Mountains, Caves, and Snowstorms: The "Lai of Two Lovers" in Anglo-Norman and Old Norse

Marie's *Lai des Deus Amanz* is preserved complete in MS H, London, British Library, Harley 978, with the first 169 lines also found in MS S, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, nouv. acq. fr. 1104.[1] The differences between these two redactions have been much discussed, but the relationship between the Anglo-Norman text and its translation into Old Norse has received almost no attention. Nevertheless, the *lai* plays an important role in the Old Norse text known as *Strengleikar* (Songs for Stringed Instruments). This collection brings together translations of eleven of Marie's *Lais*, ten of the anonymous *lais*, and four of unknown origin.[2] It is now largely contained within one manuscript, Uppsala University Library, de la Gardie 4-7. This manuscript dates to the second half of the thirteenth century and was likely produced in Bergen or the surrounding area. Fragments of the text were also found inside the lining of a bishop's mitre in Skálholt, Iceland, and are now kept in the Arnamagnæan Collection in Copenhagen as AM 666 b 4to.[3] A full translation of *Deus Amanz* is found in the Uppsala manuscript, where it is named *Tveggia elscandi* (Two Lovers).[4] A second text of the same name also appears in the Skálholt fragments, but it is incomplete because the corners of the parchment were cut off to fit it inside the mitre. The relationship between the two Norse *lais* is therefore uncertain. Although this second *Tveggia elscandi* shares a name with the text in the Uppsala manuscript (and thus with Marie's *Deus Amanz*), it is not a variation in the manner of MS S and MS H. It differs in both setting and some details of the plot and seems, rather, to be a creative retelling of Marie's tale. The two *lais* sit in dialogue in the *Strengleikar* collection, where they offer a uniquely Norse investigation of landscape, memory, and the genesis of literary texts. In so doing, they engage with some of the central themes of *Deus Amanz* while adapting those themes for a new, Nordic audience.

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[1] Citations from this text are from *Les Lais de Marie de France*, ed. Jean Rychner, Paris: Champion, 1966, pp. 93-101. Translations are from *The Lais of Marie de France*, trans. Glyn S. Burgess and Keith Busby, London: Penguin, 1986, pp. 82-85.

[2] On the principal variations with respect to *Deus Amanz*, see Logan Whalen's recent edition of MS S, "The *Deus amanz* fragment in MS S (Paris, BnF, nouv. acq. fr. 1104)," *Le Cygne*, 6 (2019), pp. 83-100 (at 87-90).

[3] A good overview of these manuscripts, their provenance, and current state of preservation is given in *Strengleikar: An Old Norse Translation of Twenty-one Old French Lais*, ed. and trans. Robert Cook and Mattias Tveitane, Oslo: Norsk historisk kjeldeskrift-institutt, 1979, pp. ix-xxviii. An English provenance has also been suggested by Ingvil Brügger Budal in "The Genesis of *Strengleikar*: Scribes, Translators, and Place of Origin," in *Eddic, Skaldic and Beyond: Poetic Variety in Medieval Iceland and Norway*, ed. Martin Chase, New York: Fordham University Press, 2014, pp. 31-43.

[4] The Norse text contains some details found in MS S but not in MS H, notably the much-discussed ll. 23-30, which detail the king's quasi-incestuous interest in his daughter. In other places it seems to follow more closely the wording of MS H. As is usual in Old Norse translations of Marie's *lais*, several lines found in both H and S are simply omitted. A full list of these omissions is given in *Strengleikar*, Cook and Tveitane, p. 159. Quotations from the Old Norse text and translations into English are from this volume, although I have made some minor adjustments for the sake of clarity.

De la Gardie 4-7 and AM 666 b represent some of our oldest manuscript sources for Norwegian courtly literature, and the *Strengleikar* collection is therefore key to understanding how and why such texts were introduced into the Nordic world.[5] The collection opens with a prologue (*Forrœða*), which offers a close translation of Marie's *Prologue* to the *Lais*; however, the Norse translator prefaces this with additional comments of his own.[6] In particular, he discusses the role played by Hákon Hákonarson, King of Norway from 1217-1263, in the production of the text:

> ⟨E⟩n bok þessor er hin*n* virðulege hacon k*onon*gr let norr*œ*na or volsko male ma hæita lioða bok. þui at af þæim sogum er þæssir bok birtir gærðo skolld i syðra brætlande er liggr i fran*n*z lioðsonga. þa er gærazc i horpum gigiom. Simphano*m*. Organo*m*. Timpano*m*. Sallterium. ok corom. ok allzkonar oðrum strænglæiku*m* er men*n* gera ser ok oðrum til skemtanar þæssa lifs.
>
> This book, which the esteemed King Hákon had translated into Norse from the French language, may be called "Book of Lais," because from the stories which this book makes known, poets in Brittany – which is in France – composed *lais*, which are performed on harps, fiddles, hurdy-gurdies, lyres, dulcimers, psalteries, rotes, and other stringed instruments of all kinds which men make to amuse themselves and others in this world. (p. 4-7)

Although the Norse *lais* were translated into prose rather than verse, there is a sense of excitement and even wonder in this lengthy musical description.[7] The oral pre-history of the *lais* is, for the Old Norse translator, a key part of their entertainment value. Carefully explaining to the Norse audience where this musical, almost mystical, land of origin is located, the translator positions his patron, King Hákon, as the heir to the Breton poets. References to Marie are removed throughout the collection: the translation of the *lais* from Breton to French to Norse is, the preface implies, a royal project from beginning to end. This is in keeping with other texts from the period. Hákon is named as the patron of five translated works, including such well-known romances as *Tristrams saga ok*

[5] Among many recent works on this topic, see especially Sif Ríkharðsdóttir, *Medieval Translations and Cultural Discourse: the Movement of Texts in England, France and Scandinavia*, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012; Marianne Kalinke, ed., *The Arthur of the North: The Arthurian Legend in the Norse and Rus' Realms*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2011; Stefka G. Eriksen, *Writing and Reading in Medieval Manuscript Culture: The Translation and Transmission of the Story of Elye in Old French and Old Norse Literary Contexts*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2014; and the special issue entitled *Arthur of the North: Histories, Emotions, and Imaginations*, ed. Bjørn Bandlien, Stefka G. Eriksen, and Sif Ríkharðsdóttir, *Scandinavian Studies*, 98.1 (2015).

[6] I use the term "Old Norse translator" for the sake of simplicity, but the collection may well have been the work of multiple translators.

[7] For further discussion on the stylistic implications of this, see Erin Michelle Goeres, "Translating Romance in Medieval Norway: Marie de France and *Strengleikar*," in *A Companion to Medieval Translation*, ed. Jeanette Beer, University of Amsterdam Press, 2019, pp. 83-92.

Ísöndar (the Saga of Tristram and Isolde), adapted from Thomas of Britain's *Tristran*, and *Ívens saga* (the Saga of Yvain), based on Chrétien de Troyes' *Le chevalier au Lion* (The Knight of the Lion). Indeed, the king seems to have revelled in the culture of the Anglo-Norman court. His reign saw the widespread adoption not only of Anglo-Norman literature, but also of painting, sculpture, and architecture.[8] The two countries also enjoyed close political and trading relationships, actively promoted by the king. Having navigated a bloody civil war during the early part of his reign, Hákon looked outward as he sought to consolidate his position at home. He adopted a more authoritarian form of monarchy than had previously been seen in Scandinavia, and it has been argued that the royal figures of romance – particularly King Arthur – offered attractive literary parallels to Hákon's increasingly centralized form of government.[9] The storyworlds of *lai* and romance moreover offered a valuable form of cultural capital to members of the Norwegian court, enabling the king and his retainers to demonstrate their inclusion in the wider European cultural sphere.[10] As the *Strengleikar Forrœða* demonstrates, the translation of these texts demonstrates a fascination with their origins, and with the ways they had moved through different reading communities on their journey to Norway.

Deus Amanz and the first *Tveggia elskandi*

The Norse translations of *Deus Amanz* exemplify this interest in the cultural mobility of texts.[11] Movement, memory, and the production of narrative intersect in Marie's tale, making it perhaps the ideal work through which to explore such themes.[12] As many have observed, the first twenty lines of Marie's text teem with geographical locations: there are three references to Normandy (*Normendie/Neustrie*), where the story takes place, four to the town of Pitres and its inhabitants (*Pistre/les Pistreis*), and two to the *munt* (mountain) that looms above.[13] The tale is thus

[8] A useful summary of the king's reign is given in Knut Helle, "The Norwegian Kingdom: Succession Disputes and Consolidation," in *The Cambridge History of Scandinavia*, ed. Knut Helle, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 369-91. On the relationship between England and Norway at this time, see also Knut Helle, "Anglo-Norwegian Relations in the Reign of Håkon Håkonsson (1217-63)," *Medieval Scandinavia*, 1 (1968): 101-14.

[9] E.g. Geraldine Barnes, "The *riddarasögur* and Mediæval European Literature," *Medieval Scandinavia*, 8 (1975): 140-58; and Carolyne Larrington, "Queens and Bodies: The Norwegian Translated *Lais* and Hákon IV's Kinswomen," *JEGP*, 108 (2009): 506-27.

[10] On this see also Erin Michelle Goeres, "Sounds of Silence: The Translation of Women's Voices from Marie de France to the Old Norse *Strengleikar*," *JEGP* (2014): 279-307.

[11] Cf. Stephen Greenblatt, with Ines G. Županov, Reinhard Meyer-Kalkus, Heike Paul, Pál Nyíri, and Friederike Pannewick, *Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

[12] On these themes see especially Logan E. Whalen, *Marie de France and the Poetics of Memory*, Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2008; SunHee Kim Gertz, *Echoes and Reflections: Memory and Memorials in Ovid and Marie de France*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003; and Minnie B. Sangster, "Re-Membering Marie de France's *Lai Des Deus Amanz*," *Medieval Perspectives,* 17.2 (2003): 118-28.

[13] See, among others, Whalen, *Poetics of Memory*, pp. 71-3; Sangster, "Re-Membering," p. 120; and Peter R. Grillo, "Folklore et hagiographie dans le lai des *Deux Amants*," *Romance Philology*, 45.4 (May 1992): 469-83 (at pp. 471-72). The Norse text removes only one reference to Pitres from this list. On the suggestive semantic associations of this word

rooted in a highly localised landscape that may have been known to Marie's audience and, as some have argued, perhaps even to Marie herself.[14] As Sharon Kinoshita and Peggy McCracken have observed, however, this grounding in the region of Normandy makes it the only *lai* in Marie's extant collection to fall fully outside the Celtic world.[15] With both the opening and closing lines emphasising the role of the Bretons in its production – "Un lai en firent li Bretun : / De *Deus Amanz* reçuit le nun" (The Bretons made a lay about them which was given the title *The Two Lovers*: ll. 5-6, p. 5-6) – the movement of the text emerges at the forefront of the *lai*.[16] As Kinoshita and McCracken argue, "The Breton story about a place in Normandy, recorded and translated by a woman living in Britain but originally from France, suggests a movement of stories among Brittany, Normandy, Britain, and even Scotland and Ireland."[17] The translation of the tale into Old Norse adds Norway and, ultimately, Iceland, to this list.

In contrast to this specific geographical grounding, the protagonists of the *lai* are never named. Rather, they are introduced in terms that emphasise their youth (AN *enfanz,* ON *ungmenni*) and relationship (AN *Deus Amanz,* ON *Tveggia elskandi*).[18] They are in some ways stock characters, and the *lai* seems to draw on a number of well-known sources, including the Ovidian tale of Pyramus and Thisbe, folktales composed around the *peau d'âne* theme, and the Tristan legend, among others.[19] To briefly summarise their adventures, the girl is a princess whose mother has died and whose father sets a challenge for any would-be suitors: they must carry the princess up the mountain that looms over his city.[20] It is marvellously high and yet the suitors cannot rest on the way or they will lose the challenge. Many try and all fail. When the young woman falls in love with a boy at her father's court, the boy resolves to undertake the challenge. The princess sends him to her kinswoman in Salerno, a woman skilled in plant-based medicine, to procure a potion that will give him the

with OF *piteer* (to pity, to have pity), see Howard R. Bloch, *The Anonymous Marie de France*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003, p. 54.

[14] As argued in Sangster, "Re-Membering," p. 121; see also Minnie B. Sangster, "A Study of the Legend and Location of *Les Deux Amanz* from the Middle Ages to Modern Times', *Le Cygne*, 4 (1998): pp. 11-20.

[15] Sharon Kinoshita and Peggy McCracken, *Marie de France: A Critical Companion*, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2012, p. 114.

[16] The closing lines reprise this theme: "Li Bretun en firent un lai" (the Bretons composed a lay about them: l. 254, p. 85).

[17] Kinoshita and McCracken, *Marie de France*, p. 115.

[18] On this focus on youth, see especially Sarah Eddings, "Infertility and the Marvel-less in Marie de France's *Deus Amanz*," *Romance Notes*, 57.1 (2017): 157-65 (at p. 161).

[19] See Sangster's summary of possible sources in "Re-Membering," pp. 119-20; and Gertz, *Echoes and Reflections*, pp. 43-64, for an extended comparison with Ovid and references to earlier studies on this theme.

[20] The question of whether the king is incestuously involved with his daughter has been much discussed in this context. See further Joan Brumlik, "Incest and Death in Marie de France's *Deus Amanz*," in *The Court Reconvenes: Courtly Literature Across the Disciplines: Selected Papers from the Ninth Triennial Congress of the International Courtly Literature Society, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, 25-31 July 1998*, ed. Barbara K. Altman and Careton W. Carroll, Rochester, NY: D. S. Brewer, 2003, pp. 169-77.

strength needed to climb the mountain.[21] He does so, returns to Normandy, and a day is set for him to climb the mountain with the princess in his arms. Strangely, however, the young man never drinks the potion. In both the Anglo-Norman and Old Norse texts, this is initially explained by the joy (AN *joie,* ON *fagnaðr*) he feels in the princess's presence, which causes him to forget (ll. 190-4, pp. 164-5). Even when the princess reminds him of the potion, however, and begs him to drink, he refuses. It is at this moment, halfway up the mountain, that we begin to see subtle differences in the Old Norse translation. In Marie's text, the young man is worried about the reaction of the watching crowd should he stop to drink:

> Li damisels ad respundu:
> "Bele, jo sent tut fort mun quer,
> Ne m'arestereie a nul fuer
> Si lungement que jeo beüsse
> Pur quei treis pas aler peüsse.
> Ceste genz nus escriëreint,
> De lur noise m'esturdireint;
> Tost me purreint disturber.
> Jo ne voil pas ci arrester." (ll. 198-206)
>
> The young man replied: "Fair one, I feel my heart to be strong. Providing I can still walk three paces, on no account shall I stop, not even long enough to take a drink. These people would shout at us and deafen me with their noise, and they could easily distract me. I shall not stop here." (p. 84)

The Norse translation removes this reference to the watching court, with the young man answering simply: "Ec hevi yrit afl. un*n*asta. Ecki mœðizc hiarta. ok fyr*ir* þui vil ec engv*m* kosti huilazc" (I have enough strength, sweetheart. My heart is not getting tired, and therefore I don't want to stop for anything, pp. 166-7). The scene in *Strengleikar* is more intimate than that in Marie's version, where the spectators seem to close in around the children, watching their every move. In the Norse, the children are alone on the mountain, far from the hustle and bustle of the inhabited realm; the mountain becomes a private otherworld they must face together.

[21] On this figure see especially Peggy McCracken, "Women and Medicine in Medieval French Narrative," *Exemplaria*, 5.2 (1993): 239-62 (at p. 262); and Brumlik, "Incest and Death," p. 174. As these authors observe, Salerno was a well-known medical centre at the time, and Marie is careful to emphasise the woman's learning rather than suggest there is anything magical about the potion.

The boy continues to run, but two-thirds of the way up the mountain he almost collapses. The princess again entreats him to drink, but he does not. Instead, he continues in great pain until he reaches the top of the mountain. As Marie relates:

> Sur le munt vint ; tant se greva,
> Ileoc cheï, puis ne leva :
> Li quors del ventre s'en parti. (ll. 213-15)
>
> He reached the top, in such distress that he fell down and never rose again, for his heart left his body. (p. 84)

Relative to the lengthy description of the climb up the mountain, the boy's death is quick, almost abrupt, in this text. The tale turns quickly to the girl's response, detailing her attempts to revive him and her cries of grief when she cannot (ll. 216-20). The Norse tale, in contrast, dwells on the moment of the boy's death, describing in vivid detail the physical consequences of death-by-exhaustion:

> ok ko*mz* h*ann* þa up*p* a fiallit með hen*n*i með mikilli pini*n*g. þar fell h*ann* niðr ok stoð alldri siðan vp*p*. ok ra*n*n hiarta hans allt or h*onu*m. ok la h*ann* þar þa svabuit sprungi*n**n*
>
> And [he] got to the top of the mountain [with] great pain. Then he fell down and never got up again. All his heart poured out of him, and he lay there in this way, dead from exhaustion. (pp. 166-67)

In the translation, the boy's heart appears to burst out of his chest: the verb *springa* (to spring, bound, or spurt) emphasises the rapidity of this movement, contrasting sharply with the immobility of the boy's exhausted frame. It is more visceral than the French, in which the heart simply leaves (*partir*) the body. The heart in Old Norse seems to leap from the lifeless corpse, continuing the boy's frantic scramble up the mountain. The verb *springa* suggests a liquid quality to this movement, as it is frequently used of blood spurting from wounded bodies: the image is not only of the heart, but of the boy's entire circulatory system (*hiarta allt*) pouring rapidly out of his fallen corpse. In this, the boy's death anticipates the princess's much-discussed reaction to the loss of her sweetheart. In both the Anglo-Norman and the Old Norse texts, the girl grabs the vial of medicine and hurls it over the mountain. As Marie relates:

> Ele le pleint a mut haut cri,
> Puis ad geté e espaundu
> Le veissel u li beivre fu.
> Li muns en fu bien arusez ;

Mut en ad esté amendez
Tuz li païs e la cuntree :
Meinte bone herbe i unt trovee
Ki del beivrë orent racine. (ll. 222-29)

She lamented him loudly and then threw away the vessel containing the potion, scattering its contents so that the mountain was well sprinkled with it, and the land and surrounding area much improved. Many good plants were found there which took root because of the potion. (p. 85)

This moment of vegetal regeneration has provoked much comment, with scholars alternatively seeing it as a celebration of life and fertility, or a symbol of death, infertility, and the end of the royal line.[22] The transformation of the mountainside is a potent symbol of the tensions that underpin the tale – the conflict between youthful desire and parental control; the dangers of excess emotion and lack of moderation; the opposition between female wisdom and male strength – and the many ways in which those tensions are commemorated in the marvellous landscape of Pitres.[23] The description of the boy's heart pouring from his body in the Norse text creates a clear parallel between these two moments: the boy's liquid heart spills over the mountain top, becoming part of the natural world just as the girls sprinkles the potion, bringing to life new healing plants. The boy's death and the girl's final act are mirror images in the Norse text, and this is perhaps the moment where the two *ungmenni* (children) become the two *elskandi* (lovers) of the title.[24] Denied the marriage bed, they are nevertheless united by the spilling of precious liquids in their final moments. Together, they bring life to the very place – the mountain – the king had hoped would keep them apart.

In this way, the Norse text emphasises themes of fertility and sexuality more overtly than its Anglo-Norman source. The translation also draws a more explicit line between the vegetal regeneration of the mountain and the creative processes that have given rise to the text itself. As *Tveggia elscandi* relates:

[22] In favour of the former position, see especially June Hall McCash, "The *Mulier mediatrix* in the Deus Amanz of Marie de France," in *Courtly Arts and the Art of Courtliness: Selected Papers from the Eleventh Triennial Congress of the International Courtly Literature society*, ed. Keith Busby and Christopher Kleinhenz, Rochester, NY: D. S. Brewer, 2006, pp. 455-64. For the latter, see Eddings, "Infertility and the Marvel-less." On these themes in Marie's *Lais* more broadly, see Molly Robinson Kelly, "Sex and Fertility in Marie de France's Lais," in *Sexuality in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: New approaches to a Fundamental Cultural-Historical and Literary-Anthropological Theme*, ed. Albrecht Classen, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008, pp. 241-56.
[23] On the much-discussed theme of moderation in the *lai*, see especially McCash, "The *Mulier mediatrix*," pp. 459-60; Sangster, "Re-Membering," pp. 120-21; and Glyn S. Burgess, *The Lais of Marie de France: Text and Context*, Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1987, pp. 35-49.
[24] In contrast, McCash argues of Marie's text that is it time and memory that transform the two children into two lovers ("The *Mulier mediatrix*," p. 463).

> Hon kærðe þa dauða h*ans*. með havo ope. ok kastaðe þegar keralldeno frá sér er drycre*n*n var i. ok ran*n* drycren*n* or ok dreifðizc uiða vm fiallit. Sva at allt þ*at* fylki bœt*t*iz af þui fyri*r* þui. at þar fv*n*nuz morg goð gros siðan er morgvm mo*n*num bœttiz er af drvcku þeim dryc*c*.
>
> She bewailed his death with a loud scream and threw away the container which the potion was in. The potion ran out and spread all over the mountain, so that all that region benefited from it: many good herbs appeared there, potions from which benefited many people who drank them. (pp. 166-7)

The translation is close to the Anglo-Norman original, but with the notable addition that both the region and its people continued to benefit (*bœta*) from the plants after the children's deaths.[25] The Norse translator tends to abridge rather than add to his source text, so any addition is noteworthy, and this emphasis on communal healing at the climax of the tale is especially significant. The Norse text widens the scope of this marvellous flowering to encompass a narrative of communal healing and creative regeneration that extends beyond the conclusion of the *lai*. If, as Logan Whalen has argued, the Anglo-Norman text implicitly links the regeneration of the mountainside to the regeneration of the text for future audiences,[26] the Norse translation of this passage makes that process explicit, and indeed takes it one step further: the vegetation that grows from the potion furnishes the substance for new such creations. As many have observed, the profusion of new plants in *Deus Amanz* echoes Marie's opening metaphor in the *Prologue*:[27]

> Quant uns granz biens est mult oïz,
> Dunc a primes est il fluriz,
> E quant loëz est de plusurs,
> Dunc ad espandues ses flurs. (ll. 5-8)
>
> When a truly beneficial thing is heard by many people, it then enjoys its first blossom, but if it is widely praised its flowers are in full bloom. (p. 41)

The Old Norse *Forrœða* translates the central tenor of this passage but, as in *Deus Amanz*, adds in small but important ways to Marie's text:

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[25] Grillo notes this addition to the Norse in passing, seeing it as further evidence for the hagiographical tenor of the *lai* in "Folklore et hagiographie," p. 475.
[26] Whalen, *Poetics of Memory*, p. 74, building on Domenico Fasciano "La mythologie du lai *Les Deux Amants,*" *Rivista di Cultura Classica e Medievale*, 16.1 (1974): 79–85.
[27] Gertz, *Echoes and Reflections*, p. 63-64; see also Kelly, "Sex and Fertility,"; and Kristine Brightenback, "The *Metamorphoses* and Narrative *Conjointure* in 'Deus Amanz,' 'Yonec,' and 'Le Laüstic,'" *Romantic Review*, 72.1 (1981): 1-12.

> Þa bera þæir sem hin*n* villdaste viðr lauf ok blóm. ok sem goðlæikr þæirra frægizst i an*n*ars umbotu*m* þa fullgærezt allden þæirra ok nœrer aðra.
>
> Then they will bear leaves and blossoms like the most splendid tree, and as their goodness becomes known through the improvement of others, so will their fruit become fully ripe and nourish other people. (pp. 6-7)

The image of *hinn villdaste viðr* (the most splendid tree) provides the audience with a specific natural object to visualise, while the use of *sem* (as, like) employs a simile that is more easily imagined in the mind's eye than Marie's complex metaphor of textual blossoming. The additional imagery of ripe fruit (*fullgærezt allden*) nourishing the text's audience is likewise more concrete, and declares a closeness between reader and text that moves beyond that in the *Lais*. Marie's text is a flower that may be appreciated through sight and smell, but the Norse tale is a juicy fruit the audience can sink their teeth into. Reading is eating in the Old Norse *Forrœða*; the intellectual consumption of the text is linked to the physical processes of ingestion and digestion.[28] There is perhaps also a playful acknowledgement of the generative force of translation in this passage: the flower of Marie's text has borne the fruit of the Old Norse *Strengleikar*.

This emphasis on the text as something which nourishes and improves its audience from within is found throughout the Old Norse *Forrœða*. Those who lived in the past, the translator assures us, were "listugir i velom sino*m* glœgsyni*r* i skynsemdo*m*. hygnir i raðagærðom […] ⟨at⟩ allzskonar drængskap hinir frægiazto" (skilled in their arts, discerning in their reason, clever in their counsels […] and most famous for every kind of nobility, pp. 4-5). These are the people one can learn about by reading the *lais*, the translator reveals, and indeed there are clear echoes here to the learned woman of Salerno, who is "fullkomin i allzkonar lœcnis kun*n*asto" (adept in all forms of medical knowledge), and able to provide "rað ok rœct" (counsel and concern) to the young lovers (pp. 162-5). Knowledge, in both *Tveggia elscandi* and the *Forrœða*, is something one must seek elsewhere, but it can be brought into one's community through the movement of people and texts. Just as the young man travels to Salerno to benefit from the woman's knowledge and to bring back her strength-giving potion, so the transfer of the *lais* to Norway offers a way of improving not only the reader but the wider courtly community. Indeed, the Norse translation of the *Lais* has an explicitly educational function, according to the *Forrœða*:

[28] Cf. Mary Carruthers' discussion of meditative rumination and the creation of memory in *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, especially 156-88.

> ok fyr*i*r þui at i fyrnskun*n*i gerðuzc marger undarleger lut*ir* ok ohæyrðir atburðir a varo*m* dogu*m*. þa syndizc oss at frœða verande ok viðrkomande þæim sogum er margfroðer men*n* gærðo um athæve þæirra sem i fyrnskun*n*i varo ok a bokom leto rita. til ævenlægrar amin*n*ingar til skæmtanar. ok margfrœðes viðr komande þioða at hu*er*r bœte ok birte sitt lif. af kun*n*asto liðen*n*a luta. […] Sua ok at hue*r*r ihugi með allre kun*n*asto ok koste með ollu afle freme ok fullgere með ollu*m* fongum at bua ok bœta sialvan sec til rikis guðs.
>
> And because many marvellous things and events unheard of in our time took place in olden days, it occurred to us to teach those living and those to come these stories, which those of great learning made about the deeds of those who lived in olden days, and which they had written down in books as an everlasting reminder, as entertainment, and as a source of great learning for posterity, so that each person could amend (*bœta*) and illumine their life with the knowledge of past events […] and so that everyone might consider with full knowledge and strive with their strength, and accomplish and achieve with every opportunity to prepare and improve (*bœta*) himself for the kingdom of God. (p. 4-5)

Just as the plants that spring up on the mountaintop become a source of betterment for those who come after, so the consumption of tales from long ago offers the possibility for self-improvement, both for *verande ok viðrkomande* (those living and those to come). Knowledge is both mobile and generative in the Old Norse formulation but, like the Salernitan potion, it does not on its own promise success. Although he possesses the potion, the young man must still climb the mountain; so too must the audience of *Strengleikar* use all their strength (*ollu afle*) to put the knowledge they gain into practice. The aim here is not, however, to gain the kingdom of Pitres, but the kingdom of God.

Tveggia elscandi provides, in this way, an analogue to the programme of cultural and spiritual self-improvement outlined in the *Forrœða*. The Old Norse translator focuses on the benefits to be gained from consumption of courtly literature from England and continental Europe, but it is notable that his additions to the *lai* also hint at the existing literary culture of Scandinavia. Just as the Norse translation of the young man's death emphasises the liquid quality of his bursting heart, so too does the augmented description of the effect the potion has on the mountainside: "þar fv*n*nuz morg goð gros siðan er morgvm mo*n*num bœttiz er af drvcku þeim dryc*c*" (many good herbs appeared there, potions from which benefited many people who drank from them, pp. 166-67). Unlike Marie's tale, it is not only the new plants that symbolise the regeneration of the text, but the healing liquids fashioned from them. These potions are composed of the miraculous plants that spring up after the children's deaths, mixed by humans into something new. The transmission of the story to new audiences, regions, and languages is figured in this way as a semi-miraculous liquid, but one which

requires human ingenuity to shape it into useable form. In this, the *lai* resonates with the Old Norse myth of the mead of poetry. This story is told in its most complete form in *Snorra Edda* (also known as *The Prose Edda*), a compilation of myth, legend, and poetic technique generally attributed to the thirteenth-century Icelandic author Snorri Sturluson. There, the origin of poetry is said to lie in a truce made between two groups of formerly warring gods. As a sign of the truce, each of the gods spits into a pot and the resulting mixture is made into a man named Kvasir, known for his wisdom. When Kvasir is killed, his blood is mixed with honey and fermented into mead. The chief god, Óðinn, manages to steal the mead by sleeping with the daughter of the giant who guards it. Drinking it up in three large gulps, he brings it to the citadel of the gods. Thus, as Snorri relates: "Suttunga mjǫð gaf Óðinn Ásunum ok þeim mǫnnum er yrkja kunnu. Því kǫllum v[ér] skáldskapinn feng Óðins ok fund ok drykk hans ok gjǫf hans ok drykk Ásanna" (Óðinn gave Suttungr's [the giant's] mead to the gods and to those people who knew how to compose poetry. This is why we call poetry Óðinn's haul and find, and his drink, and his gift, and the drink of the gods).[29] Poetry is, according to this tale, a form of liquid inspiration one may drink, but only if one already knows how to fashion it into verse. Poets in Scandinavia had long used this metaphor for poetic composition, although Snorri's version of the tale is likely not an accurate reflection of the myth as it was told in earlier time periods.[30] It is relevant for the context of *Strengleikar*, however, as the two texts are nearly contemporaneous. Snorri had himself spent a considerable amount of time at the court of King Hákon in Norway, and indeed had composed praise-poetry in the king's honour.[31] Although courtly literature is often positioned in opposition to older forms of Scandinavian literature – as the trendy prose import that supplanted old-fashioned, Viking-age verse – it is clear that both were prized at Hákon's court. As Andrea Whitacre has previously discussed in this journal, the Norse translation of Marie's *Lais* contains a number of additions where the translator seems to be adapting his material to address the cultural gap between his Norwegian audience and the Anglo-Norman source.[32] The climactic scene on the top of the mountain offers yet another, albeit more subtle, example of this

[29] Snorri Sturluson, *Edda: Skáldskaparmál I*, ed. Anthony Faulkes, London: Viking Society for Northern Research, 1998, p. 5, my translation.
[30] Cf. Roberta Frank, "Snorri and the Mead of Poetry," in *Speculum norroenum: Norse Studies in Memory of Gabriel Turville-Petre*, ed. Ursula Dronke, Guðrún P. Helgadóttir, Gerd Wolfgang Weber, and Hans Bekker-Nielsen, Odense: Odense University Press, 1981), pp. 155-70.
[31] Snorri's poem for Hákon, *Háttatal*, references the myth in stanza 31 when the speaker announces, "hrœrum hrannir saltunnu Hárs" (we stir the waves of Óðinn's hall-barrel), that is, "I am composing poetry": Snorri Sturluson, "Háttatal," in *Poetry from Treatises on Poetics. Skaldic Poetry of the Scandinavian Middle Ages 3*, ed. Kari Ellen Gade and Edith Marold, Turnhout: Brepols, 2017, p. 1137.
[32] Andrea Whitacre, "The Translation of Transformation: A Comparison of *Bisclavret* and *Yonec* with the Norse *Bisclaret* and *Jonet*," *Le Cygne*, 4 (2017), 25-46. On this see also Carl Phelpstead, "'Better a valiant squire than a cowardly knight': Gender in *Guruns strengleikr* (The Lay of Gurun)," in *Cultural Translations in Medieval Romance*, ed. Victoria Flood and Megan G. Leitch, Cambridge, D. S. Brewer, 2022, pp. 101-16.

approach. *Tveggia elscandi* builds in this way on the themes of fertility and sexuality in the Anglo-Norman text, extending the metaphor of vegetal/textual regeneration and placing it in dialogue with existing Norse conceptions of literary composition.

Both the Anglo-Norman and Norse versions of the *lai* conclude quickly after this scene. Having thrown the potion over the mountainside, the girl dies of grief, and the bodies of the two children are subsequently found by the king and his courtiers. Their bodies lie on the mountain for three days, after which they are buried there together in a marble coffin. As June Hall McCash observes, the acts of mourning and commemoration described in these scenes are portrayed as communal activities, with plural verbs emphasising the harmony that now exists between the king and his people.[33] The king no longer seeks to thwart the will of his subjects in denying them an heir; rather, the shared experience of grief effects a reconciliation between them. In both versions of the *lai*, the mountain becomes a memorial to this experience and to the children who have died on its summit. As Marie concludes:

> Pur l'aventure des enfaunz
> Ad nun li munz "des Deus Amanz."
> Issi avint cum dit vus ai ;
> Li Bretun en firent un lai. (ll. 251-4)

> Because of what happened to these two young people, the mountain is called The Mountain of the Two Lovers. The events took place just as I have told you, and the Bretons composed a lay about them there. (p. 85)

In the Norse:

> Af þessvm atbvrð barna*n*na. var iafnan fiallit ⟨kallat⟩ tveggia elska*n*nde. En bretar gerðo siðan af þessvm atbvrð strengleic þan*n* er þe*i*r kalla tveggia elska*n*nda

> Because of this adventure concerning the children the mountain has always been called "Two Lovers." The Bretons then composed a *lai* concerning this adventure, which they call "Two Lovers." (pp. 166-7)

The translation is, again, close, but with small differences that reinforce the translator's earlier focus on the transfer of the text to a new reading community. Perhaps the most striking change is that the translator removes the first-person voice from the conclusion, as is typical of his approach

[33] McCash, "The *Mulier mediatrix*," pp. 462-63.

elsewhere.[34] The effect is to place his source material at one remove, and to present himself (as Marie does) as the mediator between different languages and traditions. The removal of the first-person voice from the conclusion to *Deus Amanz* nevertheless requires him to remove Marie's assurance that the tale is an accurate reflection of events (*issi avint cum dit vus ai*), and this is perhaps why he adds the word *iafnan* (always) to his conclusion: if he cannot claim first-hand knowledge of the events, then the fact that the mountain has *always* borne the name of the two lovers offers an alternative form of proof ostensibly external to the text itself. Evidence of the veracity of the tale is transferred, in this way, from the storyteller to the land itself. The centrality of the land as the ultimate memorial is reinforced by the repetition of the phrase *tveggia elskannda* (two lovers) in the Norse text, where it refers to both the mountain and the *lai*. Although Marie names the story *Deus Amanz* in the opening lines of the tale, her conclusion to the text reiterates the name only once, naming the mountain rather than the *lai*. The Norse translator makes the connection between the two more explicit than in Marie's version, emphasising the causal relationship between the events that have led to this double naming: it is because of the two lovers' adventure (*af þessvm atbvrð*) that the mountain has been named "Two Lovers"; and only afterwards (*siðan*) did the Bretons compose a *lai* of the same name. In this way, the Norse text nails down a chronology of composition that cycles through the human and natural worlds: the adventure of the young lovers has given rise to the name of the mountain, which in turn has inspired the *lai*. As in the *Forrœða* and the depiction of the potion thrown over the mountainside, it is the interaction between humans and the natural world that generates the literary text. SunHee Kim Gertz has argued that the flower-topped mountain functions as "nature's counter-memorial" in *Deus Amanz*, offering an alternative to the king's stone coffin that emphasises "the non-linear, seasonal return, the energy that ceaselessly, mythically, informs the universe."[35] I would argue that this is true of the *lai* as well, and particularly so in its Norse iteration. The creative process – which includes both the composition and the many layers of translation and transmission encoded in the *lai* – is presented as an organic and ongoing cycle of interactions between the human and the more-than-human worlds.

The Second *Tveggia elscandi*

The Norse translator further investigates the interaction between the human brain and body, the natural world, and the production of textual meaning in the fragmentary *Lai of Two Lovers*, now

[34] See further Goeres, "Sounds of Silence," pp. 291-93.
[35] Gertz, *Echoes and Reflections*, pp. 55.

preserved in AM 666 b. Although much of the text was lost when the manuscript was cut, it is evident that this text has many similarities with its namesake. It too is a tragic tale of two young people in love, who are similarly prevented from being together by parental opposition. It has, however, a more exotic setting than the first *Tveggia elscandi*: the young woman is the daughter of the duke of Piacenza while the young man is the son of the emperor of Rome. Much of the opening section has been lost and it is therefore impossible to tell whether the text once contained the same attention to geographical detail as *Deus Amanz*; but what remains of the text sketches the Italian setting only in general terms. The location of the *lai* in Italy underpins a political rather than a geographical focus, as it is a disagreement between the Duke and the Emperor that prevents their children from being together. Unlike the first *lai*, the extant text does not hint at an improper relationship between the Duke and his daughter; it seems rather to be the boy's father, the Emperor, who most disapproves of the relationship. The Emperor orders the Duke to cede Piacenza to him and declares that, if he does not, the Emperor will invade and take the city by force. The threat of war prompts the lovers to flee, attempting to reach the boy's uncle, the king of Spain. Unlike the first *lai*, they are not alone in their struggle, but helped by the prince's chamber-boy (*reckiusveinn*). This chamber-boy is central to the events that unfold, and he plays many roles over the course of the narrative. He is introduced as the prince's confidant and messenger to the princess; after the lovers flee he becomes their guide and protector. He is also the sole witness to their final moments. The scope of this second *lai* is therefore much expanded from the first. Two fathers are responsible for the tragic deaths of their children, with their struggle set against a geopolitical backdrop much broader than that of the highly localised region of Pitres. The two lovers do not struggle on their own, as they do in the first *lai*, but benefit from a helper and go-between. Despite these differences, the *lai* shares many themes and the general plot of *Deus Amanz*. No French source has been identified for this text, but the concluding lines of the *lai* imply a connection with the first *Tveggja elskandi*: "segia er at þessi strengleicr er fegrstr all[ra ok hann?] [heitir?] strengleicrenn tveggia elskannde" (they [the Bretons?] say that this *lai* is the most beautiful [of] all, [and it] is called(?) the "*Lai* of Two Lovers", pp. 276-77).[36] No other texts in the extant manuscripts of *Strengleikar* share a title and this therefore seems a deliberate attempt to place the two in dialogue.

As in the first *Tveggja elskandi*, movement underpins both the lovers' attempts to be together and the obstacles that ultimately keep them apart. In the first *lai,* the journey to Salerno offers hope

[36] The words in square brackets represent the editors' best guesses for the missing words. The verb *heitir* (to be called) is missing from the fragments now extant, but it seems the most likely candidate and would follow the pattern of reiterating the name of the *lai* at the end of the text seen in many other examples, in both Anglo-Norman and Old Norse.

in the form of a learned aunt's counsel and her strength-giving potion; and yet, neither protects the couple from their deadly scramble up the mountain. The second *lai* echoes this double movement and the transformation of hope to defeat. At first, the plan to elope to Spain seems to mirrors the hope offered by the journey to Salerno. For the prince, Spain represents an escape from war-torn Italy and a warm welcome from his uncle: "ec hygg h*ann* man vel viðr mec taca. ok uirðo lega fagna mer. ok he*n*ni" (I expect that he will receive me well and welcome me and her with honour, pp. 268-69). Unlike in the first *lai*, however, this plan is predicated on the young woman travelling as well, and she is wise to the difficulties women can face when they leave the protection of their homes and families. This young woman worries not only about the grief she will cause her parents (the mother is still alive in this tale) but, in contrast to the first *lai*, considers the possibility of sexual violence on the road. As she objects to the chamber-boy: "En e[f vit] ero*m* bæðe saman. þa man h*ann* gera v[ilia] sin*n* á mér" (And i[f we] are both together, then he [the prince] will perform his de[sire] on me, pp. 270-71). Although the young woman ultimately accepts this possibility as a risk she needs to take – "En ei at siðr þo at mér [snu?] iz til va*n*ndræða. þa vil ec gera vilia [hans]" (But nonetheless, though this will [produce?] difficulties for me, I will do his will, pp. 270-71) – there is an ominous ambiguity in her acquiescence. In agreeing to abide by the prince's *vilia* (will), is the princess referring to his wish to escape or to his sexual desire? The Norse term *vilia* encompasses both possibilities. As noted above, the first *lai* contains an oblique nod to the motif of father-daughter incest, and thus to the dangers the king poses to the girl; the young man, on the other hand, is not portrayed as sexually threatening and indeed the metaphor of the two young people coming together to fertilise the mountain suggests the opposite. In contrast, the dangers of uncontrolled sexuality on the part of the young man are present in the second *lai* almost from the beginning. If, in the first *lai*, danger stalks the corridors of the king's castle, and freedom is possible only in the natural world beyond, the second *lai* turns this formulation on its head. The princess knows she is leaving a place of safety when she elopes from Piacenza; in doing so, she becomes vulnerable to attack from both her sweetheart and to the many dangers lurking in the war-torn countryside around her.

In keeping with this ominous background, the perilous nature of the landscape outside the walls of Piacenza permeates descriptions of the lovers' movements after they depart. The first part of their journey culminates in the chamber-boy finding the two young people dangerously exposed after they have fallen asleep on a public road. Around fifteen lines are missing from the manuscript at this point, meaning we cannot tell what circumstances led to them being there. Nevertheless, there is an echo of the moment in the first *lai* when the boys forgets to take his potion as he runs up the mountain, blinded by the *joie/fagnaðr* (joy) of being with the princess. In this text too there is a

reference to the "fagnaðe er þa fen[gu]" (joy which they then go[t]), and a suggestion that this is what causes them to forget themselves (pp. 270-71). The nature of the *fagnaðr* (joy) they experience on the road is unclear; it may be a reference to emotion only, or it may have a physical component. Whatever the nature of their joy, it seems to be this moment of intense emotion – and exertion? – that leads to them falling asleep on the road. The chamber-boy finds them and is appalled: "[vitað]e þau mioc horðvm orðvm at þau vill [d]u þar sofa. a alme*n*nilegu*m* vege. ok let allilla at þeim" (he s[colded] them severely with harsh words for wan[t]ing to sleep there on the public road, and he was very angry with them, pp. 270-71). It is unclear from the extant text whether the boy's anger is due to concern for the couple's safety or to the potentially compromising situation in which he has found them. He does, however, hurry them to a secluded cave, promising to bring food and drink every day until the war is over.

This sojourn in the cave marks the second part of the lovers' journey. Unlike the mountain in the first *lai*, the cave does not initially pose a risk to the young lovers; rather, it appears a much-needed refuge from both the dangers of the road and the political constraints of the parental realm. The chamber-boy acts as the couple's "vorðr ok varðmaðr" (ward and watchman), bringing supplies as needed. The safety and seclusion of the space finally allows for a sexual relationship that satisfies both prince and princess – "haf[ðu] þau allan vilia si*n*n" (they ha[d] all their desire) – and, the narrator assures us, "með þessum hætti lifðu þau ok undu vel" (in this way they lived and loved well' pp. 272-3). Sheltered by the stone walls of the cave, the children exist in a state of natural simplicity. Their escape from political conflict echoes that of other romances couples who flee to the wild, particularly Tristan and Isolde, who similarly find refuge in a woodland cave.[37] Safety is illusory, however, for just as the war comes to an end,

> þa hofz þar sva mikil illveðre. at hvarki me*n*n ne bv fe mátto vt ganga or husum vndir beran hi min. hvarki matti sea gras ne velli. sva gerðizc mikit sniofall. at engir varo hamr ar ne dalar er ei varo fullir ok fo*n*nu*m* huldir ok la þessi snior alla vikuna sva at ei mi*n*caðe
>
> then there began such a great storm that neither men nor cattle could go out of their houses into the open. Neither grass nor field could be seen. There was such a great snowfall that there were no crags or valleys which were not full and covered with snow, and this snow lay all the week so that it did not diminish. (pp. 274-75)

[37] This episode was certainly known to translator and his audience, as it appears in the Old Norse *Tristrams saga ok Ísöndar*. See *Norse Romance 1: The Tristan Legend*, ed. Marianne E. Kalinke, Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1999, pp. 160-65. See also Maj-Britt Frenze, "The Romance Forests of Medieval Iceland," *Arthuriana*, 31.1 (2021): 56-77.

It is a strangely Nordic scene, despite the Italian setting. The passage has much in common with descriptions of snowstorms in the Old Norse-Icelandic sagas. The so-called "contemporary sagas" contain numerous descriptions of snowstorms that are as sudden and deadly as that in *Tveggia elscandi*; and these sagas chronicle events that would have taken place either within living memory or the recent past for a thirteenth-century audience.[38] Snowstorms also play an important role in the sagas of Icelanders, which focus on the early medieval period. *Eyrbyggja saga* (the Saga of the People of Eyri) follows the adventures of Bjǫrn Breiðvíkingakappi (Champion of the people of Breiðavík), who is caught in a blizzard conjured up to stop his controversial visits to a love-interest. There too, the weather turns suddenly, with snow trapping Bjǫrn in a cave for three days and nights. This experience prompts a change of heart, and Björn decides to stay home for the rest of the winter.[39]

As in *Eyrbyggja saga*, the experience of being trapped in a snow-bound cave prompts the lovers to re-evaluate their actions. As the snow melts, the chamber-boy manages to reach the cave, but the couple are already dying from hunger and exhaustion. He arrives in time only to hear the prince lamenting the decision to elope:

> Hin friða un*n*asta min kvað h*ann*. ok hin sœta. at visu heui ec svikit þec. þui at ef ec hefða ei v*n*nat þér. þa værer þu rikulega gift. ok agæt fru mikils rikis. en sacar heimsku mi*n*nar. ok illrar dirfðar. þa er nu h*er*togi*n*n faðer þin*n* brot*t* reki*n*n ok moðer þin utlæcz. þu u*n*nir mér sva mikit ok truðir mer sva vel. at þu fir*ir* lezc hvetvitna at koma til min. nv verðo vit bæðe her deyia.
>
> My beautiful sweetheart, he said, and sweet one, surely I have misled you, for if I had not loved you, then you would be splendidly married and the excellent lady of a great realm. But because of my foolishness and evil daring, your father the duke has now been driven away and your mother outlawed. You love me so much and trusted me so well that you gave up everything to come to me. Now we both must die here together. (pp. 274-75)

In contrast to the young man on the mountain, who expires without a word, this prince is able to reflect on the damage he has caused by persuading the princess to elope. Although the young people

[38] See for example the description of a blizzard that traps Oddr Þórarinsson and his men in the mountains above Haukadalr in *Sturlunga saga*. Despite Oddr carrying several of the men on his back through the snow, several die: *Sturlunga saga eða Íslendinga sagan miklan III*, ed. Guðrún Ása Grímsdóttir, Reykjavik: Hið Íslenska fornritafélag, 2021, pp. 123-4. Bernadine McCreesh discusses this and several more examples of snowstorms in *The Weather in the Icelandic Sagas: The Enemy Without*, Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018.

[39] *Eyrbyggja saga*, ed. Einar Ól. Sveinsson and Matthías Þórðarson, Reykjavik: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1935, pp. 109-12.

thought they were escaping the war, the prince now realises their actions have in fact fanned the flames of violence, intensifying the hatred between the two fathers. By fleeing to the wilderness, the couple have also caused the banishment of the princess's parents; all are now forced to wander the hostile landscape beyond Piacenza. It is perhaps no surprise, therefore, that the couple's final act is to reject the natural world to which they had turned with such hope: "mællto þau mart við reckiusveini*n*n ok sœrðo h*ann* ok baðo at h*ann* leti bera lic þ*ier*ra til bœiarens ok klæða lic þierra" (they spoke much with the chamber-boy and made him swear and begged him to have their bodies brought to the town and have their bodies clothed, pp. 276-77). The clothing of their bodies and their return to the town for burial symbolically asserts the couple's desire to re-join the human realm they once fled. Like the children on the mountain, this couple too is buried in a stone coffin (*steinþro*), but their resting-place does not become part of an organic counter-memorial, as in the first *lai*. Rather, they are buried "innan borgar i enni kirkiu. sva sem siolf hafðo þau" (within the city in a church, as they themselves had [wanted?], pp. 276-77). This couple explicitly reject the natural world that has caused their death, substituting for the rocky cave a series of human-made stone structures. The coffin, the church, the city: each wall of stone further insulates them from the wilderness in which they died, enclosing the lovers within concentric rings of civic and religious authority.

Gertz notes that neither the stone coffin nor the plantlife on the mountain can tell the full story of the lovers on their own: memorials require literature to draw out their full meaning. Imagining "a metaliterary afterlife of wave upon wave of stories," Gertz argues that Marie's work presents "literature as potentially fertile in spite of its reliance on conventions and authorities."[40] The translation of *Deus Amanz* into the first *Tveggia elskandi* is clearly one such wave, which in turn perhaps generated the second. The shared name places the two texts in dialogue, as does their shared interest in similar themes: young love and its resistance to parental and royal authority; the natural world and the possibilities it offers to escape social and political constraint; and the role different forms of memorial play in the transmission of story from one audience to the next. The second *lai* is, nevertheless, different from the first in its resolution around parental, political, and religious control. It is difficult to say for certain, but the extant lines of the manuscript suggest that it is the two fathers, the Emperor and the Duke, who together commission the *lai* after the deaths of their children.[41] Just

[40] Gertz, *Echoes and Reflections*, pp. 56.

[41] The lines are difficult to piece together but this is the best interpretation of the fragments that remain. The lines read: "K[eisarenn?...] … ok athug[aðe] bæðe saman. ok spurðe h*ann* þa h… sem h*ann* kom i fostrla*n*nd sit*t*. þa l[et hann gera um] lif þ*ier*ra fagran stre*n*gleic. ok segia … er at þessi strengleicr er fegrstr all[ra ok hann?] [heitir?] stre*n*gleicre*n*n tveggia elska*n*nde" (E[mperor?] … and considered both together and he then asked? … when he arrived in his own country. Then h[ad he made about] their life a beautiful *lai*, and [the Bretons?] say that this *lai* is the most beautiful [of] all, [and it] is called(?) the "*Lai* of Two Lovers", pp. 276-77).

as the two lovers are buried within the confines of the city and the church, so the generative power of literature is here linked to the very authorities the children sought to escape. The second *Tveggia elskandi* is, in this way, even more reliant on conventions and authorities than is Marie's *Deus Amanz*. This is perhaps not surprising in a collection that presents precisely such a figure, King Hákon of Norway, as the progenitor of the text. If the first *lai* challenges the power of the king, presenting the father as domineering, selfish, and possibly abusive, the second *lai* was perhaps a necessary corrective in a collection commissioned by a monarch with openly authoritarian ambitions. This second *lai* does not fundamentally challenge the power of the two father-kings, although it does demonstrate the harmful effects of their armed conflict. When the two fathers come together, however, they become, like Hákon, the patrons of a new *lai*. The production of the text is thus linked to the exercise of royal and paternal power. The lovers' ill-fated journey into the wild seems only to reinforce the danger of the world outside the political realm; it is as though the natural world itself rejects the young people's attempt to flee, and punishes them for it. The *lai* their fathers commission after the children's deaths memorialises not only their love, but also their fool-hardy attempt to pursue that love outside the domain of royal and parental authority. As a literary monument, the second *Tveggia elskandi* it is essentially conservative. Nevertheless, as the wild profusion of plantlife on the top of the mountain shows, there are limits to royal power. It is a strange quirk of fate that has left this second text in such a fragmentary state. AM 666 b is not only a demonstration of the literary afterlife of *Deus Amanz,* but a reminder of the fragility of literary monuments. Despite the didactic message of the text, the damaged pieces of parchment on which it is now preserved are also a reminder of the limits of royal power, and of one king's inability to control the narrative forever.