Representations of Christ in Christian Skaldic Poetry

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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.
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 Leidarvísan, Liknarbraut, 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.

This project would not have been possible without the knowledgeable guidance and unfailing encouragement of my primary supervisor, Professor Susan Irvine, and my secondary supervisors, Professor Chris Abram and Professor Richard North. I am also deeply indebted to the librarians at University College London, the University of Oxford, the University of Edinburgh, and the National Library of Scotland, whose assistance with accessing materials has been vital to my work over the past several years. Additionally, I wish to thank Dr Erin Goeres and Dr Katrina Attwood, who not only served as my viva examiners, but also advised me with great enthusiasm and dedication while I completed my corrections.

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List of Abbreviations


HórdG Lv 7v (Harð 14) = Vol. 5 Harðar saga 14 (Hórdar Grímkelsson, Lausavísur, 7)


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


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


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 Reykjavikurdeildar Hins íslenska bókmenntafélags, Landsbókasafn Íslands, Reykjavík.
JS = Safn Jóns Sigurðarsonar, Landsbókasafn Íslands, Reykjavík
Lbs = Handritasafn Landsbókasafns Íslands, Reykjavík

Manuscripts and Transcripts

Adv 21 8 10x
AM 104 8ox
AM 622 4°
AM 684c 4°
AM 705 4ox (705°)
AM 707 4ox
AM 714 4°
AM 715 a 4ox
AM 720 a VIII 4° (720a VIII)
AM 757 a 4° (B)

AM 99 a 8° (99a)
AM 136 4°
AM 624 4° (624)
AM 695 a 4ox
AM 706 4ox
AM 713 4°
AM 715 a 4ox
AM 717 h 4ox
AM 720 b 4° (720b)
BLAdd 4892 (4892)
DKNVSB 41 8ox (41 8ox)

\textit{Hkr} = \textit{Heimskringla}

Holm papp 64 fol

ÍB 104 4ox

ÍB 200 8ox

ÍBR 74 8ox

JS 399 a-b 4ox

JS 413 8ox

Lbs 444 4ox (444x)

Lbs 848 4ox

Lbs 966 4ox

Lbs 1745 4ox

Lbs 2293 8ox

GKS 1005 fol (Flat), Flateyjarbók

Holm papp 23 fol

Holm perg 1 fol (Bb), Bergsbók

ÍB 159 8ox

ÍBR 16 8ox

JS 260 4ox

JS 406 4ox

Lbs 221 4ox

Lbs 804 4ox

Lbs 953 4ox

Lbs 1152 8ox

Lbs 2289 4ox

UppsUB R 547 4x
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 Leiðarvisan, 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. 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, Leidarvísan from the second half of the twelfth century, the mid- to late-thirteenth century Líknarbraut, and the mid-fourteenth century Lilja. 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.

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.

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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. 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.

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

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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 fulfill 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 Nikulás 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 ‘Visur about St John’ from the thirteenth century; and Pétrsdrápa ‘Drápa about St Peter’, Andreasdrápa ‘Drápa about St Andrew’, and Káttrinardrápa ‘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 Visur 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: xlvii).
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’, Gýðingsvisur ‘Visur about a Jew’, Bruðkaupsvisur ‘Visur about a Wedding’, Máriuvisur I-III ‘Visur about Mary I-III’, Vitnisvisur af Máriu ‘Testimonial Visur 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’, Leiðarvisan ‘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

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¹⁰ Clunies Ross 2007: xliv.
include the aforementioned hagiographical and Marian poems; translations of the Latin *Stanzas addressed to Fellow Ecclesiastics*; and gnomical 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.’ 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 *slaemr*. 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. *Drápur*, which were originally developed in a courtly setting to praise a ruler for his glorious deeds, also afforded the skald to futher 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.

*Geisli*, *Harmsól*, *Leiðarvísan*, and *Liknarbraut* 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. The form was largely dominated by Icelandic poets, who

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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.\(^\text{16}\)

_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’.\(^\text{17}\) 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.’\(^\text{18}\) 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.\(^\text{19}\) 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.\(^\text{20}\) 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.  
\(^{19}\) 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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{22} Unlike earlier skaldic verse composed in a court setting, much of the surviving Christian skaldic corpus lacks authorial attribution.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{25} On the other hand, Guðrún Nordal argues that the aristocrats were

\textsuperscript{21} Guðrún Nordal 2001: 339-40.
\textsuperscript{22} Wolf 1997: 261.
\textsuperscript{23} The individual overviews for each poem will specify whether there is a known or speculated author.
\textsuperscript{24} Cf. Guðrún Nordal 2001: 141-142.
\textsuperscript{25} Clunies Ross 2007: li.
themselves the skalds. 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. 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. 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 indispensible resources due to the deterioration of many late medieval manuscripts in which these poems were preserved. Manuscript AM 757 a 4° (B) serves as a good example: the poems preserved in this early fifteenth-century manuscript include Harmsól, Leidarvisan, Liknarbraut, but the original has become one of the most difficult Icelandic manuscripts to read as a result of deterioration. Modern scholars studying poems in this manuscript rely heavily on a transcript of B by Jón Sigurðsson (1811-79), entitled JS 399 a-b 4ºX (399a-bX). 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

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28 For an overview of early critical attitudes towards Christian skaldic verse, see Clunies Ross 2007: li-lii.
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 visur, Leidarvisan, Liknarbraut, Harmsól, Maríuðrápa, and Gyðingvisur.
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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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’.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{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-lii.

\textsuperscript{31} Abram 2011: viii.

\textsuperscript{32} Abram 2011: 4.

\textsuperscript{33} Abram 2011 25.
Icelandic.\textsuperscript{34} Although it is likely to be subjective in several aspects, Snorri’s attitude towards Old Norse mythology in the \textit{Gylfaginning} and \textit{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’.\textsuperscript{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 \textit{Snorra Edda}.\textsuperscript{36}

The antiquarian interest demonstrated in \textit{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 \textit{per se}'.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{39} The context of Christian skaldic verse dictates that the literary function of the re-use of old myths is the most important emphasis.

\textsuperscript{35} Abram 2011: 25.
\textsuperscript{36} Quinn 2012: 213.
\textsuperscript{37} Abram 2011: 181.
\textsuperscript{38} Quinn 2012: 255.
\textsuperscript{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. Óláfr famously converted parts of Norway, the Atlantic islands, Iceland and Greenland with the use of threats and violence. 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. He returned to Norway with Bishop Sigewoerd 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. 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'.

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 Antonsen 2010: 25.
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’. He sought to distance his own kingdom from England and Denmark, instead making the arch-see of Bremen into Norway’s immediate religious authority. 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. 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. 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

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. 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. 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. 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. 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

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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.
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. 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.

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. 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.

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. 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-
sanctioned beliefs: both pagan and Christian practices were accepted, although Christianity was ‘diffuse and decentralized’ during this period.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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’.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{62} Many scholars have considered Iceland’s conversion narrative unique among contemporary examples in Europe.\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{58} Abram 2011: 186.
\textsuperscript{59} Abram 2011: 186.
\textsuperscript{60} Orri Vésteinsson 2000: 17-19.
\textsuperscript{61} Jochens (Jul 1999): 649.
\textsuperscript{62} Jochens (Jul 1999): 621.
Christian conversion.\textsuperscript{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 Kristjánsdóttir has observed, the establishment of monasteries and nunneries in Iceland coincided with a period of renewal for monasticism in Europe generally.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{68} The first monastery in Iceland was established at Þingeyrar in 1133, and the last at Skriðuklaustur 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.\textsuperscript{69} Among the

\textsuperscript{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; IF xxvi, 347); Kristni saga (ASB xi. 36-42); and Njáls saga (IF xii. 269-72).

\textsuperscript{65} Steinunn Kristjánsdóttir 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.

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

\textsuperscript{67} Steinunn Kristjánsdóttir 2013: 150. Cf. Magnúss Stefánsson 1975: 81-85; and Gunnar Karlsson 2000: 39-41. Speaking about the Middle Ages as a whole, Steinunn Kristjánsdóttir, 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.

\textsuperscript{68} Steinunn Kristjánsdóttir 2013: 151.

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’. Monasteries also carried out education and a variety of daily work, including
gardening, weaving, and writing.\footnote{Steinunn Kristjánsdóttir and Per Arvid Ásen 2014: 562-3.}

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’.\footnote{Steinunn Kristjánsdóttir 2013: 154-5; Helgi Porráknssó 2003: 26-28; Anna Sigurðardóttir 1988: 293; Hörður Ágústssó 1989a: 293-95; Björn Þórsteinnsson, and Guðrún Æsa Grímsdóttir 1990: 141-58; and Gunnar Karlsson 2000: 89 and onwards.}

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’.\footnote{Steinunn Kristjánsdóttir 2013: 150-1. Cf. Steinunn Kristjánsdóttir, Inger Larsson, and Per Arvid Ásen 2014: 563-4.}

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.\footnote{Steinunn Kristjánsdóttir 2013: 149-150.}

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

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. 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. Ísleifr also founded a school in Skálholt, an example that was followed by Jón Ógmundarson, 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. Among the most important learning centres in the twelfth century were Haukadalr, Skálholt, and Oddi (where Snorri Sturluson received his formal education). 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 gøðord. The need for this distinction is telling of the close relationship between the church and political leaders within Iceland.

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’.
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’. Furthermore, those poems which survived did so through the support of ‘ruling families, powerful chieftains and farmers’, and ‘powerful clans [that] acted as patrons’. 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. 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’.

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

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82 Clunies Ross 2005: 218.
84 Orri Vésteinsson 2000: 222.
independence to the king of Norway and his officials.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{86} This century also marked the 'classical period' of Icelandic saga writing, and saw the copying down of such works as the \textit{Snorra Edda}, \textit{Poetic Edda}, \textit{Völsunga saga}, and \textit{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.\textsuperscript{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'.\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{85} O'Donoghue 2008: 103-4.
\textsuperscript{86} Kirby 1986: 40.
\textsuperscript{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.
\textsuperscript{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. 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.\footnote{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.}

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 ǫ 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 \textit{Poetry on Christian Subjects} chose to use in later poems such as \textit{Lilja}. For the sake of consistency with the editions in these volumes, I have chosen to retain both the ǫ 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 ǫ in place of ö.

There are a few further departures from \textit{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.\footnote{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). 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. 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 Skúlaso* n composed about Óláfr Haraldsson’, from which modern editions derive the title and attributed author. 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.

*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. 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. Einarr was in Norway by 1114 and involved in the Norwegian court, first under King Sigurðr

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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.
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.
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 konungur mikill vin hans. Ok Eysteinn konungr bað hann til at yrkja Ólafsdrápu, ok hann orti ok faðrði norðr í Trándheimi, í Kristskirkju sjálfrí, ok varð þat með mikrum jarteinum, ok kom dýrligr ilmr í kirkjuna. Ok þat segja menn at þær áminningar urðu af konunginum sjálfum at honum virðisk vel kvaðít.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

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 *sloemr* '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 Hýrskógheiðr, 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 *sloemr* continues the story of Hneitr (stanzas 46-50), and recounts the victory at Pézínavellir brought about by a prayer to Óláfr for success in battle (stanzas 51-56), followed by the healing of the maimed Ríkharðr, 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 *invocation*' (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. 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. 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. 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’. 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. 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. 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.
109 Further examples of this subgenre, as noted by Chase (2005: 25), include Bishop Eysteinn’s Passio et Miracula Beati Olaui, 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 Eriici Regis et Martyris.
skaldic verse demonstrates how closely the two were aligned with one another in twelfth-century Norway.\textsuperscript{110}

Given that \textit{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 \textit{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 Þórðarson (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.\textsuperscript{111} \textit{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’.\textsuperscript{112} Though there are some extant fragments of a \textit{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 \textit{Óláfsdrápa} and \textit{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

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{110} Chase 2005: 12-13. \textit{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 \textit{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 \textit{vita et miracula} published as \textit{Passio et Miracula Beati Olaui} and composed by Archbishop Eysteinn of Trondheim (d. 1188) (Chase 2005: 13). For a more comprehensive overview of \textit{Geisli}’s sources and analogues, see Chase 2005: 10-16.
  \item \textsuperscript{111} Whaley 2012: 386.
  \item \textsuperscript{112} Whaley 2012: 386. For a continuous text of \textit{Hallfreðar saga}, see ÍF 8, 133-200.
\end{itemize}
struggle to adjust to new religious beliefs under the reign of King Óláfr. He
died from sickness and injury at almost forty years of age while sailing and was
buried in Iona.

Sigvatr Þórarson (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. 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
Vestfjararvísur (‘Verses about a Journey Westwards’), c. 1025-6. 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 erfdrápa
‘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’. 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
Ragnarök and the ruler being received into Vallhöll, whereas Sigvatr’s account
of the solar eclipse perhaps connects the saint’s death to that of Christ’s at the
Crucifixion. 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 lausavisa 11, he died in northwestern Norway on the
island of Selja, and was buried in Trondheim in Kristskirkja.

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.
118 Jesch 2012: 532.
The son of the farmer-poet Þórir 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. As Gade notes, ‘he spent several years in the Orkney Islands as poet and intimate of the jarls Røgnvaldr (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).’ Much of his surviving work is comprised of encomia (erfídrápur) 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. 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’. 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. 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’. 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

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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.
skaldic encomiastic poetry, 'it is only after close examination that the character of an individual poem or poet emerges'.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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 \textit{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 \textit{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:

\begin{verbatim}
Eins mà óð ok bœnir      (alls Ráðanda ins snjalla
vels fróðr, sás getr göða)      Guðs Þrenning mér kenna;
goðugt Ljós boðar geisli       gunnóflugr miskunnar
(ágaætan býðk ítrum   Óláfi brag) Sólár, (\textit{Geisli} 1)\textsuperscript{128}
\end{verbatim}

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

\textsuperscript{125} Whaley 1998: 49.
\textsuperscript{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.
\textsuperscript{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 (i heimi heims) myrkrum brá (þeima)
ok (Ljós meðan) var Vísi veðr- (kallaðisk) -haller.
Sá lét bjartfrá bjartrí berask Maðr und skýjadr
(fráegr stóð af því) floðar (fornuðr) Rǫðull síðrnu. (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 Prenning ‘Trinity’, indicating the poet’s clear grasp of this basic theological concept before continuing with more direct references to Christ. 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. 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. Icelandic godar, for example, were expected to provide wise legal counsel and serve as representatives for their pingmenn in legal settings. While the godi-pingmenn 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 Prenning, see LP 645.
130 For ráðanda, see IED 485. Arguably, the Trinity is represented fully in stanza 1, with God as Gud, the Holy Spirit as Raðanda, and Christ as Sól.
131 For snjallr, see LP 522; and SnE 1998: 397.
132 For more information regarding the involvement of Icelandic godar 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 óðr ok bœnir ‘songs and entreaties’. While bœn 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 qnd ‘spirit’ and lae ‘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 göfugt 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: 1-3 136 and the Glossa Ordinaria commentary, which includes an epistle for the morning Mass of Christmas that

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133 For bœn, 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.\textsuperscript{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 I.7-8, hinting at Óláfr’s relationship to Christ as both follower and witness:

\begin{quote}
Hic venit in testimonium, ut testimonium prehiberet de lumine, ut omnes crederent per illum. Non erat ille Lux, sed ut testimonium prehiberet de Lumine.\textsuperscript{138}
\end{quote}

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.\textsuperscript{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 \textit{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 \textit{geisli Sólar miskunnar} ‘light-beam of the Sun of mercy’ fits within this tradition.\textsuperscript{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 \textit{helmingr} in stanza 1, Einarr Skúlason describes Christ in stanza 2 as \textit{bjart Rǫðull} ‘the bright Orb’, symbolically associating Him with the sun. The use of \textit{rǫðull} ‘sun’ occurs here and in other Christian skaldic stanzas as part of heaven-kennings in which Christ is identified as Ruler.\textsuperscript{141} However, the traditional association of Christ with

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{137} Chase 2005: 21. The Latin version of the translated passage reads, \textit{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’ (\textit{Glossa Ordinaria} 6: 795; Modern English translation from Chase 2005: 21). The noun \textit{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 \textit{Geisli} 1 and 3; and \textit{Lilja} 33.
\item \textsuperscript{138} Vulg 1979, John I.7-8.
\item \textsuperscript{139} NRSV, John I.7-8.
\item \textsuperscript{140} Chase 2005: 36. For \textit{geisli} ‘light beam’, see \textit{LP} 177; \textit{SnE} 1998: 286; and entry in \textit{ADIP}.
\item \textsuperscript{141} For \textit{rǫðull}, see \textit{LP} 474; and \textit{SnE} 1998: 379. Examples of \textit{rǫðull} in the context of heaven as Christ’s domain occur in \textit{Geisli} 9; \textit{Harmsól} 10, 16, and 59; \textit{Leiðarvisan} 33; and \textit{Liknarbraut} 19.
\end{itemize}
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 cognovitis (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, II. 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. 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. 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*. 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 and Mary, the poet employs the adjective *bjartr*, which literally translates as ‘bright’ and can metaphorically mean ‘pure’ and ‘good’ in a moral sense. The use of *stjarna* in this stanza, referring to Mary as a ‘star’, also describes the heavens over which Christ is Ruler. 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.
150 For *bjartr*, see entry in *ADIP*; *LP*: 49; *SnE* 1998: 245; and *IED*: 65.
151 For *stjarna*, see *LP*: 537 and *IED*: 594.
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 lancto palce* ‘On the holy day of Easter’ found in *Gamal norsk homiliebok*. 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. 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 piisime* and symbolically identifies Christ as the ultimate source of Light. The description implies Christ’s supreme authority, including His role

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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 lancto palce* ‘On the holy day of Easter’ found in *Gamal norsk homiliebok*: At upp-runinní folo lão þær engil hia grof. þvi at þa megom vér icilia himnelca luti ef ret-lætes fol likin 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 praeciputum aeterni Dei ad obeditionem 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 piisime* from *Analecta hymnica medii aeui* (AH: 15, 13). Malachi IV.2 reads: *Et oretur 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. Réttir, which refers to legal rights and compensation in certain contexts, can also indicate spiritual righteousness and atonement as it does here. 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 Döglingr qðlinga ‘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:

Sónr sté upp með yndi  auðar mildr frá hauðri,
jófra Beztir, til øætrar  alls Ráðanda hallar.
Lófar sitr englum efri  (qðlinga hnígr þingat
Döglinga hring) á dýrðar  dagbólís Konungr stólí. (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

\(^{156}\) For réttir, 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 jófra ‘Best of chiefs’, Christ is Himself implicitly presented as a Jófurr, 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. The second helmingr refers to Christ as both Konungr, a straightforward term meaning ‘King’, and Doglingr öldinga, which serves as a translation of the Latin Rex regum ‘Prince of princes’. The term Doglingr is only found in Geisli, Leiðarvisan, and Kátrinardrápa among the Christian skaldic poems; it generally means ‘Ruler’ or ‘King’, but specifically refers to a descendent of King Dagr. Öðlingr, which appears in Geisli and Harmsól, as well as the eddic poem Gúpisspá, is only used in reference to a nobleman or prince and refers to descendents of Auði. 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 holl ‘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.

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158 For jófurr, see LP 329; SnE 1998: 331; and IED 327. Jófurr 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 doglingr, see LP 94; SnE 1998: 262; and entry in ADIP. SnE 1998: 440, 527-8. For more on öldingr, see IED 762. Öðlingr is also used of a Norwegian king in stanza 1 of Róðadrápa by Þórðr Særeksson.

161 For holl, see LP: 310; SnE 1998: 327; entry in ADIP; and Zoega 2004 [1926]: 225.
This stanza uses *holli* 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 *hirð menn* 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 *holli* 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 *holli* include: *Voðuspá* 21 i *holli Hárs* ‘in Hárr’s hall’ (*NK*, 5; Dronke 2007: 12); * Hávamál* 111 Háva *hollo* at, / Háva *hollo* i ‘at High One’s hall, in High One’s hall’ (*NK*, 34; Dronke 2011: 24); and *Lokasenna* 3 and 4 *Ægis hallir* i ‘in to Ægir’s halls’ (*NK*, 97; Dronke 2007: 333).


\(^{165}\) 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*, *Máríudrápa*, *Heilagra meyja drápa*, and *Pétrsdrápa*.

\(^{168}\) Syrett 2000: 265.

\(^{169}\) Syrett 2000: 266.
and his retainer. 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 _haestr 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’. 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 læðra_ ‘the over-man of all the scholarly people’, observing that his eminence at Niðarós _vex, pars heilagr konungr hvílir_ ‘grows, where the holy king [Óláfr] rests’. 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 Kris_ ‘to hear the ornamented poet of the powerful-minded thegn of Christ’. 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

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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.\textsuperscript{174} The term also appears in the final extant stanza of \textit{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.\textsuperscript{175} The term \textit{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 \textit{lýtk helgum jöfri fira} ‘I pay tribute to the holy ruler of people’. He notes in stanza 13 that Óláfr\textit{ leyndi hóleitri göežku 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\textit{ 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\textit{ sá fagran stiga standa af jórðu til himna} ‘saw a fair ladder proceeding from earth to the heavens’, and in stanza 16\textit{ hugðísk síðan ganga hagliga upp í lópt} ‘thought then he went surely up in the sky’ as God opened heaven to him. His life reaches its end in stanza 17, when \textit{hvatur skatnar}

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

\textsuperscript{175} For more information on the potential meanings of \textit{þegn}, both in skaldic verse and other literary contexts, see Syrett 2000: 243-71. Stanza 12 of Ulfr Uggason’s \textit{Húsdrápa} reads \textit{Par kœmr á, en æri / endr bark mærð 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 \textit{et al.} 2011: 587). For the definitive edition of Ulfr Uggason’s \textit{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 Ódinic 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 manndýrðir ‘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

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177 Abram 2011: 104-5. *Hávamál* 76-77: Deyr fé, / deyia frændr, / deyr síalfr it sama; / enn orðztirr / deyr aldregi, / hveim er sér göðan getr. / Deyr fé, / deyia frændr, / deyr síalfr it sama; / ec veit einn, / at aldri deyr: / dómr um dauðan hvem ‘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, þvít vann vísir     (vas hann mestr konungr flestra, drótt nemi mærð), ef mættak, manndýrðir, stef vanda.
Greið má gumnum létta     Guðs riðari stríðum;
rôskr þiggr allt, sem ðæskir,      Óláfr af Gram sólar. (Geisli 18)\(^\text{178}\)

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.\(^\text{179}\)

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 hird’, 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.\(^\text{180}\) The refrain in the second helmingr presents Óláfr as Guðs riðari ‘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 riðari, which means ‘rider’ or ‘horseman’, most frequently refers to a ‘knight’ with distinctly courtly connotations.\(^\text{181}\) According to Chase, ‘this is one of the earliest instances of the word riðari 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.\(^\text{182}\) As a foreign borrowing that reflected European literary precedents more than pre-twelfth century Scandinavian battle experience, riðari 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 rôskr, meaning ‘doughty’ or ‘brave’, and Christ as Gramr sólar ‘Warrior-King of the

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\(^{178}\) 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 riðari, see LP 465 and IED 497.

\(^{182}\) Chase 2007: 22. Riðari also occurs in the Christian skaldic poems Plácitusdrápa and Kátrinardrápa.
sun’, reiterating the representation of Christ as Light, Ruler, and military Leader.\footnote{For \textit{róskr}, see \textit{LP} 476 and \textit{IED} 508. \textit{róskr} is used to describe Óláfr throughout \textit{Geisli}, but is used once in \textit{Leiðarvisið} 27 to describe Christ.} The term \textit{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.\footnote{\textit{SnE} 1998: 293. For more on \textit{gramr}, see \textit{LP} 198. To hint at the term’s violent undertones, I have translated it here as ‘warrior-king’.} 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.

\begin{verbatim}
Náðít bjartr, þás beiðir  baugskjalda lauk aldri
(sýndi Salvörð grundar  sín tökn) röðull skína.
Fyrr vas hitt, at Harra  hauörtjalsa brá dauða
Happ (nýtask mér) mætu  (máltól) skini sólar. (\textit{Geisli} 19)\footnote{I have modified Chase’s edition of the Old Norse text by using brackets instead of dashes to differentiate clause-boundaries.}
\end{verbatim}

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 \textit{Sín tökn} ‘His signs’ to illustrate that holiness has departed from the world. The first \textit{helmingr} observes that the \textit{bjartr} \textit{röðull} ‘bright sun’ was unable \textit{skína}, meaning ‘to shine’ or ‘gleam’, at Óláfr’s death, and likewise in the second \textit{helmingr} the sun’s \textit{skíni} ‘shining’ was...
destroyed at Christ’s death on the Cross.\textsuperscript{186} Chase also notes that the first 
*helmingr* is reminiscent of a passage from the *Legendary Saga of St Óláfr*,
which reads:

\begin{quote}
Nu let Olafr konongr þar lif sitt. þar varð sva mikil ogn, at solen fal
gæisla sinn oc gerði myrc, - en aðr var fagt veðr – æftir þui sem þa var,
er Sialfr Skaparen for af verolddenne. Syndi Guð þa mikla ogn\textsuperscript{187}
\end{quote}

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*.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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 Óláf in this stanza, but also an important thread
throughout *Geisli*.

\begin{footnotes}
\item\textsuperscript{186} For *skína*, see *LP*: 507-8; and *SnE* 1998: 392.
\item\textsuperscript{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 *Erfidrápa Ólafs heilsa*, one of the earliest poetic Óláfr accounts, links
his death to an eclipse.
\item\textsuperscript{189} Cf. Chase 2007: 23.
\end{footnotes}
Óláfr is identified in the kenning beidir baugskjaldar ‘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 Salvör ‘Guardian of the hall of earth’ and Harri hauðtjaldar ‘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 vörð 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, branljós yfir líki visa, þás Guð framði þánd sendis logskíðs 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 figurational 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 mærð þin*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 þjald ‘tent’, see LP 568; and SnE 1998: 414.
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 œskir, 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 Hǫðrar (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 Hǫðrar: 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. 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. 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. 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

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193 For grœða ‘to heal’, see LP: 206.
194 For ítr, see LP 322-3; and SnE 1998: 329. Ítr describes lóunn with arma ... ítrþveguna ‘arms...bright-washed’ in Lokasenna 17, when she embraces her brother’s killer; this is a very obscure but heathen detail (NK, 100). Pórr is described as ítr gulli Ullar ‘brilliant stepfather of Ullr’ in Pórsdrápa 18 by Eilífr Goðrúnarson from c. 990. (North 2011b: 579). There is also the kenning for Norway, ítra...Auðs systur ‘gleaning...sister of Auðr’, in stanza 6 of Halfreðr vandræðaskáld Öttarsson’s Hákonardrápa 6 from c. 995 (Heslop 2012); the kenning expresses that Norway has done the same as lóunn 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 mónuðr 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 fǫdur Magnús ins góða ‘the father of Magnús the Good’ for Óláfr in stanza 27, along with the refrain that identifies him as Guðs riðari ‘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 frónum arfa sinum 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

¹⁹⁷ Chase 2007: 32.
reason why hefir hótið snjalls hildings verit haldin of alla Danmørk ‘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 sötti 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. 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 líði 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 sloær 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 tôkn ‘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 ódr ‘new poetry’ and celebrates the verk ‘works’ he completed after his martyrdom as he prepares for the miracle account in stanzas 58 to 61.

Núss oss, þaus vann vísir, verk fyr þjóð at merkja nauðr í nýjum óði, næst; riðrat þat smæstu.
Krápt skulum Guðs (en giptu) gunnstyrks lofi dýrka,
(lér hjaldrfrðum hárar heims Lækñir 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 Geislí'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, Liknarbraut, 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 Laeknir 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 Laeknir 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 Liknarbraut 33 in chapter four.
\(^{203}\) For læknir, see LP: 386.
\(^{204}\) Chase 2005: 143.
for the author of Geisli. 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. 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

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205 Christ is called Medicus in: Matthew IX. 12 At ille audiens ait: ‘Non est opus valentibus medicus 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, medicus 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 caelitis, 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, *segjð, hvé leystak itran 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 itr ‘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 Óláf 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 Jófurr and Dóglingr 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 hird 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 Vǫrðr ‘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 Laeknir 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, Liknarbraut, 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 *slœmr*.\(^{208}\) 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 *slœmr* 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 *slœmr* 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.’ 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 *Geislí*, *Leiðarvisan*, and other works classified as liturgical, homiletic, hagiographic, and hymnodic, although Attwood has observed that there are no traceable direct sources. 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. 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° (B) and is attributed to Gamli kanóki, who is named in a marginal note on l. 42 of 12r: *Harmsol er gamle orti kanoke* ‘*Harmsól*, which canon Gamli composed’. 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 Þykkvavöö. The prose introduction to the four stanzas of Gamli’s Jónsdrápa in Jóns saga postula reveals that he was *Gamli kanunk austri Þykkvæbor* ‘canon Gamli in the east at Þykkvavöö’, which effectively locates the poem’s composition in Iceland. Based on the monastery’s founding date and the

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211 Attwood 2007: 70.
212 Attwood 2007: 71.
214 Translation from Attwood 2007: 70.
215 Jón 1874: 510. According to Steinunn Kristjánsdóttir, Inger Larsson, and Per Arvid Ásen (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.\footnote{Haki Antonsson 2012: 92.} 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

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 Leiðarvisan.\footnote{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.\footnote{Attwood 2007: 71. Cf. Louis-Jensen 1998: 89. For further details about dating Geisli, see the
poem’s introduction in chapter two.} 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\textsuperscript{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.\footnote{LH II, 115.}

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.\footnote{\textsuperscript{220} Since AM 757 a 4\textsuperscript{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, Brynjólfr Snorrason’s
transcript in Lbs 444 4\textsuperscript{ox} (444\textsuperscript{x}), is the bundle of working papers for Sveinbjörn
Egilsson’s 1844 printed edition of the four Christian poems; another is Jón

\begin{itemize}
\item assumed to have belonged to either the Augustinian or the Benedictine orders’; thus, Gamli
\item likely operated within one of these orders.
\end{itemize}
Sigurðsson’s transcription in JS 399a-b 4°x, 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°x (1152°x).222

Sveinbjörn Egilsson produced the first modern edition of Harmsól in Fjøgur 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 hliððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððððð
and death.\textsuperscript{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, panns of færi heðan munar grand mitt ‘the one which may take from this place my injury of mind’.\textsuperscript{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 tina òll lýti sin með ðóran fyr læðum móønum ‘to recount all their sins with repentance before scholarly men (clergy)’ because He promises sannri likn 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 òsoðð hætt róð ... koma upp fyr allrí skepnu á øfsta dómi, ‘all unconfessed, perilous counsels ... will be revealed at the Last Judgement’.

\begin{verbatim}
Oss verðr ey, nema þessum aldr várn boðum haldim (menn búisk mórgu sinni) meiri ógn (við þeirí), hver þvit hætt róð bórva hljóms á øfsta dómi upp fyr allrí skepnu òsoðð koma lógðís. (Harmsól 6)
\end{verbatim}

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.

\textsuperscript{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. \textsuperscript{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 Ólafss Tryggvasonar.
The first *helmingr* warns that our őgn, 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 godi and and his pingmenn.

The second *helmingr* follows this train of thought as the poet beseeches his audience to prepare themselves in life, since ősögð hætt róð ‘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 róð ‘perilous counsels’ of sinfulness, thus emphasising the importance of preparing for the Last

\(^{229}\) For őgn, 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 þás illt ráð villt 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 ófrið verk ‘ugly works’ as a younger man went against God’s blíðum boð ‘pleasing commands’, which led to his spiritual fruitlessness: barkat bráðgört 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 söri ‘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,  
(hreiðs) ok holdi þínú  (huggóðr Jófurr) blóði.  
Þó sék, Þengill skýja þrifskjöt (meginljótr 
  hagir sýnask mér mínir  margir) þar til bjargar. (Harmsól 12)235


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 Jofurr ‘Chief’, specifically Jofurr hlunns hreins byrjar ‘Chief of the launching-roller of the fair sailing wind’. 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. 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. The Christ-kenning þrifskjótr 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. Despite its reliance on ships for

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236 For jofurr ‘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.
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. 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’. 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 nokkurra dāðir
laxa fróns, en leyndak lóskum þótt, sem máttak,
seggja kind at síndisk, (sætss) þokka mun betri,
(Visi hár) an værak (vel kunnum þvi, sunnu). (Harmsól 13)

I let certain deeds to come to light before the men 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

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 lóskum ‘covered weaknesses’ as well as he could manage. Acknowledging Christ’s revelatory nature in the kenning Vísí 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 lóskum ‘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.
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 fjari,
grandi firðr, þanns gerðak geig, es sék þik eigi;
elsku kuðr, alls Yðvarr, Qðlingr, hefik, rðla,
aumligr þræll í òllum afgerðum mik vafðan. (Harmsöl 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’.

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 i òllum 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’. Unlike Geisli, which celebrates Óláfr’s role as Christ’s þegn or riðari ‘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’. 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 grunnúðiðr ‘every man who does not love You is simple-minded’.

Hverr es greppr, sás gerra, grunnúðiðr, Þér unna
(slíkr hofum synða auki sótt), heimstøðu Dróttinn.
Þú biðr òld, en aðir, almáttigr Guð, sátta,
ýta ferð at yrði aldýr, sökum valda. (Harmsól 17)

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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 sótt ‘settlement’, yet there are some who continue to cause
sókum ‘offences’. Sótt 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.\(^\text{253}\) Sók, 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.\(^\text{254}\) 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 synða ‘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’.\(^\text{255}\)
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 sótt, 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 otbelginn ok
mælir við þá at þeir skulu fylla belginn af rađu gulli ok svá hylja hann allan, ok svá skal þat vera
at sætt þeira ‘Hreidmar 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

\(^{254}\) For sók, 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.  

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 ðinni.  
Guð, rétt guðdóm Yðvarn  (glatast mein af því) hreinana  
(hölda liðs) at hylja,  hár, manndómi vórum.  (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.  

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,

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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 positorus tegmina carnis / Et sumpturus item, nil iam ut mutabile ferret / Post mortem propra 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. 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. In an aside in the second *helmingr*, Christ’s followers are described as *líd*, 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. 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. 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. 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 *Liknarbraut* and *Lilja*. In *Harmsól* overall, however, Christ as Beguiler plays only a minimal role.

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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 For *mein*, see *LP* 399; *LEI* 2000: 419; and entry in *ADIP*. 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 östyrkð 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 Angrstrðir* ‘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 yndi 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 *rāðvisa fíra, þás Yóvarr 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 I.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,

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263 Acts I.9-11: *Et cum Haec dixisset, videntibus illis, elevatus est, et nubes suscepit Hum ab oculis eorum. Cumque intueruntur 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 I.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 I.9-11).
Christ instead is *skrýdr 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.

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 *fylga* ‘to accompany’, thereby ‘amplifying *skrýdr* in the expression *skrýdr, fylgjandi helgu holdi*, which he paraphrases as *forklaret følgende dit hellige legeme* ‘transfigured (or glorified) following your holy body.’ 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 *skrýdr helgu holdi* ‘clothed with your holy flesh.’ 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*. 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

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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.
267 *Kátrinardrápa* 8: *Mildingr foldar mána skryddi sannan Guðdóm mannligu holdi* ‘the Prince of the land of the moon [God] adorned the true Godhead with human flesh’.
"helgu holdi" ‘holy flesh’. 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. Gamli adds to this account of the Ascension that *vitrit litu pat gørla*, ‘wise men saw that fully’; the verb *lita* ‘to see’ alongside the adjective *gørla* ‘fully’ indicates that Christ’s divinity is not merely perceived but completely made known to humanity. 

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 *Skringeypnandi 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. 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’. 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. 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 itr herr sveitar engla ok menn á jørðu* ‘all the glorious troop of

268 For *skrýða*, 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 Liðarvisan 21.
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. 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 ping, 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.

Not a single steed-adorner 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.

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’ Day and the Holy Spirit, as well as in biblical passages like Joel

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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 gups 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 kepær reþr ‘to finish, all the saints will quake, there will be great dread in the world, when the king comes in wrath’ (HómÍsl 1872, 214).
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’.

The use of this term thus hearkens back to Scandinavian legal systems, just as the description of Christ as *Jofurr* ‘Warrior Chieftain’ evokes earlier Scandinavian leaders and invites the audience to imagine Christ in a familiar literary milieu.

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. Icelanders, by contrast, governed themselves through a combination of local assemblies and the annual *Alþing* gathering, in which a group of representatives called *godi* 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. 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,

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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 Zoega 2004 [1926]: 14.

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


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. 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. 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 Jófurr 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. However, this expression of nurturing generosity is tempered with signs of overwhelming power. The kenning jóskreytandi ísheims ‘steed-adorner of the ice-world’, which depicts humanity as seafarers navigating the treacherous waters of the world, alongside the aforementioned heaven-kenning in Jófurr 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 hryggu augliti ossu

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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 fātt framn of vœnr i 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 þtlaust af því móti til yndis ok sælu ‘without fear from that meeting to delight and bliss’; stanza 37 similarly warns that allt gengr drengjum víð 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 unrepentent, who are sent to Hell and face óvísilgar þísilr ‘uncertain torments’ (stanza 38) and fleira angr an tunga ór megí 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 víð Harra láðs byjar ‘to reconcile himself with the King of the land of the breeze’, reiterating the concept of humanity’s need for reconciliation through sát ‘settlement’ as expressed in Hamsól 17. He warns that no one may be saved nema böti verk gòr 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 lóngu lifi ‘are not promised long life’ (stanza 43) and that God has hefr leyndó ‘has hidden’ each person’s dánardægr ‘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.
Gamli states in stanza 45 that only Christ can offer unfailing help to humanity and concludes with a refrain, marking the end of the stefjábálkr. Harmsól moves into its concluding section in stanza 46, where it is explained that the slæmr mun sídað sýna þjóð ðæmi 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 sór 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 síðabót 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.

Drengr réð brátt at beíða Buðlung ept hag þungan
hoppum reifðr, sem hæfði, himinrikis sér líkna.
Fekk an fyrr af sökkva friðr 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 drengr reifðr hoppum ‘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. Finnr Jónsson 1931: 186-7.

\(^{292}\) For riki ‘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 Árnórr Póðarson jarlaskáld: *Gjófvinr vilda Sygna* ‘gift-friend of cherished Sygnir’ (*Haraldsdrápa* 9), and *audvin 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 Oláfs heilda* by Sigvatr Póðarson: *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.\textsuperscript{294} The use of \textit{vingjafar} in this stanza demonstrates the value of friendship and relates to the idea of \textit{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.27\textsuperscript{295} and James II.23.\textsuperscript{296} Old Norse hagiographies also use the corresponding epithet \textit{Guðs vinr} ‘friend of God’ to describe saints, indicating that the concept was a familiar one.\textsuperscript{297} According to Chase, calling a \textit{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{299} Eddic wisdom poetry, such as \textit{Hávamál}, equally demonstrates a literary precedent for the link between friendship and rey giving.\textsuperscript{300} This simple

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{294} For \textit{vingjof}, see \textit{LEI} 2000: 422; LP 618; and Zoëga 2004 [1926]: 492.
  \item \textsuperscript{295} Wisdom VII.27: \textit{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).
  \item \textsuperscript{296} James II.23: \textit{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).
  \item \textsuperscript{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 include: Geisli 9 (\textit{vin Tygga rǫðuls ‘friend of the Sovereign of the sun’}, and Geisli 64 (\textit{heitfastr Jǫfurr veitir gýðar vin sinum ‘the oath-firm King of the storm-hall gives honour to his friend’}).
  \item \textsuperscript{299} Byock 2001: 192.
  \item \textsuperscript{300} For example, \textit{Hávamál} 42: \textit{Vin sinom / scal maðr vinr vera / oc gialda gíof við gíof; / hlátr við hlátr / scylli höðlar 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 \textit{NK}, 23). According to von See (2001: 369), \textit{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)’.
\end{itemize}
detail of gift giving in friendship, alongside David’s identification as dregr, reinforces the personal link he shares with Christ in a chieftain-begn relationship.

Stanza 50 turns its attention to St Peter, who had denied Christ at His arrest but ultimately repented and Jegit vandla głoap með gráti ‘washed his misdeeds away fully with weeping’; consequently he possesses greater várkunnir malmrunnunm ‘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 głoapa ‘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, (sárrs minn … )
 bana hættigar benjar, bragna kyns, fyr synðir.
 Nú beiðum Pík, þjóðar þrekfoðandi, græða
 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 Lausavisur by Einarr skálaglamm Helgason (stanza 1a).
that sin may be perceived as a deadly injury committed against God. 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. He asks Christ, who is here called *brekfnæðandi þjóðar* ‘Strength-Nourisher of the people’, *grœða andar sör* ‘to heal the soul’s wounds’ which *glata lífi* ‘destroy life’, again requesting spiritual healing. 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 *lastauðigir* ‘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 réttlaeti* ‘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 Sjalfr líkna þinum lastauknum þraeli* ‘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 hǫfuðmusteri 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’.

```plaintext
Vættik oss með ótta,       alskírt himins birti
hǫfuðmusteri ins hæsta       Hildings, af þér mildi,
hauðrs, því hugga fríðir       hug minn síðir þínir,
Grams kastali inn glæstí       glyggs, en várt líf hryggvir. (Harmsól 60)
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I fearfully hope for mercy from you to us, altogether bright chief temple of the highest Chief of heaven’s brightness,

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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 *fœða* ‘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.’

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. 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 *alskírt 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. 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. 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. Mary’s connection to light is even

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 *sigrleita 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’. 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 *bliðr høfdingi 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 árman* ‘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 itru 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 *Vǫrðr skýtjalds* ‘Warden of the cloud-tent’ and *angrlestandi Jófurr sunnu* ‘sorrow-injuring Chief of the sun’.

Án lát engan Þína (angrlestandi) mesta
mann (deilir þat mæli) miskunn (Jófurr sunnu).
Vǫrðr, laða skatna skíða, skýtjalds, saman alla,
ítr, þars aldri þrjóti unaðsgnótt ok fróð, Dróttinn. *(Harmsól 65)*

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’

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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’. Christ’s ability *lesta* ‘to injure’ *angr* ‘sorrow’ leads to humanity’s reconciliation with God. The emphasis on humanity’s need for God’s *miskunn* ‘mercy’, and the description of heaven as a place where *unadsgnótt 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. *Lesta* specifically means ‘to break up, injure’, or ‘wreck’, and here paradoxically expresses Christ’s nourishment of mankind through his injuring of sorrow. *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 *Jófurrsunnu* ‘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’. Christ is called *Ítr Dróttinn* ‘glorious Lord’, once again making use of an adjective that can mean ‘shining’ or ‘gleaming’. 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. The concept of spiritual purity reflects the representation of Christ as Light, in this case entering the world through His

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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 skýddr ‘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 hófuðmusteri ‘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 skrýða ‘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 aumliðr þráll ‘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 vingjafer ‘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 Óláf’s miraculous healings. In stanza 54, for example, the poet describes sins as haettligar benjar ‘death-dangerous wounds’ and asks Christ grœða andar sór ‘to
heal the soul’s wounds’. In the same stanza Christ is called prekfoðandi ‘Nourisher of strength’, an epithet that aligns well with the poem’s later description of heaven in stanza 65 as a place where unadgnottr 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 slœmr. 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 slœmr, 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. Priebsch 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.
\(^{323}\) Attwood 2007: 137-8. For accounts of the history and reception of the Sunday Letter in Western Europe, see Delehaye 1899; Priebsch 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.
\(^{325}\) 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 *Leiðarvisan*.\(^{326}\)

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 *Leiðarvisir* ‘Itinerary’, recounts a twelfth-century pilgrimage to Jerusalem by ‘Níkulás’, who is most frequently identified as Nikulás 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 *Leiðarvisir* when the speaker, while guiding pilgrims through a church, identifies the altar where the original Letter supposedly first arrived: *Þar suðr frá því við veggin 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 *Leiðarvisan*, and the likelihood that both poems were composed by skalds in monastic circles, critics sometimes attribute the anonymously composed *Leiðarvisan* to Nikulás 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 varðveittr hanndleggr hans yfir alltari; þar kom ofan bref þat er Sialfr Drottin 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

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\(^{326}\) 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 *Leiðarvisan*.

\(^{327}\) For those in favour of this attribution, see Hill 1983; Hill 1993a; Hill 1993b; and Attwood 2007: 138. For an alternative attribution to abbot Nikulás Sæmundsson of Pingeyrar, see Riant 1865: 80.


Leiðarvisan shares with Christian drápur from the same period, particularly through the lexical and structural parallels found in Gamli kanóki’s Harmsól, Einnarr Skúlason’s Geisli, and the anonymously composed Plácitusdrápa. Attwood dates Leiðarvisan to the second half of the twelfth century.331 The anonymous poet offers a further hint within the poem when he thanks a gofugr prestr ‘noble priest’ identified as Rúnolf 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 Rúnolf, 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 Rúnolf 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° (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° (624) also contains the first thirty-five stanzas of Leiðarvisan, 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

332 Attwood 2007: 139. The two Rúnolfrs are the nephew of Bishop Ketill Þorsteinsson of Hólar (bishop 1122-5) named Rúnolfur Dálksson, and the son of that same bishop named Rúnolf Kerlsson (d. 1186) (Di I: 180-94).
334 Attwood 1996a: 41.
335 Attwood 2007: 140. One such transcription is found in the bundle of loose papers comprising 444 4° (444°), which includes what may have been Sveinbjörn Eglisson’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° (399a-b°) is an identical copy of 444°, and both of these have been annotated by Sveinbjörn Eglisson. There are also additional texts related to Leiðarvisan in 444°. Konráð Gíslason’s (1860) diplomatic transcription of stanzas 1, 2, and 35 from 624 on a single paper bifolium (444(1)°); Jón Sigurðsson’s untitled diplomatic transcription of 624 with annotations by Jón and Sveinbjörn Eglisson (444(2)°); and Sveinbjörn Eglisson’s heavily annotated and partially normalised transcription of 624 (444(3)°). In addition to these resources, Attwood also
Leiðarvisan 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.* 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 málgogn ‘speech-organs’ be moved into praise, and that his audience þagni ‘keep silent’:

Fyrr kveðk frægjan Harra fagrgims, þanns ræðr himni, hás at hróðri þessum hreggranns an kyn segjja. Æstik aflamestan orðgnóttar mér Dróttinn; hrœrð skulu mín til mærðar málgogn, en lið þagni. (Leiðarvisan 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 Leiðarvisan as a hróðr or ‘encomium’ and asks that his speech-organs be stirred *til mærðar ‘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 8os; 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.

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 Arnór jarlaskáld’s Magnússdrápa 5, a fragment of verse potentially composed by Ormr Steinþórsson, Geisli 10, and Leiðarvisan 1 and 4. Cf. Chase 2005: 134.
identifies fame as an important value of traditional skaldic verse.\(^3\) The description of Christ as *frægja Harri fagrgims hásh 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.\(^4\) The description of the sun as the *fagrgim* ‘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 fagrgims hásh 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 *fagrgim* ‘fair-jewel’.\(^5\) 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 *réttasléttr 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 *gefit oss orðgnött* ‘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 gollstófum* ‘sent a letter from heaven, swollen with golden letters’ to help the

\(^3\) For *hróðr* ‘praise-poetry’, see *LP* 285; and *SnE* 1998: 319-20. For *mærð* ‘praise’, see *LP* 418; and *SnE* 1998: 377.
\(^4\) For *frægr*, see *LP* 155; and *SnE* 1998: 280.
\(^5\) 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, híjóta 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 fríð með òllum tíri ‘abundance and pure peace with all honour’, in contrast to the torments of Hell. Once again the Leiðarvísa 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 duldr ‘concealed’ from them, presenting this doubt as a spiritual blindness to Christ’s revelatory truth.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{341} The second helmingr of stanza 14 adds that God setti þann dag til hvíldar ‘set that day for rest’ when He skôp 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.\textsuperscript{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 þólast gött lif ‘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 lagavís 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

\textsuperscript{340} For other instances of dylja in reference to the concealment of spiritual truth, see Lilja 15 and 39.
\textsuperscript{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. The relationship established between Christ and Moses, like that between Christ and Óláfr, bears some similarities to the chieftain-pøgn 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 dáðosterkr ‘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 dáðosterkr framaverkum,
rekkum*s rann til drykkjar reint vatn fram ór steini.
*Ráðmegriinn lét rigna risnúfmr 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. 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 skrýða ‘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 *Ráðmeginn* ‘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. 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. 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 *Kristskenninger* section of *Skáldskaparmál* 52, Snorri explains in the *Snorra Edda* that *Forn skáld hafa kent Hann víð Úrðr brunn ok Röm* ‘Ancient skalds associated Him

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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. 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. 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 Þókk – 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.’ 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 Leiðarvisi 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. 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. Völuspá 19: Asc veit ec standa / heitir Yggdrasill, / hár baðmr, ausinn / hvítaauri. / Þaðan koma daggvar / þær í dala falla, / stendr æ yfir, grœnn / Urðar brunnr ‘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 / Urð’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.


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 Dröttini ‘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. 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 fyð óhræðinn, ríkjan Qóling lópthjalms ‘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 Qólings ‘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, *verð einhlitir 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:

\[
Þats rétt, at dag Dróttins  Döglingr myni hingat
lopts ok lýðum skipta  ljósgims koma af himnum.
Oss skyldi sú aldri  ógnartið in striða
(drótt biði Sikling sátta  sólvangs) ór hug ganga. (Leiðarvísan 35)\]^{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, *Döglingr lopts ljósgims* ‘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, *Döglingr* ‘King’ and *Siklingr* ‘Ruler’, are used exclusively in poetic contexts, Christian skaldic verse as well as eddic, and are also used with

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\[^{352}I\text{ have modified Attwood’s edition of the Old Norse text by using brackets instead of dashes and commas to differentiate clause-boundaries.}\]
reference to famous rulers throughout.\textsuperscript{353} In addition to these reminders of Christ’s hospitable rulership over His followers, the audience is warned that this \textit{ógnartið} ‘menacing time’ of the Last Judgement should not leave their minds, and that they ought to turn to Christ for \textit{sátt} ‘settlement’, expressing humanity’s need for reconciliation with God in legal terms.\textsuperscript{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 \textit{hófuðmerki} ‘chief war-standards’, and effectively portrays Christ as a courageous Warrior Chieftain engaged in spiritual battle.

\begin{quote}
Dag metr Sinn at sónnu  snjallastr Konungr alra
eljunkuðr of aðrar  alfriðar hátiðir.
Dýrka dýrliga verka  dáðsterks hófuðmerki
(rétt segjum) dag Dróttins  drjúgmorg himintórgu. (\textit{Leiðarvísan} 36)\textsuperscript{355}
\end{quote}

The most valiant King of all, known for endurance, rates His day in truth higher than all 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 \textit{helmingr}, for example, proclaims that God is \textit{snjallastr Konungr alra} ‘the most valiant King of all’ and \textit{eljunkuðr} ‘known for endurance’, celebrating His boldness in battle. In the second \textit{helmingr} He is called \textit{dáðsterkr Dróttinn himintórgu} ‘deed-strong Lord of

\textsuperscript{353} For \textit{doglingr}, see \textit{SnE} 1998: 262, 451; \textit{LP} 94; and entry in \textit{ADIP}. For \textit{siklingr}, see \textit{SnE} 1998: 386, 505; \textit{LP} 495; and \textit{IED} 528.

\textsuperscript{354} See analysis of \textit{Hamsól} 17 in the previous chapter for more information about \textit{sátt} as a legal term.

\textsuperscript{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* *Hrjóðanda angrs pjóðar* ‘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 *Harmsöl* 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 Máríugrat 33), and ‘standard’ (Pétursdrápa 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 Arnór Pórðarson jarlaskáld; stanza 18 of the eleventh-century *Porfinnsdrápa* by Arnór Pórðarson jarlaskáld; stanza 7 of the eleventh-century *Nesjavísur* by Sigvatr Pórðarson; stanza 4 of the eleventh-century *Lausavísur* by Pjöðólf Arnórsson; stanzas 10 and 13 in the stanzas about Magnús Óláfsson in *Danaveldi* by Pjöðólf Arnórsson; stanza 2 of the twelfth-century *Haraldsdrápa* by Einarr Skúlason; stanza 19 of the twelfth-century *Eriðvikvæði* about Magnús berfoetr by Gísl Illugason; stanza 17 of the twelfth-century *Eiríksdrápa* by Markús Siggjason; stanzas 33, 52, and 64 of the thirteenth-century *Háttatal* by Snorri Sturluson; stanza 9 of the thirteenth-century *Hrynghenda* by Sturla Pórðarson). *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 sindr; stanza 5 of the eleventh-century *Kálfsflokkr* by Bjarni guilbrárskáld Hallbjarnarson; stanza 11 of the eleventh-century *Erfríðr drápa* *Óláfss helga* by Sigvatr Pórðarson; stanza 5 of the eleventh-century stanzas about Magús Óláfsson in *Danaveldi* by Pjöðólf 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 *Siðurðarblár* by Þorvaldr Ingimundarson; stanza 24 of the twelfth-century *Lausavísur* by Þórgnvaldr jarl Kali Kolsson; stanza 4 of the twelfth-century *Þuðadrápa* by Þorkell Gísliason; stanzas 8 and 11 of the thirteenth-century *Hrynghenda* by Óláfr hvítaskáld Pórðarson; stanza 14 of the thirteenth-century *Hákonarkviða* by Sturla Pórðarson.
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 fljótí fríða dhyrð með Dróttini ‘quickly into magnificent glory with the Lord’. They are then encouraged to strive to ask Christ for a heavenly abode with the promise that the glóð bjóð, súsh getr göði, lifir Ottalaus með Dróttini ‘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 skíl 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.

As the poet approaches the end of this work, he offers thanks to Rúnolfr, identified as a göfur prestr ‘worshipful priest’ who advised him hvé settak grundvoll at öði ‘how I should set the foundation of the poem’ (stanza 43), which suggests that this poem was composed within an Icelandic religious community. He then states in stanza 44 that he has exhausted his speech-organs — adding that mest hóf parf 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 í lok líta
dýrkim Dógings verka
Heim laði dýrr frá dómi
(lóthjalms dógum optar
dáðhress) bragar þessa.
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.
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. 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. 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. 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 Leiðarvisan as a kvæði meaning ‘poem or song’, evoke the earlier courtly setting of Christian skaldic verse. Even in its conclusion, this poem invites interpretation as a courtly work of praise, with a decided focus on Christ as Warrior Chieftain.

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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 lopthjalms ‘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.


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 *Döglingr lopts ljósgims* ‘Prince of the loft of the light-jewel’ and *Síklingr sólvangs* ‘King of the sun-plain’ from stanza 35, communicate His sovereignty over heaven as symbolised by the sun. The Christ-kennning *Harri fargims hás hreggranns* ‘King of the fair jewel of the high storm-house’, develops a further connection between light and beauty through its use of the term *fargim* ‘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 *fríðr* ‘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 *hródr* ‘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 Doglingr ‘Dag’s descendent’ (stanzas 1, 35, and 45) and Siklingr ‘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-begn 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 himintǫrgu ‘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 orðgnòttar ‘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, Leiðarvíðan’s diminished representation of Christ as Judge gives way instead to His representations as Light, Warrior Chieftain, and Provider of abundant spiritual nourishment.

Though Leiðarvíðan 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, Liknarbraut 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

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\(^{366}\) 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° (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° (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°x has been used for around 70

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restorations to the text. There is a transcription of JS 399 a-b 4\textsuperscript{ox} in Lbs 444 4\textsuperscript{ox} with marginal notes by Sveinbjörn Egilsson, as well as the printer’s copy in Lbs 1152 8\textsuperscript{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 ðína, Guð, mínun;
allr týnumz ek ella, ítr, sem þú mátt líta,
Guð, nema gæzku saðrar gipt ðín 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.

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 heyru 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

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\(^{371}\) Tate 2007: 229.

\(^{372}\) The *Leiðarvisan* poet makes a similar request to God in the poem’s opening two stanzas.

\(^{373}\) For *vægð*, see SnE 1998: 430. For *miskunn*, 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. The use of skína ‘to shine’ in the second helmingr similarly promotes the idea of Christ and His mercy as Light gifted to humanity.

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:

Prifgædr, lát, bjóðar, Píns anda mér skína ástarljós, sem ek æsti, albjart í sal hjarta, þat er misverka myrkrum, munar, hrindi, svá blindi míns, ör 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

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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 Salionungis itrum 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 preceding, 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), Leidirvísan (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 hamsarald’s Magnússdrápa (stanza 5), Sigmundr Ógull’s Lausavísur (stanza 1), Markús Skeggiason’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 Þórm曦 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:

TPó munk mitt ok móður hrðr
føður fall fyrst of telja;
þat berk út ór orðhofi
mærðar timbr, máli laufgat. (Egill Skallagrímsson’s Sonatorrek 5)380  

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 gœðir, see LP 211 and IED 222. For þún, 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 Liknarbraut 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 Liknarbraut 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 ávøxt 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:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Dreifðu láðs ok lofða} & \quad \text{Lístýrir, mér dýru,} \\
\text{leyfðar kendr, í lyndis} & \quad \text{láð himnesku sáði,} \\
\text{ár svá at ávøxt færak,} & \quad \text{alls Kannandi, sannan,} \\
\text{elsku kuðr, af Yðru} & \quad \text{óþornuðu korni. (Liknarbraut 5)}
\end{align*}
\]

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

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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’. 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. 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. 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. 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 Líknarbraut, 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. Stanza 5 contains the first use in Christian skaldic verse

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383 A similar kenning describes an earthly ruler in stanza 3 of the eleventh-century Bandadrápa by Eyyjólfr dāðaskáld: folkstýrir ‘folk-steerer’. The related title stjórni ‘steerer’ appears twice in Halfréðr vandradáaskáld Öttarsson’s Efídrápa Oláfss Tryggvasonar: stjóra gumna ‘the steerer of men’ (stanza 9), and dýrr stjórni 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 Líknarbraut 7 (rann hugar ‘house of the mind’) and Líknarbrut 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 ávǫxt, 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.\textsuperscript{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 pa. at vér náem andlego áre i hiortóm ýrom…Þa keomr orpa 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’.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{390} The Óðinn connection is based on ‘sacral kingship’,

\begin{footnotes}
\item[388] For ávǫxt, see entry in ADIP; LP 32; LEI 2000: 422; and SnE 1998: 432. According to ADIP, ávǫxt 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.
\item[389] Paasche 1914: 127. Old Norse text from Hómoisl 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 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).
\item[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:
\end{footnotes}
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’. 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. 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. 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’. 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. 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.


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 fríðr 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).


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 grandi 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 hauðs mána hvéls ‘Ruler of the earth of the moon’s wheel’, he states that öll þín orð eru bjartari ok fegri gulli ok gimsteinum ör 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.\(^\text{396}\)

In stanza 8 he asks bræðr ok systr ‘brothers and sisters’ to pray so that God virðiz vera nálægr minum 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 himinrikis ‘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 ðverrir svika ‘Diminisher of treacheries’, extends mercy to humanity hverja stund ‘every hour’ (stanza 11).\(^\text{397}\)

\(^{396}\) Tate 2007: 237. Jeremiah XLI.8: Decem autem viri reperti 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 hjálmprýddan Sik skrýddi; en nauð á Sik síðan sjálfráði tók dáða víst fyr vára löstu Vísi Sjálfr með piðslum. (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. 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. 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 visi, 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’.  

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.  

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 *Helian*, though the description of the Incarnation as a clothing or arming does not appear in either corpus of literature.  

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’. 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.

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400 Tate 2007: 244.
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.
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 Grimr, / 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 hulíðshjálm ‘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:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Hafði Kriðr} & \quad \text{of konungsefni} \\
\text{hulíðshjálm} & \quad \text{heilli góðu,} \\
\text{þá er alvalds} & \quad \text{ór ófriði} \\
\text{frægðarson} & \quad \text{fagnandi kom. (Sturla Þórðarson, Hákonarkviða 3)}^{406}
\end{align*}
\]

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 Hrólfss 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 krapy 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.
\(^{406}\) Gade 2009: 701.
Crucifixion beginning in stanza 14, where *grimmúð gastir 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.

\[
\text{Nisti ferð í frosti færlunduð við trú sáran (vasa Hann verðuðr þísla) várn Græðara járnnum.}
\text{Glymr varð hár af hömrum heyrðr, þá er nagla keyrðu hjálms gnýviðr Hilmi hófs í ristr ok lófa. (Líknarbraut 16)}^{408}
\]

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.

\[
din\text{-trees of the helmet: trees of battle, that is, warriors}
\]

\[
\text{Prince of moderation: Christ}
\]

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, sár Grœðari* ‘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


\(^{408}\) 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 *grœða*, see LP 206.
etymologically linked to *hjalmr* ‘helmet’.\textsuperscript{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 Árstíllir ‘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.\textsuperscript{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 kíðr vátar af gráti* ‘bore cheeks wet with weeping’ when Christ died.\textsuperscript{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.

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Enn und hægrí hendí hyggjublíðr á síðu
hlaut af hvössu sjóti hofugt sór Konungr sjófra.
Árveits rann ýta eirssans ór ben þeirí
(hugum skyldu þat höldar heyra) vatn ok dreyri. (Líknarbraut 20)\textsuperscript{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).

\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{411} Tate 2007: 248.

\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{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, hyggjublóðr Konungr jöfra ‘thought-gentle King of princes’, contrasts with the violence of receiving hófugt sár af hvössu spjóti ‘a heavy wound from a sharp spear’, again emphasising the paradox of Christ’s death that brings life to humanity. The representation of Christ as abundant Nourisher becomes clearer in the second helmingr, where vatn ok dreyri rann ór þeiri ben eirsanns Árveitís 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. Just as the water flowing from the stone and the raining of manna from heaven in Leiðarvisan 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.

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. 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 spjóti ‘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.
it. In its flood earth, sea, sky and the universe are cleansed.\textsuperscript{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 \textit{eirsannr} ‘mercy-true’ points to \textit{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.\textsuperscript{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 \textit{spjóti} ‘with a spear’ at the Crucifixion bears similarities to \textit{Hávamál} 138 to 140, in which Óðinn hangs himself on Yggdrasill and is wounded with a \textit{geiri} ‘spear’ in order to take up runes and drink the mead of poetry.\textsuperscript{420} While the \textit{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.\textsuperscript{421} In another Norse mythological narrative about the mead of poetry, this one from \textit{Skáldskaparmál} in \textit{Snorra Edda}, the flow of blood from Kvasir directly results in the gift of poetic inspiration:

\begin{verbatim}
Hann fór víða um heim at kenna mǫnnun froði, ok þá er hann kom at heimboði til dverga nokkvorra, Fjalars ok Galars, þá kǫlliðu þeir hann með sér á einmalei 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 hvær er af drekkr verðr
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{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.
\textsuperscript{419} Tate 2007: 251.
\textsuperscript{420} Hávamál 138-140: Veit ec, at ek hecc / vindgameiði á / nætr allar nío, / geiri undaðr / oc gefinn Óðini, / siálfri siálfom mér, / á þeim meði / er mangi veit, / hvers hann af rótom renn. / Við hlœif mið sældo / né við hornigi, / nýsta ec niðr, / nam ec upp rúnar, / eopandi nam, / fell ec apr þadan. / Fimbullióð nío / nam ec af ínom frægia syni / Bólporn, Bestla’s father, / oc ec drycc of gat / ins dýra miðar, / ausinn Óðreiður! ‘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 Bólporn, Bestla’s father, / and I got a drink / of the glorious mead, / sprinkled with Óðreiður!’ (Old Norse from NK,40). Cf. the discussion of \textit{Völuspa} 19 as related to \textit{Leiðarvisan} 20 for another account of Yggdrasill with themes of sacrifice and abundant mercy.
\textsuperscript{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 sögu 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.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Kvaliðr stó öllum æðri} & \quad \text{itr Gramr til helvíts} \\
\text{dægra láðs ept dauða} & \quad \text{djöfla rann at kanna.} \\
\text{Leysti Sinn at sönnu} & \quad \text{sólhallar Gramr allan} \\
\text{lýð fyr lífstré þjóðar} & \quad \text{líknarstyrkr frá myrkrum. (Liknarbraut 22)}
\end{align*}
\]

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. 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. 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.

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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.
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.

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’.

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. 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 hauðr* ‘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...
the joy of Christ’s followers who had previously been saddened by His death.\textsuperscript{427} This thematic parallel, though, does not account for the description of Christ in stanza 23 as Fœðir 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 \textit{til alþingis} ‘to the Alþing’ with a sense of dread.

\begin{quote}
Enn mun kross dýrð kynnaz (kemr ótti þá) Dróttins
fyr hňgstilefum hjörra hljóms at efsta dómi.
Meiðr skal hverri ór hauðrí hringmóts til alþingis
fremðarráðs á Fœðís fund hvatliga skunda. (\textit{Líknarbraut} 26)\textsuperscript{428}
\end{quote}

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.

\begin{quote}
\text{declining-staves of the sound of the swords: warriors pole of the sword-meeting: warrior Nourisher of famous counsel: Christ}
\end{quote}

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 Fœðir \textit{fremðarráðs} or ‘Nourisher of famous counsel’. Christ’s association with \textit{ráð} once

\textsuperscript{427} Tate 2007: 254. From Hómlísl 1993, 34r, and Hómlísl 1872, 72: \textit{Sa vas oc margfaldr fognbr i þessom heime af upriso criz es tóko ástmeN hans. þeir ábr vgró 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’.

\textsuperscript{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’. 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 LastJudgement.

Liknarbraut 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. Ping, 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’.

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 Hóðr Grímkelsson’s Harðar saga to identify Iceland’s general assembly indicates that it was used with deliberate purpose. 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 móti, which appears in the man-kenning meðr 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

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429 Tate 2007: 257.
431 Tate 2007: 257.
432 Tate 2007: 257. Cf. HóðrG Lv 7V (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 *pegnar alfegnastir hljóta ey alt it góða i sælu með ítrum Vörð sólar slóðar* ‘very joyful thegn 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 *Lækni* ‘Healer’.

Heill ver kross, er kallaz,       Krists mark, himins vistar
lyðs af Læknis dauða       lykill mannkyni syknu;
örr bí at upp lauk* Harri       élskrínz fyr þík Sínun,
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 *lifs 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.

434 For *læknir*, see *LP* 386 and *IED* 403.

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Heims, bart hvössum saumi,  hjálpsterkr, friðarmerki,  lýðr at lausn of næði,  limu Krists við þik nista.  Márta af dreyra Dróttins  dags reitar því heita  blíðs ok bitrum dauða  blómi helgra dóma. (*Liknarbraut* 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
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’.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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’.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{439} Popular Christian literature such as Fortunatus’s \textit{Pange lingua} frequently used the image of a flower in reference to the Passion, with the metaphor applied in subtly different ways.\textsuperscript{440} The typical understanding of

\textsuperscript{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 the to poet’s perception of the devil’s rights to humanity, and specifically ransom theory.
\textsuperscript{436} For saumr, see LP 481; and SnE 1998: 382.
\textsuperscript{437} For reitr, see LP 462.
\textsuperscript{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.
\textsuperscript{440} From Venantius Fortunatus’s \textit{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 Öðinn, 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 Óðrœrir’, ‘Suttung’s mead’ or ‘Hnitbjorg’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 Öðinn 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 þad einginn madr skýra / mektar blóm hvert krossinn er ‘No man can express / what a flower of might the Cross is’ (Jón Sigurðsson and Guðbrandr Vígþusson 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 Leiðarvisan 20 in chapter 4.
443 Abram 2011: 76-77.
444 O’Donoghue 2008: 28. From Skáldskaparmál: Af þessu köllum vör skáldskap Kvasís blóð eða dverga drekku eða fylli eða nakkvars konar log Óðreris eða Böðnar eða Sónar eða farskost dverga…eða Suttunga mjóð eða Hnitbjarga lög (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 Hnitbjorg’s liquid’ (Translation from Byock 2005: 84-5).
‘unpleasant bodily fluids: spit, blood, vomit and faeces’. 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. 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. 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 fôstrlands ‘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 þrællum fljót ok farmi ítrum fôstrlands á vit strandar. Þú snýr bólþ hjá bárum (boðar kasta þér lasta) lýðs und líknar auði lífs hafnar til stafni. (Liknarbraut 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.

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’. Described as farsæl ‘voyage-prosperous’ and fljót ‘swift’, the ship bears both fríðum þrálar Konungs fróns ‘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. The second helmingr further develops the ship analogy, saying that the Cross turns its stafn ‘prow’ hjá bárum bíls ‘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 föstrland ‘the foster-land’, a description of heaven that only appears here in the

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449 Jesch 2001: 123-4. For skeið, see SnE 1998: 390; and LP 503. According 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 Farmagud ‘God of cargoes’ (SnE 2005: 21, l.30). It is worth noting that Pórr 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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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 \textit{adoratio crucis} are explored in the next four stanzas. The Cross is described as a \textit{stigi} ‘ladder’ offering \textit{góða stétt af grundi á himna} ‘a good path from the earth to the heavens’ in stanza 34, and then as the \textit{bezt brú til ástar af grundi} ‘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 \textit{í hvössum skálum friðar} ‘in sharp scales of peace’, and it is the \textit{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 \textit{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 \textit{yðrum göfgum mætti ok krapti}

\textsuperscript{451} Notably, \textit{föstland} 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.

\textsuperscript{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 līði* ‘for the Lord’s retinue’.

Crúx, lemið angr en æxlið alt gótt līði Dróttins;
sýndr e rt seggja kindum, sigrtrúr í gný vigra.
Opt e rt éls í hōptum ítr lausn viðum rītum;
guma fórðar þú gerla grandi holds ok andar. (*Liknarbraut* 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, *līð*, frequently refers to a military ‘troop’, specifically the troop of a king’s household. 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 *sigrtrúr 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 hōptum* ‘in fetters’ receive from the Cross ítr lausn ‘glorious liberation’, and are saved from *grandi holds ok andar* ‘injury of flesh and spirit’. 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

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453 For *līð*, 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 læknar ljóna kind frá blindi
hyggju túnok hreinsar, heims prýði, kyn lýða.
Ert fyr hvers manns hjarta hreins víð öllum meinum
hæstr ok harðri freistni hlifiskjöldr í lífi. (*Liknarbraut* 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 læknar ljóna kind frá blindi hyggju tún* ‘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 *Liknarbraut* 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.
laecning víð sóttom ‘a cure for illnesses’, inviting the audience to interpret the Cross as a kind of medicine administered by Christ the Physician.  

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:

Eiltormr sa er i tre hieck er hver vard heill er til leit. merkir Jesvm Christvm hanganda a krossinvm, er grædar oll sår 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.

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’. 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 hlifiskjöldr 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. This depiction of the Cross also appears in the Icelandic homily De sancta cruce: heilagr cros er hlífskioldr við méinom … en ęfling við allre freístne ‘a shield against injuries … and strength against all temptation’. 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).
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. 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 *hneigistölpi 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 *sigrstöð* ‘victory-pillar’ before humanity so that everyone may see how He á *krossi réttir segjum 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, *sjá hingat til píninga* ‘look here at tortures’ (stanza 43). He continues his address in stanza 44, drawing attention to His role as wounded Healer.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ér meguð undir stórar} & \quad \text{yðars Græðís sjá blæða;} \\
\text{þær eru sínt, þó at sárar,} & \quad \text{saklausum Mér vaktar,} \\
\text{mín því at mildi raunar} & \quad \text{mest ok yðir lestir} \\
\text{veldr því, at verða skyldi} & \quad \text{Visi lýðs fyr þíslum. (Liknarbraut 44)}
\end{align*}
\]

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’. 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 *sök* ‘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 *Visi*, meaning ‘Captain’ or ‘Prince’, should be subjected to *pisl* ‘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 *slœmr* in stanza 46, asking his audience to keep the torments that Christ endured *fyr várs hjarta sjónir með tårum* ‘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.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Vilda ek af þér, aldar} & \quad \text{Angrstríðandi, síðarr} \\
\text{enn fyr öðgerð mína} & \quad \text{eiga gjöld með leigum.}
\end{align*}
\]
\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Áðr hefi ek önnur göði} & \quad \text{eirsamr, hlotit meiri}
\text{Þín, en ek þér fá launat} & \quad (\text{þat óttumz ek}) \text{Dróttinn.}
\end{align*}
\]
\[(\text{Liknarbraut 49})^{464}\]

\(^{463}\) For *visi*, see LP 625; SnE 1998: 430; and IED 718. For *pisl*, 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 gjöld með leigum ‘payment with wages’ for his óðgerð ‘poetry-making’, but that he has already received meiri göði 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, pat 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 vist 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: sebed, 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.16 and John XIII.12. 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. The poem concludes in stanza 52 with the hope that the sign of the Cross will shine í várri atferð alla stund á grunnu 'in our behaviour at all times on earth' so that we might obtain æztan fögnud elifrar 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 Liknarbraut, like Harmsöl and Leiðarvisan 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, Liknarbraut’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 Liknarbraut. 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 skini 'may shine' upon him. Sinfulness is represented as the myrkr misverki 'mirkiness of misdeeds' and the blindi 'blindness’ of a weary mind that can only be cleared away by Christ, whose albjart ásturljós ‘all-bright love-light’ will shine in the poet’s heart. The Harrowing of Hell in stanza 22 presents the

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470 The noun skerðir ‘diminisher’ is applied to a ruler in stanza 6 of the tenth-century Erfrápa 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 skráddi 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 Liknarbraut express Christ’s leadership and generosity in a manner that hearkens back to the earlier courtly setting of skaldic verse. As in Geislí and Harmsól, the poet references his work within the poem and asks that, in exchange for his óðgerð ‘poetry-making’, he receive gjöld með leiðum ‘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 þráll ‘servant’ (stanza 16) and member of a líð ‘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 skráddi 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.

Liknarbraut, 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 itrum farmi ‘a splendid cargo’ á vit strandar fóstirlands ‘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 *Liknarbraut* 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. *Liknarbraut*, like *Harmsól*, refers to the Last Judgement as a *þing*, though *Liknarbraut* 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 *Liknarbraut*, 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 *Liknarbraut*, 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 *grandi gumna kund* ‘to the injury of mankind’, and that Christ offers humanity protection from these injuries. Stanza 16 describes Christ somewhat
paradoxically as sárr Grœðari ‘wounded Saviour’, healing humanity from sin through His death on the Cross. Later, in stanza 31, He is called Laeknir ‘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, Liknarbraut ‘Way of Grace’, makes use of the term likn, 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 likn from the Cross, er læknar ljóna kind frá blindi hyggju tûns ‘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 Prifgœðir ‘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 lâð ‘land’ with himneska sáði ‘heavenly seed’ so that the sannr ávôxt r ‘true fruit’ might be brought forth. Related to the metaphor in stanza 5 is the association of holiness and righteousness with a blossoming flower, pratically as a symbol for the Virgin Mary, the Cross, and Christ. In stanza 32, for example, the Cross is presented as the blômi helgra dôma ‘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 Leiðarvisan, elements to do with light, familiar legal terms and practices, and the chieftain-begn 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 vildu Liliu kuedit hafa ‘All poets wish they had composed Lilja’.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{473} The poem is comprised of a 25-stanza upphaf, a 50-stanza stefjábalkr divided between two refrains, and a 25-stanza sloemr, 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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{476}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item 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.
\item Chase 2007: 558.
\item Chase 2007: 559.
\item Chase 2007: 556; and Tate 1984: 568.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
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 proceeded 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 *slœmr* the poet addresses God (stanza 79), Jesus (stanzas 80-85), and Mary (stanza 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. 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). 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, gratia 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’. 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. 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 Arngrimur 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. 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

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479 Chase 2007: 559. The *Ave Maria* is based on the biblical passage Luke I:42.
480 Tate 1984: 568.
481 Chase 2007: 555.
stemma. 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’.

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*. 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.

*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 Lilliæ*, ‘This is a remarkable poem, and it is called *Lilja*’ – which was added at a later date. Authorial attribution emerges in later manuscripts, beginning in the sixteenth century with AM 622 4° and its marginal heading which reads, *Hier hefur Liliu brodur Eystein*, ‘Here begins Brother Eysteinn’s *Lilja*’. 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 Þýkkvabær, and other manuscripts identifying him as a Franciscan monk from Níðarós. 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

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482 For a comprehensive list of manuscript survivals for *Lilja*, see Chase 2007: 556-8.
484 Chase 2007: 561.
486 Chase 2007: 554.
487 Chase 2007: 554.
quoted stanzas in this thesis. 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. The two earliest manuscripts, Bb and 720a, have no clear transmission relationship, nor indeed do the other manuscripts. This may suggest that Lilja was a particularly popular text and widely disseminated far beyond what survives.

In the first of the introductory stanzas, Lilja praises the Trinity, describing it as sönn eining í þrennum greimum ‘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. 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 b 10, AM 136 4°, AM 695 a 4°, AM 706 4°, AM 707 4°, AM 714 4°, AM 715 a 4°, AM 715 b 4°, AM 717 h 4°, AM 104 8°, Holm papp 23 fol, Holm papp 64 fol, IB 104 4°, IB 159 8°, IB 200 8°, IBR 16 8°, IBR 74 8°, JS 260 4°, JS 399 a-b 4°, JS 406 4°, JS 413 8°, Lbs 221 4°, Lbs 804 4°, Ls 848 4°, Lbs 953 4°, Lbs 966 4°, Lbs 1745 4°, Lbs 2289 4°, Lbs 2293 8°, and UppsUB R 547 4°. There are also numerous editions of Lilja, which include: Skj, Skald; Guðbrandur Pórláksson 1612; Páll Hallsson 1773; Finnur Jónsson 1772-8; Eysteinn Ásgrímsson 1858; Eiríkr 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; Eiríkr Magnússon 1870; and de Rivière 1883. Danish editions include Páll Hallsson 1656; Finn Magnusen 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 1822; and Lange 1958a. English editions include Eiríkr Magnússon 1870; Pilcher 1950; and Boucher 1985. French editions include de Rivièrè 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° from c. 1400 (720a VIII) (Kálund 1889-94, 2, 146); and Jensen 1983, IXI-IXIII); the sixteenth-century AM 99 a 8° (99a) (Kálund 1889-94, 2, 390); and I.M. I, 189); AM 622 4° from before 1549 (622) (Kálund 1889-94, 2, 34-7); Jón Helgason 1953, 162; and Vésteinn Ólason 1993, 306); AM 713 4°, a collection of religious verse from c. 1540 or later (713) (Kálund 1889-94, 2, 128-31; I.M. I.2, 35-7; and Jón Helgason 1953, 162); stanzas 1-6 in AM 720 b 4° from c. 1600 (720b) (Kálund 1889-94, 2, 147-8); Ein ny wiisna bok med morgum andlegum visum og kvædem, Psalum / lof sønguum og rijnum / teknum wr Heiligre Ritningu, edited by Bishop Guðbrandur Pórláksson and printed at Hólar in 1612; DKNVSB 41 8° from the seventeenth century (41 8°) (Jónas Kristjánsson 1967; and Midbøe 1960: 1, 232); the eighteenth-century transcription AM 705 4° (705) (Kálund 1889-94, 2, 121, 148-9; and I.M. I.2, 189); and the eighteenth-century vellum manuscript BLAdd 4892 (4892) (Eiríkr Magnússon 1870, xxii-xxvii; Jón Pórkelsson 1896, 205-6; I.M. 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. I.M 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 riettferrðugt mál í sliettum vísum af raddartólum mínun* ‘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. 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 danski 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 *allsvaldana Kóni* ‘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 þrysvar 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.

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\begin{align*}
\text{Mektarfullr, er af bar öllum í náttúruskærleik sínum,} \\
\text{skapaður góðr og skein í prýði Skapara næstr í vegsem hæstri.} \\
\text{Eigi liet sier alla nægjaz eingill mekt, þá er hafði feingið;} \\
\text{með ofbeldi öðlaz vildi æðra sess og virðing bæði. (Lilja 7)}
\end{align*}
\]

494 Chase 2007: 559.
495 The lack of *adalhending* (‘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?’ Though Lucifer possesses *náttúruskærleik* ‘natural brightness’ before his fall, it is *med ofbeldi* ‘with pride’ that he wanted to win *bæði æðra sess og virðing* ‘both a higher seat and regard’. The term *skær* ‘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. 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 i skaplyndi, mjók fjólbreytinn at háttum* ‘Loki is pacifying and fair to look at, but his natural disposition is evil, accustomed to being very changeable’. 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. 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 *skær* ‘bright’, see LP 551. For *prýða* ‘to adorn’, see LP 452.
498 Quoted Old Norse text from SnE 2005: 26, lines 37-8.
connection is nonetheless worth considering. As will be seen later in this chapter, Lucifer’s characteristics bear similarities to Loki’s in other respects.  

Stanza 8 highlights the growth of Lucifer’s pride, as með æstum ofsa fýstiz hann að viðrlikjaz Guðs yfirð rikum 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 b lývarða ‘plumb bob’ í dj úpeik 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.

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 b lývarða ‘plumb bob’ echoes Exodus XV.10, in which Pharoah’s army drowns in its pursuit of the Israelites through the Red Sea. Lucyfer is called fjandann ‘fiend’ and the blindre fðür ‘blind father’ of feikt ofbeldið ‘terrible pride’, who in a personified form torments him. The poet uses blindre ‘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

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500 See Lilja 42 for another potential connection with Loki.
Lucifer's relationship with his daughter Pride arguably has its origins in the epithet 'Father of Lies' from John VIII.44, which in turn influenced the medieval epithets *pater superbiae* 'Father of Pride' and *pater invidiae* 'Father of Envy', as well as passages in *Mikjáls saga* and Book I of the *Revelaciones* of S. Birgitta. It is these allegorized characteristics that blind the once shining Lucifer and make him *fávíss* 'ignorant' or 'little-wise' of God's plans. 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 *visa 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 efníd einfalt boð með*.

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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 *Mikjáls saga*: *for hann til ok horadiz gerandi ser dottur, er dramsemi heitir æ sidan...Pvlika framfærslu feck dramsemi feðr sinum, at hon fletti hann or himnarikis fegr 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, 1, 677-8; Modern English translation from Chase 2007: 572). From Book I of the *Revelaciones* of S. Birgitta: *de duabus dominis, quorum una nominatur 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.

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*. 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.

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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 pau scvldo koma til þess uegs es hann uas fyr rekenn fyr ofmelnob 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, of fyri þann skyld of at su at sem Lucifer var brett rekinn af himneskri paradis. aifunadi hann manninum at uera i iardneskri paradis. ultandi þat at hann mundi þadan brett reckinn. ef hann gengi af guds bodordi of at 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 þæð 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 prútnar, svellr og unir ‘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

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\(^{508}\) 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 Leidarvisan 12 and Lilja 39 for other instances in which humanity and the devil are described as ignorant through the use of dylja.

describes Lucifer’s act of deception. The concocting of this deadly cup is accompanied by Lucifer’s disguise, which he can produce because he is fjölkunnigr ‘skilled in magic’. This invocation of magic emphasises the sinister nature of the devil’s duplicity, but also introduces the term fjölkunnigr, which refers to pagan magic in the prose text Íslendingasögur. As Meylan observes, Old Norse Christian texts of this period make a distinction between miracles, which are attributed to God and His followers, and fjölkunnigr, 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. While this finding does not do much to reveal whether fjölkunnigr 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’. 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’. Serpents found in Old Norse mythology

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511 For brugga, see entry in ADIP; LP 66; and IED 82.
512 For fjölkunningr, see SnE 1998: 274; and LP 137. Fjölkunningr 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 fjölkunnigr, see Meylan 2011: 109-117.
515 For ormr, see LP 439; and SnE 1998: 369.
include those that gnaw at the roots of Yggdrasill,\(^\text{517}\) as well as Þórr’s nemesis, the Midgardsormr ‘World-Serpent’ that encircles the world and carries the potential for ultimate destruction.\(^\text{518}\) Given the cosmic struggle in the latter example, it is tempting to associate the Midgardsormr 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.\(^\text{519}\) 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 lifs ‘paths of life’ and rushing into the stiettir 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.

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\(^{517}\) The serpents that gnaw at Yggdrasill are mentioned in a prose passage from Gylfaginning in Snorra Edda: *En svá margir ormar eru í Hvergelmi med Niðhogg at engi tunga má telja ‘There are so many serpents in Hvergelmir with Niðhogg that no tongue may number them’* (SnE 2005:18, II.35-7). Snorri also quotes a stanza that critics have identified as stanza 34 of Grímnismál: *Ormar fleiri / liggja undir asci Yggdrasils, / enn bat uf hyggi hvern ósviðra apa; / Göinn oc Móinn, / - þeir ero Grafvítnis synir - / Grábacr oc Grafvílludr; / Ófmir oc Sváfnir / hygg ec at æ scyli / meïds gviisto mā ‘More serpents / lie beneath Yggdrassill’s Ash / than any dimwit fool may imagine; / Göinn and Móinn, - they are sons of Grave-Wolf - / Grey-Back and Grave-Field; / Ófmir 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 liggr í miðjú hafinu of all lónd ok bifir 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, II. 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: *Par lét Þórr koma á þongulinn oxahopuðit ok kastaði fyrir bord, ok fer þongulinn til grunnis. Ok er þa svá satt at segja at engu gínti þa Þórr minn Midgardsormn en Útgarðaloki hafói spottat Þórr þá er hann höf ormiinn 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, II. 34-37). The Miðgarðsormr, in his conflict with Þórr, is referred to as ormr ‘serpent’ in the eddic stanza *Víulsópa 56: Pá korn inn mæn / mogr Hlóðynjar, / gengr Óðins sonr / víð úlf vega ‘Then comes the glorious son of Hlíðyn, / Óðinn’s son steps / to attack the wolf [i.e. serpent]’* (NK, 13)

\(^{519}\) Rowe 2006: 169.
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 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’. It is thus liettliga ‘easily’ that Lucifer, sett flærðum ‘filled with deceit’, resolves að freista framt og talar með prettum ‘to tempt impertinently and speaks with tricks’. 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. Prettr more specifically means ‘a trick’ and identifies deceptions devised by devils rather than Christ. 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 andlitshvítt ‘white of face’, and promising that, instead of death, eating the apple means that munuð líkjaz víð guððóm með heiðr og valdi ‘you will be like the Godhead with honour and might’. 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.

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520 I have modified Chase’s edition of the Old Norse text by using brackets instead of dashes to differentiate clause-boundaries.
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 dái* ‘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 *sár 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 grandi. Liettir hvorki ugg nie ótta, eftir mest en þó er að lesti; opið helviti búið með bóli 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 grandi* ‘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 helviti* ‘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

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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 megí bjarga?

Hvergi, því að í syna saurgan sannliga, hverr að þyngir annan. Eitt er til, það er eg skal váttta, (á eg grátandi frammi að standa) áttu Sjálfr, inn dyri Dróttinn, þegar nú ferð, svá lifgúð verði. *(Lilja 21)*

The world is dead, and what remedy is there? Where is to be found the man 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?’

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. 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

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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 raða, in addition to meaning remedy, is also a legal term related to seeking counsel and finding a solution. Cf. Chase 2007: 485-6. For raða, 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 lifguð 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 tima ‘at the established time’, when He will take away vist 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. 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 skráðaz hennar, hlýðinnar, björtu holdi ‘wants to clothe himself with her, the obedient one’s, bright flesh’.

Nær og firr með skygnleik skýrum skapandi alt með Syni og Anda
Föðurpersónan, eingli einum erindi býðr, en þessi hlýðir:
‘Fljúg, og seg það Máríu meyju mætri, þeirri er Eg skal gæta,
Minn Einkason holdi hennar hlýðinnar vill björtu skráðaz.’
(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 firr 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 skrýðaz hennar, hýðinnar 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 skrýða ‘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 skrýða in the sense of adornment or ornamentation. The description of Mary’s flesh as bjart ‘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 litillætis ‘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 jarðlag 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 gleðiligr í loft in neðri.
Sendiboði kom sjauafalds 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 skrýða, see IED 559.
536 For bjart, 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.

\(^{(Lilja 27)}\)

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 Gabriel

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.\(^{539}\)

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 gleðiligr geisli sólar ‘joyful beam of the sun’ as he passes innan pentað firmamentum i 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 consilli 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’ (\(\text{Vulg 2012a, Isaiah XI.2-3}\)). Cf. Chase 2007: 594.

\(^{540}\) Schottmann 1973: 202. From the pseudo-Augustinian Christmas homily: Moxque volatu rapido secat axem astriferum, nubesque profundas celer adiit, perculsitque lumine noctem. Ipse per medios caeli sinus flamineos artus virbans, ignite aere fertur; et, ueluti cum pavo uersicolor obiectus radis multiluinos colores pinnis crepitate frequentibus fundit, nunc aureo, nunc roseo nunc uiridi, nunc purpureo mixtus honoris decor 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’ byggrir fyr skærðu brjóst 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 smiðaðr, 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, skýgnast sem þá er gleisir í gegnum geislinn brár fyrir augum várum. Glóar þar Sól af gleirinu heilu; gleðiliðt Jöðið skinn af móður, að innslígi hólðnu 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 skýgnast gleisir 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 *glugg*, 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 *innsgili 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*

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\(^{542}\) 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 *Harmsöl* 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 kvöði ok óbrugðnum illum...*sem þa er hugr líðr or briósti mannz at samanhöldnum ok luktum munni ok óbrugðnum vórrum, eða sólar geisli skínn í gegnum raufaust 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
Figura⁵⁴⁹; a hymn by Peter Pictor⁵⁵⁰; the hymn Sol, crystallus⁵⁵¹; and John Bromyard’s Summa Praedican⁵⁵². 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, þvi trúan bauð að sanna senn bæði mær 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).

⁵⁴⁹ 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 carmen 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 assumpccione 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 Jónsson 1977-2001, 1.1, 241; Modern English translation from Chase 2007: 601-2).

⁵⁵⁰ 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 19, 121; Modern English translation from Chase 2007: 602).

⁵⁵¹ From the hymn by Peter Pictor: Lumen lucens Patris de lumine / Christus homo prodit de Virgin, / Sic ingressus et egressus per aulam virgineam / Vt sol splendens nec incendens per fenestram uitream, /Cum nec ultum splendor solis / Neque matrem causa prolis / Violet ingrediens / Nec corrupat 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).

⁵⁵² Scott 2001: 54-5.

⁵⁵³ Bromyard 1518: 199v-200r.

⁵⁵⁴ Luke II.21: Et postquam consummati sunt dies octo, ut circumcideretur, vocatum est nomen Eius Jesus, quod vocatum est ab angelo, prius quam 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).
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 hǫrðu 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 blōð æsiz á ljósan likam ‘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 Leiðarvisan 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 hoc die factum fuit, eciam quia incepit Dominus Iesus Suum sacratissimum sanguinem pro nobis effundere. Tempestue 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 mater 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 blōð, 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. The description of the *prýði Jésú umsníðningar* ‘magnificence of Jesus’s circumcision’ and His *ljóss likamr* ‘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. 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 visu ofraz fyrr 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 *váattr, 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 slik af tungu forðum:
‘Þykker mier, sem nýjung nökkur nálgið heim og ættir beima;
eitthvað klókt mun Drottinn dikta: duldr em eg, því að fær 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;

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556 For *tár*, see *LP* 564; and *SnE* 1998: 412.
557 For *ljóss*, 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

Luficer’s limited perception of God’s plans appears as a narrative detail in both Latin and Old Norse Christian writings. Paasche and Schottmannn identify an Old Norse miracle story, found in the homily of Maximus of Turin, as an analogue for this stanza; in it Lucifer observes, *pat er mer blint, hvem veγ Hanner 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

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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. 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. 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. 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, observering sönn stórmerkin ‘the true wonders’ of heavenly phenomena and peace á hverju landi ‘in every land’ that accompany Christ and cause the devil an söttarauka ‘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

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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 form ok klókt ‘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 klókt ‘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 fyr var så maðr fæddur á fólku, 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 framr flein ódýgðar* ‘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 mjólk fædrr, en reifum klæddiz. Finn øg þó, að í sliku sannar sjálf náttúran, manndóm váttar; fysir mig því framm að æsa flein ódýgðar 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 *fædrr mjólk 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 sliku, váttar manndóm* ‘nature itself gives evidence of such a thing, testifies to His humanity’. 566 Lucifer’s use of the noun *vátttr*, a legal term meaning ‘testimony’ or ‘witness’, indicates his false belief that he is capable of bringing about Jesus’s fall through

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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 *mjólk*, 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.\textsuperscript{567} He resolves \textit{að aesa framm flein ódygðar að meini honum} ‘to shoot forward the dart of faithlessness to His harm’, making use of the noun \textit{mein} that refers generally to harm but can also mean ‘disease’ or ‘sore’ in a medical sense.\textsuperscript{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 \textit{Völsúspá} 32, displays some intriguing similarities. The second \textit{helmingr} particularly resonates with the eddic stanza, in which Hǫðr, at Loki’s suggestion, shoots an arrow of mistletoe at the Christ-like Norse god Baldr.\textsuperscript{569} Although \textit{Lilja} 42 shares no direct verbal parallels with this Eddic poem, the general images and motifs are similar, albeit with nuanced differences in meaning. \textit{Völsúspá} 32 describes the mistletoe that kills Baldr as \textit{harmflaug} ‘a shaft of anguish’, while \textit{Lilja} 42 uses \textit{fleinn}, a term that can refer to a barb, arrow, spear, or javelin.\textsuperscript{570} Instead of using \textit{skjóta} ‘to shoot’ as in \textit{Völsúspá} 32, the \textit{Lilja} poet uses \textit{æsa}, a verb that also means ‘to shoot’ in this context.\textsuperscript{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 \textit{Völsúspá} may parallel Christ’s death brought about by Judas’s action and resulting in humanity’s redemption.\textsuperscript{572} The image invites its audience to

\textsuperscript{567} For \textit{váttr} ‘witness’, see \textit{LEI} 2006: 275; \textit{SnE} 1998: 422; and \textit{LP} 598.
\textsuperscript{568} For \textit{aesa}, see \textit{IED} 759. This is the same verb used to describe blood spurting over Christ’s body at the Circumcision in stanza 35. For \textit{mein}, see \textit{LP} 399; \textit{LEI} 2000: 419; and entry in \textit{ADIP}. Sinfulness is described as \textit{mein} in \textit{Líknarbraut} 40.
\textsuperscript{569} From \textit{Völsúspá} 32: \textit{Vard af þeim meiði, / er mér syndiz, / harmflaug hættlig, / Hǫðr nam skjóta} ‘It came to pass from that tree, / which seemed slender, / a dangerous harmful dart, / Hǫðr started to shoot’ (Old Norse text from \textit{NK}, 8).
\textsuperscript{570} For \textit{harmflaug}, see \textit{LP} 229. For \textit{fleinn}, see entry in \textit{ADIP}; \textit{LP} 139; and \textit{SnE} 1998: 275. The entry in \textit{ADIP} for \textit{fleinn} lists one of its possible meanings as ‘leaf’, which is presumably based on the spear-like shape of some leaves.
\textsuperscript{571} For \textit{skjóta} ‘to shoot’, see \textit{LP} 509; \textit{SnE} 1998: 393. Chase 2007: 613. For \textit{aesa}, see \textit{LP} 657-8 and \textit{IED} 759.
\textsuperscript{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 Ývun bæði ærusnað 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 slægvitr 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 pretr ‘trick’ in reference to Lucifer’s deceptions as he lays his plans to tempt Adam and Eve.574 The devil calls himself slægvitr ‘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 pretr, 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 hvær mann hugðið hrekkjum vanr, í synd að blekkja. Vielakraings á vöðum 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’. 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’. 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 vöðum 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 *naest 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 laerisveina* ‘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 *svéitir 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.

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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
yfirmaðinginn innan hirdar ‘the murderer within the retinue’, contextualising him
within a Scandinavian social system grounded in loyalty and rendering his
treachery all of the more heinous. 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 i þeirra brjóstum ‘fury howled in their breasts’, revealing spiritual
illness and malnourishment. 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]’. The poet offers a penitent
refrain in stanza 50, marking the end of the stefjabálkr’s first section. He then

582 For hird ‘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
likam lýsan ‘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 ör 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. 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.

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Rödd eingilsins kvenmann kvaddi;      kvadda af eingli Drottinn gladdi;
gladdiz mær, þá er Fóðurinn fæddi;      fæddan Sveininn reifum klæddi;
Klæddan með sier laungum leiddi;      leiddr á krossin faðminn breiddi;
bræiddr á krossinn gumna græddi;      græddi Hann oss, en helstrið mæddi.

(Lilja 55)
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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.

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585 For a stanza in another Christian skaldic poem that juxtaposes the Incarnation with the Crucifixion, see *Líknarbraut* 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. 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 exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo ‘And Mary said, ‘My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.’* The poet references a paradox popular among Christian medieval authors when he explains that *fæddi Föðurinn* ‘she gave birth to the Father’. 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. 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 féð báðar hendr a crollenom. þuiat Han býpr faðm mífvern láinar. Óll þeim er Han elfa ‘He stretches both His arms on the Cross, because He offers the embrace of His mercy to all those whom He loves’.* The poet also presents the paradox of Christ healing humanity through His death at the Crucifixion: *Hann græddi oss,*

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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.
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 settia menn eina skæra ok uskadda íungfru moti þi dyri, huer er smn faðm 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 maedio ‘He healed us, but agony wearied Him’. 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 grœða ‘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 særdiz 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 med dreggjum ‘gall mixed with dregs’ before Óndin 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.

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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 grœða, see LP 206.
En í andláti Jésú sæta oss var flutt, að gægz á krossinn fjandinn hafi og friett að syndum, føræglöggr, eg nökkur væri. Hlaegir mig, að hier mun teygjaz hans forviti 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 viðförla 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


596 Chase 2007: 630-1. Lilja 82: Pin mig í kvölum og sóttum, áðr en dauðin detti á, Drottinn minn, að eð þeir sidað því minnum sílitta 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. 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. 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’. 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’. 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:


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.

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 Niðristigningar saga is that the trap is laid in order to maim the miðgarðsormi ‘World-Serpent’, a title used for the Norse mythological serpent that encircles the world and is nearly caught on a fishing line by Þórr.

Looking at stanza 22 of Hymiskvíða 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. 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

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602 For an extended excerpt from this section, see Niðstalg 4.19-33.
603 This has been noted by Aho 1966: 154-55; and Gschwantler 1968: 158.
604 Hymiskvíða 22: Egnði á öngul, / sá er öldom bergr, / orms einbani, / uxa hófði; / gein við öngli, / sú er god fjá, / umgjórð nedan / 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 Hymiskvíða 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 *Hómiliubók* based on a homily about Mary Magdalene by Gregory the Great where *miþgarþsormr* is written in superscript above the word *leviaþan*. \(^{608}\)

The homily fully explains the *topos* in the following passage:

\[
\text{Sia gleýpande hvalr merker gróþgan anskota þaN es svelga vill allt maNkyn i daúþa. Agn es lagt a òngol en hvass broddr leýnesc. þeNa orm tók almáttegr Guþ a òngle. þa es Hann sende Son SiN til daúþa sýnelegan at líkam en osýnelegan at guþdóme. Diabolus sa agn likams}
\]


\(^{606}\) O’Donoghue 2008: 37.


\(^{608}\) Magnús Már Lárusson 1955: 164-65; and *Hömlsi* 1872: 75-76.
Hans þat es hann beit oc villde fyrfara. en guþdoms broðr stangape
hann svasem þengoll. þuiat hann beidesc at
grípa licams agn þat es hann sa. en vass guþdóms brodr sa es leýndr
vas særþ hann. A þongle varþ hann tekeN. þuiat hann fek scæþa afþui
es hann beít. oc glataþe hann þeim es hann hafþe áþr vellde yver.
þuiat hann treýstesc at gripa þaN es hann hafþe etke vellde igegn.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 Hómiliubók, this imagery also occurs in
the homily’s Latin analogue Homiliae en evangelia, lib. 2, hom. 25 (PL 76:1194B-96C); and AM
sextánmælt ‘sixteen times spoken’ and greppaminni, which as Chase notes resemble the Latin rhetorical figures of ratioicinatio and erotema in the Fourth Grammatical Treatise.\textsuperscript{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 ör banni ‘released us all from the ban’, using the legal term for outlawry to describe humanity’s fallen state before the redemption.\textsuperscript{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 aftir í kjafta ðína ‘thus the twisted sword of faithlessness is bent back into your cheek’.\textsuperscript{614} Stanza 67 celebrates that Christ rose með sigri ‘with victory’ from death at the Resurrection and then raised the blöð, 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  ibyggjurum við dóminn hryggva
Jésú munu pá sárin sýnáz  súthrærandi og þislarfæri.
Orð og hugsan, allar gjörðir,  eru kannaðar hvers sem annars;
bjóðaz hvörki blót nie elðar;  byrgjaz úti gjafir og mútur. (Lilja 71)

\textsuperscript{612} Chase 2007: 634.
\textsuperscript{613} Bann is also applied to Lucifer in Lilja 15.
\textsuperscript{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

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\(^{615}\) 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 1.7: *Ecce venit cum nubibus, et videbat eum omnis oculus et, qui eum pupugerunt, et plangent se super eum omnes tribus terrae* (Vulg 1979, Revelation 1.7) ‘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 1.7). 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 omission* ‘I have sinned exceedingly in my life, in thought, in speech, in deed, and by omission’ (Brev. Nidr. h.iii). 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. 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. 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 orðähreimr, er á Drottins dómi dreifaz menn í flokka tvenna. Aðra sveit með hæstum heiðri hefr Hann langt yfir spéras efrí; 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: Hell

The language in the first helmingr emphasises the legal nature of this event, as eingi þrætugjarn orðähreimr 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 gjöf, see LP 186; SnE 1998: 289; and entry in ADIP. According the entry for ADIP, gjöf 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 Suíus, 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: ‘Discipite 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 dömi – appears not just as the passing of judgment, but a court case in which humanity attempts þraeta ‘to dispute’ using klókr varnir ‘clever defences’.\textsuperscript{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 liggi innan um þrútið hjartarð ‘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 sjæufalds Anda, er leysi önd mina 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 þvi 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

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 drotning himna, Guðs herbergi og gleyming sorga, gleðinnar past og eyðing lasta, líknar æðr og lifgan þjóða, loflig mær, 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’. 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. 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’, all of which are common descriptions of Mary that associate her purity and righteousness with heavenly light. 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

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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 (Máiría, græð þú mein hin stóru; Máiría, ber þú smyrsl i 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.\footnote{For past ‘food, feast’, see \textit{LP} 450. For \textit{eyða} ‘to destroy, devastate’, see \textit{LP} 113; \textit{SnE} 1998: 267; and entry in \textit{ADIP}. For \textit{lasta} ‘depravity’, see \textit{LP} 358. Compare the description of Mary as \textit{eyðing lasta} ‘desolation of depravity’ with Christ as \textit{Angrstríðir} ‘Grief-Fighter’ in \textit{Harmsól} 21; both instances use battle imagery to express the mercy these figures extend to humanity.} Two of the final descriptions of Mary in this stanza, \textit{æðr líknar og lifgan þjóða} ‘vein of grace and life-giver of people’, emphasise her healing and nourishing role for humanity.\footnote{For \textit{æðr} ‘vein’, see \textit{LP} 654; and \textit{SnE} 1998: 439. For \textit{likn}, ‘relief’ or ‘mercy’, see \textit{LP} 375-6; \textit{SnE} 1998: 347; and entry in \textit{ADIP}.} 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 \textit{smyrsl i sárin} ‘ointment to our sores’ (stanza 91), again expressing her healing role. The \textit{Lilja} poet laments his inability to fittingly praise Mary in stanzas 92 to 95, contrasting his own sinfulness with the observation that \textit{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 \textit{þessa praungskordœðra kvæðisorðœða} ‘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, \textit{varðar mest, að riettlig undirstaðan allra orða sie fundin, þó að eigi glögg regla eddu hljóti stundum að víkja 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.\footnote{Abram 2011: 13.}

\begin{quote}
Sá, er óðinn skal vandan velja, velr svá mörg í kvæði að selja
\end{quote}
hulin fornyrðin; trautt má telja; tel eg þenna svá skilning dvelja.
Vel því að hier má skýr orð skilja, skili þjóðir minn ljósan vilja; tel 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

629 For skýr, 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 i 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 *Liknarbraut*, and two centuries after *Geisli, Harmsól*, and *Leiðarvisan*, 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 *náttúruskærleik* ‘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 fóður* ‘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 styrtka* ‘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 skygneik* ‘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 *hreinlífð* ‘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 likam* ‘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 flæðum* ‘filled with deceit’, seeks *að freista framt og talar með prettum* ‘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 dregjar dauðans* ‘brewing the dregs of death’ and being *fjölkunnigr* ‘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 *Glyfaginning* 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 framm 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, öbreytiligt 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 sveitur sínar að drepa Brjót synda ‘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, váttar 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’, *eíðar* ‘oaths’, *gjafar* ‘gifts’, and *mútur* ‘bribes’ would not alter Christ’s judgement.630 Once again the Last Judgement is described as a *ping* ‘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 lífandi brunna* ‘magnificent as a reddened rose sprung up beside living springs’ and *ilmandi rót litillætis* ‘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, eíðr*, and *gjof* 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 *eíðr* and *gjof* 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 Liknarbraut. Sinfulness spreads organically from the Fall in stanza 20, where remman brast af rót i 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 grandi ‘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 liknar og lífgan þjóða ‘vein of grace and life-giver of people’, as well as lækning sötta ‘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 fólkr af fóstum ‘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 helstrið møđdi ‘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, Leiðarvisan, Liknarbraut, 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 Danorum 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

633 Thompson 1965: v.
neighbours. 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.

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. 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. 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-begn 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

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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 Ulfur 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; Ljóðarvisan 15 and 33; and Líknarbraut 29.
\(^{642}\) Orri Vésteinsson 2000: 182.
into obscurity in choosing to focus on the priesthood and governance of their particular godóðr, others sought an ever-increasing wealth through gaining property, followers, and alliances with ‘individuals who wielded the greatest power’.

Godóðr gradually came to be known more as ríki ‘domains’, a shift that reflected their identity with property, and less influential godar became liegemen of more powerful godar, now called stórgodar or hofdingjar, 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’. By 1262, when Icelanders handed over their country to Norway, all godar had sworn allegiance to the Norwegian king, who established his officials to govern throughout Iceland on his behalf. Godar 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. Moreover, godar 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 holl ‘hall’ or salr ‘hall’ takes on the meaning of a great hall, which could be ruled by a chieftain or king. Since skalds never use more specific terms such as godóðr, the prosaic Icelandic word for ‘chieftaincy’, holl and salr could be understood more fluidly and

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648 The noun holl ‘hall’ is used in descriptions of the heavens in Geisli 2, 5, 11 and 64; Harmsól 2 and 28; Leidárvisan 15, 21, 38, and 45; and Líknabraut 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.\textsuperscript{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, maerð ‘praise’ in stanzas 2 and 3, and bragr ‘poem in praise of its ruler’ in stanza 45.\textsuperscript{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 Jófurr, Doglingr, 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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{652} Similarly, the adjective snjallr, meaning ‘bold’ or ‘valiant’, describes

\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{650} For references to a Christian skaldic poem as hróðr, see Geisli 34; Leiðarvísan 1, 2, and 25; and Líknarbraut 9, 51, and 64. Maerð ‘praise’ is used to identify a praise poem in Geisli 9, 18, and 21; and Leiðarvísan 2 and 3. Maerð 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.

\textsuperscript{651} For references to Christ as Jófurr, 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 Doglingr 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.

\textsuperscript{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. 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 Hofðingi 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. 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 Leíðarvísan 7, 15, 23, 25, 29, 31, 33, and 36; and Liknarbraut 7 and 43. The power of the Cross is similarly described as snjallr in Leíðarvísan 38.
654 Vinr ‘friend’ is used to identify Óláfr in Geisli 9, 62, 64, and 68; Moses in Leíðarvísan 19; John the Baptist in Lilja 37; and God’s followers generally in Geisli 63, Harmsól 47, and Liknarbraut 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 Leiðarvisan 35 similarly suggests that the heavens are the spiritual reward for Christ’s retainers.\textsuperscript{655} The Leiðarvisan 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 Leiðarvisan 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.\textsuperscript{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 riðari ‘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 hearken 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

\textsuperscript{655} See Leiðarvisan 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.

\textsuperscript{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; Leiðarvisan 13, 17, and 21; and Líknarbraut 39 and 52. Christ’s followers are identified as drótt in Harmsól 35, 40, 45, and 48; Leiðarvisan 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'. 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 Yóvarr aumligr præll ‘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. 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. The *Harmsól* poet similarly uses þjónn (stanza 10), præll (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. 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.

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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 Præll is used to describe Christ’s followers in *Geisli* 61; *Harmsól* 16 and 58; and *Liknarbraut* 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 himintǫrgu* ‘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 *angr* ‘sorrow’ in *Harmsól* 21 and 65; and *Líknarbraut* 23, 39, 49, and 51. In *Lilja* 47 Lucifer sends *sveitir sinar 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’. Knerrir ‘mercantile ships’ were used by these early Icelanders to trade with other peoples, and were also used in expeditions and warfare. 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. By 1220 the only Icelander 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. 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 Styri ‘Steerer’, guiding the ship of heaven and His followers through the tempestuous seas of sinfulness in this world, though this is never made explicit. As a poem that meditates on the

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 Styrandi in Harmsól 27 and 33; Leiðarvísan 21 and 41; and Lilja 12. The verb styra describes
symbolic values of the Cross, *Liknarbraut* devotes stanza 33 to the image of the Cross as a *skeið* ‘warship’, captained by Christ, that carries *itr farmr* ‘a splendid cargo’ á *vit strandar fóstrlands* ‘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. 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*, *mærð*, and *bragr* that identify the earlier works as praise poems in the courtly

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Christ’s actions, in the sense of control or governance over creation, in *Harmsól* 29, *Leiðarvisan* 29, *Liknarbraut* 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, Leidarvisan,* and *Liknarbraut,* 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, Leidarvisan,* and *Liknarbraut.* 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 *hrynþent* 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.
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 *Vǫrðr* ‘Guardian’ (stanza 19) and *Grœðari* ‘Healer’ (stanza 21), representing Him as both a Protector and Physician. 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 *grœða andar sór* ‘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 *sór ok kross dyggs Dróttins várs* ‘the wounds and Cross of our dear Lord’ at the Last Judgement and thereby

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670 For references to Christ as *Vǫrðr*, see *Geisli* 19; *Harmsól* 5, 30, 52, and 65; *Leiðarvisi* 6 and 10; and *Líknarbraut* 15. *Grœðari* refers to Christ in *Geisli* 21 and *Líknarbraut* 16.
associated the soul’s wounds with Christ’s.\textsuperscript{671} \textit{Liknarbraut} devotes particular attention to the portrayal of Christ as the Healer of injurious sins, referring to Him as both \textit{sáran Groðara} ‘wounded Saviour’ in stanza 16 and \textit{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.\textsuperscript{672} The meaning of the title \textit{Liknarbraut}, ‘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.\textsuperscript{673} The \textit{Lilja} poet very plainly presents sinfulness as a disease leading to spiritual death in stanza 20 when he explains that \textit{rann glæpr af hverjum til annars} ‘sin ran from one to the next’, and the world was \textit{lifs andvani en fullr af grandi} ‘devoid of life and full of injury’.\textsuperscript{674} This is evidenced in part through the description of bitterness and wrath as \textit{gall} in men’s hearts in \textit{Lilja} 48 and 77.\textsuperscript{675} Christ and His sacrifice are once again identified as the source of healing and renewed life, as observed in the lines \textit{Hann græddi oss, en helstrið mæddi} ‘He healed us, but agony wearied Him’ (\textit{Lilja} 55).\textsuperscript{676} Mary too has the ability to heal in \textit{Lilja} 89, where she is described as the \textit{æðr liknar og lífgan hjóða} ‘vein of grace and life-giver of people’, as well as \textit{lækning sótta} ‘healing of illnesses’.\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{671} The verb \textit{grœða} refers to metaphorical healing from sinfulness in \textit{Harmsól} 54, and \textit{Lilja} 55 and 91. The noun \textit{sár} metaphorically expresses sinfulness in \textit{Harmsól} 54 and \textit{Lilja} 91; it also describes Christ’s wounds at the Crucifixion in \textit{Harmsól} 33; \textit{Leiðarvísan} 20; \textit{Liknarbraut} 37 and 43; and \textit{Lilja} 5, 71, and 87.

\textsuperscript{672} See \textit{Geisli} 57 and \textit{Liknarbraut} 31 for references to Christ as \textit{Læknir}. For the use of \textit{lækna} and \textit{lækning} to describe the metaphorical healing of sin, see \textit{Geisli} 46, \textit{Liknarbraut} 40, and \textit{Lilja} 86 and 89.

\textsuperscript{673} The noun \textit{líkn}, meaning ‘grace’ and ‘mercy’, is used of the grace extended by Christ and the Cross in \textit{Geisli} 16 and 59; \textit{Harmsól} 5, 24, 49, and 56; \textit{Leiðarvísan} 24; \textit{Liknarbraut} 10, 22, 33, 40, and 47; and \textit{Lilja} 5, 80, 81, and 89.

\textsuperscript{674} The noun \textit{grand} ‘injury’ is used to identify sinfulness as a spiritual injury in \textit{Harmsól} 16, 20, and 50; \textit{Leiðarvísan} 32 and 42; \textit{Liknarbraut} 6, 39, and 45; and \textit{Lilja} 20. The same term expresses the poet’s sorrow of mind in \textit{Harmsól} 3.

\textsuperscript{675} \textit{Gall} is also used of the literal gall that is mixed with dregs at the Crucifixion in \textit{Lilja} 58.

\textsuperscript{676} The verb \textit{mœða} ‘to weary’ is used to express that the poet is exhausted from the poem in \textit{Leiðarvísan} 44; explain that Moses grows weary from fasting in \textit{Lilja} 19’; express that Christ grows weary at the Crucifixion in \textit{Lilja} 42; and further explain that Christ healed us but agony harmed Him in \textit{Lilja} 55. \textit{Mðr} ‘weary’ is describes how Christ is weary from fasting in \textit{Lilja} 45, and that Mary is weary from a flood of tears in \textit{Lilja} 54.

\textsuperscript{677} \textit{Sótt}, meaning ‘illness’ or ‘distress’, refers to spiritual distress in \textit{Harmsól} 47; and \textit{Lilja} 40, 53, 73, and 89.
Warrior Chieftain. 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. 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 Prekfaðandi ‘Nourisher of strength’ in stanza 54, and heaven is described as a place where aldri þróti unaðgnótt ok frið ‘an abundance of happiness and peace will never end’ in stanza 65. The Sunday Letter tradition on which Leidarvísan 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 Leidarvísan 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

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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; Leidarvísan 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. The verb bera is used of Christ’s birth in Geisli 2, Harmsól 19, Leidarvísan 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, Leidarvísan 1 through 4, and Líknarbraut 1. This term describes and abundance of God’s glory in Leidarvísan 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. The Liknarbraut poet also describes the Cross in stanza 32 as the blömi helgra dóma ‘blossom of relics’ that is watered by Christ’s blood and on which Christ Himself is the bloom; he even references Christ’s ability to promote growth in the kennings prifgæðir ‘Prosperity-Endower’ (stanza 4), Fœðis elsku ‘Nourisher of love’ (stanza 23), and Fœðis fremðarráðs ‘Nourisher of famous counsel’ (stanza 26), once again indicating spiritual growth and nourishment. The noun tún ‘field’ is used of heaven in Leiðarvisan 42, and describes the poet’s breast wherein his thoughts reside in Liknarbraut 4 and 40. 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. 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. 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.

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681 For the use of ár to identify Christ as a source of abundance, see Liknarbraut 10, 17, 20, 46, and 47. Ávóxtir, in reference to spiritual fruit, also occurs in Liknarbraut 5. Kom ‘grain’ is used, also in reference to spiritual fruit, in Lilja 93.
682 Blömi metaphorically describes the Cross in Liknarbraut 32, Mary in Lilja 25, Christ in Lilja 80, and the yield of good deeds in Harmsól 8.
683 The noun lóð ‘land’ appears in heaven kennings in Harmsól 41 and 53, and Liknarbraut 22.
684 The noun þrif describes the prosperity from Christ in Harmsól 22, Leiðarvisan 33, and Liknarbraut 4. Christ is called Fœðir ‘Nourisher’ in Liknarbraut 23 and 26. The verb fœða 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
Water\textsuperscript{687} and blood\textsuperscript{688} play significant symbolic roles throughout these poems, frequently communicating spiritual purity, mercy, and redemption. The noun \textit{brunnr} ‘spring’ appears in \textit{Geisli} 23, where Óláfr’s blood is blended with a spring and brings about miraculous healing.\textsuperscript{689} The miracles from Exodus and Christ’s miracle at the wedding in Cana, as recounted in \textit{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 \textit{rigna} ‘to rain’ is used of manna raining from heaven in \textit{Leiðarvísan} 20, and appears in a penitential context when the poet asks to let it rain with tears \textit{Lilja} 75.\textsuperscript{690} In \textit{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 \textit{Pange lingua}. The flow of water and blood as an indication of Christ’s abundant mercy also appears in \textit{Lilja}, particularly in the description of Christ’s circumcision in stanza 35 and His wounding at the Crucifixion in stanza 44. The \textit{Lilja} poet’s preoccupation with the significance of blood and water is further evidenced in his use of the noun \textit{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.

\textsuperscript{687} The noun \textit{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 \textit{Geisli} 22; water flows from the Rock at Horeb in \textit{Leiðarvísan} 20; Christ turns water into wine in \textit{Leiðarvísan} 26; water and blood flow from Christ’s wound in \textit{Líknarbraut} 20; Adam is made from water and soil in \textit{Lilja} 11; and Christ is sprinkled with water at His baptism in \textit{Lilja} 37.

\textsuperscript{688} Blöð refers to the blood of Christ in \textit{Geisli} 24; \textit{Harmsöl} 12; \textit{Líknarbraut} 27, 30, 42, and 43; and \textit{Lilja} 11, 35, 54, 67, 83, and 85. It also refers to Mary’s blood in \textit{Lilja} 31. \textit{Dreyri} ‘blood’ refers to the blood of Christ in \textit{Harmsöl} 33; \textit{Líknarbraut} 20, 27, and 32; and \textit{Lilja} 5 and 49.

\textsuperscript{689} \textit{Brunnr} is also used in \textit{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.

\textsuperscript{690} The noun \textit{tár} expresses penitence in \textit{Harmsöl} 52, \textit{Leiðarvísan} 39, \textit{Líknarbraut} 46, and \textit{Lilja} 75 and 91. To encourage a penitent spirit, the \textit{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 Liknarbraut 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, Liknarbraut, 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 Liknarbraut 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, Liknarbraut, 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.
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. Though Leiðarvisan 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 lög (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). When Lucifer falls from grace due to his pride in Lilja 15, he becomes the eingill er hafði feingið pað bæn ‘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. 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. 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
in reference to spiritual matters. The Scriptures, Óláfr as a martyr, and John the Baptist are each identified as a vátr ‘witness’ in Geisli 6, Geisli 62, and Lilja 37, respectively. The nouns sæk and ben, which identify offences and injuries in a legal context, are used in Harmsól and Liknarbraut to express both the spiritual injury of sinfulness and the physical attacks endured by Christ at the Crucifixion.698 Leiðarvisan, Liknarbraut, 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, Liknarbraut 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 sæk, meaning ‘cause’ or ‘offence’, refers to offences against God in Harmsól 17, and is used to specify Christ’s guiltless state in Liknarbraut 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 Liknarbraut 18 and 20.

699 The adjective réttr, meaning ‘right’ or ‘true’, is used to specify the appropriate tithe in Leiðarvisan 10; expresses how the Cross shows the true weight of the world in Liknarbraut 36; and specifies both right judgement in Liða 19 and proper speech in Lilja 3.

700 The verb leysa ‘to redeem’ is used of spiritual redemption in Harmsól 27 and 52; Leiðarvisan 31; Liknarbraut 22; and Lilja 23, 64, 80, 83, and 85.
specific than that.\textsuperscript{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’.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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 \textit{þing} and \textit{alþing} to describe the Last Judgement in the homiletic and didactic poems \textit{Harmsól}, \textit{Liknarbraut}, and \textit{Lilja} raises the intriguing possibility that their poets may have had in mind the Icelandic \textit{Alþing}, or perhaps the small-scale \textit{þing} gatherings in Norway, when composing their verses.\textsuperscript{704} Christ appears as Judge at the Last Judgement, described as a \textit{þing}, in \textit{Harmsól 32} and \textit{Lilja 72}, and in \textit{Liknarbraut 26} the Judgement is even referred to as an \textit{alþing}. A comparison of the Last Judgement with the Icelandic \textit{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’.\textsuperscript{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-	extit{þegn} relationship to Óláfr

\textsuperscript{701} Nedkvitne 2009: 173.  
\textsuperscript{702} Nedkvitne 2009: 285.  
\textsuperscript{703} Jón Viðar Sigurðsson 1999: 166.  
\textsuperscript{704} As observed earlier in this thesis, \textit{Liknarbraut} 27 is the only Christian skaldic stanza that refers to the Last Judgement as \textit{alþing}, while \textit{Harmsól 32} and \textit{Lilja 72} use the more general \textit{þing} in reference to the Last Judgement. Dómr, which also identifies the Last Judgement in Christian skaldic verse, occurs in \textit{Harmsól} 6, 31, 34, and 36; \textit{Leiðarvisan} 38, 39, and 45; \textit{Liknarbraut} 26 and 28; and \textit{Lilja} 19, 70, 71, 72, and 76.  
\textsuperscript{705} Abram 2011: 109.
and their associations with spiritual light. The homilietic 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. 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.
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. 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.’ 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), Rufinius (340/345-410), Augustine (354-430), and Gregory the Great (540-604). 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. 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. 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

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707 Matthew IV.3: *Et accedens temptator dixit ei: ‘Si Filius Dei es, dic, ut lapides isti panes fiat’* (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 Ili 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’.


709 Fry 1951: 536.


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 gloriarn nostram, quam nemo princium huius saeculi cognovit; si enim cognovissent, nonquam 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).

formulation which has come to be known as the abuse-of-power theory’.\(^\text{713}\) 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.\(^\text{714}\) 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’.\(^\text{715}\) 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.\(^\text{716}\) 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.\(^\text{717}\) 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


\(^{\text{714}}\) 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.

\(^{\text{715}}\) Marchand 1975: 333.

\(^{\text{716}}\) This seems not to be the case with *Geisli* or *Leiðarvisan*, which focus on individual miracles rather than the theology behind Christ’s process of gaining salvation for humanity.

\(^{\text{717}}\) *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.\footnote{Prýða also describes God’s adornment of the heavens with angels in \textit{Lilja} 6, and Mary’s adornment with deeds in \textit{Lilja} 90.} 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 \textit{Geisli}, for example, uses the verb \textit{leyna} ‘to conceal’ in stanza 13, explaining that Óláfr had concealed his righteousness from humanity during his lifetime.\footnote{This detail accounts for why previous skalds did not address Óláfr’s Christianity.} \textit{Leyna} also expresses the poet’s attempts to conceal his sinfulness from humanity in \textit{Harmsól} 13, and how God has concealed each man’s death-day in \textit{Harmsól} 44. The themes of concealment and deception in reference to Christ’s Incarnation parallel descriptions of Lucifer in \textit{Lilja}, as one act of deception is pitted against another. \textit{Dylja} ‘to conceal’ refers both to Lucifer’s concealment of his identity from Adam and Eve in \textit{Lilja} 15, and God’s concealment of Christ’s identity from Lucifer in \textit{Lilja} 39.\footnote{Dylja also expresses how people who do not recognise God’s words as eternal have spiritual truth hidden from them in \textit{Leiðarvísan} 12.} The noun \textit{prettr}, by contrast, is only used in reference to Lucifer’s frauds or tricks.\footnote{In \textit{Lilja}, \textit{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.} Several other terms pertaining to deception – among them the verb \textit{svíkja} ‘to betray’, the adjective \textit{sleaegr} ‘crafty’, and the nouns \textit{flærð} ‘falsehood’, \textit{slægð} ‘sleight’, and \textit{vél} ‘deceit’ – only occur in \textit{Lilja} among the poems reviewed in this thesis, and specifically refer to Lucifer’s deceptions.\footnote{The verb \textit{svíkja} refers to Lucifer’s betrayal of Adam and Eve in \textit{Lilja} 43; in the same stanza, the adjective \textit{sleegr} is used in Lucifer’s self-description as being crafty of mind. \textit{Flærð} is used to describe people in Hell as swollen with falsehood in \textit{Harmsól} 39; Lucifer in \textit{Leiðarvísan} 31; sinfulness generally in \textit{Líknarbraut} 39; Lucifer again in \textit{Lilja} 17; and Lucifer’s attacks on Christ in \textit{Lilja} 45. The nouns \textit{slægð} and \textit{vél} are both used in \textit{Lilja} 45 to describe Lucifer’s deceptions.} \textit{Klókr}, meaning ‘wily’ or ‘cunning’, describes God’s plans to deceive Lucifer in \textit{Lilja} 39, affirming a difference from Lucifer’s tricks.\footnote{Klókr is used in two other instances within \textit{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.} While both figures engage in deception, \textit{Lilja}
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. 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. 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. For example, in Skáldskaparmál from Snorra Edda Øðinn disguises himself as an itinerant labourer called Bálverkr ‘Evil-Doer’, offering to work for Baugi in return for a drink from Suttungr’s mead. Øðinn is refused the mead, but Baugi helps him by drilling through a wall, and then brásk Bálverkr í orms líki ‘Bálverkr changed himself into the likeness of a serpent’ to get through the hole in the wall and thereby access the mead. 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 amarham ‘he changed himself into the shape of an eagle’ as he returns to Asgard with the mead, emptying it into containers for the Æsir. While being pursued by Suttungr who has also transformed into an eagle, Óðinn defecates out of fear and thereby produces ‘the inferior, debased

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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.
kind of poetic inspiration which is directly available to humans, rather than what is passed down to poets through divine inspiration.  

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.  

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. 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 Völuspá, 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 Völuspá, Lucifer’s dart in Lilja twists around to strike the attacker instead. The Lilja poet seamlessly connects this image to the

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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 *Leiðarvisan* 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 *Liknarbraut*, 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*, *Liknarbraut*, 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. 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. 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. 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 Leiðavíðan 11, linking light with spiritual purity, and called both Döglingr lopts ljósgrims ‘King of the loft of the light-jewel’ and Síklingr sólvangs ‘King of the sun-plain’ in stanza 35.

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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 Leidarvísan poet’s description of the sun in the Christ-kenning "Harri fagrims 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 stjórnu 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 "gifu vegr, og geisli lofta, gimsteinn bruða 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 skærð ‘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; Leidarvísan 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. The verb skína ‘to purify’, which expresses baptism in Harmsól 65 and Leiðarvisán 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 Leiðarvisán in stanza 41, making clear that the absence of light also indicates the absence of Christ in these poems. In beseeching the Cross for mercy, the Leiðarvisán 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 skær ‘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 túnis ‘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 albjarð 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 styrrkra ‘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

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741 The adjective bjartr is describes Christ in Líknarbraut 4 and 7. It is also used of Mary in Geisli 2 and Lilja 24, and Öláf in Geisli 49 and 51. The related noun birti ‘brightness’ describes heaven in Harmsöl 60 and Líknarbraut 28, which contrasts with the darkness of Hell. The noun myrkr identifies sinfulness and death in Geisli 2; Leiðarvisan 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 Liknarbraut. 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. 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’, ‘Strengthener’, ‘Pardoner’, ‘Reconciler’, ‘Tester’, ‘Guardian’, and the like, and eliminating those which did not pertain to Christ or God. 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. 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. 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)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Names</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven and Earth</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lilja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Lords</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Geisli, Leiðarvísan, Líknarbraut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Men</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Geisli, Harmsól, Líknarbraut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Mercy</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Harmsól, Líknarbraut, Lilja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Moderation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Líknarbraut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Power</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Harmsól, Leiðarvísan, Lilja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Purity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Líknarbraut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Weather</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Geisli, Harmsól, Leiðarvísan, Líknarbraut</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lord of the World</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Harmsól</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merciful Figure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Líknarbraut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nourisher</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Harmsól, Líknarbraut, Lilja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omnipotent Figure</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Geisli, Harmsól, Lilja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peacemaker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Harmsól</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protector</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Geisli, Harmsól, Leiðarvísan, Líknarbraut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protector</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Harmsól, Líknarbraut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protector of Earth</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protector of Faith</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Líknarbraut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protector of Heaven</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Harmsól, Leiðarvísan, Líknarbraut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protector of Men</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Harmsól</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protector of the Path</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Líknarbraut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provider of Abundance</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Geisli, Harmsól, Leiðarvísan, Líknarbraut, Lilja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provider of Heaven</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Líknarbraut</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saviour</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Líknarbraut</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ship’s Captain</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Harmsól, Leiðarvísan, Líknarbraut</td>
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<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Geisli, Leiðarvísan, Líknarbraut, Lilja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supressor of Harm</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Líknarbraut</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Harmsól</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrior Chieftain</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Geisli, Harmsól, Leiðarvísan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winner of Praise</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Harmsól</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>List of Occurrences in Poems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Controller</strong></td>
<td>Geisli 1: snállr Kjósandi alls ‘eloquent Chooser of all’(^{747})</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lord of All</strong></td>
<td>Geisli 1: snállr Ráðandi alls ‘eloquent Ruler of all’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Light (Sun)</strong></td>
<td>Geisli 2: Sól miskunnar ‘Sun of mercy’(^{749})</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Light (Sun)</strong></td>
<td>Geisli 3: Sól heilags síðar ‘Sun of holy faith’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Son/Warrior</strong></td>
<td>Geisli 6: dálvandr Dróttinn dýðar ‘carefully-acting Lord of glory’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lord of Heaven/Provider of abundance</strong></td>
<td>Geisli 9: Tyggi ròuls ‘Sovereign of the sun’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provider of Abundance/Omnipresent Figure</strong></td>
<td>Geisli 16: liknframr Umgeypnandi alls heims ‘outstandingly merciful Encompasser of the whole world’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Healer of All</strong></td>
<td>Geisli 21: ítr Grœðari alls ‘glorious Healer of all’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lord of Lords</strong></td>
<td>Geisli 25: dýrr Dróttinn harra ‘dear Lord of princes’(^{753})</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{747}\) 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.
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|

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 doglingr 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 doglingr 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 Míldingr implies mercifulness.
| Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather | Harmsól 1: hár Stillir hreggtjald 'high Moderator of the storm-tents' |
| Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather | Harmsól 2: skýrr Konungr élhallar 'pure King of the storm-hall' |
| Creator of Earth | Harmsól 3: Einskepandi 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 Hregggvörðr 'excellent 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: maetr Gætir ranns rðuls '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 Jófurr hlunns byrjar 'merciful Prince of the launching-roller of the fair breeze' |
| Lord of Heaven | Harmsól 12: þrifskjótr Ængill 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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lord of Power</th>
<th>Harmsól 15: Landreki krapta ‘land-Governor of powers’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lord</td>
<td>Harmsól 16: Harri minn ‘my Lord’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven</td>
<td>Harmsól 16: Qðlingr rðla ‘Prince of heavenly bodies’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Earth</td>
<td>Harmsól 17: Dróttinn heimstðoðu ‘Lord of the world’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather</td>
<td>Harmsól 18: ítr Gramr élserkjar ‘glorious Warrior-King of the storm-shirt’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adorer of Heaven</td>
<td>Harmsól 19: ágætr Skrýðir skríns slóðar skýja ‘excellent Adorer of the shrine of the path of the clouds’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Earth</td>
<td>Harmsól 19: mæztr Hildingr hauðrs ‘most precious Prince of the earth’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of the World</td>
<td>Harmsól 20: ern Valdr heims ‘powerful Keeper of the world’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven</td>
<td>Harmsól 20: grandlauss Skjoldungr tjalds skýja ‘sinless Prince of the tent of the clouds’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather</td>
<td>Harmsól 20: qrr Konungr élsetr ‘generous King of the storm-seat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Light</td>
<td>Harmsól 21: hár Buðlungr elds hlýrnís ‘high King of the fire of the sky’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighter of Grief/Lord of Men/Warrior Chieftain</td>
<td>Harmsól 21: vegligr Angrstríðir runna viggs ðldu ‘magnificent grief-Fighter of the trees of the steed of the wave’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nourisher/Provider of Abundance</td>
<td>Harmsól 22: góðugr Þrífvaldr ‘noble Wielder of prosperity’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Men</td>
<td>Harmsól 22: Gramr aldar ‘Warrior-King of men’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Light</td>
<td>Harmsól 23: Míldingr sunnu ‘Prince of the sun’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Ship’s Captain</td>
<td>Harmsól 23: Stillir hás nausts hríðar ‘Moderator of the high boatshed of the tempest’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giver of Peace</td>
<td>Harmsól 24: sannvíss Veitir fríðar ‘truly certain Granter of peace’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creator of Earth</td>
<td>Harmsól 24: Skepjandi ríkis láðs ‘Creator of the kingdom of the land’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of the World</td>
<td>Harmsól 25: ern Valdr heims ‘powerful Keeper of the world’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather</td>
<td>Harmsól 25: qrr Konungr élsetr ‘generous King of the storm-seat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord</td>
<td>Harmsól 25: saðr Dróttinn ‘true Lord’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Harmsól 26: ítr…ritar ranns éla ‘glorious…of the shield of the house of storms’^{764}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^{764} Referent missing.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal Authority (Reconciler)</th>
<th>Harmsól 26: þreknenninn Sættandi ýta ‘valiant Reconciler of men’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Men</td>
<td>Harmsól 27: Dróttinn fira 'Lord of men'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Light/Ship's Captain/Controller</td>
<td>Harmsól 27: sæll Sannstýrandi sólhaðurs ‘blessed true-Steerer of the sun-land’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather</td>
<td>Harmsól 28: aldyggr Ræsir regnhallar ‘altogether honourable Chief of the rain-hall’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Light</td>
<td>Harmsól 28: fríðsamr Hilmír fjöðtileygs ins hæsta hriðjalds ‘peaceful Prince of the swift fire of the highest storm-tent’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrior Cheiftain</td>
<td>Harmsól 29: fylgjandi Dróttinn himins ‘helping Lord of heaven’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omnipotent Figure</td>
<td>Harmsól 29: skýstalls Skríngleypnandi ‘cloud-platform’s shrine-Holder’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of the World</td>
<td>Harmsól 30: ern Valdr heims 'powerful Keeper of the world'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather</td>
<td>Harmsól 30: þrr Konungr élsetrs ‘generous King of the storm-seat’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protector of Heaven</td>
<td>Harmsól 30: Vørðr salar fjalla ‘Guardian of the hall of the mountains’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Light</td>
<td>Harmsól 31: inn mildi Qólingr tjalds mána ‘the gentle Prince of the tent of the moon’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord/Legal Authority (Judge)</td>
<td>Harmsól 32: ítr Dróttinn á þvísu þingi ‘glorious Lord at this assembly’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather</td>
<td>Harmsól 32: mætr Jófurr vangs éla ‘worthy King of the field of storms’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord</td>
<td>Harmsól 33: dyggr Dróttinn várr ‘our faithful Lord’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Light/Warrior Chieftain</td>
<td>Harmsól 33: inn dýrr sunnu Hjalmstýrandi ‘the precious Steerer of the helmet of the sun’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protector/Lord of Deeds and Glory</td>
<td>Harmsól 34: dýrðgjarn Dáðgeymir ‘glory-eager deed-Guardian’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Men</td>
<td>Harmsól 34: Gramr aldar kyns ‘Warrior-King of the race of men’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven</td>
<td>Harmsól 35: fróðr Fylkir himins ‘wise Chief of heaven’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven</td>
<td>Harmsól 35: snjallr Konungr dagstalls ‘excellent King of the day-support’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Light</td>
<td>Harmsól 36: Konungr fjørns hvéls sunnu ‘King of the helmet of the wheel of the sun’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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765 Christ’s gentleness is emphasised.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lord of Angels</th>
<th>Harmsól 36: Valdr dróttar dýrðar ‘Ruler of the company of glory’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protector of Heaven/Light</td>
<td>Harmsól 37: Gætir himinljóma ‘Guardian of the light of heaven’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Men</td>
<td>Harmsól 38: Hildingr kyns lofða ‘Prince of the race of men’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven</td>
<td>Harmsól 40: fróðr Fylkir himins ‘wise Chief of heaven’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protector of Earth</td>
<td>Harmsól 40: mætr Varðandi jarðar ‘glorious Guardian of the earth’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven</td>
<td>Harmsól 40: snjallr Konungr dagstalls ‘excellent King of the day-support’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather</td>
<td>Harmsól 41: Harri láðs byrjar ‘Lord of the land of the fair wind’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven</td>
<td>Harmsól 43: Gramr ræfrs landa ‘Warrior-King of the roof of lands’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protector of Heaven/Light/Lord of Deeds</td>
<td>Harmsól 44: dáðreyndr Jófurr leygs flugreinar svana ‘deed-tested Prince of the flame of the flying-land of swans’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controller/Omnipotent Figure</td>
<td>Harmsól 44: fagrtjalda Frónspennir ‘earth-Spanner of the fair tents’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven</td>
<td>Harmsól 45: fróðr Fylkir himins ‘wise Chief of heaven’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather/Warrior Chieftain</td>
<td>Harmsól 45: heitfastr Jófurr háborgar hreggs ‘promise-faithful Prince of the high fortress of the storm’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven</td>
<td>Harmsól 45: snjallr Konungr dagstalls ‘glorious King of the day-support’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Men</td>
<td>Harmsól 47: Dróttinn yta ‘Lord of men’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven</td>
<td>Harmsól 49: Buðlungr himinríkis ‘Lord of the kingdom of heaven’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Light</td>
<td>Harmsól 49: Landreki søkkva sætrs sunnu ‘land-Ruler of the treasures of the seat of the sun’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protector</td>
<td>Harmsól 50: Festir rítar musteris fróns ‘Securer of the shield of the temple of the land’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Men</td>
<td>Harmsól 51: ríkr Ræsir sveitar seggja ‘powerful Chief of the company of men’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Light</td>
<td>Harmsól 52: mætr Gramr sunnu ‘illustrious Warrior King of the sun’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Authority (Tester)</td>
<td>Harmsól 52: Reynir virða ‘Tester of men’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protector of Men</td>
<td>Harmsól 52: snjallr Vóðr gumna ‘wise Guardian of men’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Light</td>
<td>Harmsól 53: glaðr Láðvaldr glóða hróts leiptra ‘glad land-Keeper of the fires of the roof of lightnings’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Authority (Reconciler)/Warrior Chieftain</td>
<td>Sættir kyns bragna ‘Reconciler of the kindred of warriors’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nourisher</td>
<td>Překťođandi þjóðar ‘strength-Nourisher of the people’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peacemaker</td>
<td>Tínir friða ‘Gatherer of peace’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Mercy/Lord of Heaven</td>
<td>þrekfœðandi þjóðar ‘strength-Nourisher of the people’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather</td>
<td>Tínir friða ‘Gatherer of peace’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controller of Fate</td>
<td>Írvi Sættir kyns ýta ‘the generous Reconciler of the kinsfolk of men’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Authority (Reconciler)</td>
<td>‘the generous Reconciler of the kinsfolk of men’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creator/Light</td>
<td>Gervandi logskríns ‘blessed Maker of the flame-shrine’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Light</td>
<td>‘Chief of the strong homestead of the sun’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controller/Ship’s Captain</td>
<td>Vegstyrir ‘honour-Steerer’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather</td>
<td>Gramr hauðs glyggs ‘Warrior-King of the land of the wind’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Light</td>
<td>Hildingr himins birti ‘highest Prince of heaven’s brightness’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather</td>
<td>Landreki strandar veðra ‘land-Ruler of the shore of the wind’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Men</td>
<td>Æstnenninn Jófurr drengja ‘love-disposed Prince of men’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Authority (Pardoner)</td>
<td>margríkr Miskunnandi ýta ‘very powerful Pardoner of men’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather</td>
<td>veglyndr Valdr grundar veðra ‘honour-minded Ruler of the plain of the winds’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controller/Omnipotent Figure</td>
<td>Heimspennir ‘world-Spanner’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destroyer of Misfortune/Warrior Chieftain/Lord of Heaven/Light</td>
<td>angřlestandi Jófurr sunnu ‘sorrow-injuring Prince of the sun’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Glory</td>
<td>Ír Dróttinn ‘glorious Lord’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protector of Heaven</td>
<td>Vórðr skýðjalds ‘Warden of the cloud-tent’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Authority/Lord of Heaven/Light</td>
<td>Døglingr doemistóls ok sólar ‘King of the judgement-seat of the sun’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Leíðarvíslan:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
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<td>Lord of Heaven</td>
<td>Leíðarvíslan 1: Harri salar fjalla ‘Lord of the hall of the mountains’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Power</td>
<td>Leíðarvíslan 2: aflamestan Dróttinn ‘powerful Lord’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Light</td>
<td>Leíðarvíslan 2: frægr Harri fagrgims háss hreggranns ‘famous Lord of the fair jewel of the high storm-house’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Leíðarvíslan 3: frægr Stýrir aldar ‘famous Steerer of men’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>Leíðarvíslan 3: Sonr ‘Son’</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>Leíðarvíslan 9: alfríðr Sonr ‘altogether beautiful Son’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord</td>
<td>Leíðarvíslan 9: heilagr Dróttinn ‘holy Lord’</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Leíðarvíslan 11: mætr Meinhjóðandi ‘worthy harm-Destroyer’</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Leíðarvíslan 13: ítr Dróttinn ‘glorious Lord’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Light</td>
<td>Leíðarvíslan 13: Siklingr setrs sunnu ‘King of the seat of the sun’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lord of Lords</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Lord of Heaven/Light</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lord</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Lord of Glory</td>
<td>Leiðarvísan 21: ítr Dróttinn 'glorious Lord'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Light</td>
<td>Leiðarvísan 21: Siklingr setrs sunnu ‘King of the seat of the sun’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Controller/Ship's Captain</td>
<td>Leiðarvísan 21: Stýrandinn hallar heims ‘The Steerer of the hall of the world’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lord of Glory</td>
<td>Leiðarvísan 22: Buðlungr dyrðar 'King of glory'</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lord of Glory</td>
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<td>Leiðarvísan 25: alfríðustum Dróttini gotna himins ‘altogether fairest Lord of the men of heaven’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lord of Angels</td>
<td>Leiðarvísan 25: alfríztur Dróttinn gotna himins ‘fairest Lord of the men of heaven’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather</td>
<td>Leiðarvísan 25: Gramr hreggranns ‘Warrior-King of the storm-house’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Light</td>
<td>Leiðarvísan 25: sjallr sólar Salkonungr ‘wise hall-King of the sun’</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Leiðarvísan 26: hreinn Siklingr landa sólar ‘pure Prince of the lands of the sun’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bringer of Peace</td>
<td>Leiðarvísan 27: rósfr Friðkennandi ‘valiant peace-Bringer’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Controller/Ship's Captain</td>
<td>Leiðarvísan 27: Stýrir himins ‘Steerer of heaven’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Leiðarvísan 29: aldýrr Faðir ‘altogether precious ‘Father’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather</td>
<td>Leiðarvísan 29: Gramr hreggranns ‘Warrior-King of the storm-house’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Light</td>
<td>Leiðarvísan 29: sjallr sólar Salkonungr ‘valiant hall-King of the sun’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Light</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Leiðarvískin 31: snjallastr Faðir allra ‘most valiant Father of all’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son/Light</td>
<td>Leiðarvískin 31: Sonr hauðs sólar ‘Son of the land of the sun’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven</td>
<td>Leiðarvískin 32: Óðlingr hreins bœs heiðar ‘Prince of the pure dwelling of the heath’[767]</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Leiðarvískin 32: Skjoldungr skríns skýja ‘King of the shrine of the clouds’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather</td>
<td>Leiðarvískin 33: Gramr hreggranns ‘Warrior-King of the storm-house’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven</td>
<td>Leiðarvískin 33: Óðlingr salar rœðla ‘Prince of the hall of heavenly bodies’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Light</td>
<td>Leiðarvískin 33: snjallr sólar Salkonungr ‘excellent hall-King of the sun’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Glory/Provider of Abundance</td>
<td>Leiðarvískin 34: Dróttinn gnóttar vegs ‘Lord of the abundance of glory’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Light</td>
<td>Leiðarvískin 35: Ðøglingr lopts ljósgims ‘King of the loft of the light-jewel’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Light</td>
<td>Leiðarvískin 35: Siklingr sólvangs ‘Prince of the sun-plain’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Deeds/Lord of Heaven</td>
<td>Leiðarvískin 36: dýrÚgr dáðsterkr Dróttinn himintǫrgu ‘glorious, deed-strong Lord of the heaven-shield’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of All</td>
<td>Leiðarvískin 36: snjallastr Konungr allra ‘most valiant King of all’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destroyer of Harm</td>
<td>Leiðarvískin 37: œztr Hrjóðandi angrs þjóðar ‘most excellent Destroyer of the harm of people’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven</td>
<td>Leiðarvískin 38: dýrstr Ðøfurr dagskeiðs ‘most dear Prince of the day-course’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lord of Earth</td>
<td>Leiðarvískin 38: frœgr Hilmir allra landa ‘famous Prince of all lands’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healer/Warrior Chieftain</td>
<td>Leiðarvískin 39: Ðflugr Ðflir alls sóma ‘mighty Strengtheners of all honour’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Fate</td>
<td>Leiðarvískin 41: eillfr Deilir skapa ‘eternal Ruler of fates’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controller/Ship’s Captain</td>
<td>Leiðarvískin 41: Stýrandi alls ‘Steerer of all’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord</td>
<td>Leiðarvískin 41: várr Dróttinn ‘our Lord’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven</td>
<td>Leiðarvískin 42: ítr Yfirstillir túns rítar hiimins ‘glorious over-Moderator of the field of the shield of heaven’</td>
</tr>
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</table>

[767] Purity may also have associations with light.
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<th>Reference</th>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven</td>
<td>Leiðarvisan 45: dýrr Gramr dags hallar ‘glorious Warrior-King of day’s hall’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven</td>
<td>Líknarbraut 1: himins Dróttinn ‘heaven’s Lord’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven</td>
<td>Líknarbraut 2: algöfugr mæðeteitr Jófurr ins hæsta heiðs ‘completely noble, fame-glad Prince of the highest clear-heaven’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Líknarbraut 4: þrífgaðir þjóðar ‘prosperity-Endower of the people’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal Authority (Tester)</td>
<td>Líknarbraut 5: Kannandi alls ‘Tester of all’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controller/Ship’s Captain</td>
<td>Líknarbraut 5: Lífstýrir láðs ok lóða ‘life-Steerer of land and men’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord/Light</td>
<td>Líknarbraut 7: alþreinn, sæll Vísi vegs ‘completely pure, blessed Prince of glory’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Light</td>
<td>Líknarbraut 7: Hildingr hauðs mána hvéls ‘King of the land of the moon’s wheel’</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Líknarbraut 8: Jófurr veðrskríns ‘Prince of the storm-shrine’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controller/Lord of Heaven</td>
<td>Líknarbraut 9: heiðar Hjálmspenndi ‘helmet-Spanner of the heath’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord/Light</td>
<td>Líknarbraut 9: ljóss Vísi ‘bright Prince’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven</td>
<td>Líknarbraut 10: Lofðungr himinríkis ‘King of heaven’s kingdom’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Líknarbraut 10: Skilfingr skírs árs ‘King of bright abundance’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saviour</td>
<td>Líknarbraut 11: minn Lausnari ‘my Saviour’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destroyer of Falsehood</td>
<td>Líknarbraut 11: Þverriri svika ‘Diminisher of falsehoods’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven</td>
<td>Líknarbraut 12: sá baztr Míldingr heiða tjalds ‘the best Prince of heaths’ tent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Líknarbraut 13: hvargóðr Gætir vegs vitra hólda ‘ever-good Guardian of the way of wise men’</td>
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<td>Líknarbraut 13: øeztr Konungr yfrða ‘highest King of men’</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Líknarbraut 15: fróns Vørðr ‘earth’s Guardian’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lord of Men</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Liknarbraut 16: várr sárr Grœðari 'our wounded Healer'</td>
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<td>Liknarbraut 17: Árstillir 'Moderator of abundance'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Liknarbraut 17: œztr Konungr fyrða 'highest King of men'</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Liknarbraut 18: Hildingr mána hauðrs 'King of the moon's land'</td>
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<tr>
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</table>
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| Lord of Heaven/Light | Liknarbraut 19: ríkr Ræsir rðla býs 'mighty Chief of suns' dwelling' |
| Provider of Abundance | Liknarbraut 20: eirssonr Árveitir ýta 'mercy-true abundance-Granter of men' |
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| Lord of Heaven | Liknarbraut 21: mildr Konungr eyhjálms 'tender King of the island-helmet'
| Lord of Men | Liknarbraut 21: œztr Konungr fyrða 'highest King of men' |
| Lord of Heaven | Liknarbraut 22: kvalir ítr Gramr dægra láðs 'tormented glorious Warrior-King of days' land' |
| Lord of Mercy/Lord of Heaven/Light | Liknarbraut 22: líknarstyrk Gramr sóllhallar 'mercy-strong Warrior-King of sun's hall'
| Nourisher/Provider of Abundance | Liknarbraut 23: aldyggr Fœðir elsku 'fully loyal Nourisher of love' |
| Suppressor of Harm | Liknarbraut 23: Angrhegnandi 'harm-Suppressor' |
| Lord of Heaven/Light | Liknarbraut 23: sœll Dróttinn sólar hauðrs 'blessed Lord of sun's land' |
| Lord of Earth | Liknarbraut 24: guðblíðr Gramr lands 'godly-tender Warrior-King of the earth'
| Lord of Heaven | Liknarbraut 24: Siklingr fróns tjalds 'King of the earth's tent' |
| Lord of Heaven | Liknarbraut 25: Hilmir heiðtjalds 'Prince of the heath's tent' |
| Lord of Men | Liknarbraut 25: œztr Konungr fyrða 'highest King |

768 Purity may also have associations with light.
769 Also hints at Christ's mercifulness.
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<tr>
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<td>Ítr Vôðr sólar slóðar ‘glorious Guardian of the sun’s track’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lord of Men</td>
<td>Óeþr Konungr fyrða ‘highest King of men’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Light</td>
<td>Huggóðr Gramr grundar geisla ‘benevolent Warrior-King of the land of rays’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healer of Humanity</td>
<td>LÝðs Læknir ‘humanity’s Physician’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather/Provider of Abundance</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Blíðr Dróttinn dags reitar ‘tender Lord of the day’s furrow’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lord of Earth</td>
<td>Konungr fróns ‘King of earth’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controller/Ship’s Captain</td>
<td>Himinstýrir ‘heaven’s Steerer’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Light</td>
<td>Dyggr Gramr sölstéttar ‘faithful Warrior-King of the sun’s path’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Men</td>
<td>Konungr dróttar ‘King of the host’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven</td>
<td>Þreksnjallr Þengill skýja ‘strength-bold King of clouds’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provider of Abundance</td>
<td>Þðlingr árs ‘Prince of the year’s abundance’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protector of Faith</td>
<td>Siðgætir ‘faith-Guardian’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protector</td>
<td>Siðgætir ‘faith-Guardian’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provider of Abundance</td>
<td>Efll árs ‘Strengthener of the year’s abundance’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nourisher/Merciful Figure</td>
<td>Líknfœðir ‘Begetter of grace’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather</td>
<td>Bragningr veðrskríns ‘King of the storm-shrine’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protector</td>
<td>Gumna Gætir ‘Guardian of men’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighter of Grief/Lord of Men</td>
<td>Angstríðandi aldar ‘grief-Fighter of mankind’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Mercy</td>
<td>Lýknarbraut 49: eirsamr Dróttinn 'merciful Lord'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven</td>
<td>Lýknarbraut 50: ítr Ræsir regnsals ‘glorious Chief of the rain-hall’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Lord of Weather</td>
<td>Lýknarbraut 50: Konungr veðra tjalds ‘King of the storms’ pavilion’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destroyer of Misfortune</td>
<td>Lýknarbraut 51: sæll Angrskerðandi ‘blessed grief-Diminisher’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Lords</td>
<td>Lýknarbraut 52: Dróttinn jófra ‘Lord of princes’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saviour/Provider of Abundance</td>
<td>Lýknarbraut 52: Mæztr, òrr Lausnari minn ‘my most glorious, bountiful Saviour’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Angels and Men</td>
<td>Lilja 1: Yfirbjóðandi eingla og þjóða ‘supreme Ruler of angels and peoples’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord</td>
<td>Lilja 2: Dróttinn 'Lord'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of All</td>
<td>Lilja 4: Allsvaldandi Kóngr ‘all-ruling King’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord</td>
<td>Lilja 8: dýrr Dróttinn 'splendid Lord'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son/Provider of Abundance</td>
<td>Lilja 8: Guðs yfrinn ríkr eingeitið Sonr ‘God’s abundantly powerful only-begotten Son’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Mercy</td>
<td>Lilja 14: bliðr Dróttinn 'kindly Lord'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Power</td>
<td>Lilja 19: ríkr Herra 'powerful Lord'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord</td>
<td>Lilja 21: inn dýrr Dróttinn 'the dear Lord'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord</td>
<td>Lilja 23: Herra þínn 'your Lord'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controller/Omnipotent Figure</td>
<td>Lilja 23: Yfirspennandi þrenna heima 'over-Spanner of three worlds'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>Lilja 24: Sonr 'Son'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven/Light</td>
<td>Lilja 26: inn háleitr Drottni reitar stjórn ‘the sublime Lord of the path of the star’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Angels and Men</td>
<td>Lilja 28: sannr Hófðinginn eingla og manna ‘the true Chieftain of the angels and men’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God of Heaven</td>
<td>Lilja 29: Guð himnanna ‘God of the heavens’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Image of Deity</td>
<td>Lilja 30: hagligr Myndan heilags anda ‘proper Image of the Holy Spirit’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord</td>
<td>Lilja 32: Dróttinn minn 'my Lord'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven</td>
<td>Lilja 37: Valdr himnanna ‘Ruler of the heavens’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Greatness</td>
<td>Lilja 38: inn mikill Dróttinn 'the great Lord'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>Lilja 44: inn dýri Sonr 'the precious Son'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>Lilja 44: menniligr Sonr Guðs og hennar ‘human Son of God and her’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son</td>
<td>Lilja 44: Sonr Máriú ‘Son of Mary’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Lilja Line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destroyer of Sin</td>
<td>Lilja 47:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creator</td>
<td>Lilja 51:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven and Earth</td>
<td>Lilja 52:</td>
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<td>Son</td>
<td>Lilja 56:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creator</td>
<td>Lilja 57:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lord of Heaven and Earth</td>
<td>Lilja 58:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creator</td>
<td>Lilja 62:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord of Mercy</td>
<td>Lilja 63:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Giver of Life</td>
<td>Lilja 63:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lord</td>
<td>Lilja 69:</td>
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<td>Son</td>
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<td>Creator</td>
<td>Lilja 69:</td>
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<td>Lord of All</td>
<td>Lilja 70:</td>
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<td>Lord</td>
<td>Lilja 75:</td>
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<td>Creator</td>
<td>Lilja 75:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Lilja 79:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provider of Abundance/Nourisher</td>
<td>Lilja 80:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father/Light</td>
<td>Lilja 81:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lord</td>
<td>Lilja 82:</td>
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<td>Son</td>
<td>Lilja 85:</td>
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<td>Lord</td>
<td>Lilja 85:</td>
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<td>Son</td>
<td>Lilja 87:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lord of Angels and Men</td>
<td>Lilja 100:</td>
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