass broddr leýnesc. þeNa orm tók almáttegr Guþ a ɔngle. þa es Hann sende Son SiN til dauða sýnelegan at líkam en osýnelegan at guþdóme. Diabolus sa agn likams

⁶⁰⁵ Wolf 1997: 270. Cf. Marchand 1975: 333. See also Gschwantler 1968: 149. Job XL.19-21: *In oculis eius quasi hamo capiet eum et in sudibus perforabit nares eius. An extrahere poteris Leviathan hamo, et fune ligabis linguam eius? Numquid pones circulum in naribus eius aut armilla perforabis maxillam eius?* ‘In his eyes as with a hook he shall take him and bore through his nostrils with stakes. Canst thou draw out the Leviathan with a hook, or canst thou tie his tongue with a cord? Canst thou put a ring in his nose or bore through his jaw with a buckle?’ (*Vulg* 2011, Job XL.19-21).

⁶⁰⁶ O’Donoghue 2008: 37.

⁶⁰⁷ O’Donoghue 2008: 95. Rowe (2006: 168-9) explains the varying interpretations of images on the Gosforth Cross. Bailey (1980: 125) interprets the narrative of Sigurðr slaying the dragon as a typology or foreshadowing of Christ’s triumph over the devil. Margeson (1983: 104-5 and 1993: 406a-b) views pre-Christian images as associatively pagan and intended as a means of implying the greatness of the deceased with the greatness of the gods and heroes depicted. Berg (1958) interprets the images on the Gosforth Cross a communication of the decline of the pagan gods at Ragnarøk and the world’s rebirth through Christ’s victory over the devil. For more scholarship on the Gosforth Cross, see Bailey 1980; Bailey and Cramp 1988; and Hines 1989.

⁶⁰⁷ Rowe 2006: 169. Cf. Stefán Karlsson 1963: 325b.

⁶⁰⁸ Magnús Már Lárusson 1955: 164-65; and *Hómísl* 1872: 75-76.

Hans þat es hann beit oc villde fyrfara. en guþdóms broddr stangaþe hann svasem ǫngoll. A ǫngle varþ hann tekeN. þuiat hann beidesc at gripa lícáms agn þat es hann sa. en vass guþdóms brodr sa es leýndr vas sáerþ hann. A ǫngle varþ hann tekeN. þuiat hann fek scaþa afþui es hann beit. oc glataþe hann þeim es hann hafþe áþr vellde yver. þuiat hann treýstesc at gripa þaN es hann hafþe etke vellde igeþn.⁶⁰⁹

The gaping whale represents the greedy devil who wants to swallow all mankind in death. The bait is lain on the fish-hook but the sharp shaft is hidden. Almighty God took the serpent with a fish-hook, when He sent His Son to die, visible in body but invisible in godliness. The devil saw the bait of His body, which he bit and wanted to destroy, but the shaft of divinity pierced him like a fish-hook. On a fish-hook he was taken, because he was enticed to seize the bait of the body that he saw. But the sharp shaft of godliness, which was hidden, harmed him. On a fish-hook he was taken, because he was wounded by that one which he bit. And he lost that over which he had earlier had power, because he dared to grip the One against whom he had no power.

Given that there are also Latin analogues for this homily with a similar message, it is possible that the author of *Niðrstigningar saga* could have been influenced by a number of sources in his use of the bait and hook image with possible parallels to the *Miðgarðsormr*.⁶¹⁰ Finnur Jónsson has seen similarities between *Lilja* and the homily that could suggest a connection between the two sources, though I agree with Marchand that, since there are multiple occurrences of the bait and hook concept in Old Norse literature, there is no need to assume that *Niðrstigningar saga* and *Lilja* are directly linked.⁶¹¹ Nonetheless, it must be acknowledged at least some authors viewed the devil as analogous to the *Miðgarðsormr* in certain respects, and this understanding may have also been familiar to the *Lilja* poet.

Stanza 61 depicts the Harrowing of Hell in which *myrkr undraz, er ljós er styrkra* ‘darkness is astonished, that light is stronger’, a description that communicates Christ’s warrior-like strength and association with light. Stanza 62 next asks and answers a series of questions about Christ’s victory over the devil and humanity’s salvation. The stanza makes use of the skaldic figures of

⁶⁰⁹ *Hómísl* 1872: 75-76. In addition to appearing in the *Hómiljubók*, this imagery also occurs in the homily’s Latin analogue *Homiliae en evangelia*, lib. 2, hom. 25 (PL 76:1194B-96C); and AM 684c 4^o.

⁶¹⁰ Wolf 1997: 270-1.

⁶¹¹ Marchand 1975: 331. Cf. *Skj*, A2: 363-95, B2: 390-416.

sexþánmælt ‘sixteen times spoken’ and *greppaminni*, which as Chase notes resemble the Latin rhetorical figures of *rationation* and *erotema* in the *Fourth Grammatical Treatise*.⁶¹² Having praised and celebrated Christ’s spiritual victory in Hell, the poet asks Christ to draw him *frá djöfla bygðum* ‘from devils’ dwellings’ in stanza 63, and in stanza 64 contemplates the joy that Adam must have experienced when Christ *leysti oss öll ór banni* ‘released us all from the ban’, using the legal term for outlawry to describe humanity’s fallen state before the redemption.⁶¹³ The poet addresses Lucifer in stanzas 65 and 66, first asking him if he was deceived by Christ’s humanity, and then celebrating that the devil’s plan to doom all people ultimately turned against him as if it were a fishing hook: *svá beygiz bjúgi brandrinn ódygðar aftr í kjafta þína* ‘thus the twisted sword of faithlessness is bent back into your cheek’.⁶¹⁴ Stanza 67 celebrates that Christ rose *með sigri* ‘with victory’ from death at the Resurrection and then raised the *blóð, það er tók af móður* ‘blood, which He took from [His] mother’ at the Ascension. The poet recounts Pentecost in stanza 68, when *sendi Hann hingað lærisveinum hreinferðugastan Helgan Anda* ‘He sent hither to His teacher-servants (i.e. disciples) the most pure Holy Spirit’ while He sits in heaven and continues to offer His embrace of mercy to humanity. The poet praises Christ in stanza 69, and asks Him to remember His human nature and body so that He will show mercy at the Last Judgement.

Following this request the *Lilja* poet begins his account of the Last Judgement, presenting a scene of awe and terror where *geisar eldr og eisa svá jörð og fjöll* ‘fire and flames will so rage over the earth and mountains’ as Christ repays humanity for their deeds. In stanza 71 the poet contemplates the finality of Judgement upon each person and their inability to gain salvation without Christ.

Upprísöndum allra landa	íbyggjurum við dóminn hryggva
Jésú munu þá sárin sýnaz	súthrærandi og píslarfæri.
Orð og hugsan, allar gjörðir,	eru kannaðar hvers sem annars;
bjóðaz hvörki blót nie eiðar;	byrgjaz úti gjafir og mútur. (<i>Lilja</i> 71)

⁶¹² Chase 2007: 634.

⁶¹³ *Bann* is also applied to Lucifer in *Lilja* 15.

⁶¹⁴ Compare *brandrinn ódygðar* ‘the sword of faithlessness’ here with *flein ódygðar* ‘dart of faithlessness’ in *Lilja* 42.

At the sorrowful Judgement, then the grievous wounds and torture-tools of Jesus will be shown to the rising inhabitants of all lands.
 All deeds, words and thoughts of each man as well as the next will be known;
 neither sacrifices nor oaths will be offered; gifts and bribes will be excluded.

The first *helmingr* and the first line of the second *helmingr*, which share clear links to biblical and liturgical texts, are in keeping with what we might typically expect from scenes of the Last Judgement and rather closely adhere to the texts from which they derive.⁶¹⁵ It is the second half of the second *helmingr* that contains new details, with the poet explaining that God's decision will not be swayed by unjust means: *þjóðaz hvörki blót nie eiðar; byrgjaz úti gjafir og mútur* 'neither sacrifices nor oaths will be offered; gifts and bribes will be excluded'. The first of these ineffectual means of salvation, *blót* 'sacrifices', can refer to sacrificial worship and indicates that only Christ's sacrifice, and not humanity's, is adequate for reconciliation.⁶¹⁶ The next ineffectual defence is an *eiðr* 'oath', which is a formal and binding promise that any person looking to perform a public duty – such as a judge, pleader, neighbour, or witness – had to give to guarantee that he would perform his duty according to right and law; Christ's clear supreme justice makes the oaths of men redundant.⁶¹⁷ By presenting both religious sacrifice and legal oaths as ineffectual, the poet demonstrates that, apart from Christ's help, there are no adequate means for being reconciled with God. This continues in the pairing of *gjafar* and *mútur*, both of which refer to

⁶¹⁵ The first *helmingr* draws its influence from the popular medieval literary and artistic practice of showing at the Last Judgement the tools that tortured Jesus in the Crucifixion; this in turn was derived from the biblical passage in Revelation I.7: *Ecce venit cum nubibus, et videbat eum omnis oculus et, qui eum pupugerunt, et plangent se super eum omnes tribus terrae* (Vulg 1979, Revelation I.7) 'Look! He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail' (NRSV, Revelation I.7). The first lines of the second *helmingr* also allude to Revelation, this time II.23, and are based in part on the liturgical formula *peccavi nimis in vita mea / cogitatione / locutione / opera / et omissione* 'I have sinned exceedingly in my life, in thought, in speech, in deed, and by omission' (*Brev. Nidr.* h.iii^r). Cf. Chase 2007: 643.

⁶¹⁶ For *blót*, see entry in *ADIP*; *LP* 54; *SnE* 1998: 247; and *IED* 70. More generally, *blót* also means worship, and can refer to objects related to sacrifice (*ADIP*).

⁶¹⁷ For *eiðr*, see *LEI* 2000: 416; *SnE* 1998: 262; *LP* 98; and entry in *ADIP*. The *sacramentum*, from which we get the word 'sacrament', was understood in its Roman context as a sacred military oath. For more information on the concept of the Christian sacraments as a kind of military oath, see Ó Carragáin 2005: 120, 123.

'bribes' in this context.⁶¹⁸ The ultimate message is that humanity is unable to appease or deflect God's judgement through anything they have to offer, and this in turn affirms Christ's role as a just Judge.

Continuing the narrative of the Last Judgement, stanza 72 presents the separation of the righteous from the unrighteous as depicted in Matthew XXV.31-4 and 41.⁶¹⁹ Once again the inadequacy of mankind's verbal defences becomes the focus, as humanity is separated into two flocks.

Eingi finz á þessu þingi þrætugjarn nie klókar varnir
 orðahreimr, er á Drottins dómi dreifaz menn í flokka tvenna.
 Aðra sveit með hæstum heiðri hefr Hann langt yfir spéras efri;
 steypir þá með eymd og ópi öðrum niðr í fjandann miðjan.

(*Lilja* 72)

At this assembly is found no litigious cry of words nor clever defences, when at the Lord's judgement men are dispersed into two flocks. The one company He raises up with highest honour far above the upper spheres; then casts down the others with wretchedness and weeping right into the middle of the fiend.

middle of the fiend: Hell⁶²⁰

The language in the first *helmingr* emphasises the legal nature of this event, as *eingi þrætugjarn orðahreimr nie klókar varnir* 'no litigious cry of words nor clever defences' can be found in humanity when they are judged and separated by God. With the shift in emphasis from Christ and His symbols of legal authority to

⁶¹⁸ For *gjǫf*, see *LP* 186; *SnE* 1998: 289; and entry in *ADIP*. According the entry for *ADIP*, *gjǫf* may also be construed as a bribe in certain instances. For *múta*, see *LP* 415.

⁶¹⁹ Matthew XXV.31-4, 41: *Cum autem venerit Filius hominis in gloria Sua, et omnes angeli cum Eo, tunc sedebit super thronum gloriae Suae. Et congregabuntur ante Eum omnes gentes; et separabit eos ab invicem, sicut pastor segregat oves ab haedis, et statuet oves quidem a dextris Suis, haedos autem a sinistris. Tunc dicet Rex his, qui a dextris Eius erunt: 'Venite, benedicti Patris Mei; possidete paratum vobis regnum a constitutione mundi'... Tunc dicet et his, qui a sinistris erunt: 'Discedite a Me, maledicti, in ignem aeternum, qui praeparatus est Diabolo et angelis eius'* (*Vulg* 1979, Matthew XXV.31-4, 41) 'When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and He will put the sheep at His right hand and the goats at the left. Then the King will say to those at His right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world'... Then He will say to those at His left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from Me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels'' (*NRSV*, Matthew XXV.31-4, 41).

⁶²⁰ Chase (2007: 644) observes that this metonymy for Hell also appears in the Middle Icelandic saying, *far þú í fjandann* 'go to Hell' (from Guðbrandur Jónsson 1951: 175).

the *varnir* ‘defences’ of mankind, a new perspective begins to emerge, one in which the Judgement – referred to in this poem both as *þing* and *dómi* – appears not just as the passing of judgement, but a court case in which humanity attempts *þræta* ‘to dispute’ using *klókar varnir* ‘clever defences’.⁶²¹ Deceptions such as unfounded or cunning arguments that could arise within a case brought forward at a *þing*, whether the small-scale local Norwegian assemblies or the Icelandic Alþing, are not present in the wholly just legal proceedings over which Christ presides. In this manner, the Last Judgement is figured as the ultimate and idealised *þing*, with Christ accurately perceiving the righteousness and penitence of each person and passing judgement accordingly.

Stanza 73 provides a detailed account of the torments in Hell, which is contrasted with the joys of heaven in stanza 74 and prompts the poet to pray fervently for mercy throughout a large section of the poem, beginning at stanza 75. He expresses his fear of *dóm og dauða* ‘judgement and death’ in stanza 76, and describes the seven deadly sins as if they were painful physical afflictions in stanzas 77 and 78. Having established the harmful threat of these sins, the poet again beseeches Christ for mercy in stanzas 79 to 81 and laments that his sins appear to him *sem eitr linna liggja innan um þrútið hjartað* ‘as if serpents’ poison lies within around my swollen heart’ (stanza 80), referencing the depiction of Lucifer as a serpent in stanza 15 and 60 and representing sinfulness as a contamination of the spirit. He asks Christ to send the *sanna gift sjaufalds Anda, er leysi önd mína ór banni* ‘true gift of the sevenfold Spirit, which can release my soul from its ban’ (stanza 80), again depicting the punishment for sinfulness as the Scandinavian legal practice of outlawry. He then asks for Mary’s assistance at the Judgement in stanza 82, and further beseeches God to afflict him with pains and sicknesses so that *eg sie þá síðan því minnur slitinn af bitrum króki fjandans* ‘I may later be less ripped apart by the fiend’s biting hook’, presenting the devil’s temptations in a similar manner to the bait and hook topos in stanza 60. He continues his requests to Christ for mercy

⁶²¹ For *vörn*, ‘a defence’ in a legal context, see *LEI* 2006: 275; *SnE* 1998: 431; *LP* 629; and *IED* 722. For *þræta* ‘to dispute’, see *SnE* 1998: 437; and *LP* 648-9. For *klókr* ‘clever’, see *LP* 339.

and protection against sin and devils in stanzas 83 to 85, and returns to Mary for intercession from stanza 86, asking her to enfold his soul in her *ágætu verndarskauti* ‘excellent protecting mantle’. The poet addresses Mary in stanza 89, praising her through a number of traditional analogies that link her to healing, light, nourishment, and purity.

Þú ert hreinlífis dygðar dúfa, dóttir Guðs, og lækning sótta,
 giftu vegr, og geisli lofta, gimsteinn brúða og drottning himna,
 Guðs herbergi og gleyming sorga, gleðinnar past og eyðing lasta,
 líknar æðr og lífgan þjóða, loflig mæ, þú ert einglum hærri.
(Lilja 89)

You are the dove of the virtue of chastity, daughter of God, and healing of illnesses,
 way of grace, and ray of the skies, gemstone of brides and queen of the heavens,
 God’s lodging and forgetting of sorrows, food of gladness and desolation of depravity,
 vein of grace and life-giver of peoples, praise-worthy maiden, you are higher than the angels.

Mary is described in the first *helmingr* as *lækning sótta* ‘healing of illnesses’, which Chase notes is related to the Latin Marian epithet *medicina dolorum* ‘medicine of pain’.⁶²² This further reinforces the image of Christ as Physician by placing Mary, as an avenue for Christ’s mercy, in the role of the healer offering a remedy.⁶²³ She is called *giftu vegr, og geisli lofta, gimsteinn brúða og drottning himna* ‘way of grace, and ray of the skies, gemstone of brides and queen of the heavens’, all of which are common descriptions of Mary that associate her purity and righteousness with heavenly light.⁶²⁴ In the second *helmingr* she is described as *herbergi Guðs og gleyming sorga* ‘God’s lodging and forgetting of sorrows’, as well as *past gleðinnar og eyðing lasta* ‘food of gladness and desolation of depravity’; these indicate that she functions as both a protector and nourisher, characteristics that once again apply to Christ by

⁶²² For *lækna*, see LP 386. For *sótt*, see LP 527.

⁶²³ Chase 2007: 663. Cf. AH: 15, 129; 31, 145; 32, 87, 141; 46, 164, 183, 197, 251. Mary also heals injuries in *Lilja* 91 (*Máría, græð þú mein hin stóru; Máría, ber þú smyrsl í sárin* ‘Mary, heal the great injuries; Mary, bring balm to our wounds’). For *læknir*, see LP 386. For *sótt*, see LP 527.

⁶²⁴ For *geisli* ‘light-beam’, see LP 177; SnE 1998: 288; and entry in ADIP. For *gim* ‘gem’, see LP 181; and SnE 1998: 288.

extension.⁶²⁵ Two of the final descriptions of Mary in this stanza, *æðr líknar og lífgan þjóða* ‘vein of grace and life-giver of people’, emphasise her healing and nourishing role for humanity.⁶²⁶ In combination, these images express the idea that Mary functions as a means by which Christ the Physician and Nourisher heals and provides abundant mercy to humanity.

Praise of Mary continues in stanzas 90 and 91, where she is described as a hall of the Holy Spirit and healer who brings *smyrsl í sárin* ‘ointment to our sores’ (stanza 91), again expressing her healing role. The *Lilja* poet laments his inability to fittingly praise Mary in stanzas 92 to 95, contrasting his own sinfulness with the observation that *Drottinn einn er hreinni Máriu* ‘the Lord alone is purer than Mary’ (stanza 95). As he approaches the end of his work, the poet offers up the poem to both Christ and Mary in stanza 96 in hopes that he will be saved from torment by *þessa þraungskorðaðra kvæðisorða* ‘these tightly-arranged poetry-words’, referencing the complex rules for composing in skaldic metre. He specifically apologises for any lack of clarity in stanza 97, explaining, *varðar mest, að ríttlig undirstaðan allra orða sie fundin, þó að eigi glögg regla eddu hjóti stundum að vikja undan* ‘it is of greatest importance that the proper sense of all words be found, even though the unclear rule of the Edda must sometimes yield’. The stanza thus expresses the poet’s paramount goal of accurately and effectively communicating about Christianity, while also acknowledging the limits and challenges of the medium through which this is completed.

The author’s understanding of the light of Christ is further developed in the poem’s penultimate stanza, where he explains his desire for clarity in this work. While earlier skaldic poetry ‘favours hidden meaning over explicit meaning on aesthetic grounds’, the poet here favours directness.⁶²⁷

Sá, er óðinn skal vandan velja, velr svá mörg í kvæði að selja

⁶²⁵ For *past* ‘food, feast’, see *LP* 450. For *eyða* ‘to destroy, devastate’, see *LP* 113; *SnE* 1998: 267; and entry in *ADIP*. For *lasta* ‘depravity’, see *LP* 358. Compare the description of Mary as *eyðing lasta* ‘desolation of depravity’ with Christ as *Angrstríðir* ‘Grief-Fighter’ in *Harmsól* 21; both instances use battle imagery to express the mercy these figures extend to humanity.

⁶²⁶ For *æðr* ‘vein’, see *LP* 654; and *SnE* 1998: 439. For *líkn*, ‘relief’ or ‘mercy’, see *LP* 375-6; *SnE* 1998: 347; and entry in *ADIP*.

⁶²⁷ Abram 2011: 13.

hulin fornyrðin; trautt má telja; tel eg þenna svá skilning dvelja.
 Vel því að hier má skýr orð skilja, skili þjóðir minn ljósan vilja;
 tal óbreytiligt veitt að vilja; vil eg, að kvæðið heiti Lilja. (*Lilja* 98)

He who must execute the difficult poem chooses to put into the poem so many concealed archaisms that one can hardly count them; I say that he thus delays understanding. Because one may understand clear words well, let people understand my clear will; this ordinary speech given freely; I wish that the poem be called 'Lilja'.

The poet complains that cryptic verse, which is usually praised in the skaldic tradition for its craft and challenging nature, would delay the audience's understanding in an unproductive way for this particular poem. Like the devil's deceptions enacted against humanity, obscure meanings in skaldic poetry also deceive its audience with unclear interpretations and hidden meanings. As Chase has noted, 'the skald cannot completely free himself of the aesthetic that elegant poetry (*vandan óðinn*) requires *hulin fornyrðin* 'obscure archaisms', which hinder understanding (*dvelja skilning*), but he firmly states his own resolve to strive for light and clarity'.⁶²⁸ Having established obscurity as an unhelpful literary practice, the poet then explains, *því að hier má vel skilja skýr orð, skili þjóðir ljósan vilja minn, óbreytiligt tel veitt að vilja* 'because one may understand clear words well, let people understand my clear will, this ordinary speech given freely', and concludes the stanza by identifying the poem's title as *Lilja*.⁶²⁹ Just as divine truth is symbolised by light and clarity throughout the poem, so too does the poet hope his poem will serve as a beacon of biblical truth.

The poem reaches its conclusion in stanzas 99 and 100, with the hope that humanity will ultimately receive assistance from both the Virgin Mary and Christ at the Last Judgement. For the sake of his own salvation and that of his audience, the poet instructs, *segi hverr, er heyrir á þessa diktan, riett Máriu hennar vess* 'may whoever listens to this composition, say directly to Mary her verse' in stanza 99, specifying the verse as the prayer *Ave Maria* through

⁶²⁸ Chase 2007: 673. Cf. Lie 1952: 78.

⁶²⁹ For *skýrr*, see LP 516. For *ljós* 'bright, light', see SnE 1998: 348; LP 378; and entry in ADIP. For *óbreytiligt* 'ordinary', see LP 440.

mention of the phrase *Dominus tecum* in the second *helmingr*. The final stanza repeats the opening stanza's praise of the *sönn Eining í þrenning greinum* 'true Unity in three parts', celebrating the Trinity's omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence as a means of refocusing attention from Mary to her ultimate source of mercy and power in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Conclusions

Composed around one century after *Líknarbraut*, and two centuries after *Geisli*, *Harmsól*, and *Leiðarvísan*, the mid-fourteenth century *Lilja* reflects changing literary tastes and theological thought. Consequently, this poem differs stylistically from its predecessors, with the poet setting out to claim the skaldic poem for the purpose of proclaiming a Christian message. As a poem of 100 stanzas, it is by far the longest of the works reviewed in this thesis; due in part to its length, *Lilja* more fully develops the various representations of Christ, often defining His characteristics through His relationships with Lucifer, humanity, and His followers.

As a poem that engages with a more comprehensive biblical timeline from Creation to the Last Judgement than other Christian skaldic poems, *Lilja* develops an even more nuanced representation of righteousness and sinfulness in relation to light and darkness. The poet observes in stanza 7 that Lucifer possessed a *náttúruskærleikr* 'natural brightness' prior to his Fall, indicating that he was a part of God's good Creation but developed jealousy for Christ's greater light; this pride leads to his fall into the darkness of Hell. The adjective *skærr* 'brightness' is also applied to the Virgin Mary and righteous humanity in other parts of the narrative, confirming that the term was associated with righteousness and holiness, which Lucifer previously possessed and lost. Once in Hell, Lucifer is tormented by his daughter Pride in stanza 9, and described as her *blindr föður* 'blind father'. His blindness and ignorance, which extend to anyone who follows him, account for his inability to recognise Jesus's divinity. During the Harrowing of Hell in stanza 61, *myrkr undraz, er ljós er styrkra* 'darkness is astonished that light is stronger', making explicit the representation of Christ as the Light that dispels the darkness of sin and death.

God, in contrast to Lucifer in his spiritual blindness, is characterised by light and clarity, as in stanza 24 when He is praised for *skapandi ... alt nær og firr með skýrum skygnleik* ‘creating ... everything near and far with clear sight’. In the same stanza Gabriel expresses Christ’s intention to cover Himself in the Virgin Mary’s *björtu holdi* ‘bright flesh’, indicating Mary’s righteousness and role as the avenue for Christ’s Light entering the world. Gabriel’s appearance is praised as *sigrandi páfugls prýði* ‘surpassing the peacock’s magnificence’ as he passes through the firmament in stanza 27 to visit Mary, who is described as *hreinflífið* ‘purity itself’ and *gimsteinn vífa* ‘gemstone of women’. Features of light and beauty are thus applied to both the angel and Mary as extensions of Christ in the world. Christ’s birth, which takes place in stanza 33, is depicted as being *sem þá er geislinn brár í gegnum skygnast glerið fyrir augum várum* ‘just as when the sunbeam breaks through the clearest glass before our eyes’, a description that would have conjured the striking image of glasswork in cathedrals, in contrast to more opaque domestic solutions for letting natural light into a household. Unlike Óláfr, who is himself the *geisli* ‘light-beam’ emanating Christ’s light, Mary is a clear glass through which the *geisli* of Christ shines at His birth. As a poem with a particular emphasis on the Virgin Mary, this figure receives a great deal of attention for her righteousness as expressed through light imagery, as when she is called *giftu vegr, og geisli lofta, gimsteinn brúða og drotning himna* ‘way of grace, and ray of the skies, gemstone of brides and queen of the heavens’ (stanza 89). She is not only described as a *geisli* ‘light-beam’ emanating from Christ, but also as purity itself and a gemstone; her purity equates to heavenly value, as she proves herself a fitting avenue for Christ’s light to enter the world. Likewise, Christ continues to be presented in similar terms, depicted as having a *ljós líkam* ‘bright body’ in stanza 35 and being Mary’s ultimate source of spiritual light.

Unlike previous examples from Christian skaldic verse, where poets presented the Incarnation as an adornment, and perhaps even an arming for spiritual battle, the *Lilja* poet chooses to focus on the deception at work against Lucifer through the Incarnation. Specifically, *Lilja* develops the concept of Lucifer being kept ignorant of Christ’s divine identity, and how this relates to doctrine on the devil’s rights over humanity after the Fall. Stanza 39 presents a puzzled Lucifer, blinded to Christ’s divinity and aware that something is being

cleverly hidden from him. Even more intriguingly, he devotes attention to Lucifer's own attempts at deception, which are successful with humanity but not so with Christ. Stanza 17 lays out the plans of Lucifer who, *settr flærðum* 'filled with deceit', seeks *að freista framt og talar með þrettum* 'to tempt impertinently and speaks with tricks' when speaking with Eve. The description of Loki as changeable in *Gylfaginning* 33 seems not unlike Lucifer's deceptive nature, suggesting a potential link between these two figures in the minds of a Norse literary audience in the medieval period. There may be something to this similarity, since Lucifer is described as *bruggandi dreggjar dauðans* 'brewing the dregs of death' and being *fjölunnigr* 'skilled in black magic' in stanza 15 when he conceals himself by *forma mál innan ormi* 'forming speech inside a serpent'; the terms chosen here are also used commonly to refer to pagan or non-Christian magic, which by the time of this composition would have applied to Norse mythological beliefs. This presentation of shape shifting, particularly in the context of using magic, suggests more of a Norse mythological flavour than descriptions of Christ's Incarnation. In contrast to Lucifer's shape-shifting, the Incarnation is described in stanza 24 as Christ clothing Himself in Mary's flesh, which could be construed as either a covering for concealment or an arming for spiritual battle; in either case, Christ's human nature is not brought about by magical shape-shifting, though His divinity remains hidden from the devil.

Lucifer, both in his interaction with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and in his spiritual battle with Christ, is described by the *Lilja* poet as an *ormr* 'serpent', which invites the reader to imagine him in both a Christian and Norse mythological context. In particular, this detail evokes the struggle between Þórr and the Miðgarðsormr in *Gylfaginning* from *Snorra Edda* and stanza 56 of the eddic poem *Völuspá*, inviting the comparison to be made between Christ and Þórr. This and another mythological narrative also share striking similarities with Lucifer's monologue in stanza 42 when he concludes, *því fýsir mig að æsa fram flein ódygðar að meini honum* 'therefore I wish to shoot forward the dart of faithlessness to His harm'. Not only could this passage potentially relate to the image of the Miðgarðsormr being caught on Þórr's fishing line, it may have evoked the narrative of Baldr being shot by a dart of mistletoe at Loki's suggestion from *Völuspá* 32. However, unlike the attack on Baldr, this dart of faithlessness twists back on itself in stanza 45, showing that Lucifer's spiritual

attack is turned to Christ's advantage. The image culminates in stanza 60, when Lucifer is specifically depicted as a serpent swallowing the bait of Christ at the Crucifixion and being caught on the hook of the Cross. The detailed exploration of the bait and hook topos not only reveals some of the poet's theological perspectives and familiarity with Latin and Old Norse Christian texts of the period, but also develops the theme of Christ's beguiling of Lucifer through His Incarnation and death on the Cross.

For all of the deception and cunning that takes place throughout *Lilja*, the poet actively departs from what he perceives as the murky and obscure archaisms of previous skaldic verse and its traditionally complex stanzas. Acknowledging the skaldic literary precedent for cleverly obscuring meaning, he explains in stanza 98, *því að hier má vel skilja skýr orð, skili þjóðir ljósan vilja minn, óbreytiligt tel veitt að vilja* 'because one may understand clear words well, let people understand my clear will, this ordinary speech given freely'. This declaration helps to explain one of the most significant distinctions between Christian skaldic verse and its earlier courtly setting; the agenda of praise for a famed ruler remains the same, but the once-celebrated cryptic qualities no longer hold the same importance. This decided departure from early skaldic style seems rooted in the light imagery of Christ that pervades the stanzas of *Lilja*, and the passage from stanza 98 is indicative of how important clarity is in Christian skaldic verse, particularly for the *Lilja* poet.

While themes of revelatory light and deceptive actions enjoy comprehensive development in *Lilja*, Christ's role as Warrior Chieftain receives considerably less attention, though His role as Protector and Liberator of humanity seems to hold a continued importance. Lucifer and his devils are presented as an imposing but ultimately defeated troop engaged in spiritual battle to secure humanity as their captors, and against which Christ and His followers must fight. For example, in stanza 47 Lucifer determines that he must send *sveitir sínar að drepa Brjót synða* 'his troops to kill the Breaker of sins', confirming the portrayal of spiritual battle. In stanza 48, Christ's disciples are referred to as His *hirð* 'retinue', and Judas's identity as a murderer within this retinue would have made his crime against Christ more damnable to a Scandinavian audience. The larger cast of characters gives the impression of a

battle, and the Harrowing of Hell in particular offers the poet an opportunity to showcase this image of Christ victorious against His enemies.

Lucifer's legal relationship with both humanity and Christ becomes a key point of exploration in this poem. Following his fall, Lucifer is described in stanza 15 as the *eingill er hafði feingið það bann* 'angel who had received that ban', referencing the legal practice of outlawry for those who committed severe legal misdeeds in various Scandinavian legal systems of the period. The poet also focuses on the devil's use of tricks and temptations in order to bring about the Fall of humanity, a method that Lucifer believes legitimises his rule over sinful people, but which Christ does not recognise as legitimate. Assessing Christ's identity in stanza 42, Lucifer draws on legal terminology when he concludes that *sjálf náttúran, sannar í slíku, váttaf manndóm* 'nature itself gives evidence of such a thing, testifies to His humanity', though the audience is aware that he is blinded to Christ's true identity. As with previous Christian skaldic poems, the account of the Last Judgement invites the use of legal terminology; in stanza 71, for example, the poet observes that *blót* 'sacrifices', *eiðar* 'oaths', *gjafar* 'gifts', and *mútur* 'bribes' would not alter Christ's judgement.⁶³⁰ Once again the Last Judgement is described as a *þing* 'assembly' where humanity cannot bring forward successful *varnir* 'defences' on their own merit, but must seek reconciliation with Christ. These details, which present Christ's relationship to humanity as a legal one, may serve as a further reflection of theological debates to do with the devil's rights.

As in *Líknarbraut*, *Lilja* also draws attention to the abundance of mercy poured out by both Christ and His followers. *Lilja* places a great deal of attention on the Virgin Mary, and consequently her representations are an important feature of this work. She is described as being both *glæsilig sem roðnuð rósa runnin upp við lifandi brunna* 'magnificent as a reddened rose sprung up beside living springs' and *ilmandi rót lítillætis* 'the fragrant root of humility' (stanza 25). She is also described as a kind of sustenance, when in

⁶³⁰ Perhaps significantly, terms such as *blót*, *eiðr*, and *gjaf* are also used outside a legal context, and may further add to the complexity of the relationship portrayed between Christ and humanity. *Blót*, for example, relates to spiritual sacrifice, while *eiðr* and *gjaf* both evoke the values existing between a warrior chieftain and his *þegn*.

stanza 89 she is called *past gleðinnar* ‘food of gladness’. These representations relate to, and perhaps serve as an extension of, the idea of Christ as Nourisher and Provider of abundance. As in previous Christian skaldic poems, one expression of Christ’s abundant mercy here is through the flow of blood and water from His body, both at His circumcision in stanza 35 and at the Crucifixion. In each instance the flow is symbolic of an outpour of mercy as He extends salvation to humanity. The ways in which this concept is represented evoke agricultural images and a theme of nourishment. The poet’s multiple references to roots, in particular, emphasise the organic and natural spread of spiritual life, with Christ as its ultimate source.

Sins are perceived not only as a legal breach against God in *Lilja*, but also as an injury and disease that leads to spiritual death. Consequently, themes of disease and healing play an important role in *Lilja*, just as they did in *Líknarbraut*. Sinfulness spreads organically from the Fall in stanza 20, where *remman brast af rót í kvistu* ‘the bitterness sprang forth from root to twigs’. The poet equates this organic growth of sin with the spread of a disease, explaining that *rann glæpr af hverjum til annars* ‘sin ran from one to the next’, and that the world was *lífs andvani en fullr af grandí* ‘devoid of life and full of injury’. The poet’s despair prompts him to ask *en hvað er til ráða?* ‘what remedy is there?’ for this dead world in stanza 21, and concludes joyfully that mankind *lífguð verði* ‘may be revived’ through Christ. Mary, like Christ, is seen as a source of life when she is described in stanza 89 as *æðr líknar og lífgan þjóða* ‘vein of grace and life-giver of people’, as well as *lækning sóttá* ‘healing of illnesses’. All of these instances refer to humanity’s spiritual state, but *Lilja* also frequently turns its attention to physical details in its narrative. In Lucifer’s contemplation of Christ in stanza 42, he observes that this man *þystir og er fölr af föstum* ‘thirsts and is pale from fasts’, affirming Christ’s human characteristics. Christ’s ministry on earth, as expressed in stanza 46, focuses on His miraculous healings, making the connection between physical and spiritual healing. In contrast, those who conspire against Christ in stanza 48 are described as being *fullr upp af galli grimdar* ‘filled up with the gall of grimness’, reinforcing the concept of sin as disease and illness. Christ’s role as the wounded Physician emerges at the Crucifixion in stanza 55, where the poet explains *Hann græddi oss, en helstríð mæddi* ‘He healed us, but agony wearied Him’. Lucifer, who attempted to defeat

Christ through the Crucifixion, is himself *lamdr og meiddr* 'lamed and injured' at the Harrowing of Hell in stanza 61, and obliged to release humanity to Christ. Thus *Lilja* takes the image of Christ as Physician and develops representations of sin as disease and injury more fully than earlier Christian skaldic poems.

Compared to the other poems examined in this thesis, *Lilja* offers by far the most detailed representations of Christ, particularly in His engagement with Lucifer and His relationship with humanity. To secure humanity's salvation, Christ is portrayed as laying a trap against the devil, engaging in spiritual battle against Lucifer's troops, securing legal reconciliation for His people, and causing not only spiritual healing but also the flourishing of humanity through His abundant flow of mercy. These representations derive from a number of Christian literary influences, but also resemble in many ways the Norse narratives of Baldr's death and Þórr fishing for the Miðgarðsormr. Though the connections to myth are speculative, what remains clear is that, through the course of Christian skaldic poetry's development, the ways in which Christ was presented build upon one another and gain increasing complexity over time. *Lilja* is thus a satisfying culmination of many ideas explored throughout the thesis as the poet weaves them throughout his complex work.

Chapter Seven - Conclusions

This study began with an introductory overview of Christian skaldic poetry, as well as the historic and cultural context in which poems of this genre were composed. Having established the grounds for focusing on the hagiographical *Geisli* and the homiletic and didactic *Harmsól*, *Leiðarvísan*, *Líknarbraut*, and *Lilja*, I undertook an analysis of these poems that identified both common features and unique elements in their representations of Christ. From this analysis it is evident that a great variety of influences – both direct and indirect – have reshaped the presentation of Christ in each of these poems. In many cases, the influences are a combination of biblical and patristic writings, alongside some Old Norse mythological, literary, and cultural precedents. Despite the variety of influences, themes, and purposes within each poem reviewed in this study, what has emerged are a number of key representations of Christ that are common to all these poems and define His relationship with humanity and individual biblical figures. These representations can be classified in five categories:

- (i) Christ as Warrior Chieftain
- (ii) Christ as Healer and Abundant Nourisher
- (iii) Christ as Legal Authority
- (iv) Christ as Beguiler
- (v) Christ as Light

These categories frequently overlap with one another, as each poet juxtaposes and combines them in order to create an even more complex set of portrayals. This thesis concludes with a review of Christ's representations within these five categories, identifying how they were developed in each poem and what they communicate about Christ's identity and relationship with humanity.

(i) Christ as Warrior Chieftain

Beginning with Einarr Skúlason's hagiographical *Geisli* and persisting through the homiletic and didactic Christian skaldic poems, the identification of Christ as

Warrior Chieftain plays an important role in shaping the audience's perceptions of His relationship with humanity. This category covers a variety of characteristics, from generous hospitality, to leadership in battle, to the navigation of treacherous seas. In combination, the image of Christ that emerges is one derived from Norse and Christian literary devices that also evoke certain roles of leadership in both Norwegian and Icelandic contexts. Individually, each poem uses this representation in different ways to suit its varying purposes.

To better understand the characteristics associated with this representation, it is useful to have some knowledge of the warrior chieftain in early Germanic contexts, particularly in how early accounts inform and influence modern perceptions. The scholarly notion of *comitatus*, which in part defines the traditional chieftain-*þegn* relationship, is primarily derived from two early Roman sources: Julius Caesar's *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* (51 B.C.) and Tacitus's *De Origine et situ Germanorum* (c. 98 A.D.), also known as *Germania*.⁶³¹ O'Donoghue has noted that the stereotype of the brave Northern hero also has much to do with the influence of Thomas Bartholin's 1689 work, *Antiquitatem Danicorum de Causis Contemptae a Danis adhuc Gentibus Mortis* 'Danish Antiquities Concerning the Reasons for the Pagan Danes' Disdain for Death', though this itself derives influence from earlier Roman accounts.⁶³² Chapters seven through nine of Tacitus's *Germania* in particular shape modern notions about retinues, chieftaincies, and the legal organisation in early Germanic societies. While these accounts provide a wealth of information on Germanic life during the time in which they were composed, Thompson has rightly pointed out that 'Germanic society is considered for the most part as though it had existed in a political vacuum' with little regard for cultural and historical change over time.⁶³³ Abram is the latest in a long line of scholars to speculate that Tacitus focuses on the praiseworthy aspects of Germanic societies in part 'to show how 'decadent' Roman society might be improved by imitating its less civilized

⁶³¹ Woolf 1986: 177. Cf. Thompson 1965: v, 25. See chapters seven through nine of *Germania*; Amm. Marc. xvi 12.60; Agathias *Hist.* i. 15. Exile: pp. 80-99f; and Thompson 1965: 50.

⁶³² O'Donoghue 2008: 108-9.

⁶³³ Thompson 1965: v.

neighbours'.⁶³⁴ As accounts of Germanic life from other and opposing cultures, the perspective of Roman sources should therefore be read with caution. If we read Caesar and Tacitus alongside contemporary archaeological evidence and accept the anthropological description with 'a pinch of salt', as Abram suggests, we may gain some insight into how the heroic idiom functions in Christian skaldic poems spanning from the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, and particularly how these authors contribute to the presentation of Christ as a Warrior Chieftain with retainer-like followers engaged in spiritual battle.⁶³⁵

Chieftaincies existed from as early as the time Julius Caesar composed *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* in 51 B.C., though in the context of this work the chieftain was always a temporary figure whose purpose was to lead his men in battle. By 98 A.D., when Tacitus composed his work, the new practice of land ownership created a disparity in wealth and may explain why the loyalty that a retinue showed to its chief had increased dramatically by this period.⁶³⁶ As certain men became significantly wealthier than others, it became possible for them to secure loyalty by distributing wealth to their retainers, solidifying the relationship in both war and peacetime. A good chieftain demonstrated a generosity of wealth and hospitality to his warriors and possessed such a high degree of fame that he would be chosen over elected officials for diplomatic talks with foreign rulers.⁶³⁷ These details continue to frame interpretations of Germanic literature and shape perceptions of what defined a heroic warrior chieftain.

As much as these earlier sources continue to influence modern perceptions of both chieftain-*þegn* relationships and war-bands in the North, the more immediate literary influences for Christian skalds would have likely been the heroic poems of the *Edda*, or even the battle poems of tenth-century skalds. For this reason, we will now turn our attention to the ideas contemporary with Christian skaldic poetry, distinguishing where possible between literary representations and contemporary political practice. In the period that Christian

⁶³⁴ Abram 2011: 54. Cf. North 1997: 10, 45-6, 79, and 208-10; and Davidson 1964: 14-15.

⁶³⁵ Abram 2011: 54.

⁶³⁶ Thompson 1965: 48. For details on the development of *comitatus* through the social change of privately owned wealth, see Thompson 1965: 48-50.

⁶³⁷ Thompson 1965: 56.

skaldic verse was composed – between roughly the twelfth and fourteenth centuries – the term *þegn* ‘retainer’ denoted ‘a member of the personal escort of a prince, or some other personage’, defining the relationship of men loyal to the king in Norway, as well as the followers of earls, archbishops and bishops.⁶³⁸ To some extent this Norwegian system was adopted and became more developed in Iceland, serving as the basis for the relationship between *goðar* and their followers.⁶³⁹ As noted in the analysis for *Geisli* 5 in chapter two, the term *þegn* does occur in what is regarded as the final extant stanza of Ulfr Uggason’s *Húsdrápa* ‘Eulogy on a House’, a rare example of a praise poem for an Icelandic chieftain that helps to confirm that this type of relationship existed in Iceland as well.⁶⁴⁰ Within this Icelandic system the *goðar* took on religious orders to keep power within their families for the first few centuries after the Conversion. Haki Antonsson has observed that, consequently, ‘the boundary between the chieftain and the ecclesiastical class had been exceedingly blurred’ as the role of chieftain shifted in purpose over time and between countries.⁶⁴¹ However, by the twelfth century the trend of ordaining *goðorð* ceased as men from humbler backgrounds became priests, while chieftains continued to own the church properties.⁶⁴²

Norway tends to offer more relevant parallels to Christ in these poems in terms of its governance under a central king compared to the numerous *goðar*, or Icelandic chieftains, governing in Iceland. During the centuries in which Christian skaldic verse was produced, these *goðar* faced increasing internal strife, with some *goðorð* ‘chieftaincies’ becoming more powerful than others. Conflicts among these chieftains were partly encouraged by the king of Norway, whose ‘tactics were to tie as many as possible of the Icelandic chieftains to him as liege men so that he could then command them as it suited him’.⁶⁴³ Throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the class difference between *goðar* and the general populace increased with the tithes. While some *goðar* fell

⁶³⁸ Jón Viðar Sigurðsson 1999: 78.

⁶³⁹ Jón Viðar Sigurðsson 1999: 78.

⁶⁴⁰ North *et al.* 2011: 587. Christ’s followers are identified using the noun *þegn* in *Geisli* 11; *Leiðarvísan* 15 and 33; and *Liknarbraut* 29.

⁶⁴¹ Haki Antonsson 2012: 125. Cf. Orri Vésteinsson 2000.

⁶⁴² Orri Vésteinsson 2000: 182.

⁶⁴³ Jón Viðar Sigurðsson 1999: 13. Cf. Hastrup 1985: 232.

into obscurity in choosing to focus on the priesthood and governance of their particular *goðorð*, others sought an ever-increasing wealth through gaining property, followers, and alliances with ‘individuals who wielded the greatest power’.⁶⁴⁴ *Goðorð* gradually came to be known more as *ríki* ‘domains’,⁶⁴⁵ a shift that reflected their identity with property, and less influential *goðar* became liegemen of more powerful *goðar*, now called *stórgoðar* or *høfðingjar*, or even the Norwegian king. As Jón Jóhannesson observed, ‘the Icelanders were finding it increasingly difficult to tolerate the constant civil unrest which had long plagued the land, and they were most anxious not only to have the king bring this disorder to a halt, but also to have him maintain peace in the future’.⁶⁴⁶ By 1262, when Icelanders handed over their country to Norway, all *goðar* had sworn allegiance to the Norwegian king, who established his officials to govern throughout Iceland on his behalf. *Goðar* continued to serve in their legal capacity, but they were now under the ultimate legislative and judicial authority of Norway. They often worked under earls, who served as the king of Norway’s delegates.⁶⁴⁷ Moreover, *goðar* now served the Norwegian king as retainers, and historical records show that this included going to battle on his behalf. Thus, Norway’s political influence grew within Iceland and reshaped its social hierarchy. Given that the poems in this study were written between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, Norwegian influence deserves consideration and, ultimately, provides some useful points of comparison.

Several details in the poems reviewed for this thesis point to the representation of Christ as Ruler within a courtly context. The common Christian skaldic representation of heaven as Christ’s *høll* ‘hall’ or *salr* ‘hall’ takes on the meaning of a great hall, which could be ruled by a chieftain or king.⁶⁴⁸ Since skalds never use more specific terms such as *goðorð*, the prosaic Icelandic word for ‘chieftaincy’, *høll* and *salr* could be understood more fluidly and

⁶⁴⁴ Jón Jóhannesson 1974: 230.

⁶⁴⁵ This can also mean ‘authority’ over men from the thirteenth century. Jón Jóhannesson 1974: 60. Cf. Helle 2003: 219.

⁶⁴⁶ Jón Jóhannesson 1974: 284. Cf. Jón Viðar Sigurðsson 1999: 76.

⁶⁴⁷ Jón Jóhannesson 1974: 286.

⁶⁴⁸ The noun *høll* ‘hall’ is used in descriptions of the heavens in *Geisli* 2, 5, 11 and 64; *Harmsól* 2 and 28; *Leiðarvísan* 15, 21, 38, and 45; and *Líknarbraut* 22 and 31. *Sal* ‘hall’ occurs once in the heaven kenning in *Geisli* 7. *Lilja* is the only work among the five Christian skaldic poems in this study that does not describe heaven as a hall.

symbolically while still evoking heroic age literature about rulers past. All of the poems selected for this thesis further describe heaven as God's *ríki* 'kingdom', reinforcing Christ's role of leadership.⁶⁴⁹ The courtly tradition is more explicitly evoked by the poets' references to their works as praise poems, as when the *Leiðarvísan* poet calls his work *þessi hróðr* 'this praise poem' in stanza 2, *mærð* 'praise' in stanzas 2 and 3, and *bragr* 'poem in praise of its ruler' in stanza 45.⁶⁵⁰ These descriptions of the poems, and the emphasis on the praise of Christ and particular Christian figures within them, help to establish the setting and point back to the earliest historical use for skaldic poetry. Some of the titles used of Christ similarly evoke earlier Norse literature. *Geisli*, for example, presents Christ as *Jǫfurr*, *Dǫglingr*, and *Gramr*, drawing on much older words for Scandinavian warrior chieftains and suggesting this earlier relationship while also creating the connection to Norwegian kingships through Christ's associations with St Óláfr in the poem.⁶⁵¹ Other titles for Christ, among them *Konungr*, *Harri*, *Siklingr*, *Vísi*, *Hildingr*, *Mildingr*, *Hilmir*, and *Stillir*, all express Christ's role as Ruler in earlier Christian skaldic poetry but do not appear in *Lilja*.⁶⁵² Similarly, the adjective *snjallr*, meaning 'bold' or 'valiant', describes

⁶⁴⁹ Heaven is identified as a *ríki* 'kingdom' in *Geisli* 16; *Harmsól* 24 and 49; *Leiðarvísan* 14; *Líknarbraut* 1 and 10; and *Lilja* 69 and 87. The same term is used in reference to Christ or God's power in *Harmsól* 22 and 40.

⁶⁵⁰ For references to a Christian skaldic poem as *hróðr*, see *Geisli* 34; *Leiðarvísan* 1, 2, and 25; and *Líknarbraut* 9, 51, and 64. *Mærð* 'praise' is used to identify a praise poem in *Geisli* 9, 18, and 21; and *Leiðarvísan* 2 and 3. *Mærð* is used to praise Óláfr in *Geisli* 39, 46, and 71; and it is used to praise God in *Harmsól* 2 and 8, and Christ in *Líknarbraut* 2. For references to a Christian skaldic poem as a *bragr*, see *Geisli* 1, 9, 11, 50, 68, 70 and 71; *Harmsól* 64; and *Leiðarvísan* 4, 5, 43, 44, and 45. These terms seem not to appear in *Lilja* to describe the work as a praise-poem.

⁶⁵¹ For references to Christ as *Jǫfurr*, see *Geisli* 5 and 64; *Harmsól* 12, 32, 44, 45, 56, 62, and 65; *Leiðarvísan* 17, 26, 38, and 42; and *Líknarbraut* 2 and 8. Christ is called *Dǫglingr* in *Geisli* 5 and *Leiðarvísan* 1, 35, and 45. For references to Christ as *Gramr* 'Warrior Chieftain', see *Geisli* 18, 21, 24, 27, 30, 33, 36, 39, 42, and 45; *Harmsól* 14, 18, 22, 34, 52, and 60; *Leiðarvísan* 25, 29, 33, and 45; and *Líknarbraut* 22, 24, 30, 42, and 43.

⁶⁵² *Konungr* 'King' is used of Christ numerous times in each of the first four Christian skaldic poems reviewed in this thesis, but does not occur in *Lilja*. For references to Christ as *Harri*, see *Geisli* 19; *Harmsól* 16 and 41; *Leiðarvísan* 1 and 2; and *Líknarbraut* 31. For references to Christ as *Siklingr*, see *Geisli* 67; *Leiðarvísan* 13, 14, 17, 21, 26, 30, and 31; and *Líknarbraut* 19 and 24. Christ is identified as *Vísi* 'Leader' in *Geisli* 2 and 71; *Harmsól* 13; and *Lilja* 7, 12, and 44. For examples of Christ as *Hildingr* 'Chief', see *Harmsól* 19, 38, and 60; and *Líknarbraut* 7, 15, and 18. Christ is called *Mildingr* 'Liberal Man' in *Geisli* 58, *Harmsól* 23, *Leiðarvísan* 23, and *Líknarbraut* 12. Christ is named *Hilmir* 'Prince' in *Geisli* 28 and 67; *Leiðarvísan* 4 and 38; and *Líknarbraut* 16 and 25. For examples of Christ as *Stillir* 'Ruler', see *Harmsól* 1 and 23; *Leiðarvísan* 42; and *Líknarbraut* 17.

Christ in the first four poems but not in *Lilja*.⁶⁵³ The titles in *Lilja* that identify Christ's role as Warrior Chieftain seem to be limited to *Dróttinn*, which is used of Christ numerous times throughout the entire Christian skaldic corpus, and *Höfðingi* which is used of the Virgin Mary in *Harmsól* 61 and Christ in *Lilja* 28. The contexts for the composition of the homiletic and didactic poems reviewed in this thesis, unlike *Geisli*, are not entirely clear, making it more difficult to discern whether the authors presented Christ more as an Icelandic *góði*, the Norwegian king, or a figure combining their characteristics with literary tropes. These particular details, rather than limiting the scope of possibility, instead offer a general representation of Christ as Ruler, reflecting a theologically sound concept by making use of relevant local terms.

Christ's relationship with His followers seems to have been influenced in some capacity by the Germanic heroic ideal of gift giving, a practice that existed as both a literary concept and standard means of maintaining political relationships between a leader and his *vinr* 'friend' in Norway and Iceland. The degree to which friendship, loyalty, gift giving, and fosterage play a role suggest that these were useful frameworks for expressing Christ's relationship with humanity to the original audience. In *Geisli* Einarr Skúlason equates Christ's generosity in bringing about humanity's salvation with the compensation he hopes to receive from his audience for the poem's composition. The poet thus evokes ideals and practices that were admired, if not directly implemented by medieval Icelanders and Norwegians. God's gifts to King David in exchange for his penitent spirit in *Harmsól* 49 are called *vingjafar* 'gifts of friendship', a word that draws on the Christian literary concept of *amicus Dei* 'friend of God'. Gamli kanóki explains that King David is rewarded with heavenly riches, but does so through terminology used to describe traditional gift exchanges between chieftains and their retainers.⁶⁵⁴ The noun *auðr* 'wealth' is used in reference to Christ's generosity with heavenly riches in *Geisli* 5, and also appears in

⁶⁵³ Christ is described as *snjallr*, meaning 'valiant' or 'wise', in *Geisli* 1; *Harmsól* 5, 35, 40, 45, and 52; and *Leiðarvísan* 7, 15, 23, 25, 29, 31, 33, and 36; and *Líknarbraut* 7 and 43. The power of the Cross is similarly described as *snjallr* in *Leiðarvísan* 38.

⁶⁵⁴ *Vinr* 'friend' is used to identify Óláfr in *Geisli* 9, 62, 64, and 68; Moses in *Leiðarvísan* 19; John the Baptist in *Lilja* 37; and God's followers generally in *Geisli* 63, *Harmsól* 47, and *Líknarbraut* 31. *Gjof*, in reference to a gift from God, occurs in *Geisli* 6 and 64; and *Harmsól* 49. *Lilja* 71 uses *gjof* in the sense of 'bribe' within the legal setting of the Last Judgement.

Líknarbraut 33 where the ship of the Cross bears the wealth of grace. The description of the sun as a *ljósgim* ‘light-jewel’ in a Christ-kenning in *Leiðarvísan* 35 similarly suggests that the heavens are the spiritual reward for Christ’s retainers.⁶⁵⁵ The *Leiðarvísan* poet asks for a spiritual reward in exchange for his poetry in stanza 49, but does so in a particularly courtly manner, explaining that for his *óðgerð* ‘poetry-making’, he hopes for *gjöld með leigum* ‘payment with wages’, which seems similar to the business arrangement on which earlier skalds would have made their living. God’s *risna* ‘hospitality’ when He provides water and manna for the Israelites in *Leiðarvísan* 20 adds to His depiction as a generous Ruler. The representation of gift-giving, along with requests for heavenly wealth based on poetic compositions, seems to have been an earlier rather than a later practice in Christian skaldic poetry, perhaps reflecting the gradual move away from the genre’s courtly roots and traditional tropes.

Christ’s followers frequently lend themselves to depictions as retainers in spiritual battle, with Christ as their Warrior Chieftain. Angels, martyrs, followers of Christ, and the whole of humanity are identified at various points in Christian skaldic poems as *hirð*, *lið* and *drótt* in groups, suggesting a relationship in which Christ is their King or Chieftain.⁶⁵⁶ The chieftain-*þegn* relationship expressed in *Geisli*, while drawing on the Germanic literary concept of the heroic, must be contextualized within the framework of the Norwegian monarchy, and the links between Christ and Óláfr thus must also be understood through that framework. Óláfr’s identification as *Guðs ríðari* ‘God’s knight’ in stanzas 18, 21, 24, 27, 30, 33, 36, 39, 42, and 45 shows that, while some of the details in this poem harken back to much earlier heroic tropes, others are drawn from the relatively recent influence of courtly literary traditions outside Scandinavia. Byock’s observations on *Beowulf* may be re-used as an appropriate reflection of how

⁶⁵⁵ See *Leiðarvísan* 2 and 35 for the references to the sun as *gim* ‘gem’. In *Líknarbraut* 7, Christ’s words are described as fairer than *gulli ok gimsteinum* ‘gold and gems’, and Mary is called the *gimsteinn vífa* ‘gemstone of women’ and *gimsteinn brúða* ‘gemstone of brides’ in *Lilja* 27 and 89, respectively.

⁶⁵⁶ *Geisli* 5 refers to the angels in heaven as *hirð*. The term is also used in *Lilja* 34 in reference to shepherds, and *Lilja* 48 in reference to Christ’s disciples. Multiple stanzas of *Geisli* refer to literal troops in military battle as *lið*, while humanity is described as Christ’s *lið* in *Geisli* 46 and 62; *Harmsól* 27; *Leiðarvísan* 13, 17, and 21; and *Líknarbraut* 39 and 52. Christ’s followers are identified as *drótt* in *Harmsól* 35, 40, 45, and 48; *Leiðarvísan* 45; and *Líknarbraut* 42. Angels are similarly described as *drótt* in *Harmsól* 36.

figures such as St Óláfr in *Geisli* strike the balance between two literary cultures: '[t]he traditional heroic life, with its feats of bravery, proof of prowess, gaining of fame and fortune, and fateful end, has throughout been transmuted into an image acceptable for a Christian warrior to emulate'.⁶⁵⁷ The retainer relationship is used to describe the disciples and martyrs throughout Christian skaldic verse, but Óláfr's role as Norway's *rex perpetuus* sets him apart as a compelling point of comparison with Christ.

Not all of these poems present Christ's followers in such a positive light. In *Harmsól* 16, for example, Gamli kanóki refers to himself as *Yðvarr aumligr þræll* 'Your wretched slave' when addressing Christ, a description that highlights his penitential spirit and feelings of inadequacy towards a merciful Chieftain against whom he has committed sins.⁶⁵⁸ However, even with the poet's humble attitude towards his relationship with God, there are still examples where a follower of Christ is described as being in a chieftain-*þegn* relationship with Christ. The penitent King David in *Harmsól* 49, for example, is called *drengr*, an exclusively Scandinavian term that shifted in meaning from a member of a *comitatus* to a *þegn* in service of a king, in this case Christ.⁶⁵⁹ The *Harmsól* poet similarly uses *þjónn* (stanza 10), *þræll* (stanza 16) and *lið* (stanza 18) in reference to Christ's followers, once again identifying humanity through the former while establishing a chieftain-*þegn* relationship with the latter.⁶⁶⁰ While Christ's followers are still considered his retinue in *Lilja*, the poet also presents the devil's followers as his troops in stanza 17 and identifies Judas as a member of Christ's retinue, albeit a disloyal one, in stanza 48. The image of Christ developed in these descriptions express His sovereignty, as well as His companionship with His retinue.

⁶⁵⁷ Byock 2001: 164. This transformation happened in England as early as the eighth century, in contrast with Norway and Iceland where such representations do not appear in skaldic verse until the twelfth century.

⁶⁵⁸ *Þræll* is used to describe Christ's followers in *Geisli* 61; *Harmsól* 16 and 58; and *Líknarbraut* 33 and 35. The same term is used in reference to the people who attacked Christ at the Crucifixion in *Lilja* 52.

⁶⁵⁹ *Drengr* is used in reference to Christ's followers generally in *Geisli* 22 and *Harmsól* 37. This also applies to specific individuals and their relationships with Christ: *drengr* describes King David in *Harmsól* 49, and Judas in *Lilja* 48.

⁶⁶⁰ The term *þjónn* 'servant' is used of Ríkarðr as a servant of God in *Geisli* 58; of the poet as Christ's sinful servant in *Harmsól* 10; and of the poet as Christ's servant in *Lilja* 87.

While the *comitatus*-like relationship Christ shares with His followers is well established in early Christian skaldic verse, many of the details about Christ's opponents and their contrasting characteristics do not feature until later works. Poems of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries favour notions of Christ destroying, breaking, or harming sin, which present His actions in the context of spiritual battle.⁶⁶¹ The verb *glata* 'to destroy' is used twice in *Harmsól*: first to express that sin is destroyed by Christ in stanza 18, explaining in stanza 54 that humanity is destroyed by sin if they do not receive this help. While *Harmsól* 49 hints at this with its description of the Incarnation as both an arming for battle and *merki*, meaning 'tokens' or 'war-standards', the image becomes much more developed in *Leiðarvísan*, *Líknarbraut*, and *Lilja*.⁶⁶² *Leiðarvísan* 36 also makes use of *merki*, this time in reference to the holy writings about the Last Judgement, and refers to Christ as *dáðsterkr Dróttinn himintorgu* 'deed-strong Lord of the heaven-shield', describing Him in terms associated with fame and battle. As in *Harmsól*, the *Líknarbraut* poet presents the Incarnation as an arming for spiritual battle when he observes that Christ *skrýddi Sik, hjálmprýddan* 'dressed Himself, helmet-adorned,' with flesh in stanza 12;⁶⁶³ and at the Resurrection in stanza 23, the completion of His spiritual victory over sin and death, Christ is called *Angrhegnandi* 'sorrow-Punisher'. Christ's involvement in spiritual warfare becomes a particularly important part of the poem *Lilja*, which not only develops Lucifer and his devils as Christ's specific enemy in battle, but also devotes sections of the poem to Lucifer's soliloquies, as when he determines that he must send *sveitir sínar að drepa Brjót synda* 'his troops to kill the Breaker of sins' in stanza 47. The warfare aspect of this characterisation for Christ not only remains important across the corpus, but also becomes increasingly used as a means of expressing salvation through spiritual victory. In this way, the Christ of Christian skaldic verse draws on literary tropes of the celebrated warrior chieftain in Norse literature.

⁶⁶¹ Christ is described as harming or destroying *anгр* 'sorrow' in *Harmsól* 21 and 65; and *Líknarbraut* 23, 39, 49, and 51. In *Lilja* 47 Lucifer sends *sveitir sínar að drepa Brjót synda* 'his troops to kill the Breaker of sins' who is Christ.

⁶⁶² *Merki* refers to Christ's signs in *Harmsól* 18 and 53, the Cross-sign in *Líknarbraut* 32 and 52, signs of mercy in *Lilja* 87, and miraculous events in *Lilja* 5, 23, and 40.

⁶⁶³ The noun *hjalmr* 'helmet' is used in heaven kennings in *Harmsól* 33; *Leiðarvísan* 30 and 45; and *Líknarbraut* 9 and 21.

The culture of seafaring, reflected in these representations of Christ as Captain of a ship, differed between Norway and Iceland. While medieval Norway enjoyed a thriving maritime culture, Icelanders became increasingly dependent on Norway for supplies from the Continent. Ships certainly played an important role in the Age of Settlement, as people made their way to Iceland, with the more powerful settlers likely having ‘their own ships in which they brought their retinues with them’.⁶⁶⁴ *Knerrir* ‘mercantile ships’ were used by these early Icelanders to trade with other peoples, and were also used in expeditions and warfare.⁶⁶⁵ However, ship ownership steadily declined after the tenth century, and by the twelfth century it seems that only five Icelanders owned ships, some of which were owned jointly with Norwegians.⁶⁶⁶ By 1220 the only Icelandic to own a ship, according to Sturla Þórðarson, is said to have been Snorri Sturluson, and that was a gift given in that year by Earl Skúli of Norway.⁶⁶⁷ These details reveal that, by the time Christian skaldic verse was being produced, seafaring was critical to the lives of Icelanders without being an integral part of their own culture and livelihood. In addition to serving as a cultural and agricultural resource to Iceland through their frequent excursions, Norwegians also possessed great military prowess on the sea.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the image of Christ as Captain of a ship representing the Cross seems to have contributed to the notion of Christ as Warrior Chieftain, in some cases evoking sea-battles and in others suggesting a precious cargo was being carried across treacherous waters. In *Harmsól*, Gamli kanóki presents Christ as *Pengill* ‘Captain’ and *Stýri* ‘Steerer’, guiding the ship of heaven and His followers through the tempestuous seas of sinfulness in this world, though this is never made explicit.⁶⁶⁸ As a poem that meditates on the

⁶⁶⁴ Jón Jóhannesson 1974: 95. Jón Jóhannesson (1974: 322) also notes that ‘[m]erchants or traders were often referred to as ‘seafarers’. Cf. Helle 2003: 213.

⁶⁶⁵ Düwel 1998: 577. According to Düwel, ‘[i]n der Regel ist es schwierig, zw[ischen] Kriegsfahrt und Raubwiking auf der einen und H[andel]s-Unternehmen auf der anderen Seite zu unterscheiden’ ‘usually, it is difficult to distinguish between war and pillaging Viking ships on one side and commercial businesses on the other side’ (Düwel 1998: 577). Cf. Jesch 2001: 64.

⁶⁶⁶ Jón Jóhannesson 1974: 96.

⁶⁶⁷ Jón Jóhannesson 1974: 96.

⁶⁶⁸ Christ is called *Pengill* ‘Captain’ in *Harmsól* 12, *Leiðarvísan* 14, and *Liknarbraut* 43; the term is also used of Óláfr in *Geisli* 12, 43, and 56, and King David in *Harmsól* 48. Christ is described as *Stýrandi* in *Harmsól* 27 and 33; *Leiðarvísan* 21 and 41; and *Lilja* 12. The verb *stýra* describes

symbolic values of the Cross, *Líknarbraut* devotes stanza 33 to the image of the Cross as a *skeið* ‘warship’, captained by Christ, that carries *ítr farmr* ‘a splendid cargo’ *á vit strandar fósturlands* ‘towards the shore of our foster-land’. Christ is recognised in the latter example as Captain and capable military Leader over His troops. Culturally, the early seafaring *vikingar*, as well as the society of medieval Norway, share more in common with the portrayals of Christ as a ship’s Captain than the society in Iceland when these poems were composed. The notable lack of ship imagery in *Lilja* is perhaps indicative of an ever-diminishing connection between Icelandic rulers and seafaring, or at least a sign that this metaphor for Christ was no longer considered quite as useful.

Overall, Christ was understood as a combination of Warrior Chieftain and supreme Monarch. The nuances of language and ideas found in these poems suggest that the heroic idiom and contemporary political situations in Norway and Iceland contributed their own unique perspectives to develop a distinct and unique warrior chieftain image of Christ, who is described within a complex framework comprised of Germanic literary traditions, biblical and patristic writings, and contemporary roles of authority in Norway and Iceland.⁶⁶⁹ As explained in the analysis throughout the thesis, parallels with Norwegian systems of power tend to be more prevalent in these verses than parallels with Icelandic ones. In societies which experienced conversion only a few centuries earlier, and which held a keen interest in their literary and cultural traditions, the use of familiar heroic devices alongside contemporary systems of leadership would have helped to make Christ more accessible as a figure to be admired.

An examination of the terminology used in Christian skaldic verse reveals that the type of leadership role Christ takes on differs in type and specificity from poem to poem. Generally speaking, there does seem to be a shift away from this representation in later Christian skaldic poems. For example, the description of heaven as a hall does not occur in *Lilja*, nor do the terms *hróðr*, *mærd*, and *bragr* that identify the earlier works as praise poems in the courtly

Christ’s actions, in the sense of control or governance over creation, in *Harmsól* 29, *Leiðarvísan* 29, *Líknarbraut* 11, and *Lilja* 22.

⁶⁶⁹ For information about the divine-warrior theme in Christian literature, see Longman and Reid 1995; Aulén 1931; Boyd 1997; and Bettancourt 2010.

tradition. The most telling distinction between *Lilja* and the other poems in this thesis is the multitude of titles for Christ as Warrior Chieftain, King, and Ruler that appear in *Geisli*, *Harmsól*, *Leiðarvísan*, and *Líknarbraut*, compared to the significantly limited number in *Lilja*. Reflecting this general trend, the descriptions of Christ's followers as *hirð* and *drótt* occur in all but *Lilja*, though all of the poems do share in common their occasional descriptions of humanity as the servants or slaves of Christ. For as much as the poems considered in this thesis are united by a set of common characteristics, there are many ways in which *Lilja* remains singularly distinct from *Geisli*, *Harmsól*, *Leiðarvísan*, and *Líknarbraut*. The youngest of these five poems, it has a structure and subjects that are significantly influenced by literary styles and theological interests of the period in which it was composed. Its late composition date also places it in a period following the composition of *Snorra Edda* and the *Poetic Edda*, putting it in a position to react and respond to older Icelandic literature through the lens of Snorri's work. The poet's use of *hrynhent* metre, while drawing from Norse literary tradition in many respects, indicates a slight move away from strict skaldic metre and, perhaps, the language used to celebrate particular cultural values. The limited interest in Christ's role as Warrior Chieftain in this late medieval poem may thus be due to changing literary tastes and social values, as other representations of Christ became more relevant or better reflected popular representations of the day.

At first glance, *Geisli* seems like the best example for viewing Christ as Warrior Chieftain, as it is Einarr Skúlason's constant task to connect the martyred King Óláfr with Christ in his retelling of miraculous healings and battlefield victories. Additionally, the poet plays off of traditional expectations for and hints at payment for his poetry, highlighting the gift-giving dynamic at work. However, there are certain details and characterisations of Christ that fit within this warrior chieftain category but only occur in the homiletic and didactic poems in this thesis. The representations of Christ as the Captain of a ship and Steerer of Creation appear in all but *Geisli*, which at best hints at ship imagery in *Geisli* 57 when expressing God's strength as *kraptr*. This development in Christ's role as the Captain of a ship has its roots in the writings of Venantius Fortunatus, but also employs terminology that suggests Christ is captaining nothing less than a warship that carries his *comitatus* of men to the foster-land of heaven. In

addition to this new facet of the Warrior Chieftain role, poems after *Geisli* also add to the battle imagery associated with Christ through the addition of heaven kennings that use the terms *hjalmr* ‘helmet’ and *targa* ‘shield’, and descriptions of sin being harmed or destroyed. Thus the homiletic and didactic poems do further develop the representation of Christ as Warrior Chieftain, though this portrayal seems significantly less important in *Lilja* than other categories.

(ii) Christ as Healer and Abundant Nourisher

The generosity of Christ explored in His representation as Warrior Chieftain also applies to His twinned roles as Healer and Nourisher. A number of details from the five poems reviewed in this thesis point to the portrayal of Christ as Warrior Chieftain, a depiction that pervades the whole Christian skaldic corpus with varying degrees of specificity. The expressions of Christ’s abundant mercy through nourishment and healing become increasingly important in poems of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. In particular, the metaphors become at once more vivid and more entwined with one another.

Christ’s role as Healer first appears in the miraculous healings performed by Himself and through His followers, and develops a rich metaphorical sense over the course of Christian skaldic verse. In *Geisli* Christ fulfills His role as Healer indirectly through Óláfr, who performs several miraculous healings following his martyrdom on the battlefield. Einarr Skúlason also refers to Christ as both *Vqrðr* ‘Guardian’ (stanza 19) and *Græðari* ‘Healer’ (stanza 21), representing Him as both a Protector and Physician.⁶⁷⁰ Homiletic and didactic poems describe sin as both an injury and disease gripping mankind that only Christ can heal. In *Harmsól* 54, for example, Gamli kanóki asks Christ *græða andar sör* ‘to heal the soul’s wounds’, which are also presented as *hættligar benjar* ‘death-dangerous wounds’ in the same stanza; this word choice may further allude to *Harmsól* 33 where *sör ok kross dyggs Dróttins várs* ‘the wounds and Cross of our dear Lord’ at the Last Judgement and thereby

⁶⁷⁰ For references to Christ as *Vqrðr*, see *Geisli* 19; *Harmsól* 5, 30, 52, and 65; *Leiðarvísan* 6 and 10; and *Líknarbraut* 15. *Græðari* refers to Christ in *Geisli* 21 and *Líknarbraut* 16.

associated the soul's wounds with Christ's.⁶⁷¹ *Líknarbraut* devotes particular attention to the portrayal of Christ as the Healer of injurious sins, referring to Him as both *sáran Græðara* 'wounded Saviour' in stanza 16 and *Læknir* 'Healer' in stanza 31; the poet deliberately juxtaposes Christ's wounded body at the Crucifixion with His ability to heal mankind through His death on the Cross.⁶⁷² The meaning of the title *Líknarbraut*, 'Way of Grace', not only identifies the Cross as the pathway to salvation, but also hints at its role in healing humanity through Christ's sacrifice.⁶⁷³ The *Lilja* poet very plainly presents sinfulness as a disease leading to spiritual death in stanza 20 when he explains that *rann glæpr af hverjum til annars* 'sin ran from one to the next', and the world was *lífs andvani en fullr af grandí* 'devoid of life and full of injury'.⁶⁷⁴ This is evidenced in part through the description of bitterness and wrath as *gall* in men's hearts in *Lilja* 48 and 77.⁶⁷⁵ Christ and His sacrifice are once again identified as the source of healing and renewed life, as observed in the lines *Hann græddi oss, en helstrið mæddi* 'He healed us, but agony wearied Him' (*Lilja* 55).⁶⁷⁶ Mary too has the ability to heal in *Lilja* 89, where she is described as the *æðr líknar og lífgan þjóða* 'vein of grace and life-giver of people', as well as *lækning sóttá* 'healing of illnesses'.⁶⁷⁷ In several of these poems, certain kennings present Christ in active battle against the injuries of sin, once again connecting this representation with that of Christ engaged in spiritual battle as

⁶⁷¹ The verb *græða* refers to metaphorical healing from sinfulness in *Harmsól* 54, and *Lilja* 55 and 91. The noun *sár* metaphorically expresses sinfulness in *Harmsól* 54 and *Lilja* 91; it also describes Christ's wounds at the Crucifixion in *Harmsól* 33; *Leiðarvísan* 20; *Líknarbraut* 37 and 43; and *Lilja* 5, 71, and 87.

⁶⁷² See *Geisli* 57 and *Líknarbraut* 31 for references to Christ as *Læknir*. For the use of *lækna* and *lækning* to describe the metaphorical healing of sin, see *Geisli* 46, *Líknarbraut* 40, and *Lilja* 86 and 89.

⁶⁷³ The noun *líkn*, meaning 'grace' and 'mercy', is used of the grace extended by Christ and the Cross in *Geisli* 16 and 59; *Harmsól* 5, 24, 49, and 56; *Leiðarvísan* 24; *Líknarbraut* 10, 22, 33, 40, and 47; and *Lilja* 5, 80, 81, and 89.

⁶⁷⁴ The noun *grand* 'injury' is used to identify sinfulness as a spiritual injury in *Harmsól* 16, 20, and 50; *Leiðarvísan* 32 and 42; *Líknarbraut* 6, 39, and 45; and *Lilja* 20. The same term expresses the poet's sorrow of mind in *Harmsól* 3.

⁶⁷⁵ *Gall* is also used of the literal gall that is mixed with dregs at the Crucifixion in *Lilja* 58.

⁶⁷⁶ The verb *mæða* 'to weary' is used to express that the poet is exhausted from the poem in *Leiðarvísan* 44; explain that Moses grows weary from fasting in *Lilja* 19; express that Christ grows weary at the Crucifixion in *Lilja* 42; and further explain that Christ healed us but agony harmed Him in *Lilja* 55. *Móðr* 'weary' is describes how Christ is weary from fasting in *Lilja* 45, and that Mary is weary from a flood of tears in *Lilja* 54.

⁶⁷⁷ *Sótt*, meaning 'illness' or 'distress', refers to spiritual distress in *Harmsól* 47; and *Lilja* 40, 53, 73, and 89.

Warrior Chieftain.⁶⁷⁸ As evidenced here, the poems from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries fill in the details a bit more than their predecessors, describing sin as a disease or injury that will lead to death if Christ does not tend to it.

The language of healing in these poems can also imply growth in terms of conception, birth, and upbringing, as well as nourishment from an agrarian perspective. The verb *bera*, meaning ‘to give birth to’ or ‘to bear’, refers to Christ’s birth in all of the poems reviewed here apart from *Líknarbraut*, and according to context also describes the bearing of spiritual fruit, enduring suffering, and bringing a healing balm to spiritual wounds.⁶⁷⁹ Christ’s associations with these concepts tend to occur in thirteenth and fourteenth century skaldic verse, demonstrating an increased interest in these concepts in later poems. However, there are some examples of prosperous growth as a theme in *Harmsól*, where Christ is called *Þrekfœðandi* ‘Nourisher of strength’ in stanza 54, and heaven is described as a place where *aldri þrjóti unaðgnótt ok frið* ‘an abundance of happiness and peace will never end’ in stanza 65.⁶⁸⁰ The Sunday Letter tradition on which *Leiðarvísan* is based naturally lends itself to the praise of Christ’s abundant mercy through its focus on miraculous events. *Matr*, meaning ‘food’ or ‘provision’ occurs twice in *Leiðarvísan* to identify food that has been provided miraculously by God: first when the manna rains from heaven in stanza 20, and then when Christ feeds the multitude with fishes and loaves in stanza 28. *Líknarbraut*’s numerous uses of *ár* ‘abundance’ and its 52-stanza layout reflecting the weeks of a calendar year, along with the poet’s

⁶⁷⁸ *Ben* ‘wound’ refers to the spiritual wounds of sinfulness in *Harmsól* 54, and the wounds endured by Christ at the Crucifixion in *Líknarbraut* 18 and 20. The noun *mein*, which means ‘harm’, ‘disease’, or ‘sorrow’, is used to describe sinfulness as a spiritual harm in *Geisli* 13; *Harmsól* 18 and 41; *Leiðarvísan* 11 and 39; *Líknarbraut* 40; and *Lilja* 42 and 91. *Mein* is also used of physical injuries and sufferings in *Geisli* 13; *Harmsól* 18; and *Líknarbraut* 13, 43 and 46. *Písl* ‘torture’ refers to spiritual torments in *Harmsól* 23 and 38; more frequently, though, it is used in reference to Christ’s Passion, as in *Líknarbraut* 12, 16, 44, and 30; and *Lilja* 59 and 71.

⁶⁷⁹ The verb *bera* is used of Christ’s birth in *Geisli* 2, *Harmsól* 19, *Leiðarvísan* 23, and *Lilja* 12. The same verb is used by Gamli kanóki to explain that he did not bear spiritual fruit in *Harmsól* 8; expresses that Christ bore disgrace in *Líknarbraut* 15; explains that Mary bore wet cheeks from weeping in *Líknarbraut* 18; states that the Cross bore Christ’s limbs in *Líknarbraut* 32; and is involved in requests from the poet that Mary bear forth prayers in *Lilja* 88 and bring balm to our wounds in *Lilja* 91.

⁶⁸⁰ *Gnótt*, in reference to the abundance of words or language from God, occurs in *Geisli* 10, *Leiðarvísan* 1 through 4, and *Líknarbraut* 1. This term describes an abundance of God’s glory in *Leiðarvísan* 34, and an abundance of joy in *Harmsól* 37 and 65.

request that Christ sprinkle his mind's land with *himnesku sáði* 'heavenly seed' in stanza 5, shows a familiarity with the Parable of the Sower in the New Testament and depicts righteousness as a spiritual flourishing.⁶⁸¹ The *Líknarbraut* poet also describes the Cross in stanza 32 as the *blómi helgra dóma* 'blossom of relics' that is watered by Christ's blood and on which Christ Himself is the bloom;⁶⁸² he even references Christ's ability to promote growth in the kennings *Þrifgæðir* 'Prosperity-Endower' (stanza 4), *Fæðis elsku* 'Nourisher of love' (stanza 23), and *Fæðis fremðarráðs* 'Nourisher of famous counsel' (stanza 26), once again indicating spiritual growth and nourishment. The noun *tún* 'field' is used of heaven in *Leiðarvísan* 42, and describes the poet's breast wherein his thoughts reside in *Líknarbraut* 4 and 40.⁶⁸³ Biblical concepts such as the root of Jesse and fruits of the spirit contribute to the Christian literary precedent for these representations in certain stanzas, which seem to serve as either direct translations or thematic parallels with the original biblical texts.⁶⁸⁴ In *Lilja*, themes of nourishment and growth are strongly associated with Mary, who is described in stanza 25 as being both *glæsilig sem roðnuð rósa runnin upp við lifandi brunna* 'magnificent as a reddened rose sprung up beside living springs' and *ilmandi rót lítillætis* 'the fragrant root of humility', as well as the *past gleðinnar* 'food of gladness' in stanza 89.⁶⁸⁵ In a cultural context where agricultural production played an important role in day-to-day life, particularly in the challenging climate of Iceland's farming communities, the perception of Christ as abundant Nourisher would likely offer a relevant perspective while remaining firmly rooted in Christian literary precedents.⁶⁸⁶

⁶⁸¹ For the use of *ár* to identify Christ as a source of abundance, see *Líknarbraut* 10, 17, 20, 46, and 47. *Ávøxtr*, in reference to spiritual fruit, also occurs in *Líknarbraut* 5. *Korn* 'grain' is used, also in reference to spiritual fruit, in *Lilja* 93.

⁶⁸² *Blómi* metaphorically describes the Cross in *Líknarbraut* 32, Mary in *Lilja* 25, Christ in *Lilja* 80, and the yield of good deeds in *Harmsól* 8.

⁶⁸³ The noun *lád* 'land' appears in heaven kennings in *Harmsól* 41 and 53, and *Líknarbraut* 22.

⁶⁸⁴ The noun *þrif* describes the prosperity from Christ in *Harmsól* 22, *Leiðarvísan* 33, and *Líknarbraut* 4. Christ is called *Fæðir* 'Nourisher' in *Líknarbraut* 23 and 26. The verb *fæða* is used of Jesus's birth in *Lilja* 29, 33, 41, 55, and 88, and of Mary feeding Christ with milk in *Lilja* 42.

⁶⁸⁵ The noun *rót* is used of sorrow and bitterness spreading in *Geisli* 59 and *Lilja* 20. *Lilja* also uses this term in reference to Mary as the root of humility in stanza 25, and to the roots of the heart in stanzas 50 and 77.

⁶⁸⁶ For further reading regarding the agricultural society in Iceland, see Byock 2001: 8, 29; and Jón Jóhannesson 1974: 288-97. For information on the troubles facing Iceland's agricultural

Water⁶⁸⁷ and blood⁶⁸⁸ play significant symbolic roles throughout these poems, frequently communicating spiritual purity, mercy, and redemption. The noun *brunnr* ‘spring’ appears in *Geisli* 23, where Óláfr’s blood is blended with a spring and brings about miraculous healing.⁶⁸⁹ The miracles from Exodus and Christ’s miracle at the wedding in Cana, as recounted in *Leiðarvísan*, express redemption as something akin to overflowing liquid, an image that Scripture links to the description of Christ as living water in John IV.13-14. The verb *rigna* ‘to rain’ is used of manna raining from heaven in *Leiðarvísan* 20, and appears in a penitential context when the poet asks to let it rain with tears *Lilja* 75.⁶⁹⁰ In *Líknarbraut* the blood and water that flow from Christ’s wound at the Crucifixion in stanza 20 symbolise His outpouring of mercy to mankind through His sacrifice, while also symbolically ‘watering’ the tree of the Cross in an image that may ultimately be traced back to Venantius Fortunatus’s *Pange lingua*. The flow of water and blood as an indication of Christ’s abundant mercy also appears in *Lilja*, particularly in the description of Christ’s circumcision in stanza 35 and His wounding at the Crucifixion in stanza 44. The *Lilja* poet’s preoccupation with the significance of blood and water is further evidenced in his use of the noun *æðr* ‘vein’, which refers to Adam’s veins being filled with his soul in stanza 11; the veins of the Jordan in which Jesus is baptized in stanza 37; and Mary as the vein of mercy in stanza 89. The abundant flow of mercy is also considered a reward for the poet and a gift to humanity, linking this theme to the portrayal of Christ as a generous Warrior Chieftain.

production, see Byock 2001: 26, 54. See Thompson 1965: 53 for information regarding the perceived importance of agriculture in the Viking Age.

⁶⁸⁷ The noun *vatn* ‘water’ appears at various points throughout these poems in reference to water that represents purity, righteousness, and God’s gifts to humanity. For example, Óláfr’s body is washed in pure water in *Geisli* 22; water flows from the Rock at Horeb in *Leiðarvísan* 20; Christ turns water into wine in *Leiðarvísan* 26; water and blood flow from Christ’s wound in *Líknarbraut* 20; Adam is made from water and soil in *Lilja* 11; and Christ is sprinkled with water at His baptism in *Lilja* 37.

⁶⁸⁸ *Blóð* refers to the blood of Christ in *Geisli* 24; *Harmsól* 12; *Líknarbraut* 27, 30, 42, and 43; and *Lilja* 11, 35, 54, 67, 83, and 85. It also refers to Mary’s blood in *Lilja* 31. *Dreyri* ‘blood’ refers to the blood of Christ in *Harmsól* 33; *Líknarbraut* 20, 27, and 32; and *Lilja* 5 and 49.

⁶⁸⁹ *Brunnr* is also used in *Lilja*, first to describe Mary as a red rose sprung up by living springs in stanza 25, and again to describe Mary as the sweetness of the spring of mercy in stanza 28.

⁶⁹⁰ The noun *tár* expresses penitence in *Harmsól* 52, *Leiðarvísan* 39, *Líknarbraut* 46, and *Lilja* 75 and 91. To encourage a penitent spirit, the *Lilja* poet similarly draws attention to the tears of Christ in stanza 35, and the tears of Mary in stanzas 53 and 54.

Old Norse literary and mythological influences may also contribute to these representations of Christ, particularly in the connection between a ruler and agrarian prosperity. As suggested in chapter 4's analysis of *Leidarvisan* 20, Christ's association with the *Urðar brunnr* 'wellspring of the Norns' in *Skáldskaparmál* 52 of Snorri's *Edda* indicates that, at least in the minds of those familiar with *Snorra Edda*, Christ shared some associations with divine waters in Old Norse mythology.⁶⁹¹ There may be some similarities between Christ's sacrifice to gain grace for humanity, and Óðinn's sacrifice to gain the mead of poetry, though as noted in the analysis for *Líknarbraut* 20 and 32 in chapter 5 the comparison is problematic and should therefore be considered with caution. The representation of Christ as abundant in mercy and the source of salvation may also have been linked to Baldr's role as a symbol for new life in the minds of those familiar with the *Poetic Edda*, as explored in chapter 4's discussion of *Leidarvisan* 20. In any case, what remains clear is the importance placed on Christ's mercy in later poems, and its strong associations with growth, outpouring, and healing.

The characterisation of Christ as Healer and Abundant Nourisher covers a wide variety of images and concepts, and the degree of attention each receives varies from poem to poem. Christ as Healer is most prevalent in *Geisli*, *Líknarbraut*, and *Lilja*, perhaps reflecting the focus on healing miracles in the first of these poems and the emphasis on Christ's mercy in the two latter. The portrayal of sin as an illness or injury, while present to varying degrees in all of these poems, is by far the most prevalent in the penitential *Harmsól*, as the poet continually stresses humanity's inadequacies. Agrarian imagery that emphasises Christ's nourishment of humanity through spiritual growth receives the most attention in the homiletic and didactic poems, particularly in *Líknarbraut* and *Lilja*. Similarly, the expression of Christ's mercy as an abundant liquid poured out for humanity seems to have held importance in the later Christian skaldic poems, particularly *Leidarvisan*, *Líknarbraut*, and *Lilja*. While not entirely devoid of the terms and images associated with this concept, *Geisli*

⁶⁹¹ As mentioned in analysis for *Leidarvisan* 20 in chapter four, Christ's presence by the *Urðar brunnr* 'wellspring of the Norns' may be an expression of His omniscience and omnipotency.

and *Harmsól* certainly do not emphasise the outpouring of God's grace and spiritual fruitfulness in the same manner as later Christian skaldic poetry. What all of these poems do share is the concept of *líkn* 'mercy' extended to humanity by Christ, and this is the core idea from which Christ's role as Healer and Abundant Nourisher develops.

(iii) Christ as Legal Authority

Christ assumes a number of legal roles in both early and late Christian skaldic verse. At various times He is presented as a Counsellor, Judge, Reconciler, and in some instances a combination of these roles. These representations are striking in their use of specific legal terminology, depicting mankind's judgement and salvation more as a real-world legal process than an abstract concept. The legal metaphor is even employed to develop the importance of certain figures, particularly the Virgin Mary in her role as intercessor at the Last Judgement.

Each of the poems in this thesis reflects two fundamental concepts: that Christ is supreme Judge, and that Christ's mercy must be accepted by penitents in order for them to be released from guilt. This is particularly true of the homiletic and didactic poems. Gamli kanóki's *Harmsól*, with its penitential focus, frequently turns its attention to humanity's need for reconciliation with God for their sins, which are portrayed as legal offences and crimes. Christ functions as *Sættir* 'Reconciler' in *Harmsól* 54 and 58, evoking one of the legal roles of the Icelandic *goði* towards his *þingmenn*: to offer legal counsel and arrange settlements on their behalf.⁶⁹² In exchange for a retainer's loyalty, the responsibility of the Icelandic *goðar* was to maintain and defend the peace in their chieftaincy by settling disputes between their assemblymen and supporting them in conflicts with the friends of other chieftains.⁶⁹³ The role of Christ as Reconciler certainly owes much to Christian literary precedents, but it is also possible that the *goði-þingmenn* relationship influenced these representations

⁶⁹² *Sættir* is used in reference to Christ in *Harmsól* 54 and 58. For more information about the legal responsibilities of *goðar* in Iceland, see Guðrún Nordal 2001: 361; and Jón Viðar Sigurðsson 1999: 120.

⁶⁹³ Jón Viðar Sigurðsson 1999: 121. Cf. Hastrup 1985: 120.

to some extent. In all of the poems reviewed in this thesis, apart from *Lilja*, the redemption is described as a *lausn* ‘release’ from sin, and legal terms such as *sykn* ‘acquittal’ and *sátt*, meaning ‘settlement’ or ‘reconciliation’, express Christ’s ability to save humanity from the judgement due to them for misdeeds.⁶⁹⁴ Though *Leiðarvísan* primarily focuses on praising Christ’s miracles, the poet does remind his audience that they should seek *sátt* ‘reconciliation’ in stanza 35 through Christ in order to attain salvation at the Last Judgement. In *Líknarbraut* God’s laws are referred to as *lóg* (stanza 6), Christ’s wisdom and legal counsel as *ráð* ‘counsel’ (stanza 26), and humanity’s salvation as both *sykn* ‘acquittal’ (stanza 31) and *lausn* ‘absolution’ (stanzas 32 and 39).⁶⁹⁵ When Lucifer falls from grace due to his pride in *Lilja* 15, he becomes the *eingill er hafði feingið það bann* ‘angel who had received that ban’, a description referencing the Scandinavian legal practice of outlawry that hints at the poet’s interest in the devil’s rights to fallen humanity as a theological concept.⁶⁹⁶ The *Lilja* poet also observes that Christ’s Judgement will be free from corruption, rendering *varnir* ‘defences’ (stanza 72), as well as *blót* ‘sacrifices’, *eiðar* ‘oaths’, *gjafar* ‘gifts’, and *mútur* ‘bribes’ (stanza 71) ineffectual in altering His assessment of each person’s righteousness.⁶⁹⁷ These poems thus, to varying degrees, depict Christ’s relationship with humanity as a legal one in which he seeks settlement and reconciliation for their offences, perhaps as an Icelandic chieftain might do for his assemblymen.

The perception of Christ as a legal Authority is further supported by the use of various other terms that carry a specific legal meaning and are used here

⁶⁹⁴ For descriptions of Christ as *Lausnari*, see *Geisli* 30, 62, and 68; and *Líknarbraut* 11 and 52. For references to salvation as *lausn*, see *Harmsól* 25, and *Líknarbraut* 32, 37, 39, and 57. See *Harmsól* 4 and *Líknarbraut* 31 for references to the acquittal of sins with the adjective *sykn* and the noun *sykna*. See *Harmsól* 17 and *Leiðarvísan* 35 for references to reconciliation as *sátt*.

⁶⁹⁵ The term *lag* is used in reference to Moses’s wisdom in *Leiðarvísan* 18, of the Ten Commandments in *Leiðarvísan* 19, and of God’s laws in *Líknarbraut* 6. See *Geisli* 1 and 5 for descriptions of Christ as *Ráðandi*, *Leiðarvísan* 20 for a reference to Christ as *Ráðmegninn*, and *Líknarbraut* 26 for a reference to Christ as *Fœðis fremðarráðs* ‘Nourisher of famous counsel’. *Ráð* is used to specify evil counsels in *Harmsól* 6, 7, and 14; Lucifer’s plans for Judas in *Lilja* 48; and Christ’s counsel in *Lilja* 40.

⁶⁹⁶ See *Lilja* 15, 64, 80, and 83 for references to the punishment for sin as a *bann*. The same term is used to mean ‘forbidden’ in *Harmsól* 48 and *Lilja* 66.

⁶⁹⁷ See *Harmsól* 34 and *Lilja* 72 for references to *varnir* as legal defenses at the Last Judgement. Though the term *gjöf* is construed in *Lilja* 71 as a bribe, it is understood as God’s gift in *Geisli* 6 and *Harmsól* 64.

in reference to spiritual matters. The Scriptures, Óláfr as a martyr, and John the Baptist are each identified as a *vátrr* ‘witness’ in *Geisli* 6, *Geisli* 62, and *Lilja* 37, respectively. The nouns *søk* and *ben*, which identify offences and injuries in a legal context, are used in *Harmsól* and *Líknarbraut* to express both the spiritual injury of sinfulness and the physical attacks endured by Christ at the Crucifixion.⁶⁹⁸ *Leiðarvísan*, *Líknarbraut*, and *Lilja* each make use of the adjective *réttr* to express what is right, just, and proper, again in a spiritual capacity.⁶⁹⁹ The verb *leysa* ‘to redeem’ expresses spiritual redemption in all of the homiletic and didactic poems reviewed in this thesis and depicts salvation as a settlement or reconciliation between humanity and God.⁷⁰⁰ The noun *boð* ‘command’ refers to God’s Commandments in *Harmsól* 6, 8, and 38, as well as the command given to Adam and Eve in *Lilja* 14. The related verb *beiða* ‘to request’ is used to entreat God and Mary for assistance in *Harmsól* 49 and 54, *Líknarbraut* 2, and *Lilja* 3, identifying them as intercessors on humanity’s behalf. Such details work together to reinforce the legal aspects of Christ’s relationship with humanity, adding to the fundamental Christian belief that everyone must rely on Christ to be reunited with God and invited into the kingdom of heaven.

The period under examination was one of significant change for the Icelandic legal system, as the country’s unique form of governance under numerous *goðar* came to terms with outside systems of authority from the church and the Norwegian king. Viewed alongside legal practices contemporary with the poetry, Christ’s legal roles could be interpreted in a variety of contexts. The possible roles associated with Christ include a warrior chieftain, a Lawspeaker or *lögmaðr* ‘lawman’ at the Alþing, a presider over public penance, and a monarch possessing supreme judgement. Nedkvitne speculates that the portrayals of Christ as supreme Lord and powerful Judge probably reflect how laymen understood Him during this period, though it is difficult to be more

⁶⁹⁸ The noun *søk*, meaning ‘cause’ or ‘offence’, refers to offences against God in *Harmsól* 17, and is used to specify Christ’s guiltless state in *Líknarbraut* 21 and 44. The noun *ben*, which means ‘wound’ in a legal context, refers to sinfulness of the soul in *Harmsól* 54, and Christ’s physical wounds at the Crucifixion in *Líknarbraut* 18 and 20.

⁶⁹⁹ The adjective *réttr*, meaning ‘right’ or ‘true’, is used to specify the appropriate tithe in *Leiðarvísan* 10; expresses how the Cross shows the true weight of the world in *Líknarbraut* 36; and specifies both right judgement in *Lilja* 19 and proper speech in *Lilja* 3.

⁷⁰⁰ The verb *leysa* ‘to redeem’ is used of spiritual redemption in *Harmsól* 27 and 52; *Leiðarvísan* 31; *Líknarbraut* 22; and *Lilja* 23, 64, 80, 83, and 85.

specific than that.⁷⁰¹ Christ's combined roles as Judge and Legal Authority correlate well with the increasing power of the Norwegian king in the thirteenth century, when 'kings acquired the right, in practice, to issue new laws on their own authority'.⁷⁰² After 1220, King Hákon even provided arbitration judgements for Icelandic chieftains, serving in a role that was otherwise held by several people within the community.⁷⁰³ For this reason, it is likely that Christ was understood as King in legal contexts, mainly through His supreme rulership at the Last Judgement.

The use of *þing* and *alþing* to describe the Last Judgement in the homiletic and didactic poems *Harmsól*, *Líknarbraut*, and *Lilja* raises the intriguing possibility that their poets may have had in mind the Icelandic *Alþing*, or perhaps the small-scale *þing* gatherings in Norway, when composing their verses.⁷⁰⁴ Christ appears as Judge at the Last Judgement, described as a *þing*, in *Harmsól* 32 and *Lilja* 72, and in *Líknarbraut* 26 the Judgement is even referred to as an *alþing*. A comparison of the Last Judgement with the Icelandic *Alþing* is problematic when we consider how Christ's role as King is frequently emphasized. Abram observes that disputes in Iceland were often settled through an 'uneasy mixture of legal arbitration and deadly force', with the country 'unique in its lack of central authority' compared to other European nations at that time; Norway, by contrast, was continually moving towards 'consolidated royal power and centralized administration'.⁷⁰⁵ This suggests that the legal assembly envisioned by the poet may relate more closely to the Norwegian king as the supreme legal head of his country.

Apart from references to Christ as *Lausnari* and *Ráðandi*, and the aforementioned description of Scripture as a *váttir* 'witness', there is almost no evidence that Christ was understood as a Legal Authority in *Geisli*, which instead values representations of Christ's chieftain-*þegn* relationship to Óláfr

⁷⁰¹ Nedkvitne 2009: 173.

⁷⁰² Nedkvitne 2009: 285.

⁷⁰³ Jón Viðar Sigurðsson 1999: 166.

⁷⁰⁴ As observed earlier in this thesis, *Líknarbraut* 27 is the only Christian skaldic stanza that refers to the Last Judgement as *alþing*, while *Harmsól* 32 and *Lilja* 72 use the more general *þing* in reference to the Last Judgement. *Dómr*, which also identifies the Last Judgement in Christian skaldic verse, occurs in *Harmsól* 6, 31, 34, and 36; *Leiðarvísan* 38, 39, and 45; *Líknarbraut* 26 and 28; and *Lilja* 19, 70, 71, 72, and 76.

⁷⁰⁵ Abram 2011: 109.

and their associations with spiritual light. The homiletic and didactic poems all make reference to the Last Judgement and Christ's redemption, though *Harmsól* and *Líknarbraut* are more focused on Christ's legal relationship with humanity than *Leiðarvísan* and *Lilja*. *Harmsól*, as a penitential work, presents Christ as a Legal Authority in order to stress humanity's faults alongside Christ's ability to bring about reconciliation with God at the Last Judgement. *Líknarbraut*, with its focus on the Cross as Christ's means of extending His grace to His followers, similarly presents humanity's sinfulness as legal breaches against God, and Christ as the Redeemer for these crimes. The attention afforded to legal matters in *Lilja* may be due, in part, to its preoccupation with the devil's rights. According to this theological concept, Lucifer believed he had the right to rule over fallen humanity since they lacked the righteousness needed for a relationship with God. In order to reclaim humanity and secure their salvation in heaven, Christ devised a means by which to reclaim this right. The next representation of Christ to be discussed, that of Beguiler, explores the means by which Christ enacted His plan, and even steered Lucifer's actions by means of deception.

(iv) Christ as Beguiler

Ransom theory is a doctrinal perspective on the Atonement developed in the western church through the work of the early Christian theologian Origen. According to this theory Satan gained supposed legal possession over mankind in their fallen state. In order to justly restore humanity to salvation, Christ needed to sacrifice Himself through the Crucifixion as a ransom.⁷⁰⁶ To bring about this sacrifice, Christ becomes a man and thereby deceives the devil into believing He can be defeated in death. The representation of the devil as ignorant of Christ's divinity is a medieval concept, drawing from particular interpretations of biblical passages such as Matthew IV.1-11 and Luke IV.1-

⁷⁰⁶ Whether this ransom is paid to Lucifer or God is debated, though this thesis interprets *Lilja* as taking the view that the ransom is paid to God. For more information about ransom theory, see Marx 1995: 10-12.

13.⁷⁰⁷ The idea arose from a misunderstanding of the grammar in translation of these biblical passages, but regardless of the original meaning the concept became a popular one in medieval Christian literature.⁷⁰⁸ Consequently, certain Church Fathers understood the Incarnation as the intentional deception of Satan, with Christ using humanity as a disguise that 'shielded His divine nature from the devil.'⁷⁰⁹ Proponents of this perspective include Ignatius of Antioch (c. 35-c. 108), Irenaeus (d. 202), Origen (184/5-253/4), Eusebius of Alexandria (c. fourth century), Gregory Nazianzen (329-389), Gregory of Nyssa (339-395), Rufinus (340/345-410), Augustine (354-430), and Gregory the Great (540-604).⁷¹⁰ These authors, particularly the patristic author Origen, cite I Corinthians II.7-8 as further textual evidence to support this concept, since the passage suggests that it is Christ's Incarnation and Lucifer's response in ignorance of His true identity that frees humanity from the law of death.⁷¹¹ This concept of *pia fraus* 'pious fraud' seems to have resonated with the authors of Christian skaldic poetry.

The concept was perhaps made most widely accessible to medieval Europe from the twelfth century through the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard (c. 1100-60), specifically in Distinctions 18, 19, and 20.⁷¹² The *Sentences* draws from Augustine's consideration of the redemption in chapters 11 through 16 from book 3 of *De Trinitate*, and this presentation of the material 'introduces the

⁷⁰⁷ Matthew IV.3: *Et accedens temptator dixit ei: 'Si Filius Dei es, dic, ut lapides isti panes fiant'* (Vulg 1979, Matthew IV.3) 'The tempter came and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread'' (NRSV, Matthew IV.3). Luke IV. 3: *Dixit autem Illi Diabolus: 'Si Filius Dei es, dic lapidi huic, ut panis fiat.'* (Vulg 1979, Luke IV.3) 'The devil said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread'' (NRSV, Luke IV.3). In both passages, the devil seems to challenge Jesus on the basis of being unsure whether He is the Son of God, as indicated through the use of *si* 'if'.

⁷⁰⁸ Wee 1974: 1. Cf. Coulange 1929: 109.

⁷⁰⁹ Fry 1951: 536.

⁷¹⁰ Wee 1974: 4. Cf. MacCulloch 1930: 199-216.

⁷¹¹ Fry 1951: 529. Cf. MacCulloch 1930: 205-6. I Corinthians II.7-8: *sed loquimur Dei sapientiam in mysterio, quae abscondita est, quam praedestinavit Deus ante saecula in gloriam nostram, quam nemo principum huius saeculi cognovit; si enim cognovissent, numquam Dominum gloriae crucifixissent* (Vulg 1979, I Corinthians II.7-8) 'But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory' (NRSV, I Corinthians II.7-8).

⁷¹² Marx 1995: 7.

formulation which has come to be known as the abuse-of-power theory'.⁷¹³ One of the images most prominently associated with theological conception, that of the hook and bait, not only appears in the visual arts during this period but also in numerous works of literature.⁷¹⁴ One Old Norse analogue, the prose text *Niðrstigningar saga* dating from c. 1200, is an account of the Harrowing of Hell in which either 'the interpolator...or his source recognised the doctrinal significance of the connection of Leviathan, the pious fraud, and the fear expressed by Christ on the cross'.⁷¹⁵ All of these examples indicate that the concept of ransom theory, and its associated imagery, would at least have been accessible to skalds from the thirteenth century onwards.

In the homiletic and didactic poems *Harmsól*, *Líknarbraut*, and *Lilja*, Christ is depicted as clothed, covered, or concealed in humanity through the Incarnation for the purpose of deceiving the devil and completing Atonement.⁷¹⁶ The penitential poem *Harmsól*, which uses the term *hylja* (stanza 18) to describe the Incarnation, presents this event as both an act of covering to hide Christ's divine identity, and a clothing to prepare Him for spiritual battle. Similarly, *Lilja* 31 takes the interpretation of the Incarnation as deception through the use of *hylja* when Christ 'hides' in Mary's blood.⁷¹⁷ By contrast, *Harmsól* 29 uses the verb *skrýða* 'to adorn' when Christ is clothed in holy flesh at the Ascension; *Líknarbraut* 12 uses it to describe Christ clothing Himself in flesh at the Incarnation; and *Lilja* 24 also uses *skrýða* to describe Christ clothing Himself in Mary's bright flesh at the Incarnation. In each of these instances, the action indicated by *skrýða* is intentionally highlighted as praiseworthy, and in the case of *Líknarbraut* 12 is used alongside the verb *prýða* 'to adorn' to describe an

⁷¹³ Marx 1995: 8. Cf. Rashdall 1920: 305, 311, 330ff. and *passim*. For the relevant passage from Peter Lombard's work, see *Sentences* II: 125-7.

⁷¹⁴ Marx 1995: 12. Cf. Marchand 1975: 330. A few examples include Gregory the Great, *Moralia*, PL 75.509-1162, and PL 76.9-782 (PL 76.680-1); Honorius Augustodunensis, *Speculum Ecclesiae*, PL 172.807-1108 (col. 937); Herrad of Hohenbourg's *Hortus Deliciarum*, II 135 (plate 49, f84r); and Jacobus a Voragine's *Legenda Aurea*, 230. For a few further examples written in Middle High German prior to 1200, see Marchand 1975: 331.

⁷¹⁵ Marchand 1975: 333.

⁷¹⁶ This seems not to be the case with *Geisli* or *Leiðarvísan*, which focus on individual miracles rather than the theology behind Christ's process of gaining salvation for humanity.

⁷¹⁷ *Hylja* also describes a metaphorical covering in *Lilja* 39, pertaining to God's secret hidden from Lucifer, and *Lilja* 98 regarding the obscure meanings of older skaldic poems.

arming for spiritual battle.⁷¹⁸ While some of these stanzas describe the Incarnation as an adornment, or even an arming for battle, the concept of human flesh as a covering that hides Christ's divine identity also contributes to these depictions.

The theme of concealment extends beyond representations of the Incarnation, applying to God, humanity, and Lucifer at various points in these poems. Einarr Skúlason's *Geisli*, for example, uses the verb *leyna* 'to conceal' in stanza 13, explaining that Óláfr had concealed his righteousness from humanity during his lifetime.⁷¹⁹ *Leyna* also expresses the poet's attempts to conceal his sinfulness from humanity in *Harmsól* 13, and how God has concealed each man's death-day in *Harmsól* 44. The themes of concealment and deception in reference to Christ's Incarnation parallel descriptions of Lucifer in *Lilja*, as one act of deception is pitted against another. *Dylja* 'to conceal' refers both to Lucifer's concealment of his identity from Adam and Eve in *Lilja* 15, and God's concealment of Christ's identity from Lucifer in *Lilja* 39.⁷²⁰ The noun *prettr*, by contrast, is only used in reference to Lucifer's frauds or tricks.⁷²¹ Several other terms pertaining to deception – among them the verb *svíkja* 'to betray', the adjective *slægr* 'crafty', and the nouns *flærð* 'falsehood', *slægð* 'sleight', and *vél* 'deceit' – only occur in *Lilja* among the poems reviewed in this thesis, and specifically refer to Lucifer's deceptions.⁷²² *Klókr*, meaning 'wily' or 'cunning', describes God's plans to deceive Lucifer in *Lilja* 39, affirming a difference from Lucifer's tricks.⁷²³ While both figures engage in deception, *Lilja*

⁷¹⁸ *Prýða* also describes God's adornment of the heavens with angels in *Lilja* 6, and Mary's adornment with deeds in *Lilja* 90.

⁷¹⁹ This detail accounts for why previous skalds did not address Óláfr's Christianity.

⁷²⁰ *Dylja* also expresses how people who do not recognise God's words as eternal have spiritual truth hidden from them in *Leiðarvísan* 12.

⁷²¹ In *Lilja*, *prettr* is used when Lucifer speaks with tricks to Eve in stanza 17; then in stanza 43 when the poet makes the general observation that few watch out for deceit; and in stanza 66, where Lucifer is identified as the one who conceived of the first fraud. In all cases, the term specifies Lucifer's tricks and deceptions.

⁷²² The verb *svíkja* refers to Lucifer's betrayal of Adam and Eve in *Lilja* 43; in the same stanza, the adjective *slægr* is used in Lucifer's self-description as being crafty of mind. *Flærð* is used to describe people in Hell as swollen with falsehood in *Harmsól* 39; Lucifer in *Leiðarvísan* 31; sinfulness generally in *Líknarbraut* 39; Lucifer again in *Lilja* 17; and Lucifer's attacks on Christ in *Lilja* 45. The nouns *slægð* and *vél* are both used in *Lilja* 45 to describe Lucifer's deceptions.

⁷²³ *Klókr* is used in two other instances within *Lilja*: first to describe the poetry of the early skalds in stanza 4, and then to explain that humanity will lack clever defenses at the Last Judgement in stanza 72.

uses this terminological distinction to distinguish between each one's motive and justification. Since Christ has the right to reclaim humanity, His beguilement of Lucifer is justified.⁷²⁴ Thus the act of concealment is itself neutral, as it can refer to actions by God, humanity, or Lucifer.

The themes of deception and particularly the descriptions of Christ's Incarnation as a covering in these poems prompt the question: why might this have been a popular perspective among Christian skalds? Christian literature of the period certainly contributed to the doctrinal understanding of the devil's rights, and the Christian skaldic poems themselves seem to have been written by people familiar with Christian literary trends of the period. However, the interest in deception may also, in part, derive from tropes and themes in Old Norse mythological narrative. When writing about Norse mythological figures, Kevin Wanner observed that control over cunning intelligence is necessary for gaining sovereignty.⁷²⁵ Loki is most frequently associated with cunning and deceptive behaviour in Norse myth, but the same language of duplicity is also often applied to Óðinn.⁷²⁶ For example, in *Skáldskaparmál* from *Snorra Edda* Óðinn disguises himself as an itinerant labourer called *Bólverkr* 'Evil-Doer', offering to work for Baugi in return for a drink from Suttungr's mead. Óðinn is refused the mead, but Baugi helps him by drilling through a wall, and then *brásk Bólverkr í orms líki* 'Bólverkr changed himself into the likeness of a serpent' to get through the hole in the wall and thereby access the mead.⁷²⁷ Once through he presumably returns to his original form and sleeps with Gunnlóð over three nights, and in return he is allowed to drink three sips of the mead. He manages to consume all of the mead from three large containers with three large sips, and then *brást hann í arnarham* 'he changed himself into the shape of an eagle' as he returns to Asgard with the mead, emptying it into containers for the Æsir.⁷²⁸ While being pursued by Suttungr who has also transformed into an eagle, Óðinn defecates out of fear and thereby produces 'the inferior, debased

⁷²⁴ Notably, motifs of Christ clothing Himself in humanity to deceive the devil do not occur in Old English and Old Saxon poetry on Christian subjects.

⁷²⁵ Wanner 2009: 213.

⁷²⁶ Wanner 2009: 218.

⁷²⁷ *SnE* 1998: 4, l.33.

⁷²⁸ *SnE* 1998: 4, l.38.

kind of poetic inspiration which is directly available to humans, rather than what is passed down to poets through divine inspiration.⁷²⁹ Óðinn uses disguise and deception in this account in order to obtain wisdom, resulting in the distribution of poetic inspiration to humanity. When compared with Christ's deception in order to free humanity from sin and offer grace, Óðinn's retrieval and distribution of the mead of poetry could be seen as the outpouring of a gift to humanity. Moreover, Christ's strategy in His deception of Lucifer could be a point of connection with portrayals of Óðinn, since this Norse god's 'major contributions to warfare are strategic', at least in thirteenth-century literary recollections.⁷³⁰ Richard North has argued that Woden's West-Saxon genealogical role influenced the cult of Óðinn in Norway in the mid-tenth century, suggesting this Norse god may have at least had some associations in Scandinavia with legitimate rule and inherent right to power; this in turn would fit well with the interpretation of Christ reclaiming humanity from the devil, who rules over them illegitimately.⁷³¹ However, the comparison made with this passage from *Skáldskaparmál* is by no means a perfect parallel, and is significantly complicated by Óðinn's physical transformation, which more closely resembles Lucifer's deception of Adam and Eve when he forms speech within a serpent in *Lilja* 15. As mentioned earlier with regards to Christ as abundant Nourisher, the bodily fluids specified in this account do not share the same symbolic value as the water and blood that flow from Christ's side at the Crucifixion, adding another complicating factor to the Óðinn-Christ comparison.

Among the Old Norse gods, Baldr is the one most commonly associated with Christ, and in the narrative of his death Loki would seem to be representative of Lucifer. Loki's deception in *Vǫluspá*, which culminates in the death of Baldr, shares similarities with the description of Lucifer's attack on Christ in *Lilja*. Just as a dart of mistletoe kills Baldr, so too does the devil attempt to shoot a dart of faithlessness at Christ. However, in contrast to the successful slaying of Baldr in *Vǫluspá*, Lucifer's dart in *Lilja* twists around to strike the attacker instead. The *Lilja* poet seamlessly connects this image to the

⁷²⁹ O'Donoghue 2008: 29.

⁷³⁰ Wanner 2009: 227.

⁷³¹ North 1997: 111-132.

popular representation of Lucifer as a serpent who is caught on the hook of the Cross with Christ as its bait. The bait and hook topos, along with the mousetrap analogy, was one of the means by which Christ's Incarnation was explained as a trap for the devil. This metaphor is not only similar to the Þórr and Miðgarðsormr fishing narrative in content and terminology, but may also have been visually juxtaposed with a depiction of this Old Norse myth on the Gosforth stone cross in Cumbria.⁷³² Rowe has noted that, since devils and demons were frequently presented as serpents and dragons, and since it was popular belief that these beings sought to attack Christians at church entrances, 'the doors were often decorated with images of dragon-killers such as St George and the Archangel Michael in order to ward off evil spirits'; though the Archangel Michael interpretation is a particularly compelling one, the image could have been multivalent and invited the Norse mythological interpretation as well.⁷³³ Even with Christian literary influences shaping the poet's concept of the devil's rights and Christ's intention to deceive Lucifer for the sake of saving humanity, the details that form this representation display a great many similarities with the depiction of particular gods in Old Norse myth.

Geisli and *Leiðarvísan* feature terminology pertaining to concealment and deceit, but do not specifically contribute towards the representation of Christ as Beguiler. This particular characterisation, while hinted at in *Harmsól* and *Líknarbraut*, primarily exists in the mid-fourteenth century poem *Lilja*. Given the exploration of ransom theory and the popular image of Christ laying a trap for the devil, this emphasis on Christ's deception of Lucifer is perhaps unsurprising. What makes the depiction an intriguing one is its existence in a poem that actively seeks clarity and avoids obscurity. Perhaps the *Lilja* skald, like many Christian writers of the period, revelled in the paradoxes, or at least seemingly opposed characteristics, in Christianity. Whatever the case, Christ's role as Beguiler seems to be limited to the homiletic and didactic poems *Harmsól*, *Líknarbraut*, and *Lilja*, in contrast to the pervasive image throughout the Christian skaldic corpus of Christ as revelatory Light.

⁷³² For more information regarding the Gosforth Cross, see analysis for *Lilja* 60 in Chapter 6.

⁷³³ Rowe 2006: 169. Cf. Stefán Karlsson 1963: 325b.

(v) Christ As Light

One of the most frequently recurring images in Christian skaldic verse is that of Christ as Light. In some ways the light imagery in these poems bears slight similarities to the use of light and brightness in other Norse texts, such as descriptions of Christ with the adjective *ítr* 'glorious' that was also applied to Norse pagan figures in a pre-Christian context.⁷³⁴ However, the predominant influences are certainly Scriptural and medieval literary precedents, many of which have been noted throughout this thesis. As Roberta Frank has observed, the noun *ljós* 'light' belongs to the vocabulary of twelfth-century 'new poetics' and carries with it notions of purity, brightness, and the immaculate.⁷³⁵ Light indicates the purity and righteousness attributed to figures in these poems, and liturgical and patristic texts are frequently the source material for the way in which light is used in these instances.

Each of the poems reviewed in this thesis depicts Christ as either associated with light, or being Light itself. Einarr Skúlason represents Christ as *Ljós* 'Light' in the first three stanzas of *Geisli*, and the martyred Óláfr as a *geisli* 'sunbeam', serving as an avenue for Christ and His redemptive abilities on earth.⁷³⁶ Similarly, Christ continues to be associated with light as in *Harmsól 2*, which features the *heiti Ljós meðan* 'Light of the world' in reference to Christ, and also includes a popular kenning-type that proclaims His sovereignty over the sun and heavens. He is described as *hreinn* 'pure' in *Leiðarvísan 11*, linking light with spiritual purity, and called both *Døglíngur lopts ljósgíms* 'King of the loft of the light-jewel' and *Siklíngur sólvangs* 'King of the sun-plain' in stanza 35.⁷³⁷

⁷³⁴ *Ítr* is used in reference to God and Christ in *Geisli 21*; *Harmsól 8, 18, 26, 32 and 65*; and *Líknarbraut 3, 22 and 29*.

⁷³⁵ Frank 1978: 89.

⁷³⁶ For examples of Christ's association with *ljós*, see *Geisli 1, 2, 3, and 20*; *Harmsól 63*; *Leiðarvísan 35*; *Líknarbraut 4*; and *Lilja 22, 40, 61, and 63*. The representation of Christ's followers as pathways for divine light is applied to disciples, martyrs, angels, and even the Cross. See *Geisli 1 and 7*, and *Lilja 27 and 89* for references to Christ's followers as *geisli*; this noun is also used in reference to heaven in *Líknarbraut 30* and the Incarnation in *Lilja 33*.

⁷³⁷ *Hreinn* is used numerous times in each of these poems to describe the purity of Christ, His followers, the Cross, and other subjects associated with spiritual righteousness. This term is used in reference to Christ and God in *Harmsól 3 and 18*; *Leiðarvísan 4 and 26*; *Líknarbraut 3*,

The *Leiðarvísan* poet's description of the sun in the Christ-kenning *Harri fagrgims hás hreggranns* 'King of the fair jewel of the high storm-house' (stanza 2) suggests the heavens are equated with heavenly riches, a concept explored in the section on Christ as Warrior Chieftain. Christ's purity is also mentioned alongside His spiritual light in *Líknarbraut* 3, when the poet asks for Christ's *hreina heyrn miskunnar* 'pure hearing of mercy' so that mercifulness *skíni* 'may shine' upon him. *Lilja* similarly celebrates Christ's light, identifying Him in stanza 33 as a *Geisli* 'light-Beam' entering the world in purity at the Incarnation. All of these examples serve to establish the prevalence of this depiction in Christian skaldic poetry.

The skalds also apply light and brightness to the Virgin Mary. In *Geisli* 2 Christ is born from the *bjarti stjörnu flæðar* 'bright star of the sea' which seems to be a translation of the Marian epithet *stella maris*.⁷³⁸ Gamli kanóki describes Mary as a shining temple or castle in *Harmsól* 60, indicating her holiness as well as her role of bringing Christ into the world through the Incarnation. Mary plays an integral part in *Lilja*, both as the means by which Christ enters the world, and in her intercessory position at the Last Judgement. Consequently, she receives a great deal of attention, being described in stanza 33 as a clear glass through which the *Geisli* 'light-Beam' of Christ shines at His birth, and in stanza 89 is also named *giftu vegr, og geisli lofta, gimsteinn brúða og drotning himna* 'way of grace, and ray of the skies, gemstone of brides and queen of the heavens'. These descriptions not only express Mary's purity and righteousness, but also indicate that these qualities allow Christ's divine light to enter the world. She thus serves as an extension of Christ as Light.

Brightness and purity seem to be conceptually linked in all of the poems reviewed in this thesis. The connection between shining light and spiritual purity, and the interest these concepts held for the authors of *Geisli*, *Líknarbraut*, and *Lilja* is evident in the use of the verb *skína* 'to shine' and the adjectives *skærr* 'bright' and *skýrr*, meaning 'clear' or 'pure', in order to reflect a spiritually

7, and 19; and *Lilja* 68. It describes the Cross in *Líknarbraut* 41, and is used of Christ's followers, including the angels and Mary, in *Geisli* 24 and 61; *Leiðarvísan* 14; and *Lilja* 27, 30, 33, 83, 89, and 95.

⁷³⁸ The noun *stjarna* 'star' also occurs in a heaven kenning in *Lilja* 26, and is used in describing starlight as a sign of Christ in *Lilja* 40.

righteous state.⁷³⁹ The verb *skíra* ‘to purify’, which expresses baptism in *Harmsól* 65 and *Leiðarvísan* 24, particularly highlights the association of brightness with purity. Light is also regarded as a symbol of conceptual clarity, primarily in the later Christian skaldic poems. In *Líknarbraut* 51, for example, the poet refers to his work as a *ljóss* ‘bright’ poem, perhaps suggesting that, like Christ’s followers, his words serve as an avenue through which Christ’s light might be transmitted into the world. The author of *Lilja* according to stanza 98 deeply values the clarity of his work; he states his intention to depart from the skaldic tradition of mysterious and riddling stanzas in order to make the message of Christ’s salvation plain, just as Christ Himself brought revelatory light into a world filled with sin’s darkness. Though these details do not directly describe Christ, they do point towards His depiction as Light through the value they are given by the poets.

The bright and shining nature of Christ and His followers is contrasted with the murkiness of sins and Hell in these poems. *Geisli* communicates this in the deaths of Christ and Óláfr, which are both accompanied by an eclipse in stanzas 19 to 21 to symbolise the departure of divine light from the world. The detail shows Einarr Skúlason’s familiarity with the Gospel of John and Easter liturgies that include the eclipse in accounts of the Crucifixion and the deaths of some martyrs. *Harmsól* tends to focus more on humanity’s dark sinfulness because of its penitential nature, though light is periodically used to express spiritual revelation in scenes such as the Ascension and Second Coming. The *eldr* ‘fire’ and *myrkr* ‘darkness’ of Hell appear in contrast to the light and peace of Heaven in *Leiðarvísan* in stanza 41, making clear that the absence of light also indicates the absence of Christ in these poems.⁷⁴⁰ In beseeching the Cross for mercy, the *Leiðarvísan* poet notes that the Cross can cure humanity *frá*

⁷³⁹ The verb *skína* ‘to shine’ performs a variety of purposes in these poems. For example, it refers to various members of the Trinity in *Geisli* 7; *Líknarbraut* 3 and 4; and *Lilja* 11, 33, 37, 81, and 88. *Skína* is also used of the Cross in *Líknarbraut* 41 and 52, Mary in *Lilja* 29, and even of Lucifer prior to his fall in *Lilja* 7. Adam before the fall, the Virgin Mary, and people in heaven are all described as *skærr* ‘bright’ in *Lilja* 12, 28, and 74, respectively. The adjective *skýrr*, meaning ‘clear’ or ‘pure’, describes Christ in *Harmsól* 2; the desired state of words and poetry in *Lilja* 3 and 98; a spiritual gift given to Adam in *Lilja* 12; and God’s vision at Creation in *Lilja* 24.

⁷⁴⁰ The verb *brenna* ‘to burn’ is used in descriptions of Hell in *Líknarbraut* 28 and *Lilja* 84; however, it also describes how light burned over Óláfr’s body when he became a martyr in *Geisli* 20.

blindi hyggju túns ‘from the blindness of thought’s field’ and *hreinsar kyn lýða* ‘purify the kin of men’ in stanza 40; in other words, he observes that the dark spiritual ignorance of sinfulness will ultimately be overcome by the revelatory light of Christ’s mercy. *Líknarbraut* 4 describes sinfulness as the *myrkr misverka* ‘murkiness of misdeeds’ and the *blindi* ‘blindness’ of a weary mind, which can only be dispelled with the *albjartr ástarljós* ‘all-bright love-light’ of God’s spirit; later, in stanza 22, Christ’s heavenly light overpowers the darkness of sin at the Harrowing of Hell.⁷⁴¹ Blindness once again describes spiritual ignorance in *Lilja* 9, where Lucifer is referred to as the *blindr föður* ‘blind father’ of Pride, and this in spite of his once exalted state and *náttúruskærleik* ‘natural brightness’.⁷⁴² The Harrowing of Hell sequence in stanza 61, in which *undraz myrkr er ljós er styrkra* ‘darkness is astonished that light is stronger’, remains in keeping with earlier skaldic examples of how the realms of Christ and Lucifer are contrasted with one another. While each of these poems represents Christ as Light and sin as darkness in these varied ways, the symbolic value remains fairly consistent throughout and reflects representations in popular Christian literature of the period.

Directions for Future Research

This thesis has endeavoured to advance scholarly understanding of Christ’s representation in Christian skaldic poetry in a number of ways. Chapters two through six articulate the individual representations of Christ in each of the five poems selected for this study, exploring a range of possible influences to determine how these characterisations might have been shaped by the literature, ideas, and culture of the day. Drawing from the portrayals of Christ in these five poems, chapter seven establishes five key categories and traces their development from the twelfth to fourteenth centuries. This concluding

⁷⁴¹ The adjective *bjartr* describes Christ in *Líknarbraut* 4 and 7. It is also used of Mary in *Geisli* 2 and *Lilja* 24, and Óláfr in *Geisli* 49 and 51. The related noun *birtir* ‘brightness’ describes heaven in *Harmsól* 60 and *Líknarbraut* 28, which contrasts with the darkness of Hell. The noun *myrkr* identifies sinfulness and death in *Geisli* 2; *Leiðarvísan* 31 and 41; *Líknarbraut* 4 and 22; and *Lilja* 19, 43, 61, 73, and 77.

⁷⁴² *Blindr* is also used of spiritual blindness in *Lilja* 78.

chapter also offers possible explanations as to why certain characteristics may have been of interest in particular historical and literary contexts. Ultimately, the review of these five poems and five characteristics reveals that a complex web of influences is at work throughout the production of Christian skaldic poetry, and that despite all the features shared by these poems, each represents Christ in distinctive ways that may reflect its purposes and even its historic contexts.

Several directions for future research are suggested by this thesis. Firstly, there are obvious limitations in the scope of this study, which for reasons of space was restricted to particular poems. There is ample opportunity for further study of Christ's representation in other Christian skaldic verse, including gnomic and wisdom poetry, Marian poetry, translations of Latin texts, stanzas on legal subjects, and hagiographical works apart from *Geisli*. Though the poems in this thesis were carefully selected for their frequent references to Christ and His relationship with humanity, the numerous other subgenres of Christian skaldic poetry offer their own distinctive sets of characteristics for Christ, and each poet combines them in unique ways to further the aims of an individual poem. Explorations of these other poems could add meaningful nuances to our understanding of Christ's representation across time and in individual works. Further research might thus usefully explore how the categories identified in this thesis contribute to our understanding of the representation of Christ and the techniques used to represent Him in other related poems.

Secondly, and along similar lines, I have only been able to touch briefly on related vernacular traditions such as Old English and Old Saxon. The details I have mentioned suggest that certain representations of Christ, particularly in His role as Warrior Chieftain engaged in spiritual battle, seem to have resonated with authors and audiences in Iceland and Norway, along with neighbouring lands that were under German literary and cultural influence. I have also made mention of the Middle English *Piers Plowman's* expression of Christ's arming for spiritual battle against the devil in Passus XVI; while this poem was composed after the Christian skaldic poems under review, it nonetheless reflects a literary trend in representing Christ as simultaneously armed and hidden that may have influenced some descriptions of Christ's Incarnation in poems such as *Harmsól* and *Líknarbraut*. There is plenty of

scope for an extended analysis of these similarities, alongside considering further parallels in the way authors working in these related traditions represented Christ and interpreted the sources and conventions that they may have had in common with the Old Norse poets.

Thirdly, my analysis has drawn attention to a number of intriguing parallels between Old Norse mythology and representations of Christ. Many of these comparisons have their roots in scholarship that continues to be debated, since the degree to which written records of Old Norse myth were influenced by Christianity – and Christian skaldic verse by popular perceptions of Old Norse myth – is difficult to pin down with any certainty. The similarities that this thesis has identified between Christian skaldic representations of Christ and certain Old Norse myths and mythological figures deserve more detailed exploration in future research.

Fourthly, this thesis has helped to identify categories of representation for Christ within these five poems, and in so doing has also identified trends in their prevalence and particular features. Some of these trends may be attributed to the aims of a particular poetic genre. Others, however, may have implications for the date and authorship of poems in ways that this thesis has not been able to explore in detail. For example, the general trend away from Christ as Warrior Chieftain and towards Christ as Beguiler, as revealed through the use of particular words and images in expressing Christ's relationship with humanity, may help to identify the characteristics of particular periods in Christian skaldic poetry. Such details may also indicate how authors and audiences regarded particular doctrinal viewpoints, such as the devil's rights and ransom theory through the combined use of terminology to do with deception and legal matters. These are the areas in which, through the analysis and conclusions of this thesis, I hope that some groundwork has now been laid for further research.

Appendix - Christ Kenning Table

In a thesis that focuses its analysis on five specific representations for Christ, it is important that I acknowledge an alternative approach to this project and offer some information to further reveal the complexity of Christ's representations throughout these poems. Specifically, a table of kennings for Christ, each identified within particular categories, reveals that there are more representations of Christ than I have explored in this thesis.⁷⁴³ Data for this table was collected from a variety of searches on the Skaldic Editing Project database, including searches for Christ or God as referent.

I began by accessing The Skaldic Project electronic database (<http://abdn.ac.uk/skaldic/db.php>), where I used an online search tool to locate kennings for Christ and God in the five poems that appear in this thesis. I then used the database's word search tool to locate other references to Christ and God, searching for references to 'Saviour', 'Lord', 'King', 'Prince', 'God', 'Ruler', 'Steerer', 'Creator', 'Father', 'Son', 'Giver', 'Healer', 'Nourisher', 'Strengthened', 'Pardoner', 'Reconciler', 'Tester', 'Guardian', and the like, and eliminating those which did not pertain to Christ or God.⁷⁴⁴ Having conducted these searches, I then began categorising these kennings and titles according to the characteristics they attribute to Christ and God, and organised the chart according to the speculated chronological order of these poems.⁷⁴⁵ In order to identify Christ's representation as clearly as possible in each instance, I have not strictly adhered to the five representations identified in my thesis but rather

⁷⁴³ Edith Marold (1985: 717-750) carried out a project of categorising representations of Christ and God in Christian poems from 1000 to 1200, noting similarities and differences across three eras within this period (1000-1050; 1050-1150; and 1150-1200). Like Marold, I treat Christ and God as an interchangeable means of identifying the same figure, unless it is clear from the text that it specifically one or the other. While many of the categories I have identified are similar to Marold's, I have also identified specific characterisations that do not appear in her chart. My work also covers a longer period across Christian skaldic poetry, extending to the fourteenth century, but also limits its scope to the five poems that are the focus of this thesis.

⁷⁴⁴ The Skaldic Project database organises its kenning categories using a list of Modern English words, with links to all kennings that denote a given word. A list of options in Old Icelandic would perhaps have been preferable for compiling this table, but was not available.

⁷⁴⁵ I generally follow the dating in Clunies Ross 2007, though am also aware that some of this is still debated.

focussed on specificity and accuracy for each example. Following the example of Edith Marold, who listed her categories in the language of the article, I list the categories I have identified in Modern English.

Based on this work, I have been able to gather the following raw data regarding characterisations of Christ.⁷⁴⁶ As this and the subsequent chart will demonstrate, the representations of Christ as reflected through these searches reveals further that individual characteristics frequently overlap with one another, and can therefore defy specific categories. Notably lacking from the following list are representations of Christ as Beguiler, while the other four representations identified in this thesis are present in varying forms; this is a significant detail, as it reveals that not all characterisations can be construed through a database search, but are instead borne out through careful analysis of the poem as a whole.

Adorner of Heaven: 1 (Harmsól)

Bringer of Peace: 1 (Leiðarvísan)

Controller: 16 (Geisli, Harmsól, Leiðarvísan, Líknarbraut, Lilja)

 Controller: 15 (Geisli, Harmsól, Leiðarvísan, Líknarbraut, Lilja)

 Controller of Fate: 1 (Harmsól)

Creator: 10 (Geisli, Harmsól, Lilja)

 Creator: 6 (Lilja)

 Creator of Earth: 2 (Harmsól)

 Creator of Heaven: 1 (Geisli)

 Creator of Humanity: 1 (Lilja)

Destroyer: 6 (Harmsól, Leiðarvísan, Líknarbraut, Lilja)

 Destroyer of Misfortune: 2 (Leiðarvísan, Líknarbraut)

 Destroyer of Falsehood: 1 (Líknarbraut)

 Destroyer of Harm: 2 (Leiðarvísan)

 Destroyer of Sin: 1 (Lilja)

⁷⁴⁶ In numerous instances, a given passage could represent Christ in multiple ways. The raw data reflects the number of instances in which Christ's representation fits one category, but the same description could also be reflected in the raw data for another category. Also, the raw numbers for indented subcategories, where they occur, break down the total numbers reflected in the category under which it is located.

Father: 4 (Leiðarvísan, Lilja)
 Fighter of Grief: 2 (Harmsól, Líknarbraut)
 Giver: 4 (Harmsól, Lilja)
 Giver of Life: 3 (Harmsól, Lilja)
 Giver of Peace: 1 (Harmsól)
 God of Heaven: 1 (Lilja)
 Healer: 5 (Geisli, Leiðarvísan, Líknarbraut)
 Healer: 2 (Leiðarvísan, Líknarbraut)
 Healer of All: 1 (Geisli)
 Healer of Humanity: 1 (Líknarbraut)
 Healer of the World: 1 (Geisli)
 Image of Deity: 1 (Lilja)
 Legal Authority: 12 (Geisli, Harmsól, Leiðarvísan, Líknarbraut)
 Legal Authority: 4 (Geisli, Leiðarvísan, Líknarbraut)
 Judge: 2 (Geisli, Harmsól)
 Pardoner: 1 (Harmsól)
 Reconciler: 3 (Harmsól)
 Tester: 2 (Harmsól, Líknarbraut)
 Light: 69 (Geisli, Harmsól, Leiðarvísan, Líknarbraut, Lilja)
 Light: 66 (Geisli, Harmsól, Leiðarvísan, Líknarbraut, Lilja)
 Light of Heaven: 1 (Geisli)
 Sun: 2 (Geisli)
 Lord: 253 (Geisli, Harmsól, Leiðarvísan, Líknarbraut, Lilja)
 Lord: 19 (Geisli, Harmsól, Leiðarvísan, Lilja)
 Lord of All: 6 (Geisli, Leiðarvísan, Lilja)
 Lord of Angels: 4 (Harmsól, Leiðarvísan)
 Lord of Angels and Men: 3 (Lilja)
 Lord of Deeds: 4 (Harmsól, Leiðarvísan)
 Lord of Deeds and Glory: 1 (Harmsól)
 Lord of Earth: 5 (Harmsól, Leiðarvísan, Líknarbraut)
 Lord of Fate: 1 (Leiðarvísan)
 Lord of Glory: 9 (Geisli, Harmsól, Leiðarvísan)
 Lord of Greatness: 1 (Lilja)
 Lord of Heaven: 129 (Geisli, Harmsól, Leiðarvísan, Líknarbraut, Lilja)

Lord of Heaven and Earth: 2 (Lilja)
 Lord of Lords: 5 (Geisli, Leiðarvísan, Líknarbraut)
 Lord of Men: 19 (Geisli, Harmsól, Líknarbraut)
 Lord of Mercy: 5 (Harmsól, Líknarbraut, Lilja)
 Lord of Moderation: 1 (Líknarbraut)
 Lord of Power: 4 (Harmsól, Leiðarvísan, Lilja)
 Lord of Purity: 1 (Líknarbraut)
 Lord of Weather: 31 (Geisli, Harmsól, Leiðarvísan, Líknarbraut)
 Lord of the World: 3 (Harmsól)
 Merciful Figure: 1 (Líknarbraut)
 Nourisher: 7 (Harmsól, Líknarbraut, Lilja)
 Omnipotent Figure: 5 (Geisli, Harmsól, Lilja)
 Peacemaker: 1 (Harmsól)
 Protector: 20 (Geisli, Harmsól, Leiðarvísan, Líknarbraut)
 Protector: 4 (Harmsól, Líknarbraut)
 Protector of Earth: 3 (Geisli, Harmsól, Líknarbraut)
 Protector of Faith: 1 (Líknarbraut)
 Protector of Heaven: 10 (Harmsól, Leiðarvísan, Líknarbraut)
 Protector of Men: 1 (Harmsól)
 Protector of the Path: 1 (Líknarbraut)
 Provider of Abundance: 17 (Geisli, Harmsól, Leiðarvísan, Líknarbraut, Lilja)
 Provider of Heaven: 1 (Líknarbraut)
 Saviour: 2 (Líknarbraut)
 Ship's Captain: 12 (Harmsól, Leiðarvísan, Líknarbraut)
 Son: 14 (Geisli, Leiðarvísan, Líknarbraut, Lilja)
 Suppressor of Harm: 1 (Líknarbraut)
 Unknown: 1 (Harmsól)
 Warrior Chieftain: 10 (Geisli, Harmsól, Leiðarvísan)
 Winner of Praise: 1 (Harmsól)

Category	List of Occurrences in Poems
Controller	Geisli 1: snallr Kjósandi alls 'eloquent Chooser of all' ⁷⁴⁷
Lord of All	Geisli 1: snjallr Ráðandi alls 'eloquent Ruler of all'
Lord of All	Geisli 1: snjallr Valdandi alls 'eloquent Ruler of all' ⁷⁴⁸
Light (Sun)	Geisli 2: Sól miskunnar 'Sun of mercy' ⁷⁴⁹
Lord of Heaven	Geisli 2: Vísi veðr-hallar 'Prince of the wind-hall'
Light (of Heaven)	Geisli 3: betri [Ljós] ómjós setrs annars røðuls 'better [Light] of the not-small abode of another sun'
Light (Sun)	Geisli 3: Sól heilags siðar 'Sun of holy faith'
Lord of Lords	Geisli 5: Døglíngur øðlinga 'Prince of princes'
Lord of Heaven	Geisli 5: lofaðr Konungr dagbóls 'praised King of the day-home'
Son/Warrior Chieftain/Legal Authority/Lord of All	Geisli 5: Sonr alls Ráðanda mildr auðar 'Son of the Ruler of all, generous with riches'
Lord of Glory	Geisli 6: dáðvandur Dróttinn dýrðar 'carefully-acting Lord of glory'
Lord of Heaven/Provider of abundance	Geisli 6: hæstr Skjöldungur býðr huldum til himinvistar 'highest Prince invites men to heavenly hospitality'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Geisli 9: Tyggi røðuls 'Sovereign of the sun'
Provider of Abundance/Omnipresent Figure	Geisli 16: líknfrámr Umgeypnandi alls heims 'outstandingly merciful Encompasser of the whole world'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Geisli 18: Gramr sólar 'Warrior-King of the sun' ⁷⁵⁰
Protector of Earth	Geisli 19: grundar Salvörðr 'hall-Guardian of earth'
Lord of Heaven	Geisli 19: Harri hauðrtjalda 'Lord of the earth-tents'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Geisli 21: Gramr sólar 'Warrior-King of the sun' ⁷⁵¹
Healer of All	Geisli 21: ítr Grœðari alls 'glorious Healer of all'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Geisli 24: Gramr sólar 'Warrior-King of the sun' ⁷⁵²
Lord of Lords	Geisli 25: dýrr Dróttinn harra 'dear Lord of princes' ⁷⁵³

⁷⁴⁷ Alternate reading, which is not used in this thesis.

⁷⁴⁸ Alternate reading, which is not used in this thesis.

⁷⁴⁹ The database claims this refers to both God and Christ.

⁷⁵⁰ Part of a *stef*.

⁷⁵¹ Part of a *stef*.

⁷⁵² Part of a *stef*.

Lord of Heaven/Light	Geisli 27: Gramr sólar 'Warrior-King of the sun' ⁷⁵⁴
Lord of Heaven/Light	Geisli 30: Gramr sólar 'Warrior-King of the sun' ⁷⁵⁵
Lord of Heaven/Light	Geisli 33: Gramr sólar 'Warrior-King of the sun' ⁷⁵⁶
Lord of Heaven/Light	Geisli 36: Gramr sólar 'Warrior-King of the sun' ⁷⁵⁷
Lord of Heaven/Light	Geisli 39: Gramr sólar 'Warrior-King of the sun' ⁷⁵⁸
Legal Authority (Judge)	Geisli 42: Dómari heims 'Judge of the world'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Geisli 42: Gramr sólar 'Warrior-King of the sun' ⁷⁵⁹
Lord of Heaven/Light	Geisli 45: Gramr sólar 'Warrior-King of the sun' ⁷⁶⁰
Lord of Heaven	Geisli 46: Lofðungr ranns himintungla 'Prince of the house of heavenly bodies'
Lord	Geisli 56: dáðsnjallr Døglingr 'quick-acting Ruler' ⁷⁶¹
Healer of the World	Geisli 57: Læknir heims 'Physician of the world'
Lord of Men	Geisli 58: Mildingr angfýldrar aldar 'King of sinful humankind' ⁷⁶²
Lord of Heaven	Geisli 63: Valdr himna 'Keeper of the heavens'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather	Geisli 64: heitfastr Jøfurr hreggsalar 'oath-firm King of the storm-hall'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather/Legal Authority	Geisli 64: heitfastr Jøfurr hreggsalar 'oath-firm King of the storm-hall'
Warrior Cheiftain	Geisli 64: Lofðungr ljóss vegs byrjar 'Prince of the bright path of fair wind'
Creator of Heaven	Geisli 65: Gervir himna 'Maker of the heavens'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Geisli 65: snarr Tyggi sólar 'quick Sovereign of the sun'
Lord of Men	Geisli 65: Yfirkjöldungr aldar 'supreme King of men'
Lord of Heaven	Geisli 66: himna Salkonungr 'King of the hall of the heavens'
Lord	Geisli 67: hæstr Hilmir 'highest Prince'

⁷⁵³ Part of a *stef*.

⁷⁵⁴ Part of a *stef*.

⁷⁵⁵ Part of a *stef*.

⁷⁵⁶ Part of a *stef*.

⁷⁵⁷ Part of a *stef*.

⁷⁵⁸ Part of a *stef*.

⁷⁵⁹ Part of a *stef*.

⁷⁶⁰ Part of a *stef*.

⁷⁶¹ This is interpreted as applying to Geisli 57. However, as Chase observes, 'There are two reasons to be suspicious of this kenning; the first is that *døglingr* is never used as the base-word of a kenning for a secular ruler, only for God or Christ, and this is borne out by one other example in st. 5/7, and the second is that *døglingr* is not the right sort of base-word in a kenning for a generous ruler, which should belong to a category such as 'distributor', 'spender', 'waster' or similar' (Chase 2007: 53).

⁷⁶² *Mildingr* implies mercifulness.

Lord of Heaven	Geisli 71: Vísi hós vagnræfrs 'King of the high wagon-roof'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather	Harmsól 1: hár Stillir hreggtjalda 'high Moderator of the storm-tents'
Lord	Harmsól 2: Dróttinn minn 'my Lord'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather	Harmsól 2: skýrr Konungr élhallar 'pure King of the storm-hall' ⁷⁶³
Creator of Earth	Harmsól 3: Einskepjandi landa 'sole Creator of lands'
Lord of Heaven	Harmsól 4: hæstr Stillandi hnossa himins 'highest Regulator of the ornaments of heaven'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather	Harmsól 4: ítr Fylkir veðrhallar 'glorious Chief of the storm-hall'
Protector of Heaven	Harmsól 5: snjallr hábrautar Hreggvörðr 'excellent storm-Warden of the high path'
Lord of Glory	Harmsól 7: dýrðhittandi Dróttinn 'glory-finding Lord'
Lord of Men	Harmsól 7: Yngvi þjóðar 'Prince of the people'
Winner of Praise	Harmsól 8: ítr Mærðvinnandi manna 'glorious praise-Winner of men'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Harmsól 9: eljunsterkr Dróttinn bjartloga hróts hreggs 'energy-strong Lord of the bright flame of the roof of the storm'
Giver of Life	Harmsól 9: Lífgjafi manna 'life-Giver of men'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Harmsól 10: Konungr sóltjalds 'King of the sun-tent'
Protector of Heaven/Light	Harmsól 10: mætr Gætir ranns røðuls 'excellent Guardian of the house of the sun'
Lord	Harmsól 11: Dróttinn 'Lord'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather/Ship's Captain	Harmsól 12: huggóðr Jøfurr hlunns byrjar 'merciful Prince of the launching-roller of the fair breeze'
Lord of Heaven	Harmsól 12: þrifskjótr Þengill skýja 'prosperity-swift King of the clouds'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Harmsól 13: hár Vísi setrs sunnu 'high King of the seat of the sun'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Harmsól 14: Gramr tjalda hyrjar heiðs 'Warrior-King of the tents of the fire of the clear sky'
Giver of Life	Harmsól 14: Lífgjafi minn 'my life-Giver'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather	Harmsól 15: Konungr þeyláðs 'King of the thawing wind's land'

⁷⁶³ Purity may also have associations with light.

Lord of Power	Harmsól 15: Landreki krapta 'land-Governor of powers'
Lord	Harmsól 16: Harri minn 'my Lord'
Lord of Heaven	Harmsól 16: Qðlingr røðla 'Prince of heavenly bodies'
Lord of Earth	Harmsól 17: Dróttinn heimstøðu 'Lord of the world'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather	Harmsól 18: ítr Gramr élserkjar 'glorious Warrior-King of the storm-shirt'
Adorner of Heaven	Harmsól 19: ágætr Skrýðir skríns slóðar skýja 'excellent Adorner of the shrine of the path of the clouds'
Lord of Earth	Harmsól 19: mæztr Hildingr hauðrs 'most precious Prince of the earth'
Lord of the World	Harmsól 20: ern Valdr heims 'powerful Keeper of the world'
Lord of Heaven	Harmsól 20: grandlauss Skjöldungr tjalds skýja 'sinless Prince of the tent of the clouds'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather	Harmsól 20: qrr Konungr élsetrs 'generous King of the storm-seat'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Harmsól 21: hár Buðlungr elds hlýrnis 'high King of the fire of the sky'
Fighter of Grief/Lord of Men/Warrior Chieftain	Harmsól 21: vegligr Angrstríðir runna viggs qldu 'magnificent grief-Fighter of the trees of the steed of the wave'
Nourisher/Provider of Abundance	Harmsól 22: gøfugr Þrifvaldr 'noble Wielder of prosperity'
Lord of Men	Harmsól 22: Gramr aldar 'Warrior-King of men'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Harmsól 23: Mildingr sunnu 'Prince of the sun'
Lord of Heaven/Ship's Captain	Harmsól 23: Stillir hás nausts hríðar 'Moderator of the high boatshed of the tempest'
Giver of Peace	Harmsól 24: sannvísir Veitir friðar 'truly certain Granter of peace'
Creator of Earth	Harmsól 24: Skepjandi ríkis láðs 'Creator of the kingdom of the land'
Lord of the World	Harmsól 25: ern Valdr heims 'powerful Keeper of the world'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather	Harmsól 25: qrr Konungr élsetrs 'generous King of the storm-seat'
Lord	Harmsól 25: saðr Dróttinn 'true Lord'
Unknown	Harmsól 26: ítr...rítar ranns éla 'glorious...of the shield of the house of storms' ⁷⁶⁴

⁷⁶⁴ Referent missing.

Legal Authority (Reconciler)	Harmsól 26: þreknenninn Sættandi ýta 'valiant Reconciler of men'
Lord of Men	Harmsól 27: Dróttinn fira 'Lord of men'
Lord of Heaven/Light/Ship's Captain/Controller	Harmsól 27: sæll Sannstýrandi sólhauðs 'blessed true-Steerer of the sun-land'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather	Harmsól 28: aldyggr Ræsir regnhallar 'altogether honourable Chief of the rain-hall'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Harmsól 28: friðsamr Hilmir flýtileygs ins hæsta hriðtjalds 'peaceful Prince of the swift fire of the highest storm-tent'
Warrior Chieftain	Harmsól 29: fylgjandi Dróttinn himins 'helping Lord of heaven'
Omnipotent Figure	Harmsól 29: skýstalls Skríngeypnandi 'cloud-platform's shrine-Holder'
Lord of the World	Harmsól 30: ern Valdr heims 'powerful Keeper of the world'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather	Harmsól 30: ǫrr Konungr élsetrs 'generous King of the storm-seat'
Protector of Heaven	Harmsól 30: Vǫrðr salar fjalla 'Guardian of the hall of the mountains'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Harmsól 31: inn mildi Qðlingr tjalds mána 'the gentle Prince of the tent of the moon' ⁷⁶⁵
Lord/Legal Authority (Judge)	Harmsól 32: ítr Dróttinn á þvísa þingi 'glorious Lord at this assembly'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather	Harmsól 32: mætr Jǫfurr vangs éla 'worthy King of the field of storms'
Lord	Harmsól 33: dyggr Dróttinn várr 'our faithful Lord'
Lord of Heaven/Light/Warrior Chieftain	Harmsól 33: inn dýrr sunnu Hjalmstýrandi 'the precious Steerer of the helmet of the sun'
Protector/Lord of Deeds and Glory	Harmsól 34: dýrðgjarn Dáðgeymir 'glory-eager deed-Guardian'
Lord of Men	Harmsól 34: Gramr aldar kyns 'Warrior-King of the race of men'
Lord of Heaven	Harmsól 35: fróðr Fylkir himins 'wise Chief of heaven'
Lord of Heaven	Harmsól 35: snjallr Konungr dagstalls 'excellent King of the day-support'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Harmsól 36: Konungr fjornis hvéls sunnu 'King of the helmet of the wheel of the sun'

⁷⁶⁵ Christ's gentleness is emphasised.

Lord of Angels	Harmsól 36: Valdr dróttar dýrðar 'Ruler of the company of glory'
Protector of Heaven/Light	Harmsól 37: Gætir himinljóma 'Guardian of the light of heaven'
Lord of Men	Harmsól 38: Hildingr kyns lofða 'Prince of the race of men'
Lord of Heaven	Harmsól 40: fróðr Fylkir himins 'wise Chief of heaven'
Protector of Earth	Harmsól 40: mætr Varðandi jarðar 'glorious Guardian of the earth'
Lord of Heaven	Harmsól 40: snjallr Konungr dagstalls 'excellent King of the day-support'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather	Harmsól 41: Harri láðs byrjar 'Lord of the land of the fair wind'
Lord of Heaven	Harmsól 43: Gramr ræfrs landa 'Warrior-King of the roof of lands'
Protector of Heaven/Light/Lord of Deeds	Harmsól 44: dáðreyndr Jofurr leygs flugreinar svana 'deed-tested Prince of the flame of the flying-land of swans'
Controller/Omnipotent Figure	Harmsól 44: fagrtjalda Frónspennir 'earth-Spanner of the fair tents'
Lord of Heaven	Harmsól 45: fróðr Fylkir himins 'wise Chief of heaven'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather/Warrior Chieftain	Harmsól 45: heitfastr Jofurr háborgar hreggs 'promise-faithful Prince of the high fortress of the storm'
Lord of Heaven	Harmsól 45: snjallr Konungr dagstalls 'glorious King of the day-support'
Lord of Men	Harmsól 47: Dróttinn ýta 'Lord of men'
Lord of Heaven	Harmsól 49: Buðlungr himinríkis 'Lord of the kingdom of heaven'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Harmsól 49: Landreki søkkva sætrs sunnu 'land-Ruler of the treasures of the seat of the sun'
Protector	Harmsól 50: Festir rítar musteris fróns 'Securer of the shield of the temple of the land'
Lord of Men	Harmsól 51: ríkr Ræsir sveitar seggja 'powerful Chief of the company of men'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Harmsól 52: mætr Gramr sunnu 'illustrious Warrior King of the sun'
Legal Authority (Tester)	Harmsól 52: Reynir virða 'Tester of men'
Protector of Men	Harmsól 52: snjallr Vqrðr gumna 'wise Guardian of men'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Harmsól 53: glaðr Láðvaldr glóða hróts leiptra 'glad land-Keeper of the fires of the roof of lightnings'

Legal Authority (Reconciler)/Warrior Chieftain	Harmsól 54: Sættir kyns bragna 'Reconciler of the kindred of warriors'
Nourisher	Harmsól 54: Þrekfœðandi þjóðar 'strength-Nourisher of the people'
Peacemaker	Harmsól 55: Tínir friðar 'Gatherer of peace'
Lord of Mercy/Lord of Heaven	Harmsól 56: margríkr Jofurr líknar ok fleygs ægis foldar 'very powerful King of mercy and of the swirling helmet of the land'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather	Harmsól 57: hár Valdr blásinna tjalda hreggs 'high Ruler of the windswept tents of the storm'
Controller of Fate	Harmsól 57: mætastr Happvinnandi hólða 'most honoured fortune-Winner of men'
Legal Authority (Reconciler)	Harmsól 58: inn orvi Sættir kyns ýta 'the generous Reconciler of the kinsfolk of men'
Creator/Light	Harmsól 58: sæll Gervandi logskríns 'blessed Maker of the flame-shrine'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Harmsól 59: Ræsir ramlígs búsröðuls 'Chief of the strong homestead of the sun'
Controller/Ship's Captain	Harmsól 59: Vegstýrir 'honour-Steerer'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather	Harmsól 60: Gramr hauðrs glyggs 'Warrior-King of the land of the wind'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Harmsól 60: inn hæstr Hildingr himins birti 'highest Prince of heaven's brightness'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather	Harmsól 61: Landreki strandar veðrs 'land-Ruler of the shore of the wind'
Lord of Men	Harmsól 62: ástnenninn Jofurr drengja 'love-disposed Prince of men'
Legal Authority (Pardoner)	Harmsól 63: margríkr Miskunnandi ýta 'very powerful Pardoner of men'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather	Harmsól 63: veglyndr Valdr grundar veðra 'honour-minded Ruler of the plain of the winds'
Controller/Omnipotent Figure	Harmsól 64: Heimspennir 'world-Spanner'
Destroyer of Misfortune/Warrior Chieftain/Lord of Heaven/Light	Harmsól 65: angrestandi Jofurr sunnu 'sorrow-injuring Prince of the sun'
Lord of Glory	Harmsól 65: ítr Dróttinn 'glorious Lord'
Protector of Heaven	Harmsól 65: Vqrðr skýtjalds 'Warden of the cloud-tent'
Legal Authority/Lord of Heaven/Light	Leiðarvísan 1: Døglingr dæmistóls ok sólar 'King of the judgement-seat of the sun'

Lord of Heaven	Leiðarvísan 1: Harri salar fjalla 'Lord of the hall of the mountains'
Lord of Power	Leiðarvísan 2: aflamestan Dróttinn 'powerful Lord'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Leiðarvísan 2: frægr Harri fagrgims háshreggranns 'famous Lord of the fair jewel of the high storm-house'
Controller/Ship's Captain	Leiðarvísan 3: frægr Stýrir aldar 'famous Steerer of men'
Son	Leiðarvísan 3: Sonr 'Son'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather	Leiðarvísan 4: hreinlyndr Hilmir hreggþjalma 'pure-minded Prince of the storm-enclosure' ⁷⁶⁶
Lord/Warrior Chieftain	Leiðarvísan 5: dáðmóttugs Dróttinn 'deed-mighty Lord'
Protector of Heaven	Leiðarvísan 6: snillifimr grundar Salvörðr 'earth's prowess-nimble hall-Warden'
Provider of Abundance	Leiðarvísan 8: vegfróðr Veitir góðra hluta 'way-wise Granter of good things'
Son	Leiðarvísan 9: alfríðr Sonr 'altogether beautiful Son'
Lord	Leiðarvísan 9: heilagr Dróttinn 'holy Lord'
Protector of Heaven	Leiðarvísan 10: Vörðr vallræfrs 'Warden of the plain-roof'
Destroyer of Misfortune	Leiðarvísan 11: Fárskerðir 'misfortune-Diminisher'
Destroyer of Harm	Leiðarvísan 11: mætr Meinhrijóðandi 'worthy harm-Destroyer'
Lord of Glory	Leiðarvísan 13: ítr Dróttinn 'glorious Lord'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Leiðarvísan 13: Siklingr setrs sunnu 'King of the seat of the sun'
Lord of Lords	Leiðarvísan 14: Dróttinn harra 'Lord of lords'
Controller/Ship's Captain	Leiðarvísan 14: heppinn Heimstýrir 'fortunate world-Steerer'
Lord of Heaven	Leiðarvísan 14: Siklingr himinríkis 'King of the heaven-kingdom'
Lord of Heaven	Leiðarvísan 15: snjallr Dróttinn dags hallar 'valiant Lord of the day's hall'
Lord of Glory	Leiðarvísan 17: ítr Dróttinn 'glorious Lord'

⁷⁶⁶ Purity may also have associations with light.

Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather	Leiðarvísan 17: Jøfurr há s hreggranns 'Prince of the high storm-house'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Leiðarvísan 17: Siklingr setrs sunnu 'King of the seat of the sun'
Lord	Leiðarvísan 19: Dróttinn várr 'our Lord'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Leiðarvísan 19: fjølhress Tyggi tunglbryggju 'very hearty Sovereign of the moon-pier'
Lord of Deeds	Leiðarvísan 20: dáðsterkr Dróttinn 'deed-strong Lord'
Lord of Glory	Leiðarvísan 21: ítr Dróttinn 'glorious Lord'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Leiðarvísan 21: Siklingr setrs sunnu 'King of the seat of the sun'
Controller/Ship's Captain	Leiðarvísan 21: Stýrandinn hallar heims 'The Steerer of the hall of the world'
Lord of Glory	Leiðarvísan 22: Buðlungr dýrðar 'King of glory'
Lord of Glory	Leiðarvísan 23: mæztr Mildingr dýrðar 'most praiseworthy Prince of glory'
Lord of Angels	Leiðarvísan 24: Dróttinn dáðstéttar dags lands 'Lord of the deed-host of day's land'
Controller/Ship's Captain	Leiðarvísan 24: Stýrir alls tírar 'Steerer of all glory'
Lord of Angels	Leiðarvísan 25: alfríðustum Dróttni gotna himins 'altogether fairest Lord of the men of heaven'
Lord of Angels	Leiðarvísan 25: alfríztr Dróttinn gotna himins 'fairest Lord of the men of heaven'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather	Leiðarvísan 25: Gramr hreggranns 'Warrior-King of the storm-house'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Leiðarvísan 25: snjallr sólar Salkonungr 'wise hall-King of the sun'
Lord of Deeds/Lord of Heaven	Leiðarvísan 26: dáðfimr Jøfurr himna 'deed-agile Prince of the heaven's'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Leiðarvísan 26: hreinn Siklingr landa sólar 'pure Prince of the lands of the sun'
Bringer of Peace	Leiðarvísan 27: røskr Friðkennandi 'valiant peace-Bringer'
Controller/Ship's Captain	Leiðarvísan 27: Stýrir himins 'Steerer of heaven'
Father	Leiðarvísan 29: aldýrr Faðir 'altogether precious 'Father'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather	Leiðarvísan 29: Gramr hreggranns 'Warrior-King of the storm-house'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Leiðarvísan 29: snjallr sólar Salkonungr 'valiant hall-King of the sun'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Leiðarvísan 30: blíðr Siklingr sólbyggju 'joyful Prince of the sun-pier'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Power	Leiðarvísan 30: óhræðinn, ríkr Qðlingr loþhjalms 'the fearless, powerful Prince of the sky-helmet'

Father/Warrior Chieftain	Leiðarvísan 31: snjallastr Faðir allra 'most valiant Father of all'
Son/Light	Leiðarvísan 31: Sonr hauðrs sólar 'Son of the land of the sun'
Lord of Heaven	Leiðarvísan 32: Qðlingr hreins bæes heiðar 'Prince of the pure dwelling of the heath' ⁷⁶⁷
Lord of Heaven	Leiðarvísan 32: Skjöldungr skríns skýja 'King of the shrine of the clouds'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather	Leiðarvísan 33: Gramr hreggranns 'Warrior-King of the storm-house'
Lord of Heaven	Leiðarvísan 33: Qðlingr salar røðla 'Prince of the hall of heavenly bodies'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Leiðarvísan 33: snjallr sólar Salkonungr 'excellent hall-King of the sun'
Lord of Glory/Provider of Abundance	Leiðarvísan 34: Dróttinn gnóttar vegs 'Lord of the abundance of glory'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Leiðarvísan 35: Døglingr lopts ljósgims 'King of the loft of the light-jewel'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Leiðarvísan 35: Siklingr sólvangs 'Prince of the sun-plain'
Lord of Deeds/Lord of Heaven	Leiðarvísan 36: dýrligr dáðsterkr Dróttinn himintørgu 'glorious, deed-strong Lord of the heaven-shield'
Lord of All	Leiðarvísan 36: snjallastr Konungr allra 'most valiant King of all'
Destroyer of Harm	Leiðarvísan 37: æztr Hrjóðandi angrs þjóðar 'most excellent Destroyer of the harm of people'
Lord of Heaven	Leiðarvísan 38: dýrstr Jøfurr dagskeiðs 'most dear Prince of the day-course'
Lord of Earth	Leiðarvísan 38: frægr Hilmir allra landa 'famous Prince of all lands'
Healer/Warrior Chieftain	Leiðarvísan 39: øflugr Eflir alls sóma 'mighty Strengtheners of all honour'
Lord of Fate	Leiðarvísan 41: eilífr Deilir skapa 'eternal Ruler of fates'
Controller/Ship's Captain	Leiðarvísan 41: Stýrandi alls 'Steerer of all'
Lord	Leiðarvísan 41: várr Dróttinn 'our Lord'
Lord of Heaven	Leiðarvísan 42: ítr Yfirstillir túns rítar hiimins 'glorious over-Moderator of the field of the shield of heaven'

⁷⁶⁷ Purity may also have associations with light.

Lord of Heaven/Light	Leiðarvísan 42: Jǫfurr sunnu 'Prince of the sun'
Lord of Heaven	Leiðarvísan 45: dáðhress Dǫglingr lophjalms 'deed-hearty King of the sky-helmet'
Lord of Heaven	Leiðarvísan 45: dýrr Gramr dags hallar 'glorious Warrior-King of day's hall'
Lord of Heaven	Líknarbraut 1: himins Dróttinn 'heaven's Lord'
Lord of Heaven	Líknarbraut 2: algǫfugr mærdǫteitr Jǫfurr ins hæsta heiðs 'completely noble, fame-glad Prince of the highest clear-heaven'
Provider of Abundance	Líknarbraut 4: Þrifgæðir Þjóðar 'prosperity-Endower of the people'
Legal Authority (Tester)	Líknarbraut 5: Kannandi alls 'Tester of all'
Controller/Ship's Captain	Líknarbraut 5: Lífstýrir láðs ok lofða 'life-Steerer of land and men'
Lord/Light	Líknarbraut 7: alhreinn, sæll Vísi vegs 'completely pure, blessed Prince of glory'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Líknarbraut 7: Hildingr hauðs mána hvéls 'King of the land of the moon's wheel'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather	Líknarbraut 8: Jǫfurr veðrskríns 'Prince of the storm-shrine'
Controller/Lord of Heaven	Líknarbraut 9: heiðar Hjúlmuspennandi 'helmet-Spanner of the heath'
Lord/Light	Líknarbraut 9: ljóss Vísi 'bright Prince'
Lord of Heaven	Líknarbraut 10: Lofðungr himinríkis 'King of heaven's kingdom'
Provider of Abundance/Light	Líknarbraut 10: Skilfingr skírs árs 'King of bright abundance'
Saviour	Líknarbraut 11: minn Lausnari 'my Saviour'
Destroyer of Falsehood	Líknarbraut 11: Þverrir svika 'Diminisher of falsehoods'
Lord of Heaven	Líknarbraut 12: sá baztr Mildingr heiða tjalds 'the best Prince of heaths' tent'
Protector of the Path of Wisdom	Líknarbraut 13: hvargóðr Gætir vegs vitra hǫlda 'ever-good Guardian of the way of wise men'
Lord of Men	Líknarbraut 13: æztr Konungr fyrða 'highest King of men'
Protector of Earth	Líknarbraut 15: fróns Vǫrðr 'earth's Guardian'
Lord of Men	Líknarbraut 15: Hildingr hǫlda 'King of men'
Lord of Moderation	Líknarbraut 16: Hilmir hófs 'Prince of moderation'

Healer	Líknarbraut 16: várr sárr Groeðari 'our wounded Healer'
Provider of Abundance	Líknarbraut 17: Árstillir 'Moderator of abundance'
Lord of Men	Líknarbraut 17: æztr Konungr fyrða 'highest King of men'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Líknarbraut 18: Hildingr mána hauðs 'King of the moon's land'
Son	Líknarbraut 18: siðnenninn Sonr 'virtue-striving Son'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Purity	Líknarbraut 19: dýrr, hreinn Siklingr hauðrfjornis 'precious, pure King of earth's helmet' ⁷⁶⁸
Lord of Heaven/Light	Líknarbraut 19: ríkr Ræsir røðla býs 'mighty Chief of suns' dwelling'
Provider of Abundance	Líknarbraut 20: eirsannr Árveitir ýta 'mercy-true abundance-Granter of men'
Lord of Lords	Líknarbraut 20: hyggjublíðr Konungr jofra 'thought-tender King of princes' ⁷⁶⁹
Lord of Heaven	Líknarbraut 21: mildr Konungr eyhjálms 'tender King of the island-helmet' ⁷⁷⁰
Lord of Men	Líknarbraut 21: æztr Konungr fyrða 'highest King of men'
Lord of Heaven	Líknarbraut 22: kvaliðr ítr Gramr dægra láðs 'tormented glorious Warrior-King of days' land'
Lord of Mercy/Lord of Heaven/Light	Líknarbraut 22: líknarstyrkr Gramr sólhallar 'mercy-strong Warrior-King of sun's hall' ⁷⁷¹
Nourisher/Provider of Abundance	Líknarbraut 23: aldyggr Fæðir elsku 'fully loyal Nourisher of love'
Suppressor of Harm	Líknarbraut 23: Angrhegnandi 'harm-Supressor'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Líknarbraut 23: sæll Dróttinn sólar hauðs 'blessed Lord of sun's land'
Lord of Earth	Líknarbraut 24: guðblíðr Gramr lands 'godly-tender Warrior-King of the earth' ⁷⁷²
Lord of Heaven	Líknarbraut 24: Siklingr fróns tjalds 'King of the earth's tent'
Lord of Heaven	Líknarbraut 25: Hilmir heiðtjalds 'Prince of the heath's tent'
Lord of Men	Líknarbraut 25: æztr Konungr fyrða 'highest King

⁷⁶⁸ Purity may also have associations with light.

⁷⁶⁹ Also hints at Christ's mercifulness.

⁷⁷⁰ Also hints at Christ's mercifulness.

⁷⁷¹ Also hints at Christ's mercifulness.

⁷⁷² Also hints at Christ's mercifulness.

	of men'
Lord of Heaven	Líknarbraut 25: Skjöldungr skríns hlýrna 'Ruler of the shrine of heavenly bodies'
Nourisher/Legal Authority	Líknarbraut 26: Fæðir fremðarráðs 'Nourisher of famous counsel'
Protector of Heaven/Lord of Weather	Líknarbraut 28: Gætir glyggranns 'Guardian of the storm-house'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather/Light	Líknarbraut 28: Valdr birtiranns byrjar 'Ruler of the radiant house of the wind'
Protector of Heaven/Light	Líknarbraut 29: Ítr Vörðr sólar slóðar 'glorious Guardian of the sun's track'
Lord of Men	Líknarbraut 29: æztr Konungr fyrða 'highest King of men'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Líknarbraut 30: huggóðr Gramr grundar geisla 'benevolent Warrior-King of the land of rays'
Healer of Humanity	Líknarbraut 31: lýðs Læknir 'humanity's Physician'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather/Provider of Abundance	Líknarbraut 31: qrr Harri élskríns 'generous Lord of the storm-shrine'
Provider of Abundance/Nourisher	Líknarbraut 32: blíðr Dróttinn dags reitar 'tender Lord of the day's furrow'
Lord of Earth	Líknarbraut 33: Konungr fróns 'King of earth'
Controller/Ship's Captain	Líknarbraut 38: Himinstýrir 'heaven's Steerer'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Líknarbraut 42: dyggr Gramr sólstéttar 'faithful Warrior-King of the sun's path'
Lord of Men	Líknarbraut 42: Konungr dróttar 'King of the host'
Lord of Heaven	Líknarbraut 43: þreksnjallr Þengill skýja 'strength-bold King of clouds'
Provider of Abundance	Líknarbraut 46: Qðlingr árs 'Prince of the year's abundance'
Protector of Faith	Líknarbraut 46: Siðgætir 'faith-Guardian'
Protector	Líknarbraut 46: Siðgætir 'faith-Guardian'
Provider of Abundance	Líknarbraut 47: Eflir árs 'Strengtheners of the year's abundance'
Nourisher/Merciful Figure	Líknarbraut 47: Líknfæðir 'Begetter of grace'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather	Líknarbraut 48: Bragningr veðrskríns 'King of the storm-shrine'
Protector	Líknarbraut 48: gumna Gætir 'Guardian of men'
Fighter of Grief/Lord of Men	Líknarbraut 49: Angrstríðandi aldar 'grief-Fighter of mankind'

Lord of Mercy	Líknarbraut 49: eirsamr Dróttinn 'merciful Lord'
Lord of Heaven	Líknarbraut 50: ítr Ræsir regnsals 'glorious Chief of the rain-hall'
Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather	Líknarbraut 50: Konungr veðra tjalds 'King of the storms' pavilion'
Destroyer of Misfortune	Líknarbraut 51: sæll Angrskerðandi 'blessed grief-Diminisher'
Lord of Lords	Líknarbraut 52: Dróttinn jöfra 'Lord of princes'
Saviour/Provider of Abundance	Líknarbraut 52: Mæztr, qrr Lausnari minn 'my most glorious, bountiful Saviour'
Lord of Angels and Men	Lilja 1: Yfirbjóðandi eingla og þjóða 'supreme Ruler of angels and peoples'
Lord	Lilja 2: Dróttinn 'Lord'
Lord of All	Lilja 4: Allsvaldandi Kóngr 'all-ruling King'
Lord	Lilja 8: dýrr Dróttinn 'splendid Lord'
Son/Provider of Abundance	Lilja 8: Guðs yfrinn ríkr eingeiðið Sonr 'God's abundantly powerful only-begotten Son'
Lord of Mercy	Lilja 14: blíðr Dróttinn 'kindly Lord'
Lord of Power	Lilja 19: ríkr Herra 'powerful Lord'
Lord	Lilja 21: inn dýrr Dróttinn 'the dear Lord'
Lord	Lilja 23: Herra þínn 'your Lord'
Controller/Omnipotent Figure	Lilja 23: Yfirspennandi þrenna heima 'over-Spanner of three worlds'
Son	Lilja 24: Sonr 'Son'
Lord of Heaven/Light	Lilja 26: inn háleitr Drottinn reitar stjörnu 'the sublime Lord of the path of the star'
Lord of Angels and Men	Lilja 28: sannr Höfðinginn eingla og manna 'the true Chieftain of the angels and men'
God of Heaven	Lilja 29: Guð himnanna 'God of the heavens'
Image of Deity	Lilja 30: hagligr Myndan heilags anda 'proper Image of the Holy Spirit'
Lord	Lilja 32: Dróttinn minn 'my Lord'
Lord of Heaven	Lilja 37: Valdr himnanna 'Ruler of the heavens'
Lord of Greatness	Lilja 38: inn mikill Dróttinn 'the great Lord'
Son	Lilja 44: inn dýri Sonr 'the precious Son'
Son	Lilja 44: menniligr Sonr Guðs og hennar 'human Son of God and her'
Son	Lilja 44: Sonr Máriú 'Son of Mary'

Destroyer of Sin	Lilja 47: Brjótr synða 'Breaker of sins'
Creator	Lilja 51: Skapari minn 'my Creator'
Lord of Heaven and Earth	Lilja 52: Yfirvaldandi himins og landa 'supreme Ruler of heaven and lands'
Son	Lilja 56: sannheilagr Sonr 'truly holy Son'
Creator	Lilja 57: Skapari minn 'my Creator'
Lord of Heaven and Earth	Lilja 58: Yfirvaldandi himins og landa 'supreme Ruler of heaven and lands'
Creator of Humanity	Lilja 62: Skapari manna 'Creator of men'
Lord of Mercy	Lilja 63: blíðr Dróttinn 'gentle Lord'
Giver of Life	Lilja 63: sannr Lífgari dauðra manna 'true life-Giver of dead men'
Creator	Lilja 63: Skapari minn 'my Creator'
Lord	Lilja 69: Dróttinn minn 'my Lord'
Son	Lilja 69: Máriu Sonr 'Son of Mary'
Creator	Lilja 69: Skapari minn 'my Creator'
Lord of All	Lilja 70: allsvaldandi Kóngr 'all-ruling King'
Lord	Lilja 75: Dróttinn 'Lord'
Creator	Lilja 75: Skapari minn 'my Creator'
Father	Lilja 79: Faðir hinn sæti 'the sweet Father'
Provider of Abundance/Nourisher	Lilja 80: Blóm Máriu 'Fruit of Mary'
Father/Light	Lilja 81: skínandi Faðir 'shining Father'
Lord	Lilja 82: Dróttinn minn 'my Lord'
Son	Lilja 85: Barn Máriu 'Child of Mary'
Lord	Lilja 85: inn dýrr Dróttinn 'the dear Lord'
Son	Lilja 87: Sonr Máriu 'Son of Mary'
Lord of Angels and Men	Lilja 100: Yfirbjóðandi eingla og þjóða 'supreme Ruler of angels and peoples'

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