The Duality of the Werewolf

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Thyra SM van Veen
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RMA thesis
Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance Studies
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Supervisor: Dr. Aaron Griffith
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Abstract

Werewolves are one of the most popular and long-enduring cultural products that has fascinated scholar and laymen alike for thousands of years. They featured in stories from the *Epic of Gilgamesh* to modern Gothic horror movies and famous modern book series, such as JK Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. It is stated that in the Middle Ages the werewolves showed benevolent behaviour.[1] The aim of this thesis is to investigate the extent by which the motif of the "benevolent werewolf", as described by Jessie Saxby[2], is an Insular Celtic phenomenon only or an Insular phenomenon as a whole.

This investigation centres around the following Medieval werewolf stories: the Shetland Islands' wulver, Ireland's *faoladh* and werewolves of Ossory[3], the Breton-originated Bisclavret and Melion, Gorlagon from *Arthur et Gorlagon* and Alphonse from the Middle English translation of *Guillaume de Palerne*. In this thesis, the ideas of the medieval church thinkers on the werewolf and the beast within, in addition to the Viking invasions of England, Scotland and Ireland will be taken into account to provide a concrete cultural backdrop that may have influenced the depictions of the werewolves.

With the exception of the *faoladh*, the werewolves in the Medieval stories display "benevolent" behaviour that manages to survive their transformation from man to wolf. However, there are cases where the characters show beastly behaviour even as humans, which slightly counters their benevolence. The findings of this investigation are interesting for two reasons. First, the benevolence had to be acknowledged by a human character or the narrator. Second, the choices the scribes/authors made not only reflected the main ideas, social etiquette and influences of the time, but made the stories raise interesting literary, theological, philosophical, historical and sociological questions in this way.

Hence, just to assume that werewolves in the Middle Ages were all benevolent is not only selling the stories short, but ignoring the implications of subtle differences in the werewolves' benevolence.

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[1] Backed up in chapter seven.
[2] Allardice, Pamela, *Myths, Gods and Fantasy: A Sourcebook* (Prism Press 1998) 224. Saxby, Jessie Margaret, *Shetland Traditional Lore* (Grant & Murray 1932).
[3] Front cover: Werewolves of Ossory - Werewolves of Ossory - Wikipedia (Accessed 1st January 2021).

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   On a more personal note, I wish to thank my parents Dr Hendrik Willem van Veen and Elvira Spronck, MSc, MBA for their encouragement and advice. Last but not least, I would like to thank Stefan for his unconditional support and unending patience with me. It is not easy to deal with someone who either has her nose in a book, against the computer screen or is trying to translate a no longer extant language.

Contents

Introduction

The concept of a monster has always captured the fascination of layman and scholars alike, and has been the subject of many interesting works. The werewolf is an excellent illustration of this. The notion of the werewolf ('*were*', meaning 'man' in Old English, thus 'man-wolf') has been one of the most long-enduring monsters, told and retold since Ancient times. The word *werwulf* first entered the English lexicon in 1020 CE but the first recognised use of the term appeared in the Ecclesiastical Ordinances of King Cnut (990-1035 CE), where it was used as a synonym for the Devil.[4] Werewolves are cultural concepts and are thus not absolute but relative entities that are defined by their contexts. Language is one of the contexts that define the werewolf and an English *werewulf* cannot be assumed to be similar to the French *loup-garou* or Danish *varulv*.[5] Not only linguistically, but also culturally speaking, they have differences between them. The *loup-garou* changes into a werewolf at night and "with the other lost souls" attacks any living creature that crosses its path.[6] Its transformation is not painful, and interestingly enough, can be returned to human form by drawing its blood.[7] The Danish *varulv* is not changed by a bite or a curse, but through an act of violence. In much of the lore, a *varulv* could become a werewolf voluntarily with the use of a certain item of clothing, such as a belt. In some cases, one could simply say to a *varulv*, "you are a wolf" and the *varulv* would transform. Its Swedish and Norwegian counterparts are more physically and mentally unstable, prone to attacking people mindlessly. In certain Swedish folklore texts, the *varulv* is a beer drinker and eat only cooked food, much like a normal man. The *varulv* was closely entwined with the nomadic Sami people of Northern and Central Sweden, who were believed to be werewolves, or had the ability to turn people into werewolves.[8]

The most famous term associated with the werewolf, '*lycanthropy*', has Indo-European origins and is composed of the Ancient Greek "*lykos*", meaning "wolf" and "*anthropos*", meaning "man". The term is important because it is the original nomenclature for the supernatural phenomenon and psychological delusion that is still used to this day.[9] The Slavs

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[4] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 1.
[5] Blécourt, Willem de, 'The Differentiated Werewolf: An Introduction to Clustered Methodology', *Werewolf Histories* (Palgrave 2015) 1.
[6] LeRossignol, J.E., 'The Loup-Garou', *Prairie Schooner* (1928) 154.
[7] LeRossignol, J.E., 'The Loup-Garou', *Prairie Schooner* (1928) 157.
[8] Af Klinktberg, Bengt, *The Types of the Swedish Folk Legend* (Helsinki 2010) 306-310.
[9] Blécourt, Willem de, 'The Differentiated Werewolf: An Introduction to Clustered Methodology', *Werewolf Histories* (Palgrave 2015) 1.

and the Medieval and Early Modern Greeks called the werewolf a *vrykolakas*.[10] Interestingly enough, the term was not applied to werewolves alone, but to a bad omen, a vampire or a werewolf turned vampire after death.[11]

The Romans had a word for the werewolf as well: *versipellis*, translated literally to 'turn-fur'. One famous werewolf story from the Romans is told in Petronius' *Satyricon*, written between 54 and 68 CE. The character Niceros, a freedman, narrates the story to a girl he was trying to court.[12] He tells her of how on a moonlit night, a soldier had stripped himself and piled his clothes by the side of the road, and urinated around them. Then, he suddenly turned into a wolf, and howled after he turned into a wolf.[13] The motif of metamorphosis and the ties to the moon are still recognisable in our modern era. This familiar portrayal of the werewolf is not the case in all versions of similar tales. Pliny the Elder (23/24-79 CE) in his *Naturalis historia* told the story of a man named Anthus, who travelled to a marsh, removed his clothes and turned into a wolf and lived with other wolves for nine years before returning to society.[14] Interestingly, the shapeshifter retained his human mind. The removal of clothes is not a prominent feature in modern and Early Modern werewolf transformations. Clemence Housman's interesting but little-studied novel, *The Were-wolf* (1896) features a female werewolf called White Fell. The character shifts between her human and wolf forms without the need for the moon or removal of clothes.[15] Some prominent werewolf examples, such as Remus Lupin and Fenrir Greyback from JK Rowling's *Harry Potter* series[16] are only affected by the full moon. King Grishmak Blood-Drinker and his Werewolves in Stuart Hill's *Cry of the Icemark* series are humanoid in shape with prominent lupine features.[17] They are not shapeshifters. Television and films adapt and readapt the creature, and yet our fascination for the werewolf does not dim. The cause of the evolution in the transformations of the werewolves could be influenced by the changes in belief system, from paganism to

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[10] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 1.

[11] Demetracopoulou Lee, D., 'Greek Accounts of the *vrykolakas*', *The Journal of American Folklore* 55/217 (1942) 126.

[12] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 11.

[13] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 11.

[14] Runstedler, Curtis, 'The Benevolent Medieval Werewolf in *William of Palerne*', *Gothic Studies Vol. 21* (2019) 57.

[15] Housman, Clemence, *The Were-wolf* (1896).

[16] Lupin and Greyback feature in: Rowling, J.K, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (Bloomsbury 1999), *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* (Bloomsbury 2003), *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* (Bloomsbury 2005) and *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (Bloomsbury 2007).

[17] Hill, Stuart, *The Cry of the Icemark*, *Blade of Fire* and *Last Battle of the Icemark* (Somerset, 2005, 2007, 2008).

Christianity, and the growing power of the Church. This will come back later on in this thesis. However, when researching the subject, a certain amount of caution has to be taken, because the history of scholarship on werewolves is fragmented due to a lack of communication between the works of academics, this poses its own difficulties. Indeed, one of the goals of this thesis is to bring together as much of this scholarship as possible in order to discern if the "benevolent werewolf" motif is present in the werewolf stories at the centre of this investigation.

History of Research

Since the mid-nineteenth century, the various representations of the werewolf in mythology, folklore, historical records, anthropological and ethnographical accounts, literature and film have been collated and analysed in books and articles by both academic and non-academic authors.[18] One of the major works that is included in the history of research into werewolves, is Leslie A. Sconduto's study *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (2009).[19] As Karin Olsen points out in her review, Sconduto provides a detailed and "very accessible" analysis of the development of the werewolf from 1700 BCE to 1700 CE.[20] Sconduto illustrates how the werewolf, after appearing briefly in the Akkadian *Epic of Gilgamesh*, transformed from the savage beast of antiquity to a "victimised noble hero" in the Middle Ages, exploring the most human elements of each werewolf, and then reverting to a savage beast again in the sixteenth century. Jessica Auz in her thesis states that the werewolf underwent a change from savage beast to sympathetic hero, leaving an "entangled web" of metaphors about what it meant to be human and what it meant to be a beast throughout history.[21]

Scholars began categorising the types of transformations the werewolf could undergo. In 1904, Kate Watkins Tibbals, in her analysis of *William of Palerne*, built upon Kirby Smith's 1894 work[22]. Smith added the "constitutional" werewolf to the "Teutonic" werewolf.[23] Tibbals added a third type of transformation: "involuntary" werewolf.[24] The "constitutional"

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[18] Bourgault du Coudray, Chantal, *The Curse of the Werewolf: Fantasy, Horror and the Beast Within* (New York 2006) 2.
[19] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009).
[20] Olsen, Karin E. E., 'Sconduto, Metamorphoses of the Werewolf', *The Medieval Review* (2010).
[21] Auz, Jessica L., 'Werewolves as Translation: Bisclovret, Melion and Alphonse', *Seton Hall University Dissertations and Theses* (2013) 1.
[22] Smith, Kirby, 'A Historical Study of the Werwolf in Literature', *PMLA* 9.1 (1894) 10-22.
[23] Smith, Kirby, 'A Historical Study of the Werwolf in Literature', *PMLA* 9.1 (1894) 22.
[24] Watkins Tibbals, Kate, *Elements of Magic in the Romance of* 'William or Palerne' (1904) 15.

werewolf is defined as a werewolf by nature, where the power to change shape is ascribed to the individual. The "Teutonic" werewolf is a werewolf that is defined by apparel; if it looks like a werewolf, it must be a werewolf. The "involuntary" werewolf refers to the "unwilling werewolf by outside force", such as a result of an enchantment.[25] Tibbals explains that "the constitutional" werewolves are responsible for the understanding of werewolves as maintaining "a dual nature", referring to a boundary between man and beast. The "Teutonic" and the "involuntary" werewolves follow the idea that appearance makes the werewolf a man or an animal.[26] These concepts will play a role in the analysis later. Miranda Green notes something similar to Smith and Tibbals, stating metamorphosis can occur in one of three ways: voluntarily, imposed as revenge or punishment and "for a particular purpose".[27]

Some of the most recent research, regarding werewolves is quite interesting.[28] Peter Bystrický wrote an article on the image of the werewolf in medieval literature, covering some of the werewolves that will be investigated in this thesis in addition to the werewolf knights of Arthur, Biclarel and Marrok.[29] Jessica Auz wrote her thesis on the topic of werewolves. Auz explored Bisclavret, Melion and Alphonse in translation, with emphasis on the portrayal of the werewolves and their behaviour. The role of the wives of Bisclavret, Melion and Alphonse in their transformations have also been studied in conjunction with the werewolves, but as this investigation is focused on exploring whether these werewolves all show aspects of the "benevolent" werewolf, this will not be explored as extensively.[30] Jessica Lynne Bettini in her 2011 Master's thesis looked at the root of the identities of Bisclavret, Gorlagon, Alphonse and the werewolf in *The Crop-Eared Dog* looking at the conflict between good and evil, the physical and the spiritual, Church doctrine and a rapidly changing society.[31] Jessie Saxby looked at the "benevolent" werewolf in the wulver.[32] Curtis Runstedler investigated the "benevolent werewolf" in *Guillaume de Palerne*, and he defined it as a werewolf that

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[25] Watkins Tibbals, Kate, *Elements of Magic in the Romance of* 'William or Palerne' (1904) 15.
[26] Watkins Tibbals, Kate, *Elements of Magic in the Romance of* 'William or Palerne' (1904) 15.
[27] Green, Miranda, *Animals in Celtic Life and Myth* (Routledge 1992) 192.
[28] Other related works, though not specifically relevant here, are Leonard R.N. Ashley's *The Complete Book of Werewolves* (2011) on werewolves from around the world, in fact, fiction, folklore and popular culture; and Matthew Beresford's book, *The White Devil: The Werewolf in European Culture* (2013), which attempts to add to the research into werewolves and offer a new understanding of the werewolf's survival in European culture.
[29] Bystrický, Peter, 'The Image of the Werewolf in Medieval Literature', *Historický Časopis* Vol. 63 (2015).
[30] Further afield, akin to this, Melissa Purdue wrote an interesting article on the duality of White Fell, not just between human and beast, but between being manly and being lady like. Purdue, Melissa, 'Clemence Housman's *The Were-wolf*: A Cautionary Tale for the Progressive New Woman', *Werewolves: Studies in Transformation* (Minnesota) 42-55.
[31] Bettini, Jessica Lynne, 'The Rage of the Wolf: Metamorphosis and Identity in Medieval Werewolf Tales', *Electronic Theses and Dissertations* (2011).
[32] Allardice, Pamela, *Myths, Gods and Fantasy: A Sourcebook* (Prism Press 1998) 224.

shows real life lupine traits, using results of contemporary studies of wolves in the wild.[33] Chantal Bourgault du Coudray's book *The Curse of the Werewolf: Fantasy, Horror and the Beast Within* explores the 'use' of werewolves by anthropologists and criminologists, shifting interpretations of the creature, Freud's 'wolf-man' and the use of wolf imagery in Nazism, not just focusing on the werewolf itself.

The history of research into werewolves comprises a plethora of books and articles written on the subject but the collection of works is also fraught with works by amateurs aimed at the general public. Willem de Blécourt states that serious academic work is extremely scarce and the titles that are in existence, are mainly articles and not books.[34] Academic publications stem mostly from various disciplines such as history, folklore studies, and literary and cultural studies.[35] According to De Blécourt, communication between academics on the subject of werewolves is limited. He also mentions further that historians rarely venture into the field of folklore in their studies, and vice versa, which limits the scope of investigation done by each discipline. Classicists and medieval literary historians who study the werewolves of classical and medieval literature seldom share their findings with other disciplines. Little of those studies focus on the Insular Celtic werewolves in terms of overlapping elements in motifs, Medieval Christian philosophy and literary traditions that affect them all, and the duality of the werewolves, which denotes the separation of and the boundary between man and beast.[36]

Aims

For the purpose of this investigation, the werewolf is defined as someone who is able to turn into a wolf through innate ability, a magical artefact, or because of a curse. The werewolf can also be a humanoid creature with lupine features. The aim of this investigation is to discover whether the phenomenon of the "benevolent werewolf", as mentioned by Jessie Saxby[37], is a phenomenon that is unique to the Celtic werewolves, or if it can also be seen in the English

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[33] Real life lupine traits include his alpha wolf tendencies, cognitive-mind mapping and surrogate parental roles. Runstedler, Curtis, 'The Benevolent Medieval Werewolf in *William of Palerne*', *Gothic Studies Vol. 21* (2019).
[34] Blécourt, Willem de, 'Monstrous Theories: Werewolves and the Abuse of History', *Preternature: Critical and Historical Studies on the Preternatural* Vol. 2 (2013) 188.
[35] Blécourt, Willem de, 'Monstrous Theories: Werewolves and the Abuse of History', *Preternature: Critical and Historical Studies on the Preternatural* Vol. 2 (2013) 188.
[36] Insular in this context refers to the British Isles: England, Wales, Cornwall, Scotland and Ireland.
[37] Allardice, Pamela, *Myths, Gods and Fantasy: A Sourcebook* (Prism Press 1998) 224. Saxby, Jessie Margaret, *Shetland Traditional Lore* (Grant & Murray 1932).

and Scandinavian werewolves.[38] In this thesis, the "benevolent" werewolf is a werewolf that can also conform to societal norms while still in wolf form.[39] According to Runstedler, a "benevolent" werewolf shows real life lupine traits such as alpha wolf behaviour, surrogate parental roles and cognitive mind-mapping. This "benevolent" werewolf is not the same as what scholars have called the "sympathetic" or "kind-hearted" werewolf because they are seen as a victim of a malignant power.[40] This does not always apply to the "benevolent" werewolf.

The paramount theories and concepts explored in this thesis are the physical and spiritual boundaries between man and beast, such as clothes, rationality, behaviour and form (Joyce Salisbury, *The Beast Within*)[41], the Medieval belief in the difference between "a will" and "the will" as well as human intellect (*The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Ethics*, ed. Thomas Williams)[42], and whether the werewolf has traits that can deem it to be "benevolent" (Curtis Runstedler, 'The Benevolent Medieval Werewolf in *William of Palerne*', *Gothic Studies Vol. 21*). Chantal Bourgault du Coudray states that regardless of genre and material relating to the werewolf, every period has been influenced by prevailing cultural attitudes and dominant "ways of knowing or speaking" about the world.[43] Since the werewolf is a cultural concept, Bourgault du Coudray's theory will be used in order to illuminate any prevalent similarities and/or differences between the werewolves of this investigation. The question that this investigation will attempt to answer is the following: *to what extent is the "benevolent werewolf" seen in Celtic werewolf stories a phenomenon unique to the Irish, Welsh, Scottish and Breton peoples, or is it an Insular phenomenon as a whole?*

This investigation aims to assist in making the history of werewolves less fragmented, by actively comparing and contrasting the Insular Celtic, Breton and English werewolves. It aims to study the cultural influences, the portrayal and duality of each werewolf in order to discern the similarities and differences between them. Sconduto's work focuses primarily on French werewolves, and de Blécourt's work is centred primary on Dutch, Flemish and

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[38] Benevolent derives from the Latin *bene* ('well', 'good') and *velle* ('to wish', 'to want'), thus means 'to have a disposition to do good'. Webster dictionary: Benevolent - Definition of Benevolent by Webster Dictionary (webster-dictionary.net) (Accessed 1 July 2021).
[39] Both modern and medieval societal norms are included in this definition.
[40] Smith, Kirby, 'A Historical Study of the Werwolf in Literature', *PMLA* 9.1 (1894) 5. Walker Bynum, Caroline, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York 2001) 94-95.
[41] Salisbury, Joyce E., *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (Routledge 2011).
[42] Williams, Thomas, 'Will and Intellect', *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Ethics* (Cambridge 2019) 238-256.
[43] Bourgault du Coudray, Chantal, *The Curse of the Werewolf: Fantasy, Horror and the Beast Within* (New York 2006) 2.

German werewolves. By focusing on Insular Celtic, English and Breton werewolves and actively comparing and contrasting them, my thesis will aim to contribute further to the research into werewolves by historians, literary historians, Celticists, anthropologists and philosophers into this subject.

Methodology

The werewolves that will be the at the centre of this analysis are the werewolves of Ossory (*Topography of Ireland*)[44], Bisclavret (Breton werewolf, *Lai de Bisclavret*)[45], Melion (*Lai de Melion*)[46], Gorlagon (the Welsh werewolf, *Arthur et Gorlagon*)[47], the wulver (Scottish werewolf)[48], the *faoladh* (Irish werewolf warriors)[49] and Alphonse (werewolf of the Middle English translation of *Guillaume de Palerne*).[50] The method of this research is qualitative in nature, as the analysis will be based on language, portrayal of the werewolves and observations regarding motif and cultural context.

   In all of these cases, primary sources have been gathered and will be analysed linguistically, both in the language in which it was codified and the language of the medieval translations as a part of discourse analysis. This will be done in order to look at stylistics, word-choice and literary tradition of the time period the stories were codified in. Language deviation will play a role as well. The fact that the story of *Arthur et Gorlagon* was codified in Latin, and not in Welsh, will be explored in relation to the codification date and codification habits of Wales.

   The dating of the codification of primary works is paramount to the investigation in terms of culture, politics and beliefs. For example, the time when Gerald of Wales, author of the story of the werewolves of Ossory, wrote his *Topography* will be explored in order to highlight the beliefs surrounding the cultural context Gerald was writing in. His own personal ideologies, especially concerning the Irish will also be explored as it may have affected his works. The political context of Gerald of Wales' work will be taken into consideration as it

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[44] Cambrensis, Giraldus, *Topography of Ireland,* transl. Forester, Thomas (2000).
[45] Translation by Burgess, Glyn S. & Busby, Keith (trans.), *The Lais of Marie de France* (Penguin Classics 1986); Norman French linguistic evidence provided by Gilbert, Dorothy (ed. and trans), *Marie de France: Poetry* (New York 2015).
[46] Translations by Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009).
[47] Translation by Leake Day, Mildred (ed. and trans.) *Arthur and Gorlagon, Latin Arthurian Literature* (Cambridge 2005).
[48] Primarily analysed using Saxby, Jessie Margaret, *Shetland Traditional Lore* (Grant & Murray 1932).
[49] Gerald of Wales' *Topography of Ireland,* translated by Thomas Forester.
[50] Translation by Skeat, Walter (trans), *The Romance of William of Palerne* (London 1867).

could provide evidence for the way Gerald has chosen to write and represent the werewolves of Ossory. Similarly, Marie de France, who wrote the werewolf story *Lai de Bisclavret*, wrote under the patronage of Henry II of England (1133-1189 CE). The courtly culture and literary traditions of the court will be described in order to provide concrete background to the codification of the story. The use of supernatural motifs used in works written under Henry II will also be explored. In addition to this, the life of Marie herself, the Breton traditions she claimed to work with and the oral origins of the *Lais* will also be discussed.

Content analysis will play a paramount role in terms of categorising themes and ideas. The motifs used in each work will play a role in revealing the prevalent literary tradition and to see if there is an overlap among the ones identified in the stories. The symbols act as indicators of cultural belief and allegory, which will help identify the boundary between man and beast in each werewolf. Moreover, they will play a central role in identifying the "benevolent werewolf". The motifs will assist in determining possible classification, such as the role of the curse placed on Gorlagon by his unfaithful wife that links him to Tibbals' classification of an "involuntary" werewolf.

Outline of Thesis

This thesis consists of seven chapters. Chapter one will provide a background on the prevailing cultural attitudes and dominant ways of thinking about the werewolf of medieval thinkers. This will be done in order to determine the possible contact between werewolf traditions in pre or early history. The medieval theology and philosophy on the concept of the beast within humanity – the ideas on what made man a human and what constituted a beast and beastly behaviour – will also be laid out in this chapter in order to provide clarity on the analysis of the werewolves covered in this investigation.

Chapter two will briefly cover some Scandinavian werewolves in order to show whether there is an influence of Viking beliefs regarding werewolves on Ireland, Scotland and England. The basic principle of the *úlfheðnar* ('wolf-skins') will be given in order to give a clear comparison to the Insular Celtic, Breton and Middle English werewolves, to see if the concept is applicable to them. This chapter will also cover the Shetland wulver. A brief history of the Shetland islands will be given in order to highlight any cultural influences on motifs and representation of the wulver. Akin to its Irish counterparts, the origin and the character of wulver will be laid out in addition to whether it could be "benevolent" or a rather *garulf* (Anglo-Norman word that is used as technical term, roughly similar in meaning to

'malevolent').

Chapter three will describe the background of the *faoladh* and the werewolves of Ossory as mentioned in Gerald of Wales' (1146-1223 CE) *Topography of Ireland*. The *faoladh*'s etymology will be discussed in order to try and discern the changes in the metamorphosis of this warrior band. The character of the werewolves of Ossory as Gerald portrays them will be described. Just as with the wulver, both of these cases will be analysed to see if they display "benevolent" or malevolent traits, and thus closer to the *garulf.*

Chapter four will be dedicated to Bisclavret, the eponymous character of the *Lai of Bisclavret*. Since the character Melion will also come into consideration, Melion's *Lai* will also be covered. The religious beliefs and literary traditions of the time in which Marie de France wrote the *Lai* of Bisclavret and the anonymous author wrote the *Lai de Melion* need to be taken into account as it could provide context for the portrayal of the werewolves. Again, they will be analysed for "benevolent" or *garulf* traits.

Chapter five will be dedicated to the origins, character and audience of the Welsh werewolf king, Gorlagon and its position as a member of the collection of Arthuriana. The chapter will also explore why the story was codified in Latin, not Welsh. Naturally, the elements to Gorlagon's duality will be covered, and as in the previous chapters, Gorlagon will be analysed for "benevolent" or *garulf* traits.

Chapter six explores the political and cultural context of the "medieval best seller", *Guillaume de Palerne*, will be explored.[51] The extant forms and the origins of the story, and Alphonse along with it, will be illuminated, with emphasis on the Middle English version. The old folk tale of the wolf's fosterling will be covered in order to show the motif and stylistic differences between Alphonse, Melion and Bisclavret as well.[52] The shared motifs between Alphonse and the other werewolves will be explored, and finally Alphonse's duality will be studied in order to find "benevolent" or *garulf* traits.

Chapter seven is the analysis, where the duality of the werewolves will be analysed and compared with one another in terms of the theological and philosophical distinctions introduced in chapter one, namely, Salisbury's physical and spiritual boundaries between man and beast, such as clothes, rationality, behaviour and form and the Medieval belief in the difference between "a will" and "the will" as well as human intellect. Whether or not all the

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[51] McKeehan, Irene Pettit, 'Guillaume de Palerne: A Medieval "Best Seller"', *Modern Language Association* (1926) 786.
[52] McKeehan, Irene Pettit, 'Guillaume de Palerne: A Medieval "Best Seller"', *Modern Language Association* (1926) 789.

werewolves concerned exhibit the traits of the "benevolent werewolf" will be central to this analysis. The information and background provided in the previous chapters will play a central role, as well as analysis of language and motifs. The influence of the Church will also be taken into account. The extent to which each werewolf is a "benevolent werewolf", or a malevolent one will play a central role as it is part of a secondary discussion about the possibility of cultural overlaps between the werewolves through communication between the Insular Celtic, Breton, English and Scandinavian traditions.

Finally, the conclusion will reveal whether the question of this investigation has been adequately answered and explore avenues for further research.

Chapter 1

Medieval Philosophy on Animals, the Beast Within and Werewolves in Europe

As mentioned in the introduction, the aim of this chapter is to provide a background on the prevailing cultural attitudes and dominant ways of thinking about the werewolf by medieval thinkers in Europe. This will provide context, but also a point of contrast for any divergence from the norm found in werewolves from the Insular Celtic, English and Breton regions. In order to avoid redundancy, the cultural attitudes and dominant ways of thinking about the werewolf in these regions, will be discussed in later chapters. The key element in the following discussion will concern predominantly medieval Christian views on metamorphosis as it is at the core of the link between human, animal and the beast within.

The church has been involved in building cultures, structuring society with its functions and institutions and in shaping the form of political systems.[53] The same can be said for influencing ideas on different philosophical and theological topics, such as the relationship between man and beast. During the medieval era, Christian thinkers were determined to find ways in which man differed to animals, but also how the Christian man differed to the pagan. The earliest church fathers rejected the classical world's belief that difference between species was illusory. They established a principle of qualitative difference between humans and animals. The Bible says man is created in the image of God, thus definitions of animals focused on physical appearance.[54] The church held the belief that because humans walk on two legs and have the use of their hands, they are reasonable and mighty, while animals are inherently "irrational and dominated".[55] Along the same line, the German bishop and philosopher Albert the Great (1200-1280 CE) wrote that "all such animals are prone to the ground, because of the weight of their head and the earthy character of their body, they tend to bear themselves in a horizontal plane". He also theorised that because "their innate heat" was inadequate, it could not "maintain them in an erect position".[56] This lack of "innate heat" was theorised to be linked to an inherent imbalance of the four elements – earth, fire, water

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[53] Pillay, Jerry, 'The church as a transformation and change agent', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* (2017) 1.
[54] Salisbury, Joyce E., *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (Routledge 2011) 3.
[55] Steel, Karl, *How to Make a Human: Animals and Violence in the Middle Ages* (Ohio 2011) 47.
[56] Salisbury, Joyce E., *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (Routledge 2011) 4.

and air – and the four humours – blood, yellow bile, black bile and phlegm – in animals. There were also those who tried to rationalise why the devout should kneel in order to pray, as there was concern that such an action brought mankind closer to the animal. One such person was Peter Cantor ('the Chanter', died 1197 CE), in his *On Penitence and Its Parts*. He stated that "we are led back to the memory that we lately stood in paradise with the angels; now we lie among brute creatures on the earth and we bear our soul". Peter identified kneeling with the bodily semblance to beasts, but also human submission to God and to any human to whom deference is owed.[57] According to Peter Cantor, by kneeling, humans recall their innate superiority because for the human, it is only a temporary state while for the animal it is permanent. He states that while the human only abases himself momentarily, the animals cannot stand on two feet due to "their natural inferiority and subjugation to humans".[58]

While the above focused on outward appearance, animals were also defined by their behaviour. According to a medieval Latin Bestiary, they "were called Beasts because of the violence with which they rage, and are known as 'wild' (*ferus*) because they are accustomed to freedom by nature and are governed (*ferantur*) by their own wishes".[59] From this, it can be deduced that animals are different because they do not abide by social conventions that bind humans, and as such were thought to be prone to violence. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 CE) wrote that "savagery and brutality take their names from a likeness to wild beasts which are also described as savage." To Aquinas, people who acted in a manner similar to an animal fell under the category of bestial. Violence is not a phenomenon foreign to humans, but there seemed to be a distinction made between human and bestial violence. Human violence was considered to be logical as it was influenced by motives and goals. Animal violence was believed to not have these qualities and thus considered to be irrational.[60]

As can be deduced from the nature of human versus animal violence, irrationality is a third critical difference (in addition to physical and behavioural differences) between animals and humans. Irrationality derived from a perceived lack of intellect, "reason" or *voluntas* ("a will" or "the will") in animals by early church fathers and medieval thinkers.[61]

In the fourth century, Saint Ambrose (340-394 CE) was one of the first who claimed the

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[57] Steel, Karl, *How to Make a Human: Animals and Violence in the Middle Ages* (Ohio 2011) 46.
[58] Steel, Karl, *How to Make a Human: Animals and Violence in the Middle Ages* (Ohio 2011) 47.
[59] White, T.H., *The Bestiary: A Book of Beasts* (New York 1960) 7.
[60] Salisbury, Joyce E., *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (Routledge 2011) 4.
[61] Williams, Thomas, 'Will and Intellect', *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Ethics* (Cambridge 2019) 238.

difference between the two species lay in the fact that humans possess reason, intellect and *voluntas* while animals do not possess such characteristics and are therefore irrational. On a similar note, Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430 CE) wrote that "animals do not laugh or make jokes, but that is not the highest human activity; nor do animals seek fame and glory and power, but our desire for these does not make us better than animals. The difference is in reason."[62] Augustine expressed the superiority of humans to "brute animals" as humans are "rational creatures".[63] Medieval Christian writers wrote that *voluntas* was an important determinant of human action.[64] John Scotus (800-877 CE) states that the *voluntas* is rooted in nature and is the natural desire to have happiness, but in order to be free, the *voluntas* has to transcend nature.[65] Peter Abelard (1079-1142 CE) defines *voluntas* not as a faculty or power but a simple occurrent desire.[66] This is quite fitting, but Thomas Aquinas' (1225-1274 CE) theory of action, characterised by a complex marriage between will and reason, is the most applicable.[67] The key distinction, Aquinas theorised, lies between the exercise of the will's act and the specification of said act. Exercise determines whether the act will be done or not, and the specification is the type of act performed, with reason being the driving force behind the specification. An irrational being could not do this. Aquinas stated that animals are "without intellect", thus were irrational and so were not made "in God's image". Will and reason are intrinsically linked to what it means to be human, "for it is precisely this … difference from other animals, that he possesses reason".[68] Thus, according to Thomas Williams, there is no single notion corresponding to the word. There is "a will", which is simple wanting or desire, and "the will", which suggests a unified faculty or power that is responsible for one's choices or actions.[69] A case can be made that monsters, such as werewolves, cannot be readily classified as either irrational or rational due to their duality.[70] In addition to this, Claudius Aelianus (175-235 CE), known as "Aelian", whose theories were

[62] Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will,* trans. Williams, Thomas (Indianapolis 1993) 69.

[63] Salisbury, Joyce E., *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (Routledge 2011) 4-5.

[64] Williams, Thomas, 'Will and Intellect', *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Ethics* (Cambridge 2019) 238.

[65] Williams, Thomas, 'Will and Intellect', *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Ethics* (Cambridge 2019) 246.

[66] Williams, Thomas, 'Will and Intellect', *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Ethics* (Cambridge 2019) 242.

[67] Williams, Thomas, 'Will and Intellect', *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Ethics* (Cambridge 2019) 244-245.

[68] John Scotus Eriugena, *Periphyseon (The Division of Nature),* trans. O'Meara, John and Sheldon-Williams, I.P. (Montreal 1987) 375.

[69] Williams, Thomas, 'Will and Intellect', *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Ethics* (Cambridge 2019) 238-239.

[70] Steel, Karl, *How to Make a Human: Animals and Violence in the Middle Ages* (Ohio 2011) 52.

quite popular during the fourteenth century, thought that the nature of animals was not very different from people in aspects of behaviour and emotion, thus making them not entirely irrational.[71]

In the same vein, the early church fathers and the medieval thinkers were also very much against the idea stemming from the Antique period that metamorphosis was possible. The pre-Christian ideas surrounding metamorphosis was that the physical shape of a werewolf or shapeshifter denoted their bestial character.[72] These church fathers were adamant that the pagan idea of metamorphosis was wholly incorrect and that though humans exhibited "habits, characteristics and desires" of beasts, this did not automatically imply that they could physically turn into beasts (Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus, 155-220 CE).[73] Tertullian, the son of a Roman centurion and later apologist for the Church, used his classical education in order to attack pagans and heretics, and to defend the Christian faith. In his work *De anima* ('*On the soul*'), he argued against the possibility of metamorphosis, stating that "it is impossible for the human soul to pass into beasts, even though the philosophers may hold that both are made up of the same substantial elements".[74] He stated that the human soul is "clearly incapable of adapting itself to the bodies of animals and their natural characteristics" and that substance cannot be equated with nature. Tertullian theorised that "we may call a man a wild beast or a harmless one, we don't mean that he has the soul of a beast", for the souls are different.[75] Saint Ambrose came to a similar conclusion to Tertullian. He dismissed transmigration of souls between humans and animals as "ridiculous creations of poets", whose senses had been deceived.[76] Ambrose also wrote that "those made after the likeness and image of God cannot be changed into forms of beasts".[77] The soul is a perpetual entity. It is a crucial element in the preservation of identity.[78] There is a struggle in the works of church fathers to keep to church doctrine, and yet also not betray their own ideas and theories on the matter of metamorphosis. Saint Augustine is probably the best example of this. He developed a theological interpretation of metamorphosis of human beings into wolves and

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[71] Salisbury, Joyce E., *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (Routledge 2011) 68.
[72] Salisbury, Joyce E., *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (Routledge 2011) 141.
[73] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 15.
[74] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 15.
[75] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 15-16.
[76] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 16.
[77] Salisbury, Joyce E., *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (Routledge 2011) 141.
[78] Walker Bynum, Caroline, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York 2001) 23.

other animals in his work *The City of God* (early fifth century) that would have influence for over a thousand years. Augustine declared that although the bodies changed, their minds did not and their souls did not. He did not reject metamorphosis as God's powers were limitless, and made it clear that metamorphosis could not happen through any means other than God's will.[79] A lot of the writings from church fathers concur that demons may conjure illusions and phantasms that boggle the mind and senses of man in order to mislead him. Metamorphosis was apparently part of these beliefs, but it is not automatically assumed that demons are involved. Caroline Walker Bynum states that "if only God (and, with his permission, the angels and saints) breaks the regularity of nature, then magic must be natural". Theologians did not deny the existence of magic but "most philosophers and physicians held astonishing events and entities … to be *mirabilia*, explained entirely 'from natural things'."[80]

In relation to *The City of God*, the influential Germanic penitential, *Canon Episcopi* (early tenth century), condemns sorcery using Augustine's concept of the "phantasm". The *Canon Episcopi* attributes such powers of illusion to Satan, declaring that the fallen angel easily works his powers "on the mind of infidels". While condemning the powers, the *Canon Episcopi* also rationalises metamorphosis as "the result of demonic trickery".[81] The penitential does not specifically mention werewolves or Saint Augustine, but it does reinforce the doctrine of metamorphosis that Augustine established. It was an important document that was referred to throughout the Middle Ages, and was prominent enough to be reproduced. As Sconduto points out, Burchard (950/965-1025 CE), archbishop of the Imperial City of Worms in the Holy Roman Empire, reproduced the work twice: first in *Corrector* (1008-1012) and a second time in *Decretum Libri XX* (1012-1023), which was a compilation of canon law.[82] One of the specific beliefs Burchard condemned was the belief in werewolves. Burchard wrote that "when a man is born, they [the Moirai][83] can designate him for whatever they want … as a result, whenever that man wishes, he can be transformed into a wolf, called in German a Werewolf, or into some other form. If you have believed that this can happen …

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[79] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 18.

[80] Walker Bynum, Caroline, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York 2001) 91.

[81] Bettini, Jessica Lynne, 'The Rage of the Wolf: Metamorphosis and Identity in Medieval Werewolf Tales', *Electronic Theses and Dissertations* (2011) 9-10.

[82] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 20-21.

[83] The three Moirai are the three Fates of Greek mythology. They are Atropos ('the Snipper'), Clotho ('the Weaver') and Lachesis ('the Measurer'), daughters of Zeus and the Titaness of Justice, Themis, in certain myths and daughters of Nyx, goddess of Night, and Erebus, the being of darkness, in others.

you are to do ten days penance on bread and water."[84] What this gives evidence for is, that the public still held continued fascination and belief in certain pagan superstitions and werewolf legends. Aquinas does not quite demand penance for belief in metamorphosis, but emphasises the illusory nature of the werewolf as "those transformations … cannot be produced by the power of nature" and merely resembles reality.[85] Aquinas applied the same theory to angels, stating that they could take on human bodies but did not change into humans because of it.[86] The application of the theory on angels was done in order to rebuke pagan legends and popular beliefs that posed a threat to the Christian faith.[87]

Sconduto states that the antique accounts that stress the reality of the werewolf and the clerical writings that insist on the illusory nature of metamorphosis all gave birth to the medieval werewolf narratives. To an extent, this is true. However, Sconduto ignores the influence of another major player in the relationship between the ancient sources and the medieval church writers, which is Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The rise in popularity of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, particularly books 1 and 15, in the twelfth century was the turning point for the belief in metamorphosis and the concept of change.[88] Change has often been viewed by medieval thinkers with both horror and a sense of awe; it is both able to transcend the self and lose parts of the self. Before the twelfth century, very few copies were made of the text, but between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries, the work had an "explosion" of popularity. The tales were interpreted allegorically, as they were read more as moral lessons and much in the same way as fables and bestiary lore were. Due to Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* the possibility of shape-shifting re-entered the Christian mind and was reconsidered, along with pre-Christian ideas on change and the beast within.[89] The ancient authors believed that humanity and bestial behaviours were not opposites, nor were parallel to each other. They could exist simultaneously in the same person. The idea of breaching categories and a parallel existence between man and beast played an intrinsic role especially towards the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[90] Bynum states that the concept of change is intrinsically tied to the human conception of entity or identity and with the rise in popularity of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*

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[84] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 21.
[85] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 24-25.
[86] Walker Bynum, Caroline, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York 2001) 103.
[87] Krys, Svitlana, 'Metamorphosis of the Werewolf', *The Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* (Alberta 2010) 405-406.
[88] Walker Bynum, Caroline, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York 2001) 87.
[89] Salisbury, Joyce E., *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (Routledge 2011) 142.
[90] Walker Bynum, Caroline, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York 2001) 21.

people seemed to believe in the ancient concept of change.[91] People leant towards the view that change was not replacement but an evolution or development, such as in the cases of an alteration of appearance or a different mode of being.[92]

In 1125 CE, William of Malmsbury (1095-1143 CE), a Benedictine monk, chronicler and foremost English historian of the twelfth century, completed his *Gesta Regnum Anglorum* ('Deeds of English Kings', 1125), which had been partnered with Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* ('Ecclesiastical History of the English People', 731). Among the anecdotes included in this history of the English kings, is an account of a young acrobat being turned into a donkey by two old women living near Rome through the use of witchcraft.[93] William described how despite being in form of a donkey, the acrobat had not "lost a man's intelligence". This is in line with what Joyce Salisbury deems to be 'Christian metamorphosis': while in pagan metamorphosis an external transformation was done to show bestial characteristics, in Christian metamorphosis, the exterior changed to show animal-like characteristics, but the human essence remained unchanged.[94] The inclusion of this anecdote gives evidence for public interest in metamorphosis during the twelfth century, but does not indicate that William believed the events occurred. Metamorphosis blurred the lines between humans and animals, and belief in it awakened fears of the loss of rationality and spirituality, and a descent into sins such as lust, hunger and rage.[95] Through this, it can be argued that lycanthropy rearticulates the problem of human appearance and the bestial reality that can lurk beneath the surface as questions about animality and limits of the human being arose during the "werewolf renaissance of the twelfth century".[96]

As actions were a defining element of humanity and bestiality, an animal showing greater cunning than it was thought to be capable of, was theorised to be a person in shifted form. Late medieval accounts of intelligent wolves frequently raised the question of whether the animal was simply a wolf or a human in wolf shape.[97] A late medieval definition echoed the Ancient Greek and Roman views on werewolves: "there be some [wolves] that have eaten

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[91] Walker Bynum, Caroline, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York 2001) 20.

[92] Walker Bynum, Caroline, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York 2001) 23.

[93] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 21.

[94] Salisbury, Joyce E., *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (Routledge 2011) 143.

[95] Salisbury, Joyce E., *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (Routledge 2011) 143.

[96] Wood, Lucas, 'The Werewolf as Möbius Strip, or Becoming Bisclavret', *The Romantic Review* (Columbia 2011) 11.

[97] Salisbury, Joyce E., *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (Routledge 2011) 143.

children or men … and they are called werewolves, for men should beware of them".[98] Gervase of Tilbury (1150-1220 CE) compiled a plethora of popular beliefs and folklore in his *Otia Imperialia* ('*Recreation for an Emperor*', completed by 1215), which he wrote for the Holy Roman Emperor Otto IV (1175-1218 CE). Gervaise asserted that not only "we have seen" a man become a wolf, but had seen it "often".[99] In his work, Gervaise also made references to Augustine's *The City of God* regarding the theory of metamorphosis. In the *Otia Imperialia,* Gervaise outlined the story of Raimbaud de Pouget, a knight in the Auvergne, who became disinherited and lost his mind to deranged fear, ultimately transforming into a wolf.[100] While in this form, he devoured the young and mangled the old. Eventually he managed to regain human form after his paw was severed by a confrontation with a woodcutter. What this shows, is that there was a prevalent belief that a werewolf could regain his or her human form through outside intervention. However, it should be noted that Gervaise's claim to have seen a man transform into a wolf first-hand is a calculated tactic to lend credibility to his werewolf stories.[101] Thus, during the "werewolf renaissance of the twelfth century", the werewolves had undergone their own metamorphosis, in behaviour and physical appearance, in order to keep in line with Church doctrine.[102] Gervaise appears to have an issue with that. Sconduto points out that "Gervaise seems to be caught between his own beliefs and those of the Church, never quite able to give up one side for the other".[103] This attests to the uncertainty of medieval scholars when it came to the topic of metamorphosis and illuminates the grey area between medieval werewolf stories, and metamorphosis in general, and the ideas in medieval Church dogma.[104]

Culturally speaking, despite a belief in clerical works on the existence of werewolves, people in medieval Europe also different views on werewolves. These ideas seemed often to go hand in hand with beliefs around the wolf. In Europe, wolves were regarded as a

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[98] Edward, Duke of York, *The Master of Game* quoted in Cummings, J, *The Hound and the Hawk* (New York 1988) 133.
[99] Bettini, Jessica Lynne, 'The Rage of the Wolf: Metamorphosis and Identity in Medieval Werewolf Tales', *Electronic Theses and Dissertations* (2011) 14.
[100] Pluskowski, Aleksander, 'Before the Werewolf Trials: Contextualising Shape-Changers and Animal Identities in Medieval North-West Europe', *Werewolf Histories* (Palgrave 2015) 82.
[101] Bettini, Jessica Lynne, 'The Rage of the Wolf: Metamorphosis and Identity in Medieval Werewolf Tales', *Electronic Theses and Dissertations* (2011) 14.
[102] Bettini, Jessica Lynne, 'The Rage of the Wolf: Metamorphosis and Identity in Medieval Werewolf Tales', *Electronic Theses and Dissertations* (2011) 11.
[103] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 38.
[104] Bettini, Jessica Lynne, 'The Rage of the Wolf: Metamorphosis and Identity in Medieval Werewolf Tales', *Electronic Theses and Dissertations* (2011) 14.

particularly fierce creature.[105] According to a Latin Bestiary, a wolf will "massacre anybody who passes by with a fury of greediness … Wolves are known for their rapacity … and hankering for gore. He keeps his strength in his chest and jaws … His neck is never able to turn backward".[106] In England, wolves did not face systematic eradication until the twelfth century when the English crown set aside huge sections of the realm under forest law, and claimed exclusive hunting rights.[107] It was only then that the English crown issued bounties on wolves and established professional wolf-hunters known as the *luparii*.[108] In the Middle English context, associations were made between wolves and Jews, typically through the medium of cannibalism, conceptually linking them with werewolves.[109] This was a common allegory.

There were also different ideas on how to become a werewolf. The most common theories were being born under a new moon, born in a forbidden marriage or born on Christmas Eve. Consuming wolf flesh, drinking rainwater from wolf prints, and working instead of worshipping on holy days were also believed to turn someone into a werewolf. In some cases, it was believed that simply wearing the fur or hide of a wolf could turn someone into a werewolf. In various Dutch sagas, there is a pattern in the werewolf is created: a man makes a deal with the Devil and gets a wolf coat as well as a girdle or a belt. Once he puts it on, he is transformed and will only revert back to human form once the fur is removed.[110] It gave birth to a Dutch verb: 'to werewolf' ('*weerwolven*'), meaning 'to willingly change shape'.[111] This idea linked very close to the Scandinavian *úlfheðnar*, or 'wolf-skinned ones', who were in the service of the god Odin, All-father of the Aesir, the main pantheon of gods who resided in Valhalla.[112]

In the traditional medieval worldview, as held among the learned classes, metamorphosis represented the degradation of the human into the bestial. The werewolf was also the symbol of the duality between man and beast. The motif of the wild monster was a representation of

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[105] Steel, Karl, *How to Make a Human: Animals and Violence in the Middle Ages* (Ohio 2011) 62-63.
[106] White, T.H., *The Bestiary: A Book of Beasts* (New York 1960) 56-57.
[107] Steel, Karl, *How to Make a Human: Animals and Violence in the Middle Ages* (Ohio 2011) 63. Cummins, John, *The Hound and the Hawk: The Art of Medieval Hunting* (New York 1988) 60-61.
[108] Bartlett, Robert, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings, 1075-1225* (Oxford 2000) 671.
[109] Pluskowski, Aleksander, 'Before the Werewolf Trials: Contextualising Shape-Changers and Animal Identities in Medieval North-West Europe', *Werewolf Histories* (Palgrave 2015) 83.
[110] However, in order to break the magical link that is formed by the man and his wolf, the wolf fur has to be burned completely, which is why the fur was often hidden. The earliest werewolf saga of the Netherlands is from circa 1330 CE, recorded in the *Lekenspiegel* by Jan van Boendale, Laan, Kornelis ter, *Nederlandse Overleringen II* (1981) 37-39. Boendal, Jan van, *Lekenspiegel* (2003).
[111] Veen, Abe van der, *Witte wieven, weerwolven en waternekkers* (2017) 179.
[112] Veen, Abe van der, *Witte wieven, weerwolven en waternekkers* (2017) 45.

the beast lurking within all humans.[113] What is clear, is that medieval thinkers tried to balance a belief in werewolves and metamorphosis with Church dogma, especially after the twelfth century. The idea of such an overt, physical change – a human changing into a wolf – challenged the medieval assertion of what is a man, what is an animal and confronts them with the prospect of the beast within humanity. Though, perhaps intimidatingly enough for the medieval church thinkers, the change did not have to be physically obvious at all.

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[113] Sell, Carl B., 'The Duality of a Monster: The Human-Animal Binary and its Role in Marie de France's Bisclavret', (Academia) 2-3.

Chapter 2

The Scandinavian *úlfheðnar*, the Viking Invasions of Ireland, England, Scotland, and the Shetland Wulver

<u>The Scandinavian *úlfheðnar*</u>

In contrast to the Medieval European beliefs and interpretation of metamorphosis, the early Northern Scandinavian tale-tradition provides a different perception of metamorphosis that deviates from Christian doctrine.[114] In Scandinavian tradition, there appear to be three kinds of metamorphosis: metamorphosis of the soul into an animal, where the body stays in human form, the psychic metamorphosis brought on by fury (mainly for berserkers and *úlfheðnar*) and lastly the classic metamorphosis of the body commonly associated with werewolves. In saga-literature, it was not uncommon to read about battle-frenzied warriors known as berserkers changing into "so called were-animals".[115] These warriors would channel the power and spirit of the creature they wished to become. Christa Tuczay states that the Scandinavian stories "not only express the ancient desire to roam freely in the wild", but also exhibit a respect and admiration for the animal body.[116] As seen in the previous chapter, the ideas of medieval Christian thinkers and church fathers significantly differed from this, as they believed that animals were below humans in status. Norse stories describe how aspects of animal bodies appear to be "hidden and asleep" in the human body and under the correct circumstances, can be awakened and utilised to the advantage of the human, such as in the case of shape-changers, not werewolves alone. According to Wilhelm Grönbech, in Scandinavian tradition the soul works in tandem with the character of a person. He observed that "the elements from which a soul creates the body are not recruited from outside".[117] These elements Grönbech are referring to "are to be found within the soul and are likewise within the everyday body; whoever really appeared as a wolf, bear, an ox, an eagle, always

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[114] Tuczay, Christa Agnes, 'Into the Wild – Old Norse Stories of Animal Men', *Werewolf Histories* (Palgrave 2015) 61.

[115] A were-animal is defined as a shapeshifter that can change between human and some animal form, such as a werewolf or a were-bear.

[116] Tuczay, Christa Agnes, 'Into the Wild – Old Norse Stories of Animal Men', *Werewolf Histories* (Palgrave 2015) 61.

[117] Grönbech, Wilhelm, *The Culture of the Teutons,* English translation (London 1931) 273.

had the character traits … within himself."[118] These traits could be strength, cunning, courage, intuition and instinct.

Whereas medieval Christian beliefs did not consider the human soul to be affected by metamorphosis, as the soul cannot be influenced by supernatural elements, the Scandinavian literary sources do include the soul in the process. Tuczay writes that the soul either leaves the body in animal form while the person sleeps, or the person puts on an animal skin and becomes an animal in this way but leaves the soul unaffected.[119] The circumstance for the soul to leave a body in animal form is unclear but a person wearing an animal skin and becoming the animal usually happened in conjunction with battle. This is interesting to note as it could seem to imply that the soul makes the mutable corporeal form a human and without the soul, there is, or could be, a change to a different form. This ties in well with the topic of the berserker and the *úlfheðnar* ("wolf skins"). Snorri Sturluson (1179-1241 CE) stated in the prologue of his *Heimskringla* (derived from *kringla heimsins*, "the circle of the world") that skaldic poetry was an important historical source because, although it was praise poetry, to cite false praise would be "mockery, not praise" and thus would lessen the significance of the achievements described in the work, including those of the berserker and the *úlfheðnar*.[120] The ninth century *skald* (a poet who composed skaldic poetry) Þórbjörn Hornklofi, court poet of King Harald Fairhair (850-932 CE)[121], provides the first identification of a Berserker and *úlfheðnar* in his *Hafnismal*.[122] In addition to this source, Hornklofi's ninth century *Raven's Song,* which was written in the form of a dialogue between a Valkyrie ("chooser of the slain", a winged maiden who served Odin and chose who lived and who died in battle) and a raven, stated that berserkers who carried bloody shields into battle were called *úlfheðnar*.[123] The famous stanzas that identify these warriors are preserved in Snorri Sturluson's *Heimskringla*: "Savage berserkers roaring mad, and champions fierce in wolf-skin clad, howling like wolves; and clanking jar, of many a mail-clad man of war."[124] Before a battle, the berserker knew how to get into a state similar to frenzy or madness,[125]

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[118] Grönbech, Wilhelm, *The Culture of the Teutons,* English translation (London 1931) 273.
[119] Tuczay, Christa Agnes, 'Into the Wild – Old Norse Stories of Animal Men', *Werewolf Histories* (Palgrave 2015) 63.
[120] Holman, Katherine, *The Northern Conquest: Vikings in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford 2007) 19.
[121] He is also known as Harald Finehair.
[122] Tuczay, Christa Agnes, 'Into the Wild – Old Norse Stories of Animal Men', *Werewolf Histories* (Palgrave 2015) 65.
[123] Bystrický, Peter, 'The Image of the Werewolf in Medieval Literature', *Historický Časopis* Vol. 63 (2015) 793.
[124] Sturluson, Snorri, *Heimskringla,* Monsen, Erling, and Smith, A.H (ed. and transl.) (Cambridge 1932) 67.
[125] This was reportedly done by the consumption of hallucinogenic mushrooms and chanting.

which was known as *berserkergangr* ('battle fury').[126] The use of the simile, "howling like wolves", by Hornklofi is quite telling: wearing of animal hides symbolically gave the berserkers and the *úlfheðnar* the attributes of their animal hides, but did not physically metamorphose the warriors into the animal. They underwent a type of psychic metamorphosis, as mentioned previously.

The *Hafnismal* and the *Heimskringla* were not the only sagas in which berserkers and the *úlfheðnar* were mentioned. Odin had two wolves named Geri and Freki who were possibly more than just simple pets. There is a possibility that Geri and Freki were skin-changers, like the *úlfheðnar*, Odin's own bodyguards, or two chosen warriors with the All-father's utmost confidence.[127] In the ninth chapter of the *Vatnsdæla* saga ("*The Saga of the People of Vatnsdal*", one of the sagas of the *Icelandersand* and codified around the middle of the thirteenth century), Harald Fairhair had berserkers and *úlfheðnar* on his ship. These warriors were identified together with "berserkerdom and animal hides", but the saga does not specifically mention metamorphosis of the body or soul.[128] Another saga that makes mention of shape-shifting and wolf-like creatures was the *Egil saga* ("*The Saga of Egil*"), usually attributed to Snorri Sturluson. A key passage in chapter 27 tells of how Kveldúlf ("Eveningwolf") Skallagrim and his men attack the crew of King Harald Fairhair's ship in a murderous rage. This story narrates a "family history" of being able to become "wolf-like creatures", which definitely does not fall in line with the ideas explored in chapter one as it suggests the ability to shapeshift is genetic. Kveldúlf was a *hamramr* ("shapeshifter") who could also transform into a wolf through his rage. In this passage of the saga, the term *hamramr* is used synonymously with *berserkergangr*: the battle fury.[129] Kveldúlf's son Grim possessed supernatural powers after sundown (*hamask*) but could not shift his form, due to the family powers being diluted through the generations. Grim's son Egil could not shift, but could be taken with rage, described as *reiðr* ("enraged"). Akin to the *Vatnsdæla* saga, the transformations and powers get only a mere mention, with no details given to the kind of transformations the characters undergo.[130] Nonetheless, this case provides concrete textual evidence for the ability to shapeshift, which gets lost through the generations until only the

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[126] Fabing, H.D., 'On Going Berserk: A Neurochemical Inquiry', *The Scientific Method* Vol. 83 (1956) 232-237.
[127] Härger, Arith, 'Werewolves in Norse Mythology', *Wight of the Nine Worlds* (2017) Blog.
[128] Tuczay, Christa Agnes, 'Into the Wild – Old Norse Stories of Animal Men', *Werewolf Histories* (Palgrave 2015) 65.
[129] Tuczay, Christa Agnes, 'Into the Wild – Old Norse Stories of Animal Men', *Werewolf Histories* (Palgrave 2015) 66.
[130] Tuczay, Christa Agnes, 'Into the Wild – Old Norse Stories of Animal Men', *Werewolf Histories* (Palgrave 2015) 67.

psychic metamorphosis of the *berserkergangr* is accessible to the descendants. It shows that the family line could tap into two of the three types of metamorphosis: the classical and the psychic. The berserker and the *úlfheðnar* are also mentioned in *Grettir's Saga* (fourteenth century), in which it is alleged that no weapon could harm the *úlfheðnar* and that when they attacked, no one could stop them.[131] Usually, because of the number of motifs and dissonant elements, the sagas require careful studying in order to extract the meaning behind each one.[132] However in the case of werewolves, the sagas were quite consistent in that dog and wolf motifs were frequently used, which has led scholars to identify the berserker and, to some extent, the *úlfheðnar* with werewolves.[133] Interestingly enough, despite some of these sagas being codified during periods where Scandinavia had been Christianised, the sagas do not tend to adhere to medieval Christian doctrine surrounding metamorphosis. There are still some latent pagan elements, which make these sagas all the more interesting as it would suggest the *skalds* and codifiers did not let their faith influence a cultural product.

Etymological studies also play a role in the investigation of the *úlfheðnar* as well as the berserker in relation to the werewolf. According to Alexander Jóhannesson, the werewolf was denoted by the word *vargúlfr*.[134] Wolfgang Golther's *Handbuch der germanische Mythologie* put the berserker and the werewolf together in the same category. However, Golther makes the distinction that the werewolf physically metamorphosed into a wolf, both in the concept of the soul shift and the classical metamorphosis, while the berserker remained a battle-frenzied man.[135] Eugen Mogk defines the 'berserker' as "the man dressed as a bear" or "the man in bear skin" and, most interestingly, regards the berserker as a variation of a werewolf. Indeed, Mogk stated that "berserkers are in essence nothing more than werewolf myths", seeing them both as products of folklore and mythology with no roots in reality.[136] According to Tuczay, Mogk's "calamitous definition" continues to bring a great deal of confusion to the werewolf debate.[137] Tuczay states that Mogk created a bad image for the werewolf, by relating the word *vargúlfr*, which translates to "dishonourable criminal", to the werewolf. Precisely what the nature of the alleged "calamitous definition" is, is very unclear and not elucidated by Tuczay at all. Indeed, Jóhannesson does not receive similar censure for

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[131] Bystrický, Peter, 'The Image of the Werewolf in Medieval Literature', *Historický Časopis* Vol. 63 (2015) 794.
[132] Crawford, Barbara E., *Scandinavian Scotland* (Leicester 1987) xii, 274.
[133] Rübekeil, Ludwig, *Diachrone Studien zur Kontaktzone zwischen Kelten und Germanen* (2002) 118.
[134] Jóhannesson, Alexander, *Isländisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Zürich 1956) 143, 171, 1221.
[135] Golther, Wolfgang, *Handbuch der germanische Mythologie* (Leipzig 1895) 101-103.
[136] Mogk, Eugen, *Germanische Mythologie* (Straßburg 1898) 273.
[137] Tuczay, Christa Agnes, 'Into the Wild – Old Norse Stories of Animal Men', *Werewolf Histories* (Palgrave 2015) 63.

translating *vargúlfr* as "werewolf". Despite the inconveniences and confusion that possible incorrect attributions and labelling can cause, it is important to note that Old Norse has no specific term that applies to the werewolf, as there at least different variations: *vargúlfr*, *varulv* and *vargr*. Jóhannesson states that the *varulv* in folklore refers to a man or spirit in wolf-form, denoting classical metamorphosis or the metamorphosis of the soul.[138] Lastly, the word *vargr* (another term for werewolf) relates etymologically to the Old English *wearg*, which is believed to descend from an older Proto-Germanic root word *wargaz* meaning "strangler".[139] *Wearg* referred in this context to the vilest criminals imaginable. This word, *vargr,* was attributed to the wolf Fenrir, son of the trickster god Loki and the giantess Angrboða, and, according to some versions of the myth, his sons Sköll and Hati, who were believed to chase the sun (Sól, Sunna) and moon (Máni) across the sky.[140] This was because of their destructive fates during Ragnarök. In more legal terms, the word *vargr* or *wearg* denoted places where criminals were executed (earliest dating to 851 and the latest at 1046) or a rogue wolf or rogue animal which preyed on livestock and killed far more than they could eat.[141] Two of the Old Norse words, *vargúlfr* and *vargr*, for werewolf also relate to acts of dishonour and violence, which could indicate how the Old Norse people thought the werewolf behaved.

In order to be able to discern the extent to which the *úlfheðnar* and the Viking beliefs on metamorphosis had influence on the Insular Celtic and English image of the werewolf, a brief look at the invasions of Ireland, England and Scotland needs to be taken.

The Viking Invasions of Ireland and England

From the *Annals of Ulster* and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* the Viking invasions of the British Isles and Ireland extended from about 793 to 1066 CE. The character and duration of the Viking raids, as well as the dates and the extent of the earliest settlements, differ considerably in the various regions of the British Isles, reflecting the different ambitions and strategies of the Vikings.[142] In Ireland, the Viking raids began 795 and the influence the Vikings held in Ireland lasted into the twelfth century. During this period of time, Ireland was split into seven kingdoms: the Ulaid, Airgialla, the Northern and Southern Úi Néill, Connacht, Laigin

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[138] Jóhannesson, Alexander, *Isländisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Zürich 1956) 143.
[139] Zoëga, Geir T, *Vargr*, *A Concise Dictionary of Old Icelandic* (Clarendon Press 1910).
[140] Simek, Rudolf, *Dictionary of Northern Mythology* (2007) 292.
[141] Pluskowski, Aleksander, 'Before the Werewolf Trials: Contextualising Shape-Changers and Animal Identities in Medieval North-West Europe', *Werewolf Histories* (Palgrave 2015) 93.
[142] Ó Cróinín, Dáibhí, *Early Medieval Ireland 400-1200* (Routledge 2013) 240.

(Leinster) and Munster (see Figure 1).[143] Early medieval Ireland did not have truly urban settlements but monasteries such as Armagh, Clonmacnois and Kildare, fulfilled the function of towns. They were wealthy centres of consumption that attracted merchants and craftsmen.[144]
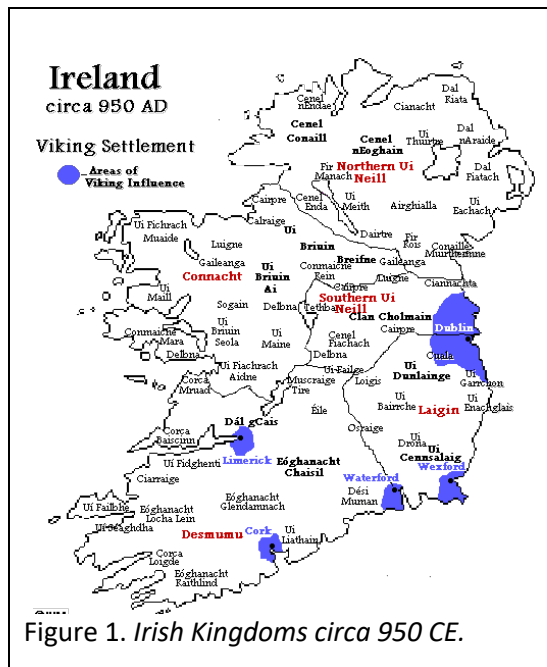

Figure 1. *Irish Kingdoms circa 950 CE.*

They also attracted the attention of the Vikings, as these centres were sources of rich plunder. In the 840s, the Viking raiders started navigating the Irish rivers and they set up fortified camps along the rivers. One such inland site, which was one of the first to be plundered by the raiders, was Roscommon. In 842, Clonmacnois was plundered, followed by Biror and Saighre, a monastic site in Clareen, County Offaly in Leinster.[145] Some of these, such as Dublin, Waterford, Wexford, Cork and Limerick eventually grew into Ireland's first towns as they became trading centres (also seen in Figure 1).[146]

England, during the time of the Viking invasions, was, like Ireland, split into seven major kingdoms, as seen in Figure 2[147]: Mercia, Northumbria, Wessex, Sussex, Essex, Kent and East Anglia. Wessex, Mercia, Northumbria, and East Anglia were the most important political units of the time, with Mercia being the most powerful of them all when the Vikings first began to raid.[148] The *Anglo Saxon Chronicle* states that the first Viking ships landed in England in 787.[149] Dáibhí Ó Cróinín states that the Viking raids began with the plundering of Lindisfarne in 793 but that they did not settle until eighty years later, in 876.[150] The *Anglo Saxon Chronicle* tells how 'the Great Army', led by Ivar the Boneless (Old English, *Hyngwar*, 800s-873 CE) and his brothers Björn Ironside, Halfdan, Hvitserk, Sigurd Snake-In-

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[143] Figure 1 taken from: ire900-gif.30040 (500×556) (alternatehistory.com) (Accessed 2nd March 2021).
[144] Haywood, John, *The Historical Atlas of the Celtic World* (London 2009) 98.
[145] Ó Muirithe, Diarmaid, *From the Viking Word-Hoard: A Dictionary of Scandinavian Words in the Languages of Britain and Ireland* (Dublin 2010) xii.
[146] Haywood, John, *The Historical Atlas of the Celtic World* (London 2009) 102.
[147] Figure 2 taken from: Heptarchy | Definition & Maps | Britannica (Accessed 5th March 2021).
[148] Holman, Katherine, *The Northern Conquest: Vikings in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford 2007) 36.
[149] Ó Muirithe, Diarmaid, *From the Viking Word-Hoard: A Dictionary of Scandinavian Words in the Languages of Britain and Ireland* (Dublin 2010) xii.
[150] Ó Cróinín, Dáibhí, *Early Medieval Ireland 400-1200* (Routledge 2013) 240.

the-Eye and Ubba, arrived in 865 and launched an all-offensive campaign against the Northumbrian capital of York. In this campaign, they killed two kings, Osberht (d. 867) and Ælla (d. March 21 or 23 867).[151]

The raids brought Mercia, Northumbria and East Anglia to their knees, leaving Wessex as the last kingdom under English rule. In 874 the great Danish army divided into two sections. Halfdan invaded Yorkshire, where he subdued the territory and settled in it with his men. They took to farming as quickly as they did to warfare and raiding.[152] The second section invaded Wessex under Guthrum (835-890 CE) but in 878 their progress was halted by their defeat at the hands of King Alfred the

Figure 2. *Map of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.*

Great (848/9-899 CE) at Ethandun, modern Eddington in Wiltshire. Eight years later, Guthrum negotiated the Treaty of Wedmore with King Alfred, in which the Danes promised to live only in the north-east portion of the country that was East Anglia. This area was subjected to Danish law and thus became known as *Danelaw*.[153] There were three major Scandinavian territories: Northumbria (Yorkshire), East Anglia and Scandinavian Mercia.[154] The wars went on sporadically and early in the eleventh century, the Danes won England back, which came under the rule of Cnut (d. 1035) and his sons between 1016 and 1042.[155] Whether the Viking beliefs regarding metamorphosis, werewolves and the *úlfheðnar*

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[151] The origin of the nickname of Ivar the Boneless is a hotly debated topic. Ívarr Beinlausi could be translated to "boneless", it could also refer to male impotence, but it also could be "the Hated", which in Latin would be Exosus. The sons of Ragnar were said to have killed Ælla through the gory ritual of the blood eagle. This method of execution entailed keeping the victim alive while their backs were sliced open so that their ribs, lungs and intestines could be pulled into the shape of bloody wings. The earliest reference to this, and the only Viking-Age reference to this ritual, is half a stanza of the skaldic poem *Knútsdrápa* ("*Cnut's Stanzas*").[151] As suggested by Crawford, this needs to be taken with a grain of salt due to the fact that half a stanza describing the ritual cannot provide strong evidence for it. Holman, Katherine, *The Northern Conquest: Vikings in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford 2007) 37.

[152] Ó Muirithe, Diarmaid, *From the Viking Word-Hoard: A Dictionary of Scandinavian Words in the Languages of Britain and Ireland* (Dublin 2010) xiii.

[153] From 793 until the eleventh century, England was never truly free from Scandinavian presence and it is not an over exaggeration to say that the Viking raids contributed significantly to the establishment of the English nation. In 991 a Danish invasion, strengthened by a well-trained army, won a series of victories, including the Battle of Maldon in Essex. This refers to the warriors as they were dressed in wolf skins and to the behaviour of the raiders.

[154] Yorkshire and Lincolnshire were the areas of the most intense settlement by the Vikings. East Anglia and Scandinavian Mercia were gradually won back by Alfred's son and heir, Edward the Elder (874-924 CE), and Alfred's daughter, Aethelflaed, Lady of Mercia after her husband's death in 911.

[155] Ó Muirithe, Diarmaid, *From the Viking Word-Hoard: A Dictionary of Scandinavian Words in the Languages of Britain and Ireland* (Dublin 2010) xiv.

influenced the Insular Celtic and English representations will be discussed in later chapters.

Scotland and the Shetland Wulver

One of the islands that was affected the most by the Nordic and Danish raiders was the Shetland Islands. The Shetland Islands lie 168 kilometres northeast of Scotland, and are closer to Norway than the Scottish capital of Edinburgh. During the Viking expansions, Shetland was colonised by the Norwegians and the Danish in the late eighth and ninth centuries CE, being annexed by Harald Fairhair in 875. The effect of this on the islands cannot be underestimated. Virtually every feature of the landscape on Orkney and Shetland has a Scandinavian name, and very few pre-Scandinavian names survive.[156] The native tongue gradually was replaced by a Scandinavian dialect which was still spoken by the islanders up until the eighteenth century. The Orkney and the Shetland Islands were the last territorial acquisitions of Scotland, ceded by Denmark from 1468 to 1469. In 1472, the Shetland Islands were transferred to the Scottish King James III (1452-1488 CE). In 1707, the Islands became part of the United Kingdom when Scotland became part of the United Kingdom. Since they came late to Scottish rule, the Orkney and Shetland islanders did not share in Scotland's nation building process and continued to look to their Scandinavian origins into the modern era.[157]

Like most civilisations, the Shetland Islands are in possession of their own mythology, folklore and legend, which may have been affected by the overwhelming Scandinavian influence. One of the otherworldly creatures that was said to inhabit the land was the wulver. Jessie Margaret Saxby described the wulver as:

> A creature like a man with a wolf's head. He had short brown hair all over him. His home was a cave dug out of the side of a steep knowe, half-way up a hill. He didn't molest folk if they didn't molest him. He was fond of fishing and had a small rock in the deep water which is known to this day as the 'Wulver's Stane'. There he would sit fishing sillaks and piltaks for hour after hour. He was reported to have frequently left a few fish on the window-sill of some poor body.[158]

This can be seen in Figure 3.[159] Unlike most werewolves, the Shetland wulver is not a shape-shifter. This is typical only for the wulver. It is unaffected by hides, clothes, the moon or any

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[156] Ó Cróinín, Dáibhí, *Early Medieval Ireland 400-1200* (Routledge 2013) 240.
[157] Haywood, John, *The Historical Atlas of the Celtic World* (London 2009) 104.
[158] Saxby, Jessie Margaret, *Shetland Traditional Lore* (Grant & Murray 1932) 141.
[159] Figure 3 taken from: Wulver | Myths and Folklore Wiki | Fandom (Accessed 3rd March 2021).

Figure 3. *A modern rendition of the wulver.*

other external influence that has been cited to transform a man to a wolf. Its form is its permanent state.

The belief surrounding the wulver was that the wulver evolved directly from wolves, and symbolised the in-between stage of man and wolf. Other than the wulver, the Shetland Islands did not have many other werewolf stories. Another notable detail is that the wulver has a benevolent spirit. It is not a warrior, or a berserker or *úlfheðnar*, despite the fact that its appearance does bear a remarkable similarity to the *úlfheðnar* (see Figure 4), which could be a remnant of Scandinavian influence on Shetland culture.[160] Its soul has not left its body and inhabited one of a wolf, nor has it undergone a psychic metamorphosis affected by rage and it does not undergo the classic metamorphosis. Not only would it leave fish for families who were too poor to afford to buy food, the wulver was known to pay his respects outside the homes of families who were facing sickness and death. Interestingly enough, Saxby does not state what would happen if someone decided to "molest", hurt or bother, the wulver. Other than Saxby's book, there is only one other work that mentions the wulver, and it could indicate a darker side to the creature. Elliot O'Donnell told the story in his 1912 book titled *Werewolves*. The story is told by one Andrew Warren. Warren relayed to O'Donnell that when he was a teenager, he lived on the islands with his grandfather, who was a keen collector of fossils.[161] On one occasion, the elderly gentleman discovered the skeleton of a man in a small, dried-up lake, with the skull of a wolf, according to Warren. He and his grandfather took the skeleton back home, but left it outside. The grandfather left to deal with church business soon
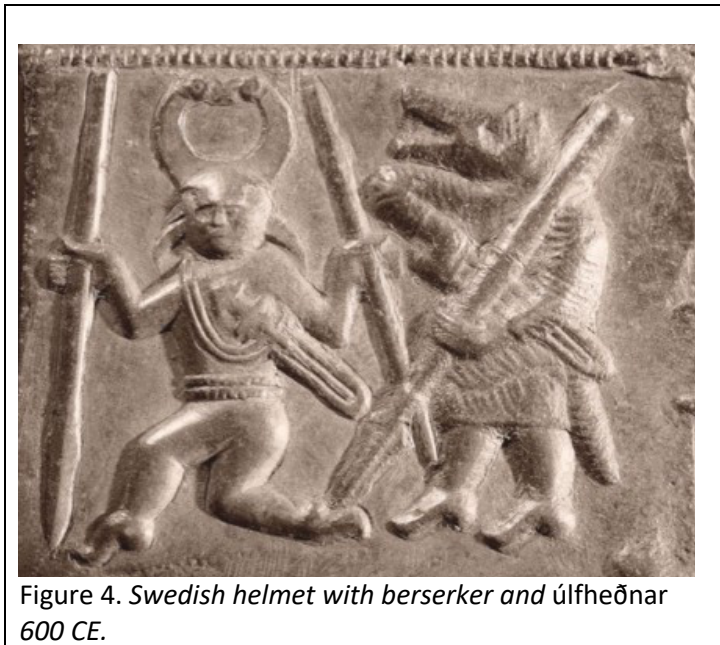
Figure 4. *Swedish helmet with berserker and* úlfheðnar *600 CE.*

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[160] Figure 4 taken from: http://viking.archeurope.info/index.php?page=helmet-plate-matrix-from-torslunda (Accessed 30th April 2021).

[161] Redfern, Nick, *Shapeshifters: Morphing Monsters & Changing Cryptids* (Llewellyn Publications 2017) 7.

after, as he was high up in the local church, and left Warren at home. O'Donnell stated that "while reading a book, he [Warren] heard a curious scratching noise from the kitchen" and Warren went to investigate. Warren "was shocked to see a dark, vague, wolf-like head peering at him "malevolently" through the glass" with "sharp teeth, an undeniable snarl-like appearance, green eyes, pointed ears, and slim hands with long fingernails". Warren thought the creature would try to break in, so he hid until his grandfather came home. Together the boy and the man returned the skeleton to where they had originally found it and buried it again. This apparently appeased the spirit of the wulver as it never bothered Warren or his grandfather again. From this account, it could be said that disturbing a wulver's grave counted as molestation and awakened its ire beyond the grave.

It is on the one hand interesting but on the other hand frustrating that sources which explore the possible consequences of annoying the wulver or making a foe of one, is nigh on impossible to find. Documentation on the elusive wulver in general is scarce. Susan Schoon Eberly, an authority on congenital disorders, speculated that the tale of the wulver may have been based on a human with Hunter syndrome, but this is far from certain.[162] When it comes to the motifs and the characteristics of the wulver, it could be argued that the wulver follows Tibbals' theory of a "constitutional werewolf", as mentioned in the introduction, as it was likely born in the form it is in, and Saxby does not mention an enchantment or a malevolent outside force turning it into one. In terms of whether it could be considered a "benevolent werewolf" or a *garulf*, the wulver can be said to be largely "benevolent" as the wulver has a caring nature, especially with vulnerable families, and shows respect to the dead and their grieving loved ones.[163] Thus, the wulver conforms to modern socially accepted ideals. When it is crossed, though, the wulver could become quite nasty. However, this does not automatically insinuate that the wulver turns into a *garulf*, as even when angered, it showed to be quite measured in its response. The spirit of the dead wulver did not attack Warren nor tried to break into the house – it simply glowered at him for desecrating its grave. Once its body was returned, the wulver left the family alone. In terms of the medieval theory of *voluntas,* as discussed in chapter one, the wulver arguably exercised "a will", because it possessed a simple wanting or desire to help those in need. It can be said that the wulver

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[162] Hunter syndrome is a very rare, inherited genetic disorder caused by a missing or malfunctioning enzyme. Because of these missing or malfunctioning enzymes, there is a build-up of amounts of harmful substances that eventually cause permanent, progressive damage that affect appearance, mental development, organ function and physical abilities. Symptoms and signs include an enlarged head, thickening of the lips, broad nose and flared nostrils, protruding tongue, a deep, hoarse voice, abnormal bone size or shape and other skeletal irregularities.

[163] It could be interpreted that the wulver shows a realistic lupine traits: adopting a surrogate parental role.

leans quite close to Peter Abelard's definition that *voluntas* is not a faculty or power but a simple occurrent desire upon which the wulver acts.

The wulver was an even-tempered creature, but the same cannot be said for other werewolves. Indeed, there were some who were quite war-like and were used as warrior metaphors. The *faoladh* is one such war-like example seen in Irish werewolf stories that we will now turn to.

Chapter 3

The Warriors and the Cursed: The *faoladh* and the werewolves of Ossory

The Irish werewolf was used as a warrior metaphor and as a metaphor for fierce behaviour, as well as for transformations in character aspects in werewolf stories.[164] The werewolf was not confined to Irish prose as female werewolves were mentioned in Old Irish legal sources.[165] One legal source that mentions the female werewolf is the *Bretha Crólige* ('Judgement of Blood Lying'). The law text that dealt with the rights that freemen in a *túath* ('tribe') had to sick maintenance (*folog n-othrusa*), and it lists the twelve categories of men and women excluded from receiving sick maintenance. One of these twelve women was "a werewolf in wolf's form" (*confael conrecta*). This was because the female werewolf was considered to be a danger or a nuisance to nurse back to health and was thus ineligible to receive the full sick maintenance.[166] Instead, the female werewolf was only entitled to a nursing fee that was dependant on three factors: the honour-price of her husband, the type of marriage she entered and her status within the marriage.[167] Interestingly enough, the text makes no mention of the male "werewolf in wolf's form" nor does the law text take into account the werewolf's human form.

The ninth century Welsh monk Nennius mentioned in his *Historia Brittonum* people who knew how to change into wolves. There are two versions of the chronicle extant: an Irish

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[164] Carey, John, 'Werewolves in Medieval Ireland', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 44 (2002) 69.

[165] Bernhardt-House, Philip A., *Werewolves, Magical Hounds and Dog-headed Men in Celtic Literature: A Typological Study of Shape-shifting* (2010) 8.

[166] Kelly, Fergus, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin 1991) 133.

[167] According to *Cáin Lánamna* ('the Law of the Couple'), the three most important unions of legal marriage were "union of joint property", "union of a woman on man-property" and "union of a man on woman-property", and the wife from any one of these unions was known as the "chief wife" (*cétmuinter*). It should be noted that Liam Breatnach argues that *cétmuinter* was the term used to describe 'spouse' in general, both the wife and the husband according to context. Breatnach, Liam, 'On Old Irish collective and abstract nouns, the meaning of cétmuinter, and marriage in early medieval Ireland', *Ériu Vol. 66* (2016) 6-10. Kelly, Fergus, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dundalgan Press 1995) 70-71.

version from 1071 CE[168] and a Latin version also from the eleventh century.[169] The Irish version speaks of the people in Ossory, who allegedly had the ability to change into wolves. What is interesting in the Irish version of Nennius' work, is that these werewolves did not physically change into wolves, but that the souls of the people left their bodies and entered those of wolves and took control of the body and mind of the animal. The families of these 'soul-shifters', as it is apt to deem them, were ordered not to move the human bodies as the soul would then not be able to return.[170]

Another manuscript of this chronicle states that these people were the descendants of a warrior named Laighnech Faeladh, who could change into a wolf by strength of will; he passed down this ability to his descendants.[171] These descendants would instruct their relatives not to move their human bodies, then turn into wolves and would go out to hunt cattle.[172] In the thirteenth century poem, *On people who change into wolves*, which had been added to Nennius' Latin version of his *Historia Brittonum*, these descendants were said to hail from Scotland.[173] This is reminiscent of Kveldúlf Skallagrim's "family history" of being able to become "wolf-like creatures", mentioned in chapter two. If there was an injury to their wolf form, the same injury would appear on their human bodies. The name Laighnech Faeladh is also mentioned in the twelfth century Irish text, the *Cóir Anmann* ('*Fitness of Names*'), which explores the origins of names.[174] Again, he and his descendants were able to turn into wolves as Faeladh was the first to do so.[175] Etymologically speaking, the warrior band of the *faoladh* ("the wolf-y one")[176] likely stem from Laighnech Faeladh since they carry his name. From this brief discussion of Laighnech Faeladh, we can see that, though

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[168] The text was translated into Late Old Irish or Early Middle Irish. It was supposedly translated by the scholar Gilla-Cóemáin mac. Gillai Samthainne, according to versions in Trinity College MS H 3.17 and the Book of Uí Mhaine. *Lebor Bretnach* contains a number of textual variations that indicate that it is the product of scholarly comparison between a number of versions, which suggests that the translation is not from a single manuscript.

[169] There are numerous manuscripts of the Latin version that are known. The oldest is Chartres MS 98 (eleventh century), the second oldest is the later eleventh century manuscript called Vatican MS Latin 1964 and the third oldest is from the early twelfth century called Harleian MS 3859. Each version has problems: Chartres is truncated, Vatican lacks features found in versions of the text used for printing and Harleian has more text than other versions but lacks a preface done by Nennius.

[170] The term 'soul shifter' is mentioned in Bystrický, Peter, 'The Image of the Werewolf in Medieval Literature', *Historický Časopis* Vol. 63 (2015) 797.

[171] Todd, J.T (ed. and transl.), *Leabhar Breathnach Annos Sis, XIV: The Irish Version of the Historia Brittonum of Nennius* (1848) 204-205.

[172] Todd, J.T (ed. and transl.), *Leabhar Breathnach Annos Sis, XIV: The Irish Version of the Historia Brittonum of Nennius* (1848) 204-205.

[173] Gwynn, Aubrey, 'The Writings of Bishop Patrick, 1074-1084', *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 1 (Dublin 1955) 62-63.

[174] Bystrický, Peter, 'The Image of the Werewolf in Medieval Literature', *Historický Časopis* Vol. 63 (2015) 798.

[175] Stokes, Whitley, and Windisch, Ernst, *Cóir Anmann* (Leipzig 1891) 285-444.

[176] The *faoladh* is also known as the *conrecht*, which literally translates to "dog paroxysm".

details vary in different versions of the text, shapeshifting is very much associated with him and his descendants, and that he and his kin are a good example of a voluntary werewolf.

The *faoladh*, adhering to the warrior metaphor, were a warrior-band known as a *fían* entirely composed of werewolves. Historically, the warrior-bands of Ireland known as *fíanna* were bands of aristocratic landless young men. Kim McCone writes that they are also known as *maic báis* ('sons of death').[177] The warrior-bands could also be denoted as *díberg* ('marauding band' or 'brigand'), *fergnia* ('one who had passed certain tests and either attended a king or employed by a king'), and *foglaid* ('raider') depending on their actions.[178] According to Philip Bernhardt-House, the warrior-bands of Ireland were outliers by nature, associated with a "transitional age-grade in society". The warrior-bands were viewed as "expendable", lacking "property or political power".[179] The fighting *faoladh*, who originated from County Tipperary, west of Ossory, offered their services to the king, who paid them to fight in his name. The *faoladh*, unlike the wulver discussed in chapter two, show overt influences from Viking traditions such as the *úlfheðnar*. Like the *úlfheðnar*, the *faoladh* dressed in wolf skins and were "especially furious and cruel in battle".[180] The *faoladh*'s behaviour, fury and customs echo those of the berserker as well. Interestingly enough, their ability to shape shift is omitted, perhaps since their ability became diluted throughout the generations. As for the payment the *faoladh* received from their patron, the king, it was said that they were not paid in gold but in the flesh of new-born babies, which the *faoladh* ate raw in a manner akin to wolves.[181] Hence, the connection to the band's etymology – the name derived from *faol*/*fael* ("wolf") – is clear as the wolf was viewed as a particularly fierce creature, as described in chapter one.

This suggests that the *faoladh* lean, in terms of the "benevolent werewolf" and the *garulf*, closer to being *garulf* due to the fact their behaviour mirrors the animalistic tendencies of the creature in which they shift their souls to or wear the skins of. The fact that the medieval Irish sources state that the *faoladh* were paid in baby flesh could give further credence to this, but as it is embellishment, a degree of caution needs to be taken. It can be said that the *faoladh*

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[177] McCone, Kim, 'Werewolves, Cyclopes, *Díberga*, and *Fíanna*: Juvenile Delinquency in Early Ireland', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 12 (1986) 5.
[178] McCone, Kim, 'Werewolves, Cyclopes, *Díberga*, and *Fíanna*: Juvenile Delinquency in Early Ireland', *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 12 (1986) 6-12.
[179] Bernhardt-House, Philip A., *Werewolves, Magical Hounds and Dog-headed Men in Celtic Literature: A Typological Study of Shape-shifting* (2010) 15.
[180] Bystrický, Peter, 'The Image of the Werewolf in Medieval Literature', *Historický Časopis* Vol. 63 (2015) 798.
[181] Bystrický, Peter, 'The Image of the Werewolf in Medieval Literature', *Historický Časopis* Vol. 63 (2015) 798.

are like the *úlfheðnar* in terms of violence and the wolf skins. From a medieval perspective, it can be argued that the violence the *faoladh* show does not automatically insinuate that the *faoladh* are *garulf*. They are doing it on the behest of their patron, which was a defining trait of the *fían*. There is some scarce evidence for benevolence of the *faoladh*, like looking after children and wounded men, but it is severely limited.[182] However, despite the fact that the *faoladh* revel in battle and enjoy the hunt, they are not mindless animals. As mentioned in chapter one, Augustine stated that animals do not "seek fame and glory and power". Humans do and the *úlfheðnar* do. Furthermore, "our desire for these does not make us better than animals. The difference is in reason." Despite being animalistic in their actions, the *faoladh* were capable of *voluntas*. They had "the will" to change their forms into those of wolves, and they had "the will" to fight for glory, which is a human trait. Glory in battle was likely the *faoladh*'s reason to fight. To the medieval perspective, the desire for glory and their *voluntas* mitigates their status as *garulf*. To a modern perspective, the *faoladh*'s revelry in

Figure 5. *Image 1: the priest meets the werewolf. Image 2: the priest follows the werewolf. Image 3: the priest administers the last Sacrament to the dying female werewolf.*

battle, the manner in which they go about seeking glory and the possibility of them feeding on baby flesh makes their status as malevolent werewolves more likely. As for the female werewolf mentioned in the law texts, though it is clear that these people were believed to exist in early Ireland, the legal evidence does not allow us to determine whether they were benevolent or not, or whether they had *voluntas* or not.
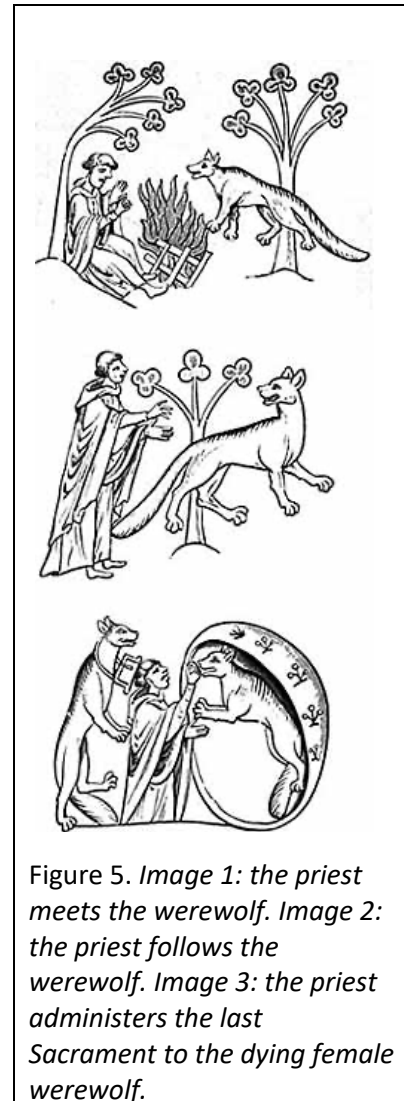
In his *Topographia Hibernica* ('*Topography of Ireland*', circa 1187 CE), a treatise on the country's geography and folklore, Gerald of Wales (1146-1223 CE), who was a royal clerk to King Henry II (1133-1186 CE) as well as an archdeacon and historian, relayed to King Henry "some wonderful occurrences" (Figure 5).[183] This treatise is the story of the werewolves of

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[182] MacKillop, James, *An Oxford Dictionary of Celtic Mythology* (2004). The blog Stair na hÉireann ('History of Ireland') mentions this as well but provides no sources. https://stairnaheireann.net/2018/09/27/faoladh-werewolves-of-ireland/ (Accessed 29 June 2021). More research would need to be done to discern if the primary sources indicate this directly.

[183] Figure 5 taken from: http://www.luminarium.org/mythology/ireland/werewolves.htm (Accessed 4th March 2021).

Ossory. Gerald wrote that about three years before the arrival of earl John [Prince John, the king's youngest son and future 'Bad King John'] in Ireland, it chanced that a priest, who was journeying from Ulster towards Mide (Meath), was "benighted" in a wood on the borders of Meath. While in company with only a young lad, a male werewolf came up to them.[184] The werewolf bade the unnamed priest and his young companion to not fear him and "added some orthodox words referring to God"[185] for good measure. The priest then "implored" the werewolf "to inform them what creature it was that in the shape of a beast uttered human words". The werewolf, "after giving Catholic replies to all questions" [186], told this unnamed priest the story of the curse of the werewolves of Ossory. A man and a woman, natives of Ossory, are cursed because of an old curse placed on Ossory by one Natalis, saint and abbot. The man and woman of Ossory are compelled to turn into wolves every seven years. At the end of the seven years, if these two people survive, two others are forced to take their places. The formerly cursed people return to their country and regain their human form.[187]

The werewolf then beseeches the priest to administer the last rite to his dying female companion. The priest followed the wolf, trembling in trepidation. The werewolf leads him "to a tree at no great distance, in the hollow of which he beheld a she-wolf, who under that shape was pouring forth human sighs and groans". The she-wolf, "on seeing the priest", greeted him with "human courtesy" and "gave thanks to God". "She then received from the priest all the rites of the church duly performed as far as the last communion."[188] The she-wolf "importunately demanded" him to complete "his good offices" by giving her the viaticum, which refers to the Eucharist and is part of the last rite. In order to reassure the terrified priest that he would not be committing blasphemy, "using his claw for a hand", the he-wolf pulled the wolf skin half way down of the female to reveal "the form of an old woman". The priest completed the rite "more out of fear than reason", but the she-wolf "devoutly" partook. After this, the he-wolf kept the priest and his companion company for the night and the following morning, led them out of the forest. The he-wolf expressed his gratitude to the priest and then recited prophecies regarding Ireland and England, and this is where the tale featuring the werewolves ends.

Gerald's account is an interesting example of medieval Irish werewolves. Much like the *faoladh*, the werewolves of Ossory possess an element of the *úlfheðnar*, namely the wolf

[184] Cambrensis, Giraldus, *Topography of Ireland,* transl. Forester, Thomas (2000) 44.
[185] Cambrensis, Giraldus, *Topography of Ireland,* transl. Forester, Thomas (2000) 44.
[186] Cambrensis, Giraldus, *Topography of Ireland,* transl. Forester, Thomas (2000) 44.
[187] Cambrensis, Giraldus, *Topography of Ireland,* transl. Forester, Thomas (2000) 44.
[188] Cambrensis, Giraldus, *Topography of Ireland,* transl. Forester, Thomas (2000) 45.

skin, which is responsible for their lupine forms. Unlike the *úlfheðnar*, who simply took up characteristics of his wolf skin, the transformations of the he-wolf and the she-wolf were physical, but did not affect their human souls, thus keeping in line with Christian metamorphosis. Regarding their character, the werewolves of Ossory can be argued to be more temperate than the *faoladh*. They are also very sane of mind. From this, it can be said that both the he-wolf and the she-wolf adhere to Augustine's theory on metamorphosis mentioned previously in chapter one: although the bodies changed, the minds of the werewolves did not and their souls did not. Augustine did not reject metamorphosis as God's powers were limitless, and could not happen through any other means than God's will. The curse on the two werewolves was at the hands of a man of God, but only God could undo it because only "the Lord" could "call him back from his present exile".[189] A curse bestowed by a saint or an abbot was seen as more legitimate and "less arbitrary" than a curse bestowed by a sorcerer because of the connection to God.[190]

The werewolves' ability to talk and their devout nature reveal their humanity and indicate a disparity between their appearance and their bestial nature.[191] However, Jeanne-Marie Boivin points out that instead of making the werewolves seem less monstrous, the ability to talk reinforces the dual nature and thus "amplifies the horror" felt by the priest.[192] Boivin states that the distinctive trait in the stories of werewolves in the Middle Ages, with the animal appearance in opposition to the human intelligence, was made clear in Gerald of Wales' account. Indeed, the rationality and the civility of the two werewolves attenuate the horror of their metamorphosis.[193] However, Boivin also believes that the account negates metamorphosis and reduces lycanthropy to a disguise or trickery.[194] What should be pointed out, as Sconduto correctly observes, is that Boivin fails to take into account the fact that the werewolves of Ossory were not able to fully remove the hides from their bodies, thus rendering the description of a "disguise" void.[195] Furthermore, it can be said that if the metamorphosis of these two werewolves was indeed a mere disguise or work of trickery, then

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[189] Cambrensis, Giraldus, *Topography of Ireland,* transl. Forester, Thomas (2000) 45.

[190] Bettini, Jessica Lynne, 'The Rage of the Wolf: Metamorphosis and Identity in Medieval Werewolf Tales', *Electronic Theses and Dissertations* (2011) 13.

[191] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 28.

[192] Boivin, Jeanne-Marie, 'Le Prêtre et les loups-garous: Un Episode de la *Topographia Hibernica* de Giraud de Barri', in Harf-Lancner (ed.) *Métamorphose et bestiare fantastique* (Paris 1993) 53.

[193] Walker Bynum, Caroline, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York 2001) 95.

[194] Boivin, Jeanne-Marie, 'Le Prêtre et les loups-garous: Un Episode de la *Topographia Hibernica* de Giraud de Barri', in Harf-Lancner (ed.) *Métamorphose et bestiare fantastique* (Paris 1993) 56.

[195] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 28.

it would be an example of diabolical illusion described by Augustine, whereas this is not the case as it was caused by God's will through a holy man.[196] Sconduto goes so far as to state that by deeming the metamorphosis a disguise or trick, Boivin "would be equating divine power with demonic power". But this case of metamorphosis is not a result of a *phantasm*, as mentioned in chapter one. Furthermore, a magical skin does not automatically indicate that the metamorphosis is a trick, especially in the Irish context. John Carey provides evidence for this, showing that in Irish tales, magical skins or garments were used to effect transformations into birds or seals, such as in the case of the selkie or the merrow.[197] In these cases, the transformations are physical, like those of the werewolves.

Another element that differs between the *faoladh* and the werewolves of Ossory, is the overtly Christian character of Gerald's account that influenced almost every aspect of the tale. As mentioned in the introduction, according to the model of Kate Watkins Tibbals, the werewolves of Ossory are not "constitutional werewolves", as they were not born werewolves. They are "involuntary" werewolves due to the fact they have been cursed or enchanted to take their lupine forms. In contrast to them, the *faoladh* are not "Teutonic" or "involuntary", but are "constitutional" werewolves as they inherited their abilities from an ancestor with the same abilities. Laighnech Faeladh himself is a "constitutional" werewolf, but over the generations, the ability to transform into wolves was lost. The werewolves of Ossory have undergone a true metamorphosis that falls "in the parameters of Christian doctrine", as Sconduto states, as the metamorphosis shows a bestial element to the people but kept their human intellect intact, which differs from Scandinavian tradition. Further evidence for this is not simply the revealed human form of the female werewolf, which shows that both the she-wolf and the he-wolf were created in the image of God, but also the saintly origin of the curse, the ability of the male and female werewolf to speak and the piousness of both the werewolves. The involvement of the unnamed priest and the viaticum episode reinforce the Christian nature of the story. As for the type of metamorphosis, the werewolves of Ossory arguably underwent 'Christian metamorphosis' as their humanity remained intact despite their lupine forms while the *faoladh* underwent 'pagan metamorphosis' as their physical shape denoted their bestial character.

To lend historical credibility to the account, Gerald recounted that two years after hearing the tale, as he was travelling through Mide, he was asked to preside over the trial of the priest

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[196] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 28.
[197] Carey, John, 'Werewolves in Medieval Ireland', *Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies* 44 (2002) 63.

who had administered the last rites to the female werewolf.[198] Unable to attend the trial, Gerald advised the council to refer the matter to the Pope.[199] His advice was heeded but Gerald did not mention the fate of the priest upon his arrival in Rome. Jessica Bettini states that the story of the werewolves of Ossory demonstrates the difficulty of reconciling church theology with tales of human metamorphosis facing the author, and to a large extent this is true.[200] This difficulty can be seen in Gerald's own writing. Gerald interprets the metamorphosis of the werewolves of Ossory as a miracle, but at the same time does question whether "such an animal" should be considered a man or a beast. He hinted that these creatures and their curse resulted from "unnatural" desires of the Irish as they were "*contra naturam*" ("against nature").[201] However, there is no elaboration on Natalis' curse nor is it explained how the exiles were chosen.[202] What could be said, is that the werewolves were transformed through no fault of their own.[203] Gerald noted that God used metamorphosis as a manner to carry out his divine vengeance on the inhabitants of Ossory and to show his overt authority over mankind.[204] In terms of the duality between the human and the beast of the werewolves, Gerald answered his previous question by citing Augustine: "we must think the same of them as we do of those monstrous births in the human species of which we often hear, and true reason declares that whatever answers to the definition of man, as a rational mortal animal, whatever be its form, to be considered a man."[205] Thus, these werewolves should be considered humans, despite their monstrous appearance. Sconduto argues that the truth behind the duality of their human soul versus their monstrous appearance was revealed to the unnamed priest during the last rites to the female werewolf, which was also part of why the priest was alarmed.[206] But the situation could be a bit more complex. The priest primarily saw their monstrous forms, even when elements of their humanity were obvious. Moreover, had the werewolves of Ossory been truly perceived as human, there would surely not have

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[198] Cambrensis, Giraldus, *Topography of Ireland,* transl. Forester, Thomas (2000) 45-46.

[199] Bettini, Jessica Lynne, 'The Rage of the Wolf: Metamorphosis and Identity in Medieval Werewolf Tales', (East Tennessee State University 2011) MA thesis, 13.

[200] Bettini, Jessica Lynne, 'The Rage of the Wolf: Metamorphosis and Identity in Medieval Werewolf Tales', (East Tennessee State University 2011) MA thesis, 13.

[201] Knight, Rhonda, 'Werewolves, Monsters, and Miracles: Representing Colonial Fantasies in Gerald of Wales's "Topographia Hibernica"', *Studies in Iconography* (2001) 60-61.

[202] This is not explained by Gerald and is not found anywhere else in the work.

[203] Knight, Rhonda, 'Werewolves, Monsters, and Miracles: Representing Colonial Fantasies in Gerald of Wales's "Topographia Hibernica"', *Studies in Iconography* (2001) 69.

[204] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 30.

[205] Cambrensis, Giraldus, *Topography of Ireland,* transl. Forester, Thomas (2000) 45.

[206] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 30.

been a need to put the priest, who administered the last rite to the female werewolf, on trial or have him brought before the pope.

The duality of the werewolves of Ossory also raise questions on the identity of the werewolves themselves. Identity, as Walker Bynum elucidates, is a "labile, threatening, problematic, and threatened" trait.[207] Identity encompasses some very personal traits, such as religion, individuality, personality, class, language group, ethnicity et cetera. Metamorphosis "is as much its guarantee as its loss."[208] Walker Bynum is correct: while the werewolves of Ossory maintained aspects of their human identity traits, such as their probable human personalities, their religion and a sense of human dignity, they also could no longer be identified as fully human due to their lupine forms, which could be interpreted as the "loss". Whether the werewolves of Ossory can be considered to be "benevolent"[209] werewolves or constituted as *garulf*, it is likely that they would fall under the "benevolent" category. The werewolves exhibited *voluntas*, adhering to both Abelard and Aquinas' ideas of the phenomenon (see chapter one). The male werewolf had "the will" and exercised said will to approach the priest for help in order to save the immortal soul of his companion. Whether the female werewolf had "the will" to hold onto her life long enough for the last rites to be given to her, so as not to damn her soul, could be up for debate. The werewolves of Ossory are also not aggressive or violent. They may not have shown care to others, like the Shetland wulver, but they cared for one another, showed politeness and deference to the priest, could still speak in human tongues and maintained human intellect. They also still showed respect to church rituals as the male werewolf assured the priest he would not interfere in the holy rites. However, it should be noted that there is no indication to suggest that these two werewolves could not or did not act in a violent, animalistic manner, but it did not seem to be at the core of their character.

The case of the werewolves of Ossory is not the only example of cursed wolf people in Ireland. Wolf people in the forests of Ireland are also mentioned in the *Konnungs skuggsjá XI* ('The King's Mirror') from the thirteenth century.[210] The work was written for the son of King Haakon Haakonsson of Norway (1204-1263 CE) to educate the prince on the matters of seafaring, trade, countries, climate, politics, courtesy, morality, military strategy and other

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[207] Walker Bynum, Caroline, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York 2001) 182.
[208] Walker Bynum, Caroline, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York 2001) 182.
[209] A "benevolent" werewolf, according to Runstedler, is a werewolf that shows real life lupine traits such as alpha wolf behaviour, surrogate parental roles and cognitive mind-mapping. In this thesis, the "benevolent" werewolf is a werewolf who can conform to societal norms while still in wolf form (see chapter one).
[210] Larson, L.M., *The King's Mirror* (New York 1917) 115-116.

subjects of importance to a royal prince. Ireland is one of the countries mentioned in the work. A strange feature of Ireland, which according to the book the inhabitants have testified to be true, is the ability to change into a wolf due to invoking the wrath of a saint. In this particular case, it was not Saint Natalis who was responsible, but Saint Patrick (fifth century), who preached Christianity to the pagans of the country. One particular but unnamed clan resisted the saint more than others, angering Saint Patrick and God. They even howled like wolves during one of his sermons.[211] Saint Patrick prayed to God for vengeance against the clan and their descendants, as a lasting punishment for their defiance. From then on, the clan and their descendants turned into wolves for an unspecified amount of time. According to the *Konnungs skuggsjá XI*, the clan would wander the forest and find food in the same manner as wolves, but would be worse than wolves as they eagerly hunted humans. The werewolves had "the ingenuity of people in their tricks".[212] This change allegedly happened every seventh winter or continued for seven whole years, after which the members of the clan were no longer afflicted. What this reveals is a recurring trend in the representation of Irish werewolves as in both cases, the werewolves were cursed by saints. This diverges from the Viking traditions and lean much closer to the Christian ideas surrounding lycanthropy, in that the transformations are physical and was a punishment from God via a holy man.

Each of these stories does have an underlying political element. The political context of the accounts of the *faoladh*, the werewolves of Ossory and the *Konnungs skuggsjá*, needs to be taken into account as it could shed light on the extent of the duality of the werewolves. Gerald of Wales was both a denigrator and a champion of Insular Celtic peoples, but he had a particular dislike for the Irish.[213] Robert Bartlett states that Gerald's criticisms of the Irish are characterised by "his unsympathetic and external point of view. He wrote as a hostile outsider."[214] This may have been influenced by Henry II's invasion of Ireland and his attempt to 'pacify' Ireland.[215] Gerald, who wrote under the patronage of the king, could have been influenced by the relations between his patron and Ireland. The early Middle Irish version of Gerald's tale in the *Topographia* linked the werewolves of Ossory to the ruling family in Ossory, indicating contemporary familiarity with werewolf tales and negative connotations of

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[211] Bystrický, Peter, 'The Image of the Werewolf in Medieval Literature', *Historický Časopis* Vol. 63 (2015) 797.

[212] Bystrický, Peter, 'The Image of the Werewolf in Medieval Literature', *Historický Časopis* Vol. 63 (2015) 797.

[213] Gerald of Wales' dislike for the Irish is one of the reasons why academics usually take his works on Ireland with a grain of salt. Brown, Michelle P., 'Gerald of Wales and the *Topography of Ireland*: Authorial Agendas in Word and Image', *Journal of Irish Studies* (2005) 52.

[214] Bartlett, Robert, *Gerald of Wales: A Voice of the Middle Ages* (Stroud 2006) 39.

[215] Duffy, Seán, 'Henry II and England's Insular Neighbours', *Henry II: New Interpretations* (2009) 138.

having family members cursed by God through a holy man.[216] To link the ruling family of a kingdom with these cursed people was effectively an *ad hominem* argument that stated the family is cursed because members of their family offended God. This could have been used as an allegory for Ireland's ruling kingdoms being in need of England's help in order to civilise themselves and cease to be barbarians. In later recensions of the *Topography*, the redactor of the work gradually portrayed the land and people more favourably.[217] Lindsey Zachary Panxhi argues that the tale of the werewolves of Ossory should be read through an ecclesiastical lens, rather than the lens of a court writer.[218] The story of the werewolves of Ossory could have been part of Henry II's desire to reform the Irish church.[219] Regarding the Irish priests, Gerald praised the chastity of the clergy, vigilance in prayer and reading, devotion to perform divine offices, and diligent practice of fasting after the reforms were put into place.[220]

As for the tale of the werewolf clan in the *Konnungs skuggsjá*, it may have played a similar political role as the werewolves of Ossory. The *Konnungs skuggsjá* aimed at introducing the concept of royal justice rather than feuds or private contracts between parties and advocates for a system ruled by one strong king.[221] The author was not necessarily set against supernatural elements. The author of the *Konnungs skuggsjá* pointed out that the supernatural elements, including werewolves, that existed in Ireland were "signs of holiness" and reveal God's favour with Ireland.[222] The indignation of the author seems to be directed at the unnamed blasphemous clan alone, not the Irish people. In terms of King Haakon's personal relationship with Ireland, it was quite good, seeing as he had once been offered the High Kingship by a delegation of Irish kings.

The medieval Irish werewolves reveal a dual nature between man and beast. The figure of the werewolf could be argued to be a mediating figure "between the unbridled ferocity of the wolf and the rationality and civilised nature of humans".[223] In the case of the werewolves of

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[216] Bettini, Jessica Lynne, 'The Rage of the Wolf: Metamorphosis and Identity in Medieval Werewolf Tales', (East Tennessee State University 2011) MA thesis, 14-15.

[217] Panxhi, Lindsey Zachary, 'Rewriting the Werewolf and Rehabilitating the Irish in the *Topographia Hibernica* of Gerald of Wales', *Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies* (2015) 22.

[218] Panxhi, Lindsey Zachary, 'Rewriting the Werewolf and Rehabilitating the Irish in the *Topographia Hibernica* of Gerald of Wales', *Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies* (2015) 23.

[219] This was because there were still some latent pagan elements left. Ó Cróinín, Dáibhí, *Early Medieval Ireland 400-1200* (Routledge 2013) 288.

[220] Panxhi, Lindsey Zachary, 'Rewriting the Werewolf and Rehabilitating the Irish in the *Topographia Hibernica* of Gerald of Wales', *Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies* (2015) 29.

[221] Bagge, Sverre, 'Nature and Society in The King's Mirror', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* (1994) 29.

[222] Bagge, Sverre, 'Nature and Society in The King's Mirror', *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* (1994) 13.

[223] Bernhardt-House, Philip A., *Werewolves, Magical Hounds and Dog-headed Men in Celtic Literature: A Typological Study of Shape-shifting* (2010) 174.

Ossory, they have the rationality and civilised nature of a normal human. The unnamed clan of the *Konnungs skuggsjá* used their human ingenuity to heighten the unbridled ferocity of their wolf instincts. The *faoladh* lean more towards the ferocity of the beast within them than the werewolves of Ossory, though it is likely some of their traits were possibly embellished for an added shock factor. All the Irish werewolves retain their human soul, which reveal they do have more elements that are compatible with Christian theology despite having a few Scandinavian influences. Both Gerald's work and the *Konnungs skuggsjá* mention the curse lasting "seven years", which is a holy number linked to the Bible, which shows overt Christian influences in addition to the nature of the metamorphosis the werewolves underwent. The benevolence of the werewolves of Ossory is highlighted by their pious and deferent nature, both to a medieval and modern perspective, while the fierce and war-like nature of the *faoladh* and the werewolf clan in the *Konnungs skuggsjá* place them closer to the *garulf*. However, the ability to differentiate the "benevolence" and the *garulf* in the werewolf is not always so clear cut, and in the following chapters, the reason why will become clear. For even under a chivalrous exterior, a savage interior can lurk. This can be perhaps best seen in the cases of Bisclavret and Melion to which we now turn.

Chapter 4

The Breton Knights: Bisclavret and Melion

<u>Bisclavret</u>

If the Irish werewolf is a metaphor for a warrior, then the Breton werewolves Bisclavret and Melion, arguably are metaphors for courtly, chivalric behaviour. *Bisclavret* is one of the twelve *Lais* of Marie de France, written in the 12th century in England, between 1160 and 1178.[224] Her verse form is the octosyllabic couplet with her rhyme-word choices demonstrating the "eloquence" of the rhyme, displaying wit in "teasing rationality".[225] Originally written in French, the *Lai de Bisclavret* tells the story of a knight from Brittany who was born a werewolf, and who initially decided it would be best to hide this secret from his wife. Bisclavret's wife began to notice her husband's strange behaviour and thought he was having an affair. After being emotionally blackmailed by his wife, Bisclavret told his wife the truth, which frightened her. The wife eventually decided she could not lie with a werewolf, thus she opted to betray him for another knight and stole his clothes. This left Bisclavret in his wolf form, with his human mind intact. He stayed alone in the woods for a while. Eventually, Bisclavret was found by his king and fellow nobles, who immediately recognised that this wolf was not a wild beast and took him back with them. Bisclavret behaved impeccably until he was faced with his former wife and her lover. He attacked them both, and tore his wife's nose off her face in the process. The wife confessed to her crime and the location where she hid the clothes. Once he put his clothes on, Bisclavret turned back into his human form.

In order to understand the way Bisclavret was written, the author Marie de France herself needs to be taken into account as well. Bisclavret is generally accepted as a figure from a Breton tale that Marie de France claimed to have written down and translated from performances she had attended.[226] This claim is disputed among academics. Patrick Malrieu states that despite examples of Breton bardic tradition being present in her *Lais*, it does not

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[224] The *Lais* are short romances often about women and men who suffer in love. They are short, typically around 600-1000 lines and often involved supernatural and fairy-world motifs.

[225] The octosyllabic couplet is eight syllable lines in rhyming pairs. Shoaf, Judy, *The Lais of Marie de France: A Verse Translation* (Gainesville 1991) Translator's Notes.

[226] Greenblatt, Stephen (ed.), *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* Volume A (London 2012) 142.

automatically indicate that Marie translated directly from the primary source.[227] On the other hand, June McCash theorises that Marie's primary concern was the preservation of her name and her work.[228] Peggy McCracken believes that Marie translated the story from Breton to French and is "conscious" that her project is a product of translation.[229] According to Virginia Kenyon, Marie was attempting to safeguard the cultural heritage of her people by offering the *Lais* to her audience in "their own tongue".[230] She may have done this as she was aware that the *Lais* had a better chance of being read, and thus remembered, in the *lingua franca* of high society than it would in Breton or English.[231] Each of these theories are up for contention.

The culture and politics of court may play an underlying role in Bisclavret's *Lais*. Marie dedicates her twelve *Lais* – including *Bisclavret* – to a "noble king", who was quite likely Henry II of England as he ruled during the time when Marie was thought to have lived in England.[232] Little is known about Marie as an individual. She was likely a descendant from a French family living in England after the Norman Conquest in 1066.[233] Yvonne Owens doubts that Marie was a nun or an abbess as the writings could be considered heretical. Marie defends the values and principles of chivalry, including jousting, which was forbidden during her lifetime by church law.[234] For these reasons, Owens theorises that Marie was the child of a nobleman of a great Norman house.[235] However, all of this is subject to conjecture.[236]

Taking this into consideration, it is most likely that the primary audience for her writings was the nobility. Furthermore, there are courtly elements woven into the story – a knight paying favours to his ladylove; merciful, wise, and just kings, which were appreciated by the nobility. The aristocracy embraced the ideals of chivalry and courtly love in literature, music, and life. Despite strong Christian ideologies and beliefs at court, influences of the supernatural are common in the works of the writers in Henry's court, such as the Melusina

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[227] Malrieu, Patrick, *Histoire de la Chanson Populaire Bretonne* (Dastum et Skol 1983) 6.

[228] McCash, June H., 'Images of Women in the Lais of Marie de France', *Medieval Perspectives 11* (1996) 98.

[229] McCracken, Peggy, 'Translation and Animals in Marie de France's *Lais*', *Australian Journal of French Studies* (2009) 206.

[230] Kenyon, Virginia, 'What do Marie de France and her writings teach us about the nature and complexities of medieval authorship?' (Academia) 2.

[231] Marie never translated *Bisclavret* into English; despite the fact it was thought that she lived there.

[232] Simpson, James & David, Alfred, *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* (London 2012) 142.

[233] There have been theories that Marie was the abbess of Shaftesbury and an illegitimate daughter of Geoffrey Plantagenet, Count of Anjou (1113-1151 CE) and was thus half-sister to Henry II. Simpson, James & David, Alfred, *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* (London 2012) 142.

[234] Owens, Yvonne, 'A Literary Technology of Magic: Ancient Vestiges and Cultural Innovations in the *Lais* of Marie de France' (Academia) 3.

[235] Her father was believed to be Waleran de Meulan (990-1069 CE).

[236] Lopez, Kirsten, 'What Lurks Within Us: The Symbolism of Human-Animal Metamorphosis in *Yonec* and *Bisclavret*' (Academia 2015) 1.

motif[237] employed by Gerald of Wales.[238] This was due to the medieval practice of assimilating the supernatural into the historical, as seen in the works of Geoffrey of Monmouth (1095-1155 CE) and Walter Map (1140-1210 CE).[239] Thus, a supernatural theme to the *Lais* of *Bisclavret* is not unexpected.

Much like the Irish *faoladh*, etymology of the name of Bisclavret could provide some insight into the character of the werewolf. The meaning behind the name has been subject to debate for over one hundred years.[240] One interpretation is that the name derives from "*bleiz lavaret*", which refers to a wolf that possesses *logos* – the ability to account for and to give reasons for decisions made.[241] This definition will be discussed further on in this chapter. Another interpretation is given by William Sayers, who proposed the etymology stems from "*bleiz claffet*", which appears quite appropriate as it translates to "wolf-sick, afflicted with lycanthropy". Other possible meanings of the name are "speaking wolf", "wearing short pants", "dear little speaking wolf", "rational wolf", and "leprous wolf", some of which are also quite fitting.[242] Hans Schwerteck's suggestion of "*bleiz kammwraet*", supposedly "counterfeit-wolf", seems less likely due to the fact that medieval werewolves are typically humans who became werewolves, not wolves who became humans.[243]

The motif of metamorphosis representing the idea of the beast within and challenging the duality between man and beast was quite well known during the time Marie wrote her *Lais*. The werewolf (*garulf*) was also a known concept. Marie defined the *garulf* as a werewolf that "is a ferocious beast which, when possessed by this madness, devours men, causes great damage and dwells in vast forests."[244] The Norman French *garulf* is a senseless and

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[237] The Melusina motif comes from the myth of Melusina, who married the first Duke of Burgundy, but every month turned into a half dragon, or half serpent. Melusina would thus bathe every month alone to hide her secret, but one day her husband broke the vow to not bother her due to his own suspicions.

[238] Short, Ian, 'Literary Culture at the Court of Henry II', *Henry II: New Interpretations* (Cambridge 2007) 345-348.

[239] Geoffrey of Monmouth wrote his *Historia Regnum Britanniae* ('History of the Kings of Britain') during this time, and Walter Map wrote *De Nugis Curialium* ('Trifles of Courtiers') and recorded the earliest versions of stories on English vampires.

[240] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 40.

[241] Boyd, Matthieu, 'The Ancients' Savage Obscurity: The Etymology of *Bisclavret*', *Notes and Queries 60.2* (Oxford 2013) 199.

[242] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 40.

[243] Boyd, Matthieu, 'The Ancients' Savage Obscurity: The Etymology of *Bisclavret*', *Notes and Queries 60.2* (Oxford 2013) 199.

[244] Burgess, Glyn S. & Busby, Keith (trans.), *The Lais of Marie de France* (Penguin Classics 1986) 69. Original Anglo-Norman: "*Garvalf, ceo est beste salvage; tant cum il est in cele rage, hummes devure, grant mal feit, es granz forez converse e vait.*" (Gilbert, Dorothy (ed. and trans), *Marie de France: Poetry* (New York 2015), lines 9-12).

bloodthirsty beast (*Garulf l'apelent li Norman ... garulf, ceo est beste salvage*).[245] As long as the *garulf*'s rage lasts, "it devours men and does great harm".[246] Almost immediately, Marie dismissed what she wrote on the *garulf* as she began to narrate Bisclavret, as if to make it clear from the onset to her audience that Bisclavret is no *garulf*.[247] What can be seen in *Bisclavret*, is that the eponymous character "conducted himself nobly" and when he turns into a werewolf, he feeds "only of the prey [he] captures".[248] In comparison to the werewolves of Ossory, Bisclavret's noble, knightly conduct was not overruled by his more bestial form.

The fact that he still displays noble conduct did not seem to register with Bisclavret himself. This is shown in the story by Bisclavret's wariness of his own duality, and the fact he is ashamed of his lycanthropy. He tries to keep it a secret from his wife as long as he could, likely fearing her reaction. The character of Bisclavret is depicted almost as though he believes that he is a *garulf*, due to social approbation. Later, after his wife's betrayal, Bisclavret is faced with his worst nightmare: imprisonment in his wolf form with no way of turning back. However, through the experience, Bisclavret "discovers his ability to control the beast with his human … understanding and good sense."[249] By the end of the story, it can be argued that Bisclavret proves to himself that he has more control than a *garulf* as his human intelligence and understanding are still intact, which likely shows him that his coloured view of his condition is misplaced.[250] Regarding the transformations themselves, Bisclavret shows that he had awareness during his transformations and could possibly even control them.[251] His weekly forays were perhaps a rejuvenating experience as Bisclavret "returned home in high spirits."[252] Bisclavret's lycanthropy also does not appear to hinder his ability to act as vassal, knight or husband and he only experiences problems in this regard when his wife discovered his secret.[253] Even in wolf form, Bisclavret still displays the same courtly behaviour as he did in human form. It becomes clear that his short periods of time, in wolf form, three times a week to hunt, are not Bisclavret's main concern. He fears permanent

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[245] Wood, Lucas, 'The Werewolf as Möbius Strip, or Becoming Bisclavret', *The Romantic Review* (Columbia 2011) 7.

[246] Burgess, Glyn S. & Busby, Keith (trans.), *The Lais of Marie de France* (Penguin Classics 1986) 69.

[247] Marie de France does not cite a previous source or author for her definition of the *garulf*, which is interesting to note as Medieval authors had a habit of citing a "previous source" to make themselves appear more credible. Whether these "previous" sources existed or not is unclear due to lack of evidence.

[248] Burgess, Glyn S. & Busby, Keith (trans.), *The Lais of Marie de France* (Penguin Classics 1986) 68.

[249] Bruckner, Matilda Tomaryn, 'Of Men and Beasts in *Bisclavret*', *Romantic Review* 81.3 (1991) 259.

[250] Walker Bynum, Caroline, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York 2001) 172.

[251] Bettini, Jessica Lynne, 'The Rage of the Wolf: Metamorphosis and Identity in Medieval Werewolf Tales', (East Tennessee State University 2011) MA thesis, 25.

[252] Burgess, Glyn S. & Busby, Keith (trans.), *The Lais of Marie de France* (Penguin Classics 1986) 68.

[253] Auz, Jessica L., 'Werewolves as Translation: Bisclovret, Melion and Alphonse', *Seton Hall University Dissertations and Theses* (2013) 9.

transformation and getting overpowered by the will of the wolf.[254]

What can be deduced from this, is that although external circumstances and behaviour may change, the essence of a being remains human, if control is exercised.[255] This can be seen in Bisclavret's werewolf behaviour: "as soon as he [Bisclavret] sees the king, he runs up to him and begs for mercy", using intelligible human-like gestures and courtly etiquette.[256] Walker Bynum argues that, despite Bisclavret's rationality and his courtly behaviour, his identity is still considered up to that point to be that of a wolf, due to his physical appearance.[257] In the story, the king also specifically remarked to his retinue that the werewolf has human understanding and intelligence, but he sounded surprised, which may give credence to Walker Bynum's argument. Despite the fact Bisclavret is an animal in appearance, the king took him back to court and kept him as an intimate in the royal household.[258] Dana Oswald states that in Middle English literature, "monsters are capable of changes both spiritual and physical … the body is no longer the primary indicator of identity", which is not the case here.[259] The king saw the body of the werewolf first, not the creature's mind. Considering the Middle English and Anglo-Norman traditions differed, this may not be surprising.

The wolf was "so noble and gentle a beast … that it never attempted to cause any harm".[260] "He is well-liked by everyone at court". Instead of revealing monstrosity, Bisclavret's body arguably concealed his duality.[261] Despite the lack of voice and his lupine form, Bisclavret upheld his knightly behaviour, but crucially he was not considered entirely human until the wife confessed to her crime.[262] It is through the betrayal of his wife that Bisclavret also changed more than any of the previous werewolves because he had learned to see his condition in a new light, whom to trust, how to be discreet and taught others to not simply judge someone by appearance.[263]

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[254] Bettini, Jessica Lynne, 'The Rage of the Wolf: Metamorphosis and Identity in Medieval Werewolf Tales', (East Tennessee State University 2011) MA thesis, 25.

[255] Salisbury, Joyce E., *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (Routledge 2011) 144.

[256] McCracken, Peggy, 'Translation and Animals in Marie de France's *Lais*', *Australian Journal of French Studies* (2009) 216.

[257] Walker Bynum, Caroline, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York 2001) 172.

[258] McCracken, Peggy, 'Translation and Animals in Marie de France's *Lais*', *Australian Journal of French Studies* (2009) 216.

[259] Oswald, Dana, *Monsters, Gender, and Sexuality in Medieval English Literature* (Suffolk 2010) 23.

[260] Burgess, Glyn S. & Busby, Keith (trans.), *The Lais of Marie de France* (Penguin Classics 1986) 70. Original Anglo-Norman: "*Seignurs," fet il, "avant venez! Ceste merveillë esgardez, cum ceste beste s'humilie! Ele ad sen d'hume, merci crie. Chaciez mei tuz chiens ariere, si gardez que hum ne la fiere! Ceste beste ad entente e sen. Espleitiez vus! Alum nus en!"* (Gilbert, Dorothy (ed. and trans), *Marie de France: Poetry* (New York 2015) lines, 151-158).

[261] Oswald, Dana, *Monsters, Gender, and Sexuality in Medieval English Literature* (Suffolk 2010) 23.

[262] Bettini, Jessica Lynne, 'The Rage of the Wolf: Metamorphosis and Identity in Medieval Werewolf Tales', (East Tennessee State University 2011) MA thesis, 29.

[263] Walker Bynum, Caroline, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York 2001) 172-173.

Another element that needs to be considered in the duality of Bisclavret is his clothing. When his wife asked where he kept his clothes ["In the name of God, where do you leave your clothes?"], Bisclavret refused to tell her, for "if I lost them … I should remain a werewolf forever".[264] He also described that he would lose his "self". This is telling as it shows a link between clothing and humanness. The loss of Bisclavret's clothing, stolen by his wife's knightly lover, is central to furthering the descent of Bisclavret into the bestial form physically, but in the end not mentally and spiritually. The link between Bisclavret's loss of "self" and his clothing adheres to the medieval idea that clothing was central to the definition of humanity; wearing clothes was one of the things that medieval people thought separated real humans from monstrous races, which were depicted nude, and thus established a physical as well as symbolic boundary between humanity and bestiality.[265] It is the reason why the thirteenth century Frankish author, Ratramnus of Corbie (800-868 CE) categorised the dog-headed Cynocephali, who were believed to live in India and Africa, as human because they wore clothes, despite having animal heads and the inability to speak.[266] Thus, the theft of the clothes ensured a loss of human identity. With the loss of his clothing, Bisclavret has lost "himself" as he is no longer recognised to be a human, and through that, no longer a knight or husband. Bisclavret is considered as a beast, doomed to be in his lupine form and wandering the forest.[267] However, his human reason is not lost as shown by his reverence for the king. It should be noted that Marie never once mentioned any savage act Bisclavret committed as a wolf.[268]

Apart from rationality and clothing, a third element that reveals a duality in Bisclavret's character, is the exacting of justice against his unfaithful wife and her lover. The wife had been the one to betray him, and her lover had been her accomplice. In light of this, Bisclavret knew how to hand out justice to them. "As soon as he arrived at the palace, he [Bisclavret] caught sight of the knight and sped towards him, sinking his teeth into him and dragging him down towards him"; "when Bisclavret saw her [the wife] … no one could restrain him. He dashed towards her like a madman and he tore the nose right off her face".[269] Both of the acts

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[264] Burgess, Glyn S. & Busby, Keith (trans.), *The Lais of Marie de France* (Penguin Classics 1986) 68-69.

[265] Salisbury, Joyce E., *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (Routledge 2011) 147.

[266] Salisbury, Joyce E., *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (Routledge 2011) 148.

[267] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 44.

[268] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 45.

[269] Burgess, Glyn S. & Busby, Keith (trans.), *The Lais of Marie de France* (Penguin Classics 1986) 70-71. Original Anglo-Norman: *Quant Bisclavret la veit venir, nuls hum nel point retenir: vers li curut cum enragiez.*

confused the king and his nobles, since it was not the docile, courtly behaviour the wolf normally exhibited. The vengeance exacted on the knight was described by Marie to be akin to a wolf attack, but his attack on his wife was described as akin to a "madman". The chosen translation of "madman" is quite telling in that, though beast in form, Bisclavret still retained enough humanity to be regarded as an angered human instead of a beast. He wanted revenge.[270]

Our modern views would consider the punishment Bisclavret exacted on his former wife beastly, especially since the loss of her nose has marked her as less than human.[271] However, the cutting off of a nose was a known punishment for treason in the time Marie wrote Bisclavret.[272] Through this act, Bisclavret showed his knowledge of the human institution of judicial violence.[273] He showed human anger, not random bestial brutality and carried out a sentence in the interest of public justice.[274] Another element that provides evidence for Bisclavret leaning closer to man than beast, is the word "vengereit", which introduces the notion of combat and chivalric justice [*Kar volentiers se vengereit*/"For Bisclavret wanted to avenge himself"].[275] The fact the knights in the kings' household and the wise advisor believed that the knight and Bisclavret's former wife wronged him revealed that they no longer viewed Bisclavret as a simple wolf in need of guarding. They viewed him as, maybe not as a fellow knight, but as someone with chivalric and courtly virtues.[276] Indeed, the violence exhibited by Bisclavret can be considered to be human in nature, according to Aquinas' doctrine that motive is intrinsic to humanity. As mentioned in chapter one, Aquinas theorised that human violence was considered to be logical as it was influenced by motives and goals.[277] When the king ordered the former wife to be interrogated, the king had essentially endorsed Bisclavret's behaviour because otherwise the wolf would have been

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Oiez cum il est bien vengiez: les neis li esracha del vis! (Gilbert, Dorothy (ed. and trans), *Marie de France: Poetry* (New York 2015), lines 231-235.

[270] This behaviour of revenge has been viewed in dogs, wolves, cats, lions, elephants, and tigers as well, which is interesting.

[271] Campbell, Emma, 'Political Animals: Human/Animal Life in *Bisclavret* and *Yonec*', *Exemplaria Vol. 25* (2013) 100.

[272] Benkov, Edith Joyce, 'The Naked Beast: Clothing and Humanity in *Bisclavret*', *Chimères: A Journal of French and Italian Literature* (1988) 35.

[273] Penny, Eleanor, 'The Beast Within and the Without: Monstrous Children and Human Monsters in *Bisclavret* and *Sir Gowther*', (Academia) 4.

[274] Wood, Lucas, 'The Werewolf as Möbius Strip, or Becoming Bisclavret', *The Romantic Review* (Columbia 2011) 15-16.

[275] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 48.

[276] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 49.

[277] Williams, Thomas, 'Will and Intellect', *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Ethics* (Cambridge 2019) 242.

punished for its attack. As a well-learned Christian, Marie may well have been aware of Aquinas' work but whether Aquinas consciously influenced her is difficult to say.

Another aspect of Bisclavret that indicates a more human element to his character, is his ability to exercise *voluntas*. Once more Bisclavret conforms with Aquinas' ideas. Aquinas' theory of action is characterised by a complex marriage between will and reason (see chapter one). Bisclavret's *voluntas* is in conformance with this theory. Bisclavret has the ability to exercise "the will" to enact his revenge on those who wronged him, his unfaithful wife and her lover, and has the ability to decide the cause of action and degree of vengeance, which also denotes the reason element.[278] *Voluntas* was believed to be a human trait, thus Bisclavret's duality leans more towards his humanity than the bestial nature of a wolf or a *garulf*. The theory that the name Bisclavret describes a wolf that possesses *logos* is therefore quite logical and fitting.

Melion

The Breton *Lai de Melion* is written in Old French by an anonymous author between 1190-1204, so shortly after Marie de France wrote her twelve *Lais*.[279] Despite some similarities to the *Lai* of *Bisclavret* in the plot of the story, it presents a different version of the knightly werewolf. Sconduto theorises that the author was likely a wandering minstrel from the Picard region in northern France, since the *Lais* was written in that dialect.[280] The *Lai de Melion* follows the eponymous character and his life at the court of King Arthur as one of the king's knights. Like every knight of Camelot, Melion had to make a vow and the vow he chose was: "I would never love a maiden no matter how nice or beautiful she is that has loved another man, or has spoken of another man."[281] Usually vows were fulfilled by going on a quest but Melion's facilitated his problems; the ladies of the court despised him, and his future bride, the daughter of the king of Ireland, travelled to Camelot from Ireland in order to find him, rather than the other way around, as she had heard of Melion's many virtues ["I have heard

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[278] Williams, Thomas, 'Will and Intellect', *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Ethics* (Cambridge 2019) 242.
[279] Boyd, Matthieu, 'Melion and the Wolves of Ireland', *Neophilologus* 93 (2009) 556.
[280] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 57.
[281] "*Il dist: 'Ja n'ameroit pucele que tant seroit gentil ne bele, que nul autre home eüst amé, ne que de nul eüst parlé'*" [17-22]. Citation from O'Hara Tobin, Prudence Mary (trans.), *Melion, Les Lais anonymes des XIIe et XIIIe siècles* (1976). Translation by Leslie Sconduto herself.

you praised highly"].[282] In the story, Melion's lycanthropy was not mentioned until he went hunting with his wife. "For three years, he [Melion] cherished her ['III. ans le tint en grant chierté']". While out hunting with his wife, they came across an enormous stag. The wife vowed she would never eat again unless she tasted some of the flesh from the stag. Melion wanted to comfort his wife, and revealed his secret to her. He told her of the ring he wore, "it has two stones in its setting, no one has ever seen any made like them, one is white, the other scarlet".[283] He told her to touch him with the white stone and put it on his head when he was "undressed and naked" and that would turn him into "a large and powerful wolf".[284] Similarly to Bisclavret's wife, Melion's wife became scared of her husband, imprisoned him in his wolf form by taking the ring and his clothes. She took a lover and fled back to Ireland. Melion now in wolf form, travelled to Ireland, where he became leader of a pack of wolves and with them wrought vengeance, "a war", upon Ireland for the betrayal of his wife.[285] After his pack was killed, Melion lived alone as a wolf until King Arthur and his court came to Ireland. Melion recognised his king and immediately lay at his feet. Arthur kept the tame wolf and took him along to his meeting with the King of Ireland. Melion tried to attack his former wife and her lover but was stopped. Arthur demanded to know why he behaved in such a way, and the wife confessed to everything. The King of Ireland then persuaded his daughter to return the magic ring. Melion was turned back into a man in private with the help of the magic stone, wanted to turn his deceitful wife into a werewolf with his magic stones, but was dissuaded by King Arthur from doing so. Melion then returned to Camelot with Arthur and the other Knights of the Round Table.

Melion, like Bisclavret, is initially described as an ideal knight as he "was very courtly and brave and loved by everyone; he showed great prowess and he was always courteous to those around him". This is fitting, for he served as a knight under King Arthur. However, as evident by his vow, Melion possessed a prideful side. There could be an easy explanation for it. The poet described Melion as a "bacheler", or "young man", unlike Bisclavret, who was already

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[282] Interestingly enough this is reminiscent of the Irish motif of falling in love from afar based on reputation, like Findabair from *Táin Bó Froích*. Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 61.

[283] White is a symbol of masculine divinity, death, joy, glory, the road to heaven and the colour of newly baptized Christians. Red is the colour of health, courage, power, blood martyrdom and love. In the Celtic context, red and white are some of the main colours of the Otherworld, signifying a creature's status as a fairy. The best example is seen in animals that are white with red ears, such as the Cwn Arawn ('Hounds of Arawn').

[284] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 62.

[285] Hopkins, Amanda, *Melion and Biclarel: Two Old French Werwolf Lays* (Liverpool 2005) 37-39.

married.[286] As Sconduto points out, naïveté and pride often go hand in hand with youth, which does hold some merit as adolescents do have the tendency to exhibit prideful behaviour. At this point, no mention is made of Melion's lycanthropy. In contrast to Bisclavret, Melion's human pride facilitated his problems because he made a rather foolish vow.

As mentioned previously, Melion's vow was fulfilled not by any quest for a wife, but through his prospective bride coming from Ireland to England to find him. But once again, Melion's character flaws would prove to be his undoing, or at least, the undoing of his humanity for a while. The scene with the stag is rather significant in this matter. Akin to Bisclavret, Melion made the choice to trust his wife with his closely guarded secret. Unlike Bisclavret, who was cautious about telling his wife about his lycanthropy, Melion did not consider for a moment that his wife may react badly to his wolf form. His naïveté as to how his wife may possibly react to his lycanthropy ensured his temporary rejection from society just as his vow had ensured the women of Arthur's court rejected him.

Comparable to Bisclavret, clothing was tied to Melion's human identity and humanity, for he bade his wife "wait for me here and watch my clothing. I leave you in charge of my life and my death; there would be no solace if I were not touched by the other stone; never again would I be a man."[287] Melion described not only losing his "self" with the clothes and the magic stones but also his life and death would be affected by them. As for his transformation, Melion did not turn three days in a week like Bisclavret but "transforms himself into a wolf as he likes, thanks to a magic helper, a ring."[288] Melion needed magic and the assistance of another human in order to transform, but it is not clear from the story who helped him each time. His clothes helped to tie him to his humanity, but it was the scarlet stone that facilitated Melion's transformation back to human form. After the transformation, "with great difficulty he [Melion] gave himself over to it."[289] "It" could denote the spirit of the wolf itself or the control of the hunting instincts of the wolf, which may be considered the bestial side of Melion. However, like Bisclavret, Melion never loses his human mind.

When Melion's wife abandoned him for his squire, imprisoning him in his wolf form, the

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[286] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 58.

[287] "*Por Deu vos pri, ci m'atendés e ma despoille me gardés. Je vos lais me vie e ma mort; il n'i auroit nul reconfort se de l'autre touciés n'estroie; jamais nul jor hom ne seroie*" [167-172].

[288] French translated by Leslie Sconduto: Dubost, Francis, *Aspects fantastiques de la littérature narrative médiévale XIIeme-XIIIeme siècles: L'Autre, l'ailleurs, l'autrefois* (Paris 1991) 557.

[289] "*En grant paine s'est enbatus*" [182] Citation from O'Hara Tobin, Prudence Mary (trans.), *Melion*, *Les Lais anonymes des XIIe et XIIIe siècles* (1976). Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 64.

poet pointed out Melion's dual status with the words *leus* ('wolf') and *ome* ('man') and emphasises the werewolf's human reaction to his wife's betrayal: "he was very unhappy … but even though he was a wolf, he had the intelligence and memory of a man".[290] On top of this, Melion, like Bisclavret, had a human sense of justice and the ability to exercise *voluntas*. When his wife and squire fled to Ireland, Melion followed and exercised and formulated "the will" to take vengeance upon them. The crucial part of this story is that it revealed the human element to the violence and vengeance Melion wrought: "he went into a forest … there he began his war". The fact that the word "war" ('*guerre*') is used is very interesting.[291] Animals are usually not described as waging war; that is a human phenomenon.

On one hand, it is possible that the wolf instincts began to "contaminate" Melion's human "intelligence and memory", as together with a new wolf pack, Melion "brutalised men and women … they ravaged the country."[292] That is to say, he acted like a beast. On the other hand, Melion retained his human intelligence and was still very much in control of his actions. Melion considered the Irish his "enemies" and was waging "war". War creates casualties, and innocent people do tend to get caught in the crossfire. In addition to this, Melion had a motive to attack the Irish: his wife was an Irish princess; thus the best revenge was to hurt her people. Matthieu Boyd states that the wolf pack reflected the medieval Irish view of the *díberg* ('brigandage', mentioned in chapter three), including the wolfishness and frenzy associated with it, and that this behaviour correlates to those wronged in Irish sagas.[293] Furthermore, Jessica Auz points out that Melion recreated a knightly brotherhood with his new wolf pack, strategizing with them, flattering them and finding ways to evade the King of Ireland's traps.[294]

It is quite important to note that Melion was not necessarily violent, before he was imprisoned in his wolf form. While out hunting with his forester and hunters, Melion and his men "found a large stag, quickly they captured it and released it". What this reveals, is that Melion does not kill unnecessarily or for sport. However, when, in wolf form, he

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[290] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 66.

[291] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 67. Hopkins, Amanda, *Melion and Biclarel: Two Old French Werwolf Lays* (Liverpool 2005) 36.

[292] "*Homes e femes malmenoient. Un an tot plain ont si esté, tot le païs ont degasté, homes e femes ocioient, tote la terre destruioient*" [274-278]. Citation from O'Hara Tobin, Prudence Mary (trans.), *Melion*, *Les Lais anonymes des XIIᵉ et XIIIᵉ siècles* (1976). Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 68.

[293] Boyd, Matthieu, 'Melion and the Wolves of Ireland', *Neophilologus* 93 (2009) 556-560.

[294] Auz, Jessica L., 'Werewolves as Translation: Bisclovret, Melion and Alphonse', *Seton Hall University Dissertations and Theses* (2013) 18.

accompanied King Arthur to the meeting with the King of Ireland, Melion was not focused on the politics. He was only focused on finding the ones who wronged him among the Irish court.[295] As with the unnamed king in *Lai de Bisclavret*, the justice that Melion tried to exact on the treacherous squire was stopped only by "the king's servants who came running in precipitously". King Arthur recognised this as unnatural as Melion had already been recognised as a "courtly wolf". King Arthur immediately demanded that the squire explain the wolf's behaviour, which he did. The King of Ireland persuaded his daughter to return the magic ring. Melion, on seeing the ring, assumed "a feudal position of submission, kneels at Arthur's feet and kisses them".[296] Gwaine, one of the Knights of the Round Table,[297] persuaded the king to transform Melion in private so Melion could save face and honour. Melion's humanity at this point had been accepted, otherwise Gwaine would not have been worried about maintaining Melion's honour. The concept of honour was of paramount importance during the medieval period.

In terms of classification, Bisclavret can be viewed as a "constitutional" werewolf as he was not cursed to be one, and it seems likely that he was born as a werewolf. Melion, though not seemingly cursed, is not entirely "constitutional" as he requires the aid of magic and another person to transform. However, it is not an enchantment, thus he is not "involuntary". Melion could be considered "Teutonic" due to the need for outside help to transform. As for whether Bisclavret and Melion are "benevolent" werewolves or *garulves*, arguments could be made for both categorisations. Bisclavret, with his courtly behaviour and his ability to maintain control, shows that he is mainly "benevolent" as he conforms to medieval courtly norms even in wolf form. Philippe Ménard declares that there is a hidden cruelty, a darkness, in Bisclavret that harbours an irresistible need to hurt and kill innocent victims.[298] However, most of the previous evidence does not show this at all. The extent of Bisclavret's possible savagery is unknown as Marie does not mention Bisclavret's exploits in the woods, but as Sconduto points out, it is unlikely that a bloodthirsty beast would run to a king for help and beg for mercy instead of ravaging him.[299] In both his human form and his wolf form,

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[295] Bystrický, Peter, 'The Image of the Werewolf in Medieval Literature', *Historický Časopis* Vol. 63 (2015) 804.

[296] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 73.

[297] Sir Gwaine, also spelled as Gawaine, is best known as one of the eponymous characters of *Sir Gwaine and the Green Knight* by an anonymous Middle English poet.

[298] Ménard, Philippe, 'Les Histoires de Loup-Garou', *Symposium in honorem prof. M. de Riquer* (Barcelona 1984) 220-221.

[299] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 47.

Bisclavret appears to retain his humanity. Though benevolent in character, Bisclavret has moments when he is unable to control his anger and succumbs to "beastly desires".[300] This, however, does not indicate that he is a *garulf*. As previously mentioned, Bisclavret's name most likely derives from "*bleiz lavaret*", which refers to a wolf that possesses *logos* – the ability to account for and to give reasons for decisions made. A *garulf*, on the other hand, is mindless. Taking all of this into consideration, Bisclavret is, largely, "benevolent".

As for Melion, he shows prideful behaviour but this does not necessarily mean that he is a *garulf*. He enacted vengeance against those who wronged him, waging a war. His actions were violent but not mindless. Melion knew how to control himself; he had retained his human mind in wolf form.[301] Indeed, when his liege lord arrived Melion's courtly behaviour and gentle nature returned, and thus showed he could conform to courtly norms in wolf form. This was until he came face to face with those who wronged him: his wife and his squire. The darkness in Bisclavret is mild, but in Melion it is much more pronounced through the brutal war he waged, killing men and women through the brigandage.[302] Melion's wife was the princess of Ireland. The royal families of Ireland were believed to be intrinsically linked to their land and its people, thus providing a justifiable reason for Melion's war on the laymen. His attack was nonetheless quite savage. According to Aquinas, people who acted in a savage manner similar to an animal fell under the category of bestial. However, the medieval Irish perspective would be that Melion had been wronged and had the right to revenge. Melion may not have been docile and courtly the entire time but he also was not a mindless animal. He was human in mind the entire time. The fact Melion wished to turn his deceitful wife into a werewolf further revealed Melion's petty and juvenile character. Because Melion could conform to medieval societal norms, he cannot be considered to be "benevolent" or *garulf*, but firmly in the middle. Both these werewolf knights comply with Aquinas' theory of action, characterised by a complex marriage between will and reason, as discussed in chapter one.[303] Their "will" dictated what they wanted to happen, and their reason provided them the means to execute it. Indeed, they also comply with John Scotus Eriugena's theory that will and reason are intrinsically linked to what it means to be human (see chapter one). As mentioned

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[300] Bettini, Jessica Lynne, 'The Rage of the Wolf: Metamorphosis and Identity in Medieval Werewolf Tales', (East Tennessee State University 2011) MA thesis, 24.

[301] Hopkins, Amanda, *Melion and Biclarel: Two Old French Werwolf Lays* (Liverpool 2005) verse 218.

[302] Hopkins, Amanda, *Melion and Biclarel: Two Old French Werwolf Lays* (Liverpool 2005) 37.

[303] Williams, Thomas, 'Will and Intellect', *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Ethics* (Cambridge 2019) 242.

in chapter one, reason "is precisely this … difference from other animals".[304]

Carl B. Sell argues that Marie uses metamorphosis in her *Lais* in a way that exposes the fact that "the medieval human-animal binary commonly upheld in literature is more fluid in nature".[305] This can also be seen in the *Lai de Melion*. Both *Lais* show that the monstrous, animalistic cruelty usually associated with werewolves and shape-shifters can be found in humans and that chivalric nobility can be found in animals on rare occasions and in the humans who behave sometimes like animals.[306] This trend of monstrous cruelty that these werewolves exhibited while seeking justice for the wrongs done to them will come further into play in the next case study: the werewolf king in *Arthur et Gorlagon*.

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[304] John Scotus Eriugena, *Periphyseon (The Division of Nature),* trans. O'Meara, John and Sheldon-Williams, I.P. (Montreal 1987) 375.
[305] Sell, Carl B., 'The Duality of a Monster: The Human-Animal Binary and its Role in Marie de France's *Bisclavret*', (Academia) 2.
[306] Sell, Carl B., 'The Duality of a Monster: The Human-Animal Binary and its Role in Marie de France's *Bisclavret*', (Academia) 2.

Chapter 5

The Werewolf King: Gorlagon

Similar to Melion, Gorlagon was a werewolf from an anonymously written tale, codified probably in the late fourteenth century in Latin.[307] The tale, generally translated into Latin as *Arthur et Gorlagon*, is part of a small collection of works and is not as much studied as other Latin Arthurian romances. It survives in a single Insular fourteenth century manuscript; Rawlinson MS. B. 149 at the Bodleian Library in Oxford.[308] Scholars have referred to the tale as Cymro-Latin, but there is no discussion as to the reason for this other than a claim made by George Kittredge in 1903.[309] However, there may be some Welsh connections to *Arthur et Gorlagon*. Rawlinson MS. B. 149 contains exclusively Latin texts but one of them is the *Historia Meriadoci Regis Cambriae* ('The Story of King Meriadoc of Wales').[310] Both of these tales have characters with Welsh names and if one scribe wrote both, there could be a possibility of cultural communication that surfaced in the stories. [311] The story begins during a feast, held by Arthur during Pentecost, when King Arthur kissed his queen in front of the whole court, rather exuberantly.[312] Shocked, Guinevere demanded Arthur explain why he would kiss her in such a manner and so publicly.[313] Arthur's answer, "because nothing of my treasure delights me more, and of all my pleasures nothing is sweeter than you", did not please Guinevere. During the ensuing conversation, Arthur believed he knew Guinevere's heart, but she stated, "you reveal that you have never understood the nature or the mind of a

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[307] Bystrický, Peter, 'The Image of the Werewolf in Medieval Literature', *Historický Časopis* Vol. 63 (2015) 804.

[308] There does not appear to be any overt evidence for Welsh language influences on the text.

[309] Kittredge, George Lyman, *Arthur and Gorlagon* (Boston 1903) 203-205. Arthur and Gorlagon : Kittredge, George Lyman, 1860-1941 : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive (Accessed 29 June 2021).

[310] According to the description given by Oxford, the entire manuscript is done by one hand, but George Kittredge claims that *Historia Meriadoci* is written in a different hand to *Arthur et Gorlagon*. This is up for dispute. Sources: MS. Rawl. B. 149 - Medieval Manuscripts (ox.ac.uk) (Accessed 29 June 2021).

[311] There should theoretically be no reason why *Arthur et Gorlagon* could not be written in Welsh if it was a Welsh story. The Welsh language survived as the dominant language of the learned classes up until the Act of Union between England and Wales in 1536 and Welsh literary language had a high prestige in Wales up until the seventeenth century. Roberts, Euryn Rhys, 'Britain, Wales, England, 600-1450', *The Cambridge History of Welsh Literature* (Cambridge 2019) 18-19. Fulton, Helen, 'The Status of the Welsh Language in Medieval Wales', *Sydney Series in Celtic Studies* 14 (Sydney 2013) 9.

[312] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 76.

[313] "She was stunned and her face reddened. She faced him and demanded why he had kissed her at this inappropriate time and place." Leake Day, Mildred (ed. and trans.) *Arthur and Gorlagon, Latin Arthurian Literature* (Cambridge 2005) 209.

woman."[314] Because of this, Arthur swore that he would not eat as long as he did not know the heart, nature and thinking of women. While Arthur was unaware of Guinevere's infidelity, the reader – both medieval and modern – would have caught on to the Queen's embarrassment because Lancelot would likely have seen Arthur's display of affection.[315] Together with Kay and Gwaine, two Knights of the Round Table, Arthur saddled a horse in order to visit King Gorgol, who was famous for his wisdom. However, Gorgol immediately referred Arthur to his older and wiser brother, Gorleil, who in turn referred Arthur to their oldest brother, Gorlagon, as of the three brothers, Gorlagon had experience with the nature and mind of a woman.[316]

Arthur arrived at the castle of Gorlagon, who also was feasting. When Arthur informed Gorlagon of his quest, Gorlagon answered, "weighty is the matter that you seek. Dismount and eat, and in the morning, I will answer your question."[317] When Arthur refused, Gorlagon informed him, "I will relate to you the events of the affair, by which you will be able to understand the wiles, nature, and mind of a woman … and when I have told you, you will be but a little wiser."[318] Eventually Arthur relented and Gorlagon related his tale to his guest. The protagonist of the tale is described by Gorlagon as a "certain King, whom I knew quite well, who was noble, accomplished, wealthy, and renowned for his justice and truth." This unnamed king possessed the requisite characteristics of an ideal sovereign.[319] However, when this king was born, "his very humanity and sanity" were entwined with a "graceful sapling", which bore a "curse that if someone were to cut it, strike him [the king] on the head with the slender end, and say 'be a wolf and have the understanding of a wolf', immediately he would become a wolf and have the senses of a wolf". The wording of the curse indicates that the king's human mind and identity can be robbed by anyone, and this shows quite clearly the dual nature of the king. For this reason, the unnamed king "surrounded this garden with a strong, high wall" and visited it daily, refusing to eat until he had verified the sapling's safety.[320]

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[314] Leake Day, Mildred (ed. and trans.) *Arthur and Gorlagon, Latin Arthurian Literature* (Cambridge 2005) 209.
[315] Bettini, Jessica Lynne, 'The Rage of the Wolf: Metamorphosis and Identity in Medieval Werewolf Tales', (East Tennessee State University 2011) MA thesis, 34.
[316] Bystrický, Peter, 'The Image of the Werewolf in Medieval Literature', *Historický Časopis* Vol. 63 (2015) 804.
[317] Leake Day, Mildred (ed. and trans.) *Arthur and Gorlagon, Latin Arthurian Literature* (Cambridge 2005)) 213.
[318] Leake Day, Mildred (ed. and trans.) *Arthur and Gorlagon, Latin Arthurian Literature* (Cambridge 2005) 213.
[319] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 77.
[320] Bettini, Jessica Lynne, 'The Rage of the Wolf: Metamorphosis and Identity in Medieval Werewolf Tales', (East Tennessee State University 2011) MA thesis, 35.

Like Bisclavret, the king's wife soon took notice of her husband's behaviour. Unlike Bisclavret's wife, who betrayed her husband out of fear, the Queen had malevolent intent, and the culpability of her actions cannot be disputed. "For she loved a certain young man, a son of a pagan king, and preferring his love over the love of her lord, she gave thought and effort that her husband might meet some disaster so that she might enjoy legitimately the embraces of the young man she so desired."[321] The unfaithful Queen, in order to find out the king's secret, engaged in emotional blackmail for three days and, once her husband relented and revealed his secret to her, took advantage of the knowledge she gained.[322] However, the Queen said "be a wolf", which was correct, and intended to say "have the mind of a wolf", but instead stated "have the mind of a man". As the curse promised, the king immediately turned into a wolf but he had retained his human mind, reason and intelligence.[323] This gives evidence that the duality of the werewolf king was tied not only to the activation of the curse, but also, and more importantly, to the wording of the curse. What needs to be noted, is that the werewolf king's metamorphosis conformed to Christian doctrine, and specifically Augustine's theory, because of the wording of the curse. As mentioned in chapter one, Augustine stated that bodies could change but their minds did not and their souls did not.[324]

After his transformation, much like Bisclavret and Melion, the werewolf king plotted revenge against his unfaithful wife. While biding his time to take revenge, the werewolf king wandered in the forest for two years and "allied himself with a wild she-wolf and begot/bred ('*progenuit*') two cubs by her".[325] The word selection for the translation, either "begot" or "bred", could reveal different perceptions of the werewolf king's behaviour. The word "begot" is usually a word used to denote human conception, but the word "bred" is normally a word used to describe the mating of animals. One word keeps the human imprisoned in the wolf's body in mind while the other suggests that the werewolf king, despite retaining human sanity, has descended into bestiality. Unlike all the previous werewolves described, the werewolf king sired wolf cubs with a wild she-wolf. The werewolf king, while still human in mind, willingly copulated with an animal, which could be construed as bestiality. This was

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[321] Leake Day, Mildred (ed. and trans.) *Arthur and Gorlagon, Latin Arthurian Literature* (Cambridge 2005) 215.
[322] Bettini, Jessica Lynne, 'The Rage of the Wolf: Metamorphosis and Identity in Medieval Werewolf Tales', (East Tennessee State University 2011) MA thesis, 35.
[323] Bystrický, Peter, 'The Image of the Werewolf in Medieval Literature', *Historický Časopis* Vol. 63 (2015) 805.
[324] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 79.
[325] Leake Day, Mildred (ed. and trans.) *Arthur and Gorlagon, Latin Arthurian Literature* (Cambridge 2005) 218-219.

severely condemned by the Church and society as a whole to be "perverse".[326] Considering the fact that the werewolf king had retained his human mind, and was in full control of his actions, it could be concluded that he had allowed the bestial nature of his lupine body to take over, which would fall in line with Aquinas' theory outlined in chapter one that those who acted like an animal fell under the bestial category.[327] It could thus be said that his soul was still that of a man but it had been corrupted by the body in which he was imprisoned However, "Aelian", mentioned in chapter one, stated that the nature of animals was not very different from people in aspects of behaviour and emotion.[328] They suffered from emotions of love, anger, and jealousy; Eros[329] "does not overlook even brute beasts."[330] According to this theory, emotions are not unique to humans, hence they may not indicate bestiality of the werewolf by mating with a she-wolf. The werewolf king also retained his mind, and so could exercise *voluntas* as he still had "a will". It can also be argued that the werewolf king had conformed to Peter Abelard's definition of *voluntas* in this case and his decision to mate with a she-wolf was simply an occurrence of desire.[331]

The werewolf king's *voluntas* is further illustrated by the revenge that he and his small pack took on those who wronged him. This time, his *voluntas* conformed to Aquinas' doctrine of exercising the will towards a specific target. The werewolf king, "seeing his chance, burst into the castle at dusk, along with his mate and cubs. He attacked the two little boys that the Queen had borne to her young man. The children happened to be playing in the courtyard unsupervised. Having seized them, the pack tore them to shreds."[332] The revenge the werewolf king meted out could be considered more bestial than the vengeance Bisclavret took on his unfaithful wife and her lover, and perhaps more than Melion's "war" ('*guerre*') on Ireland.[333] The images are graphic; this act is portrayed as one of bestiality, not one of chivalric justice. The children were innocent of the crime their parents committed in modern human eyes, but perhaps the werewolf king did not view it the same way. These children

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[326] Salisbury, Joyce E., *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (Routledge 2011) 64-68.

[327] Salisbury, Joyce E., *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (Routledge 2011) 4.

[328] Salisbury, Joyce E., *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (Routledge 2011) 68.

[329] Roman name Cupid: Eros is sometimes portrayed in Greek mythology as a primeval deity or as the son of Aphrodite, goddess of love, and Ares, god of war. Eros is traditionally believed to make people fall in love by shooting an arrow from his bow.

[330] Salisbury, Joyce E., *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (Routledge 2011) 68.

[331] Williams, Thomas, 'Will and Intellect', *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Ethics* (Cambridge 2019) 239.

[332] Leake Day, Mildred (ed. and trans.) *Arthur and Gorlagon, Latin Arthurian Literature* (Cambridge 2005) 219.

[333] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 79. Hopkins, Amanda, *Melion and Biclarel: Two Old French Werwolf Lays* (Liverpool 2005) 36.

were living reminders of his wife's unfaithfulness and his shame, which was considered a stain on someone's honour during the fourteenth century. As mentioned previously in chapter four, honour was paramount in the medieval period.

What makes the line between humanity and bestiality of the werewolf king murkier and darker than that of Bisclavret, and at least as dark as Melion's, was that he deemed himself "not completely vindicated" with the murder of the Queen's sons. He "returned to the castle with his pack" and when they saw the Queen's younger brothers "playing on the road at the very gate", they "savaged them horribly, tearing out their vitals." Once more, a very gruesome picture is painted of a ruthless animal attack.[334]

Following the death of his wolf family, the werewolf king, "torn with grief for the loss of his cubs and maddened because of the enormity of his sorrow", travelled to the land of his brother Gorleil, where he "ran nightly raids" and was chased from the kingdom. Children are not supposed to die before their parents, and it is the loss of his cubs that arguably heightened the werewolf king's grief. By focusing on the werewolf king's emotions, it could be argued that the author painted a picture of a grieving father and thus emphasising the humanity of the beast.[335] However, that grief soon turned to anger, which "maddened" him, and made the werewolf king act in a beastly manner once more. Then the werewolf king fled to his brother Gorgol's kingdom where, like Bisclavret and Melion before him, the werewolf king threw himself upon his brother's mercy: the mercy of a king.[336] Despite protests from his noblemen, Gorgol "observed the wolf for some time" and perceived "no ferocity" in him, but saw that the wolf looked "like one who craved pardon".[337] Gorgol tested the "sense" of this wolf by ordering it to catch a stag on command, which it did. Akin to Bisclavret and Melion, the werewolf king showed complete loyalty to the king and became popular and beloved at court, save for Gorgol's queen, who grew to hate and resent the wolf as she already sensed "the great sagacity" in him.[338]

When Gorgol departed on a diplomatic mission to another kingdom, he left his wife as regent and he asked her to look after the court wolf in his absence. The queen objected, fearing the animal would attack her and "leave me mangled". Gorgol had a chain forged for

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[334] Leake Day, Mildred (ed. and trans.) *Arthur and Gorlagon, Latin Arthurian Literature* (Cambridge 2005)) 219.
[335] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 80.
[336] Bernhardt-House, Philip A., *Werewolves, Magical Hounds and Dog-headed Men in Celtic Literature: A Typological Study of Shape-shifting* (2010) 202-203.
[337] Leake Day, Mildred (ed. and trans.) *Arthur and Gorlagon, Latin Arthurian Literature* (Cambridge 2005) 221.
[338] Bernhardt-House, Philip A., *Werewolves, Magical Hounds and Dog-headed Men in Celtic Literature: A Typological Study of Shape-shifting* (2010) 203.

the wolf, and instructed his wife to keep him bound at night to the "bed ladder".[339] However, the queen kept the werewolf king bound at all times.[340] As is a common motif, the queen "loved the royal seneschal[341] with an illicit love".[342] At midday on the eight day since Gorgol's departure, the queen and her lover "climbed into that very bed, little heeding the presence of the wolf". The wolf became enraged, broke his chain and attacked the man, "tearing at him savagely" and "left him half-dead", while staring at the queen "with venom in his eyes". The werewolf king in this tale exhibited the same chivalrous, courtly sense exhibited by Bisclavret and Melion for exacting punishment on those who wronged him, and those he was loyal to. The werewolf king's fury may have been heightened as Gorgol's queen's infidelity, likely reminded the werewolf king too closely of the betrayal by his own wife. Unlike Bisclavret, the werewolf king made no attempt to mutilate the queen for her immoral conduct as he may have retained an attitude of respect towards the position occupied by the queen as wife of his benefactor, and that this justice was not his to exact.[343]

After the wolf attack, the queen concocted a story for her husband that the wolf had killed the king's man and had then devoured their child, Gorgol's heir. In order to make sure no one could refute the story, the queen told lies to the servants who had heard the screams of the lover and the queen and had tried to come to the rescue. She then shut the child in an underground chamber with his nurse and sequestered her badly injured lover in a guest chamber.[344] When Gorgol returned, the queen told him, "full of cunning … her hair cut loose, and cheeks torn, and garments splashed with blood", that the wolf had killed their child. Here is an element to the story that could suggest Welsh literary influences on the story. This scene recalls elements of the "Faithful Hound" Welsh folk-tale surrounding a dog named Gelert, who was the companion of Llewelyn the Great (1173-1240 CE). Llewelyn returned from his business to find his baby son missing, the cradle overturned and Gelert's mouth smeared with blood. Llewelyn killed Gelert, believing that the hound had murdered his child. With Gelert's dying yelp, Llewelyn heard the cries of the baby from under the cradle, unharmed. Adjacent to the crib was the body of a dead wolf, which Llewelyn realised must have broken in, and

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[339] Leake Day, Mildred (ed. and trans.) *Arthur and Gorlagon, Latin Arthurian Literature* (Cambridge 2005) 223.
[340] Bernhardt-House, Philip A., *Werewolves, Magical Hounds and Dog-headed Men in Celtic Literature: A Typological Study of Shape-shifting* (2010) 203.
[341] A seneschal was a senior position filled by a court appointment with a royal, ducal, or noble household; historically, it was a steward or majordomo.
[342] Leake Day, Mildred (ed. and trans.) *Arthur and Gorlagon, Latin Arthurian Literature* (Cambridge 2005) 224.
[343] Reason is not explicitly mentioned in the tale itself. Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 83.
[344] Bernhardt-House, Philip A., *Werewolves, Magical Hounds and Dog-headed Men in Celtic Literature: A Typological Study of Shape-shifting* (2010) 203.

tried to attack his child. Gelert killed the wolf to protect the child.

The werewolf king could have met with a similar fate but it was because of Gorgol's shrewdness he did not. It can be said that because of Gorgol's doubts that the werewolf king got two more chances to show his humanity. The first chance came in the form of how the werewolf king greeted his host. Gorgol did not believe his wife as the behaviour that the wolf exhibited ["jumping about with joy and prancing with greater delight"] did not support the queen's claims, for "if the wolf had been guilty of so great a crime against him, he would not have dared to meet him with such joyful bounds", "for indeed the wild beast fears the man whom he knows he has harmed".[345] Unlike the kings in the *Lais* of *Bisclavret* and *Melion*, the king thoroughly tried to uncover the truth, without using torture and he considered all the evidence before him.[346] In turn, the werewolf king did more to convince the king of his innocence and his humanity.

The second chance for the werewolf king to show his humanity arose during the search for the missing child. He helped Gorgol discover the truth, as he knew precisely where the Queen had hidden the child. The scene itself is quite entertaining. "Coming upon the locked door, the wolf hit it three or four times with his paw, trying to convey that it should be opened for him … The wolf, unable to endure the delay [for the key], drew back a little and spreading out the claws of his four paws, he rushed headlong at the door".[347] The heroic action of the wolf breaking down the door, followed by the tender image of the wolf taking the child in his arms so his father could kiss him provided Gorgol with all the proof he needed to exact his justice against his wife and her lover.[348] It was this moment that made Gorgol realise the wolf is actually a werewolf. "The King pondered over the incredible wisdom and cleverness of the wolf", and became convinced of its "great intelligence" and soon deduced it had "the understanding of the man" and surmised that the wolf had been the victim of some kind of enchantment.[349] The sense of justice in King Gorgol assisted in revealing the line between the werewolf king's humanity and his bestial nature; his duality.

As with the unnamed king in *Bisclavret* and King Arthur in *Melion*, Gorgol decided to find a way to return the werewolf king to human form and followed the wolf back to his former

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[345] Leake Day, Mildred (ed. and trans.) *Arthur and Gorlagon, Latin Arthurian Literature* (Cambridge 2005) 225-226.
[346] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 85.
[347] Leake Day, Mildred (ed. and trans.) *Arthur and Gorlagon, Latin Arthurian Literature* (Cambridge 2005) 227.
[348] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 84.
[349] Bernhardt-House, Philip A., *Werewolves, Magical Hounds and Dog-headed Men in Celtic Literature: A Typological Study of Shape-shifting* (2010) 203.

kingdom.[350] The king soon found out what had occurred as the burghers groaned under the tyranny of the "king, who succeeded after the wolf" and lamented for their lord who was changed into a wolf by magic and the treason by his wife.[351] With an army, Gorgol attacked the castle and captured it. The Queen confessed to her crime and handed over the magical sapling. Gorgol proceeded to hit the wolf over the head with it, saying, "become a human being and have a human mind". Like Melion, Gorlagon was changed back through the aid of magic, and not clothing. This may have simply been a feature of Gorlagon's curse, or it may have been following a trend that is seen in Welsh stories, such as the Four Branches of the *Mabinogi*. The metamorphoses that occurred in the Third and Fourth Branches were facilitated through magic only, and not by God or a holy man. Augustine theorised that only God or His holy men could transform a being (see chapter one).[352] In the Third Branch, Llwyd, son of Cil Coed, transformed his pregnant wife and his retinue into mice in order to destroy Manawydan's fields as revenge for the humiliation Gwawl enduring in First Branch.[353] In the Fourth Branch, the magician Math exacted vengeance on his nephews, Gwydion and Gilfaethwy, by turning them into a stag and a hind for a year, then a sow and a boar for another year and a wolf and she-wolf for the third year, under the curse "I will make you live together and mate together, and take on the nature of the wild animals whose shape you are in".[354] Blodeuedd[355] was born from an act of metamorphosis, and she was forced to take the form of an owl, a bird condemned to be hated by all birds, through Gwydion's magic after she betrayed her husband Lleu, which changed the orthography of the name into Blodeuwedd ('owl'). In all these cases from the *Mabinogi*, clothes do not factor into the physical changes or on the humanity of the characters. Each case of metamorphosis is influenced by the wording of the curse and the magic wielded by the magician, which can

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[350] Bystrický, Peter, 'The Image of the Werewolf in Medieval Literature', *Historický Časopis* Vol. 63 (2015) 805.

[351] Bystrický, Peter, 'The Image of the Werewolf in Medieval Literature', *Historický Časopis* Vol. 63 (2015) 805.

[352] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 18.

[353] The First Branch, *Pwyll Pendeuic Dyvet* ('Pwyll Lord of Dyvet'), follows the eponymous character as he meets Arawn, Lord of Annwn (Welsh Underworld) and swaps places with the man in order to compensate for Arawn's damaged honour. In the second part of the story, Pwyll meets Rhiannon, a woman of the Otherworld, and accidentally gives Rhiannon to her jilted lover due to him not minding his words. Pwyll has Gwawl beat in a bag known as "Badger in the Bag" but shows mercy.

[354] The Third Branch, *Math fab Mathonwy* ('Math son of Mathonwy'), primarily follows the nephews of Math, Gwydion and Gilfaethwy, as they cause a war between Pryderi, son of Pwyll and Rhiannon, and Dyfed in order to distract Math so Gilfaethwy could have his way with Goewin, his uncle's virgin foot-maiden.

[355] Wife of Lleu; Lleu's mother Aranrhod was so angry at the fact she was no longer a virgin, she placed three curses on him: that he would never be named unless she gave him a name, he would never bear arms unless she would arm him herself and that he would never have a wife. After solving the two curses, Gwydion, Lleu's uncle, made Lleu a wife out of flowers.

also be seen in the case of Gorlagon.

Because his mind was unchanged, only the werewolf king's body needed to be returned to its human state. However, the werewolf king's form is "far more beautiful and comely"[356], being now possessed of such grace that everyone could at once detect that he was a man of great nobility". Alphonse, discussed in the next chapter, will provide an interesting contrast to this. It could be argued that Gorlagon had also undergone another type of metamorphosis, one that also affected his human appearance. According to Jessica Bettini's theory, the poet implies that as the result of his experiences as a werewolf and the fact he learns to control his bestial instincts, the werewolf king is now more noble and wise. To master the animalistic side of humanity's duality leads to a "happier, wiser, and more human" life.[357] This is likely the perspective of the Latin scribe.

It was after Arthur finally dismounted from his horse and asked, "who is that woman sitting opposite you of a sad countenance, and holding before her in a dish a human head bespattered with blood", Gorlagon revealed that the whole story was about him. He had divorced his queen but had decided to keep her at court to punish her further. The punishment Gorlagon inflicted on his former wife was "that she should always have the head of her paramour before her, and when I kiss the wife I married in her stead, she should imprint kisses on him for whose sake she had committed the crime". To modern sensibilities, this is a cruel punishment, perhaps one that could even be considered bestial or monstrous as it is more calculating than the revenge Gorlagon handed out as a wolf.[358] Anne Wilson posits that the "punishment he chooses for her reveals a vindictiveness which leaves Gorlagon without any of the nobility" of Gorgol, who restored Gorlagon to his kingdom.[359] The interpretation offered in the story itself, however, disagrees with our modern perspective in that it states that Gorlagon "spared her life, though she well deserved to lose it".

Taking all of this into consideration, the benevolence of Gorlagon is dubious: he is not fully "benevolent" but he is also not a full *garulf*. Despite not being completely mindless like a *garulf*, Gorlagon did systematically plot the most brutal revenge against his former wife as he could. It can be argued it makes Gorlagon worse than a *garulf* since he is able to exercise

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[356] Neither the Latin nor Kittredge explicitly says what Gorlagon is now more beautiful and comely than. It is mostly interpretated that Gorlagon has become more noble than he was before, but this up for speculation. Kittredge, George Lyman, *Arthur and Gorlagon* (Boston 1903) 227.

[357] Bettini, Jessica Lynne, 'The Rage of the Wolf: Metamorphosis and Identity in Medieval Werewolf Tales', (East Tennessee State University 2011) MA thesis 37.

[358] Bettini, Jessica Lynne, 'The Rage of the Wolf: Metamorphosis and Identity in Medieval Werewolf Tales', (East Tennessee State University 2011) MA thesis, 38.

[359] Wilson, Anne, 'Arthur and Gorlagon the Werewolf', *Anne Wilson: investigating hidden structures in narrative texts* (2007) 6.

voluntas and is fully aware of his actions. After all, after he and his wolf family had mauled two children to death, Gorlagon did not feel "completely vindicated". He was blinded by rage, and acted quite viciously. Gorlagon had not mastered his animalistic side and powerful emotions until he came to his brother Gorgol's court and learned to control both aspects. While the modern perspective views Gorlagon's actions as bestial, the contemporary audience of the story would say that Gorlagon acted in the appropriate manner to deal with an unfaithful wife, as indicated by the Latin poet himself. The moral of *Arthur et Gorlagon* was, as Sconduto named her chapter, "a lesson for an adulteress", which sets an ominous note for the fate of Queen Guinevere in the future. However, Gorlagon still had the chivalrous, courtly sense of loyalty to Gorgol and managed to restrain himself when he attacked Gorgol's unfaithful queen and servant. Thus, Gorlagon is not a full *garulf* as he was not mindless and could show restraint when he wanted to, and adhered to the medieval ideas of preserving honour and punishing infidelity. The fact he was more beautiful than before after transforming suggests he was ennobled by his time as a werewolf. To a modern audience, the werewolf king is in a morally dark grey area between the two classifications. As for his werewolf status, Gorlagon is an "involuntary" werewolf as there was a curse that tied his humanity to a magic sapling that could turn him.

Gorlagon is a good example for the monstrous, animalistic cruelty in humans as he had no trouble attacking four young boys and took one final act of almost petty vengeance against the woman who betrayed him.[360] Adam Douglas suggests that the author of the tale "coloured his accounts of the werewolf's deeds of violence" because he, or she, may have found it difficult to accept the "essential goodness" of a werewolf that would willingly mate with a regular wolf and commit so many egregious acts.[361] Considering violence is also a human trait, and Gorlagon's violence was clearly goal motivated, perhaps this was not necessarily the case.[362] The Latin scribe highlighted and emphasised Gorlagon's humanity, his human intelligence and great chivalric loyalty when appropriate and he even described how the werewolf king had become a man of nobility after turning back into human form. However, what is clear is that Gorlagon was also capable of great malice and violence. Great loyalty and chivalry but without malice and violence is also at the heart of the final werewolf case study of this investigation: the benevolent werewolf prince, Alphonse.

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[360] Sell, Carl B., 'The Duality of a Monster: The Human-Animal Binary and its Role in Marie de France's *Bisclavret*', (Academia) 2.
[361] Douglas, Adam, *The Beast Within: A History of the Werewolf* (Avon 1992) 153.
[362] Salisbury, Joyce E., *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (Routledge 2011) 4.

Chapter 6

The Benevolent Werewolf Prince: Alphonse

Surviving in only one manuscript from the thirteenth century, *Guillaume de Palerne* in which Alphonse appears, is an anonymously codified adventure romance written in verse in the Picard dialect of northern France, most likely between 1194 and 1197.[363] It was also translated into Middle English by a man named William, around the year 1350, commissioned by Humphrey IX de Bohun, sixth Earl of Hereford (1309-1361 CE).[364] Similarly to Marie de France, the codifier of *Melion* and the story of *Arthur and Gorlagon*, very little is known about the identity of the poet who composed the original *Guillaume de Palerne*. William's adaptation is nearly identical to the original Old French text, although the first three folios (216 lines) have been lost.[365] The poem follows the story of Prince Alphonse, heir to the Spanish throne, and Guillaume, Prince of Apulia and Sicily. Prince Alphonse is turned into a werewolf as a boy by his stepmother's witchcraft and grows up in wolf form in exile. One day, Alphonse catches wind of a plot against Prince Guillaume's life and rescues the child. The rest of the story follows Alphonse as he protects his foster son. At the end Alphonse marries a woman named Florence, alongside Guillaume and Meliors, the daughter of the Holy Roman Emperor. In the original Old French poem, the audience gets to know that Alphonse rescued Guillaume in his childhood from agents sent by Guillaume's perfidious uncle to poison him. Because of the lost folios, the English version (*William of Palerne*) begins when Alphonse cares for Guillaume before being discovered by a cowherd, as the original rescue was written on the lost folios.[366]

The verse novel is inspired by the same chivalric and courtly model as Bisclavret, Melion and Gorlagon's stories, but in contrast to them, the werewolf is not the only main character, and the characters were all theorised to be based upon real rulers of the kingdoms in which

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[363] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 90.

[364] McKeehan, Irene Pettit, 'Guillaume de Palerne: A Medieval "Best Seller"', *Modern Language Association* (1926) 786.

[365] Runstedler, Curtis, 'The Benevolent Medieval Werewolf in *William of Palerne*', *Gothic Studies Vol. 21* (2019) 61.

[366] Runstedler, Curtis, 'The Benevolent Medieval Werewolf in *William of Palerne*', *Gothic Studies Vol. 21* (2019) 61.

the story is set. Irene Petit McKeehan suggested that Alphonse may have been based on Alphonse II of Aragon and Alfonso VIII of Castile.[367] With characters possibly based on real rulers, the story is placed in a real environment and a real time period, which makes the story feel real and tangible.[368] The motive behind the translation is also quite interesting. Randy Schiff suggests that "William's translation is driven not by a populist nationalism zealous to make French texts available to Middle English speakers, but by an elitist desire for a spectacular demonstration of feudal hierarchy".[369] The poem reflects a "system of courtly society largely based on hierarchical relationships and male lineage".[370]

Alphonse, like Bisclavret, Melion and Gorlagon, is of noble birth and he is described as a beautiful and courtly child who is perfectly suited to his aristocratic position. "The king's first child was fostered fair as it ought … The queen his mother[371], a vile wretch, thought how fair and how lovely he was and how nobly shaped." So, Alphonse's beauty differed from the other lupine nobles previously discussed as it was made clear from the onset how aristocratic he already was as a young child, which is in contrast to Gorlagon, whose appearance only became more beautiful after his transformation. Sconduto is right with her statement that Alphonse's age and vulnerability emphasise his innocence.[372]

Akin to the fair protagonists in the Grimm fairy tales, Alphonse, because of his comely appearance and already noble nature, faces a threat from within his own family, his stepmother Queen Brande.[373] The Queen "thought that her own child should never come to be king … while the king's first son was there alive".[374] To ensure her own son's status as heir apparent, the Queen had to get rid of her husband's first-born son. The Queen was learned in "al Þe werk of wicchecraft" ['all the work of witchcraft'] and used her magic to transform the child Alphonse into a werewolf.[375] Bettini writes that the Queen used an

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[367] McKeehan, Irene Pettit, 'Guillaume de Palerne: A Medieval "Best Seller"', *Modern Language Association* (1926) 805.

[368] Bystrický, Peter, 'The Image of the Werewolf in Medieval Literature', *Historický Časopis* Vol. 63 (2015) 806.

[369] Schiff, Randy, 'Cross-Channel Becomings-Animal: Primal Courtliness in *Guillaume de Palerne* and *William of Palerne*', *Exemplaria* 21.4 (2009) 422.

[370] Auz, Jessica L., 'Werewolves as Translation: Bisclovret, Melion and Alphonse', *Seton Hall University Dissertations and Theses* (2013) 21.

[371] The queen is his stepmother but back in the age when the poem was written, even if the wife of a child's father was not the biological mother, she was called "the mother" as she was the lady of house and the child's caretaker.

[372] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 91.

[373] Auz, Jessica L., 'Werewolves as Translation: Bisclovret, Melion and Alphonse', *Seton Hall University Dissertations and Theses* (2013) 22.

[374] Skeat, Walter (trans), *The Romance of William of Palerne* (London 1867) 10, lines 125-128.

[375] Skeat, Walter (trans), *The Romance of William of Palerne* (London 1867) 10, line 118.

enchanted ointment to transform her stepson, though Skeat does not.[376] Yet, despite the new monstrous body, the young Alphonse remained a "witty werewolf" and kept his human understanding and intelligence.[377] Because of this, he knew full well what his stepmother had done and thus tried to get revenge on her for it, though without success.[378]

Unlike, Bisclavret, Melion and Gorlagon, all of whom were familiar with their condition, Alphonse's lycanthropy is completely foreign to him. His transformation is also not like those of the werewolves of Ossory as Alphonse had nothing to atone for.[379] Alphonse is truly an "involuntary" werewolf as he is a victim of witchcraft; his metamorphosis was unavoidable.[380]

Alphonse's behaviour is comparable to the wulver, the werewolves of Ossory and Bisclavret in that he is incredibly controlled in his werewolf form. After his transformation, Alphonse was chased from his home and into the wilderness. He never got to grow up in a courtly environment, yet still showed some courtly mannerisms as a wolf. Alphonse's behaviour reveals that human reason and intellect managed to grow and survive as he grew big, strong and fierce in his wolf form. While in exile, Alphonse caught on to the plot by Guillaume's uncle to poison Guillaume and decided to rescue the child; "a huge wolf, with mouth open, leaps in, comes in at the opening like a tempest; all turn aside to avoid the beast; before the king, noiselessly, he takes his son across his mouth, and then makes off; but the cry was very soon raised after him."[381] The motive behind Alphonse's actions is not bestial to him or the audience, but it is to Guillaume's parents, who were unaware of the plot against their son's life. They only saw "a huge wolf" take their child away from them for no discernible reason. The fact that the word "beast" is used in the Old French and Middle English versions is indicative to the fact that Alphonse's duality was not known to these characters at this point in the story as it was to the narrator, and he was regarded as a monster for kidnapping Guillaume.[382]

Beyond the king's court, in the wilderness, Alphonse is described as "la beste franche", "a

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[376] Bettini, Jessica Lynne, 'The Rage of the Wolf: Metamorphosis and Identity in Medieval Werewolf Tales', (East Tennessee State University 2011) MA thesis 51.

[377] Skeat, Walter (trans), *The Romance of William of Palerne* (London 1867) 10, line 145.

[378] Bettini, Jessica Lynne, 'The Rage of the Wolf: Metamorphosis and Identity in Medieval Werewolf Tales', (East Tennessee State University 2011) MA thesis 52.

[379] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 92.

[380] Watkins Tibbals, Kate, *Elements of Magic in the Romance of* 'William or Palerne' (1904) 15.

[381] Skeat, Walter (trans), *The Romance of William of Palerne* (London 1867) 3, 86-92.

[382] Auz, Jessica L., 'Werewolves as Translation: Bisclovret, Melion and Alphonse', *Seton Hall University Dissertations and Theses* (2013) 23.

noble beast", rather than a bloodthirsty monster, which shows that there was recognition of the chivalrous nature of Alphonse's actions. Alphonse "traverses so much ground, that in the country near Rome[383], in a great forest he stops; where was many a wild beast." "Whatever the child had need of, the noble beast provided for it, so that it had discomfort in nothing."[384] This is an overt example of Alphonse displaying surrogate parental roles, which was a trait Runstedler stated was part of his theory of the "benevolent" werewolf (see introduction and footnotes).[385] It was only after Alphonse's parental love for Guillaume was made known to the audience by the Middle English translator that Alphonse was no longer referred to as a beast, but as "the *werwolf*". That is, since Alphonse has shown his humanity and compassion towards the child, he is no longer a beast but rather a man who is trapped in a wolf's body.

Alphonse "embraces the king's son, with his four feet. And so familiar with him is the king's son, that all pleasures him, whatever the beast does for him." In the previous case studies, the werewolf is the one who puts itself in subjugation to its king. However, due to functioning as Guillaume's caretaker, Alphonse occupied the dominant position in their relationship and the four-year-old Guillaume is "*tamed*" by the werewolf.[386] The fact the word "*tamed*" (Old French 'aprivoisiés') was used by the Middle English translator is interesting as it suggests Guillaume is the wild animal, the submissive, in this relationship. Later on, Guillaume is adopted by a cowherd and his wife, who recognised the child's noble nature and beauty, and decided to raise him as their own son.[387]

Although Alphonse's initial response to Guillaume missing was reminiscent of the grief felt by Guillaume's parents, Alphonse calmed down when he saw the boy safe with the cowherd and his wife. He recognised that the cowherd and his wife could provide more for Guillaume than he could.[388] However, the surrogate parent role that Alphonse adopted did not end there as the werewolf prince led the Holy Roman Emperor to Guillaume in order to relocate him back into a noble household. Knowing the truth about Guillaume's identity and heritage, Alphonse worked to ensure that the rightful noble bloodline is restored and through

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[383] This could be a subtle reference to Romulus and Remus, the twins raised by the she-wolf Lupa.
[384] Skeat, Walter (trans), *The Romance of William of Palerne* (London 1867) 6, 174-6.
[385] Runstedler, Curtis, 'The Benevolent Medieval Werewolf in *William of Palerne*', *Gothic Studies Vol. 21* (2019) 61.
[386] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 95.
[387] This could be interpreted as another reference to Romulus and Remus. Auz, Jessica L., 'Werewolves as Translation: Bisclovret, Melion and Alphonse', *Seton Hall University Dissertations and Theses* (2013) 24.
[388] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009).

the Holy Roman Emperor's recognition, Guillaume regained his place at court.[389]

At court, Guillaume fell in love with the Emperor's daughter, Meliors, who was promised to a Greek prince. With assistance from Meliors' maid, Alexandrine, the lovers escaped into the woods disguised as white bears. While Bisclavret, Melion and Gorlagon lean closer to the idea of clothing being tied to humanity, there are ideas and elements in *Guillaume de Palerne* that link to the *úlfheðnar*. These ideas are not connected to Alphonse's metamorphosis, but to the disguises of Guillaume and Meliors. The two lovers disguise themselves in "the skins of two white bears and afterwards in the skins of a hart[390] and a hind".[391] It is at this point that the poet begins to make an interesting distinction between Alphonse and the humans who wear the skins as a disguise.

The distinction lies in the metamorphosis. Metamorphosis shows that a change of some kind has taken place, even if the werewolf retained its rational human mind, its personality and sense of identity and self.[392] The change, according to Christian thinkers, could not affect the soul. As discussed in chapter one, the soul is a perpetual entity. The soul is a crucial element in the preservation of identity, and a case can be made that Alphonse did manage to preserve his core courtly identity while still forging a new one in his wolf form.[393] Thus, Alphonse's soul was likely remained untouched by Brande's witchcraft. Unlike Alphonse, who was transformed as a young child and would have changed and transformed during his growth to manhood as a werewolf, Guillaume and Meliors underwent no such change physically or in their sense of identity or self.[394] They are not like the *úlfheðnar*. Under the skins, they were still physically human and identified themselves as humans.

Even as they are covered by the bear skins, the two lovers remain vulnerable and would likely have perished had Alphonse, who still loved Guillaume as his own child, not protected them. Furthermore, both Guillaume and Meliors were young and naïve and did not know how to survive in the wild due to being accustomed to a courtly lifestyle.[395] Alphonse is "the only one to … survive submersion into its seeming opposite – the woodland animal's body" and

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[389] Auz, Jessica L., 'Werewolves as Translation: Bisclovret, Melion and Alphonse', *Seton Hall University Dissertations and Theses* (2013) 24-25.

[390] A hart (derived from the Old English *heorot*) is an archaic word for stag. It was used in medieval times to describe a red deer stag more than five years old.

[391] Skeat, Walter (trans), *The Romance of William of Palerne* (London 1867) v.

[392] Bettini, Jessica Lynne, 'The Rage of the Wolf: Metamorphosis and Identity in Medieval Werewolf Tales', (East Tennessee State University 2011) MA thesis, 54.

[393] Walker Bynum, Caroline, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York 2001) 23.

[394] Bettini, Jessica Lynne, 'The Rage of the Wolf: Metamorphosis and Identity in Medieval Werewolf Tales', (East Tennessee State University 2011) MA thesis, 54.

[395] Runstedler, Curtis, 'The Benevolent Medieval Werewolf in *William of Palerne*', *Gothic Studies Vol. 21* (2019) 63.

knows how to survive in the wilderness because he grew up there.[396] After she apologised to Alphonse and transformed him back using incantations from her grimoire and her magic ring, Queen Brande tried to save her stepson from embarrassment, as he was naked, by giving him her own mantle. Alphonse then requested a bath and proper clothing. Clothes are linked to Alphonse, but not as a bridge between humanity and bestiality. Unlike Bisclavret, Alphonse bathed and received clothes after his transformation, not in order to bring it about.[397] Clothes functioned as a link to humanity in a subordinate role: it served to save Alphonse from shame, since he transformed back, nude, in front of his stepmother. At the same time, it could be said that clothing assisted in reintroducing Alphonse back into human society.

In terms of exacting justice for himself, Alphonse is mild mannered throughout the entire poem. However, Alphonse did try to avenge himself on his stepmother after his transformation, by attacking her, which revealed his human anger and desire for revenge. The second attempt made by Alphonse was described as "waging war" on Queen Brande, similarly to Melion, for what happened years previously, revealing human anger and goal directed revenge rather than mindless bestial behaviour. None of these attempts worked, nor was there any collateral damage. Unlike Bisclavret, Melion and Gorlagon, Alphonse did not seek further retribution against his stepmother after she used her magic ring to turn him back into a human. Philippe Ménard describes that Alphonse, after he is transformed into a wolf, "remains as gentle as a lamb, reasonable, benevolent".[398] Francis Dubost comes to a similar conclusion, stating that Alphonse "never gives in to the ferociousness of instincts that are not his … human nature … maintained intact beneath the skin of the animal" from childhood into adulthood.[399] What should be noted is that Queen Brande did repent for her crimes and pledged her loyalty to her stepson after turning him back. She realised her mistake and atoned for her crime, while none of the wives of the previous werewolves did. Perhaps Alphonse saw no reason to punish his stepmother unnecessarily as she repented. This falls in line with Christian doctrine that sins will be forgiven by God if repented sincerely, which indicates a possible moral of the story. It could also be a courtly aspect of the story, indicating ideal noble behaviour, especially towards a lady. On another note, it could be said that it was

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[396] Schiff, Randy, 'Cross-Channel Becomings-Animal: Primal Courtliness in *Guillaume de Palerne* and *William of Palerne*', *Exemplaria* 21.4 (2009) 421.
[397] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 123.
[398] Ménard, Philippe, 'Les Histoires de Loup-Garou', *Symposium in honorem prof. M. de Riquer* (Barcelona 1984) 214.
[399] Translated by Leslie Sconduto. Dubost, Francis, *Aspects fantastiques de la littérature narrative médiévale XIIeme-XIIIeme siècles: L'Autre, l'ailleurs, l'autrefois* (Paris 1991) 562-563.

expected that Brande admit and repent her sin, and when she did, she might expect and receive courtly behaviour in return.

In addition to the Queen, Alphonse also attacked another person, a man carrying goods, in order to save Guillaume and Meliors in the woods from starvation. Instead of killing the man and stealing the goods, the werewolf prince "merely scares him and knocks him to the ground." Alphonse showed human restraint as a wolf, and repeated it when he scared a cleric into supplying Guillaume and Meliors with wine.[400] Sconduto correctly states that "the werewolf is able to take advantage of his ferocious appearance in order to assist Guillaume and Meliors. He never intends to harm the terrified victims; rather, his only purpose seems to be to help the prince and the princess".[401] An argument that can be made is that since Guillaume had prayed to God for assistance in finding sustenance, and the supply of meat had appeared almost immediately, "for Guillaume, Alphonse is not a monster; he is a miracle".[402] Through his actions, Alphonse was protecting the rightful heirs to the throne. This in itself highlights his noble human nature over his animal side but perhaps also reinforces the message of the need to preserve feudalism.[403] Schiff states that the werewolves of romance narratives, such as Alphonse, reveal the predatory nature of aristocratic power in that those would kill innocents in order to attain or maintain power and that there should be people, like Alphonse, who guard the innocents.[404]

Like many of the werewolves stories in the Middle Ages, Alphonse exhibited *voluntas* in a way that falls between Peter Abelard's theory and that of Thomas Aquinas. [405] Alphonse's decision to rescue Guillaume was a simple desire, which Abelard believed *voluntas* entailed. However, Alphonse also acted on decisions influenced by will and reason. Saving Guillaume could be read as a simple desire of Alphonse because he knew he had to act. At the same time, other decisions Alphonse made were consciously done and he reasoned on how to act on his "will" to ensure it was done properly, which falls in line with Aquinas' theory.

The representation of a more sympathetic and benign werewolf can be seen as a reflection

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[400] Skeat, Walter (trans), *The Romance of William of Palerne* (London 1867) lines 1884-1900.
[401] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 105.
[402] Auz, Jessica L., 'Werewolves as Translation: Bisclovret, Melion and Alphonse', *Seton Hall University Dissertations and Theses* (2013) 26.
[403] Auz, Jessica L., 'Werewolves as Translation: Bisclovret, Melion and Alphonse', *Seton Hall University Dissertations and Theses* (2013) 27.
[404] Schiff, Randy, 'Cross-Channel Becomings-Animal: Primal Courtliness in *Guillaume de Palerne* and *William of Palerne*', *Exemplaria* 21.4 (2009) 418.
[405] Williams, Thomas, 'Will and Intellect', *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Ethics* (Cambridge 2019) 242.

of twelfth century interest in politics, morality and allegory, which will be explored further in the analysis.[406] Unlike Melion, Gorlagon or Bisclavret, Alphonse refrained from maiming those who wronged him or took his vengeance out on those who could be considered innocent.[407] His ability to show *voluntas* as a wolf from a young age gives strong evidence for Alphonse being "benevolent". Alphonse conforms quite well to Runstedler's concept of the "benevolent" werewolf.[408] It can be said that Alphonse's lupine traits are revealed through his alpha wolf tendencies, cognitive-mind mapping and surrogate parental roles, which are consistent with wolf research.[409] Runstedler states that recognition of real life traits of wolves help modern readers to better understand the role of the werewolf in stories.[410] However, realistic traits do not necessarily indicate benevolence. Any indication of Alphonse's benevolence comes from his courtly behaviour, his selflessness, his ability to show *voluntas* and his ability to forgive. Hence, Alphonse also conforms to this thesis' definition of a "benevolent" werewolf since he can also conform to societal norms while still in wolf form.

Through his actions towards Guillaume, Meliors, his victims and even his stepmother, Alphonse embodied the Christian concept of selfless service to others and embodied desired traits in every nobleman.[411] By the end of the story, he finds love, honour and friendship and is able to heal his relationship with the person who wronged him. In relation to other English werewolf texts, the story has a witchcraft narrative underlying it and discusses the nature of metamorphosis.[412] Extant sources on English werewolves do not discuss these topics. The transformation of Alphonse himself is different to the previous case studies, which calls into question if he is a werewolf or man-wolf. What is clear is the Alphonse conforms to

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[406] Runstedler, Curtis, 'The Benevolent Medieval Werewolf in *William of Palerne*', *Gothic Studies Vol. 21* (2019) 55.

[407] Auz, Jessica L., 'Werewolves as Translation: Bisclovret, Melion and Alphonse', *Seton Hall University Dissertations and Theses* (2013) 22.

[408] Runstedler theorises the "benevolent" werewolf could show both human and wolf traits, despite the fact that realistic traits do not necessarily correlate to benevolence. Runstedler, Curtis, 'The Benevolent Medieval Werewolf in *William of Palerne*', *Gothic Studies Vol. 21* (2019) 55.

[409] Cognitive mind mapping refers to an animal's ability to form geometric patterns, or 'maps', to form a concept of a given area. This can be seen in Alphonse's abilities to navigate the wilderness and it ensured not only Alphonse survived, but Guillaume and Meliors as well. Runstedler, Curtis, 'The Benevolent Medieval Werewolf in *William of Palerne*', *Gothic Studies Vol. 21* (2019) 61. Peters, Roger, 'Mental Maps in Wolf Territoriality', *The Behaviour and Ecology of Wolves* (New York 1975) 119-152.

[410] How he believes this is done is not elucidated clearly. Runstedler, Curtis, 'The Benevolent Medieval Werewolf in *William of Palerne*', *Gothic Studies Vol. 21* (2019) 55-64.

[411] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 126.

[412] Wiseman, S.J., 'Hairy on the Inside: Metamorphosis and Civility in English Werewolf Texts', *Renaissance Beasts: Of Animals, Humans, and Other Wonderful Creatures* (Illinois 2004) 57-58.

'Christian metamorphosis', Christian doctrine, courtly ideals and exhibits realistic lupine traits that all contribute to his status as a "benevolent" werewolf.

Chapter 7

The Analysis

Having now examined a number of werewolves in various medieval Insular traditions, we can turn forthwith to a comparative analysis of the werewolves' characteristics. There are three parts to this analysis. First the most prominent similarities and differences in these case studies will be explored. Then, the analysis will turn to the question of whether the "benevolent werewolf" is an Insular Celtic phenomenon, or an Insular phenomenon as a whole, has been sufficiently answered. Now it is time to analyse the extent to which each of these Insular Celtic, English, and Breton werewolves show similarities and differences. In terms of the physical and the spiritual boundaries between man and beast – such as form, clothes, rationality, the Medieval belief in *voluntas*, and behaviour – many interesting similarities and differences arose from this investigation.

When we examine the forms of the different werewolves discussed in this thesis, we can note several variants: the blended wolf-man form, the physical overlay of wolf over man, the physical wolf and the loss of the ability to physically transform over generations. In terms of form, the wulver differs quite considerably from the other werewolves in that it was a "creature like a man with a wolf's head", but it was not a shapeshifter in any way.[413] It had a blended wolf-man form, though it is very interesting to note that the wulver shares some similarities with a seventh century Swedish *úlfheðnar* in that both have a body that stands upright, looks humanoid and both have a wolf's head. This could be because the Shetland Islands have always had a culture that leant closer to the Scandinavian than the Scottish culture. In the case of the werewolves of Ossory, Bisclavret, Melion, Gorlagon and Alphonse, the duality of their forms is different in nature. In the wulver, the human and wolf form are merged into one while in the others, there is still duality but no merging. There is a further difference that arises. The werewolves of Ossory were cursed by a saint to take lupine forms using wolf skins. In their case, there was a physical overlay of wolf over man: they are outwardly wolves, but are still human underneath the wolf skins. Bisclavret could change without an issue, as could Melion. Both their human and wolf forms were normal. Gorlagon

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[413] Saxby, Jessie Margaret, *Shetland Traditional Lore* (Grant & Murray 1932) 141.

and Alphonse had less control over their transformations, as their lycanthropic statuses were tied to a curse placed upon them but like Bisclavret and Melion, their wolf forms looked like normal wolves on the outside. The *faoladh* are portrayed to have the ability to shift into the forms of wolves, and had the mind of a wolf, especially in the older generations. The younger generations had human minds while in wolf form. The younger generations, when trying to tap into their inherited gift, underwent a type of psychic metamorphosis where their bodies remain human yet their minds mirror those of wolves. With each generation, the ability weakens until the warrior clan eventually lost the ability to fully shapeshift, which makes them differ considerably from the majority of the other werewolves, apart from the wulver.[414]

When we shift from examining the physical forms of the various werewolves to an examination of clothing (i.e. what covers physical forms), we can observe some important distinctions. In two of the werewolf stories, the *Lais de Bisclavret* and *Melion*, clothing acts as a boundary between man and wolf form. Bisclavret and Melion were both trapped in their lupine forms by their wives through the theft of their clothes and through the magic of a ring, which is a human-made artefact. In the case of Melion, the clothes tied him to humanity but did not facilitate the transformation as in Bisclavret's case. In other werewolf stories, clothes are unimportant. Gorlagon's transformation did not tie with clothes at all, and is facilitated fully by the use of magic. As mentioned in chapter five, this could have been influenced by Welsh ideas surrounding metamorphosis incorporated by the writer of *Arthur et Gorlagon*, as clothes did not necessarily play a role in previous examples such as in the *Mabinogi*. In the case of Alphonse, the clothing is immaterial for the transition, but tie in with hiding his nakedness and saving face from shame, which is a fully human phenomenon.[415] Whether this was because of the Old French influence on the Middle English version of *Guillaume de Palerne* or because of the influences of Christian philosophy is difficult to say. The *faoladh* and the werewolves of Ossory lean closer to the Scandinavian idea of magical animal hides coats and the *úlfheðnar*, rather than the idea that clothes were a boundary between man and beast. As for the wulver, clothes did not affect his looks because of its blended form, and is not described by Jessie Saxby as wearing clothes at all or needing them. In short, the role of clothes in the transformations of the werewolves differ considerably.

While the outer appearance of the werewolves offered overt distinctions between each one,

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[414] Bystrický, Peter, 'The Image of the Werewolf in Medieval Literature', *Historický Časopis* Vol. 63 (2015) 798.
[415] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 123.

the inner qualities of the werewolves also revealed other important elements to their duality. Rationality illustrates that the werewolf is in possession of intellect, "reason" or *voluntas* ("a will" or "the will"), which all the werewolves exhibit in some form or another.[416] In the case of the wulver, it is clever enough to recognise when someone is in need of its help and has more than enough reason to know how to show self-restraint.[417] As for *voluntas*, it can be said that the wulver leans quite close to Peter Abelard's definition as the wulver's *voluntas* is not a faculty or power but a simple occurrent desire upon which the wulver acts.[418] Despite being more animalistic and war-like in character and reflecting the Scandinavian influences such as their similarity to Kveldúlf Skallagrim's "family history" of being able to become "wolf-like creatures", the *faoladh* were capable of *voluntas*. As discussed previously in chapter three, the older generation of *faoladh* had "the will" to change their forms into those of wolves, and all of the generations had "the will" to fight for glory. The *faoladh* had more than enough human intellect to know what they wanted from their patron. It should be noted that their "will" seemed to be limited in their *úlfheðnar* behaviour, which could mean their *voluntas* was affected by their battle frenzy. As for the werewolves of Ossory, Gerald made their human intellect undeniable. The male werewolf had "the will" to approach the priest for help in order to save the immortal soul of his companion. The female werewolf had "the will" to hold onto her life long enough for the last rites to be given to her, so as not to damn her soul. The human intellect of Bisclavret, Melion, Gorlagon and Alphonse survived their changes into lupine forms as their transformations never touched their human minds. Whether consciously or unconsciously, the authors of these stories created the werewolves in such a way that they conformed to the literary culture of the romances and the Christian doctrine and prominent thinkers of the time, such as Augustine, Abelard and Aquinas, in that true metamorphosis is not normally possible except through an act of God.

Voluntas is not the only important covert distinction between these cases, for the behaviour of the werewolves also show some interesting aspects to their character. The wulver behaved like a human hermit or a lone wolf, preferring its own company but still shows interest in the human community as it endeavours to help those in need or show emotional support for those who need it. Even when it gets angry, the wulver behaves in a calm and collected manner.[419]

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[416] Williams, Thomas, 'Will and Intellect', *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Ethics* (Cambridge 2019) 238.
[417] Redfern, Nick, *Shapeshifters: Morphing Monsters & Changing Cryptids* (Llewellyn Publications 2017) 7-9.
[418] Williams, Thomas, 'Will and Intellect', *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Ethics* (Cambridge 2019) 238.
[419] Redfern, Nick, *Shapeshifters: Morphing Monsters & Changing Cryptids* (Llewellyn Publications 2017) 7-9.

The same cannot always be said for the *faoladh*. There is some scarce evidence for benevolence of the *faoladh*, like looking after children and wounded men.[420] However, the majority of the sources, including Nennius, show that the *faoladh* largely behaved in a war-like manner that in some cases, leant closer to the bestial side than the human side. Their behaviour mirrored that of the berserker or the *úlfheðnar*.[421]

The werewolves of Ossory do not behave in this manner at all. Gerald shows that they behave in a manner akin to pious humans, which underneath their magical skins they still were, and behave in a very cordial manner to the priest and his companion. Marie's Bisclavret behaves in a manner that can only be described as loyal and courtly, both as a human and as a wolf. Bisclavret never attempted to do any harm to those he knew were undeserving of it, and he still exhibited the same courtly behaviour despite his own fear that the wolf's mind might eventually take over. Bisclavret only broke this code of conduct in order to try to exact justice on his unfaithful wife and her lover, which according to the perception of the time was justified.

However, it is clear that being of noble birth did not automatically indicate a completely noble character. Melion, despite being a knight of King Arthur, did not always behave in the same courtly manner as Bisclavret, for Melion's poet showed that the knight exhibited more prideful behaviour. [422] Pride is one of the seven deadly sins in Christianity, and was also a trait young knights were warned not to exhibit. In wolf form, Melion was originally not violent unless it was necessary, such as when he went to hunt the stag for his wife. Later, after his wife betrayed him, Melion wanted to have revenge for this betrayal and waged "war" against his wife's people, the Irish, as soon as he got to the country. War is a human phenomenon; thus it could be said that Melion still acted as a human while in wolf form. Moreover, Melion and his wolf pack conformed to the behaviour of the medieval Irish *díberg*. Together with a new wolf pack, Melion "brutalised men and women … they ravaged the country" and had a hidden desire to cause pain on his victims, as Ménard stated.[423] According to a medieval Irish perspective, Melion acted like a wronged character, which is fitting, but to a modern perspective, this showed beastly behaviour as the people were

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[420] MacKillop, James, *An Oxford Dictionary of Celtic Mythology* (2004). The blog Stair na hÉireann ('History of Ireland') mentions this as well but provides no sources. https://stairnaheireann.net/2018/09/27/faoladh-werewolves-of-ireland/ (Accessed 29 June 2021).

[421] Bystrický, Peter, 'The Image of the Werewolf in Medieval Literature', *Historický Časopis* Vol. 63 (2015) 798.

[422] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 58.

[423] Ménard, Philippe, 'Les Histoires de Loup-Garou', *Symposium in honorem prof. M. de Riquer* (Barcelona 1984) 220-221.

innocent in the crime. [424] Melion's ire and behaviour were only cooled by the intervention of King Arthur, who got Melion's wife to confess her crime and stopped Melion from turning his wife into a werewolf. The werewolf knight had the capability of behaving nobly and pridefully.

The same argument could be said for those born into royalty. Gorlagon told Arthur that he behaved in a kingly manner before his forced metamorphosis.[425] However, following his ordeal, the writer showed that Gorlagon did not behave with as much courtly dignity and honour as was expected of him by a modern audience. While as a wolf, Gorlagon mated with a she-wolf and "begot/bred" cubs with her, which suggested that he had descended into bestiality as he was the only werewolf out of all these case studies to mate with a she-wolf. His "war" against his former wife involved children who look to be innocent of the crime against him, but in Gorlagon's eyes were a means to an end. It might therefore be said that Gorlagon did not master all of his bestial tendencies. This was largely on account of his petty, and rather grotesque, vengeance against his former wife was more overtly bestial than an enactment of justice from a human point of view. When Gorlagon regained his human form, he took one last act of revenge against his former wife, in our eyes, came as completely unnecessary but the scribe argued it was merciful on Gorlagon's side as the wife ought to have lost her life for betraying her husband and king.[426] It was seen as merciful in a medieval perspective regardless of how it appears to the modern perspective. Gorlagon's behaviour can be connected to Aelian's theory that animals were not very different from people in aspects of behaviour and emotion, which suggests that Gorlagon's thirst for vengeance was natural. To a modern audience, the lengths to which Gorlagon went was especially vicious, borderline animalistic. It should also be noted that Melion and Gorlagon did not exhibit the battle-hungry, glory-seeking berserker or *úlfheðnar* like behaviour of the *faoladh* during their "wars" as they were not after glory.

The behaviour of Alphonse in relation to the other werewolves is rather curious. In both the Old French and Middle English versions, Alphonse never got the chance to grow up in court, but he still attempted to behave in as much of a courtly manner as he could manage in wolf form. Like Bisclavret, Melion and Gorlagon, Alphonse initially tried to take revenge but had the ability to let his anger go for a while. With Alphonse's kidnapping of Guillaume, the

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[424] Boyd, Matthieu, 'Melion and the Wolves of Ireland', *Neophilologus* 93 (2009) 556-560.

[425] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 77.

[426] Bettini, Jessica Lynne, 'The Rage of the Wolf: Metamorphosis and Identity in Medieval Werewolf Tales', (East Tennessee State University 2011) MA thesis, 38.

writer and Middle English translator showed that Alphonse was able to see what humans cannot, and thus that he was more able than the humans in wolf form. One the one hand, the kidnapping reveals that sometimes unpleasant measures have to be taken in order to safeguard the future of a kingdom but on the other hand, Alphonse took Guillaume away from his parents, who were oblivious to the danger. To them, a wolf snatched their son and spirited him away. Despite this, Alphonse's behaviour reveals that human reason and intellect managed to grow and survive despite the prince growing up in his wolf form. The werewolf prince showed flashes of behaviour that look morally ambiguous to a modern audience, such as the kidnapping of Guillaume and the attacks on his stepmother and the poor traveller, but Alphonse learned from his own experiences in order to ensure that another heir would not meet a similar fate. With Guillaume, Alphonse behaved like an adoptive or foster parent, always attempting to do what is best for his child and showed similar emotions to Guillaume's mother and Gorlagon when they lost their children. Alphonse always put Guillaume's needs first and did what he could to protect him, and later, Meliors as well. Alphonse embodied the Christian concept of selfless service to others.[427] However, he was not averse to scaring people and robbing them. Unlike Bisclavret, Melion and Gorlagon, Alphonse never once hurt any of his victims, even if he initially meant to in the case of Queen Brande. He controlled his actions and only robbed travellers in order to keep Guillaume and Meliors alive. Alphonse shows two important qualities of the "ideal nobleman" according to medieval ideas: he shows mercy and is able to forgive his enemies. At the same time this is what according to the medieval Christian philosophy distinguished a man from an animal. He found love, honour and friendship and was able to heal his relationship with the person who wronged him.

The similarities and differences in behaviour can be explained by the literary choices of the codifiers and medieval translators and the political context behind the texts. The scribes of the *Cóir Anmann* wanted to create an etymological link between one fierce warrior and another band of fierce warriors. Other writers seemed to aim to besmirch the *faoladh*'s name, especially in the suggestion they wished to be paid in baby flesh.[428] Gerald may have portrayed the werewolves in the way he did to show Henry II that his reforms of the Irish

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[427] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 126.
[428] Bystrický, Peter, 'The Image of the Werewolf in Medieval Literature', *Historický Časopis* Vol. 63 (2015) 798.

church had good cause.[429] Marie may have wanted to show how different Bisclavret was as a werewolf while at the same time flattering her patron, but this is up for speculation. The writers of Melion, Gorlagon and Alphonse also wished to portray courtly, romantic werewolves for their patrons. This can for example be seen in how Bisclavret, Melion, Gorlagon and Alphonse knelt before their kings. Despite being of Breton origin, Melion's writer appears to have been influenced by Irish motifs. The wife of Melion, coming from Ireland, fell in love with him from afar because of his reputation is reminiscent of Findabair in *Táin Bó Froích*, showing an Irish motif called *grád ecmaise*. This could be because of the rise of interest in Ireland on the British isles and in medieval Europe during the medieval era as, according to Matthieu Boyd, there was a proliferation of interest in Irish culture.[430] However, in the case of the English, the interest mostly lay in the consolidation of Ireland under English rule, which could have been symbolised by Arthur's visit to Ireland.[431] In the case of the wulver, Saxby wanted to highlight the wulver's gentle nature, as Shetland's only werewolf. The way Saxby describes the wulver fits with the idea of the "sympathetic werewolf" in Insular Celtic folklore.[432]

The manner in which Bisclavret, Melion, Gorlagon and Alphonse knelt before their kings recalls Peter Cantor's theory on kneeling, mentioned in chapter one. According to Peter Cantor, by kneeling, humans recall their innate superiority because for the human, it is only a temporary state while for the animal it is permanent.[433] The werewolves may have been subjugated while in lupine form, but the state was only temporary, and their minds were still fully human. Thus, it is a show of loyalty to their liege lord, not a sign of natural inferiority. Each of the werewolves were of noble birth, linking them to their target audience. They may not have had as high a standing as their kings, but they were not naturally inferior and the writers showed that the werewolves' noble breeding was visible despite their savage circumstances.[434] Bisclavret, even in wolf form, behaved in a courtly manner to those who had his loyalty and only attacked those who wronged him. Melion used his wolf form to try to please his wife with the stag meat and behaved himself in front of King Arthur until he saw

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[429] This was because there were still some latent pagan elements left. Ó Cróinín, Dáibhí, *Early Medieval Ireland 400-1200* (Routledge 2013) 288.

[430] Boyd, Matthieu, 'Melion and the Wolves of Ireland', *Neophilologus* 93 (2009) 556.

[431] Boyd, Matthieu, 'Melion and the Wolves of Ireland', *Neophilologus* 93 (2009) 566.

[432] Lampert-Weissig, Lisa, *Medieval Literature and Postcolonial Studies* (Edinburgh 2010) 46.

[433] He states that while the human only abases himself momentarily, the animals cannot stand on two feet due to "their natural inferiority and subjugation to humans". Steel, Karl, *How to Make a Human: Animals and Violence in the Middle Ages* (Ohio 2011) 47.

[434] Bettini, Jessica Lynne, 'The Rage of the Wolf: Metamorphosis and Identity in Medieval Werewolf Tales', (East Tennessee State University 2011) MA thesis, 59.

those who wronged him. When Arthur wanted to turn Melion back into a human, Melion assumed a vassal position. Gorlagon followed his brother's orders, helped to find his brother's heir and showed restraint against Gorgol's unfaithful queen and servant because justice was not Gorlagon's to exact. Alphonse showed mercy on his stepmother for her transgressions, kept his foster son safe and knelt before his father and the Holy Roman Emperor in the same way the three previous werewolves did with their own kings.

In the case of the spiritual element to the metamorphosis of the werewolves, save for the wulver and the *faoladh*, each of the transformations aligns with Christian doctrine and the status of the soul. There is an element of Tertullian's theory on the soul, mentioned in chapter one, that can be seen in the metamorphoses. He argued against the possibility of metamorphosis, stating that "it is impossible for the human soul to pass into beasts, even though the philosophers may hold that both are made up of the same substantial elements".[435] It can be stated that most of the werewolves conformed to his theory that "we may call a man a wild beast or a harmless one, we don't mean that he has the soul of a beast". In each werewolf's case, their immortal human souls, with which they were born, remained untainted and untouched by their lupine forms as the soul is a perpetual entity that cannot be altered. This can perhaps be seen the best in the case of the werewolves of Ossory and Alphonse. The Christian influence of Gerald of Wales can still be seen in the werewolves of Ossory as they adhered to Augustine's theory that while the bodies changed, their minds did not and their souls did not (see chapter one). Alphonse was cursed by Brande's witchcraft but the soul is a perpetual entity that cannot be altered, so it was unaffected by the magic. The soul is also a crucial element in the preservation of identity.[436] Most of the werewolves managed to preserve their identity through their metamorphosis. The wulver does not undergo any changes, thus there are not many questions that can be raised on whether its identity could change other than personal choices made by the wulver. The younger generations of the *faoladh* underwent psychic metamorphosis, thus the shift in identity occurred in the mind of these warriors. Dana Oswald's observation that "monsters are capable of changes both spiritual and physical … the body is no longer the primary indicator of identity", though written with reference to Middle English literature supports the argument offered here that the soul is a crucial element in the preservation of identity.[437]

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[435] Sconduto, Leslie A., *Metamorphoses of the Werewolf: A Literary Study from Antiquity through the Renaissance* (McFarland 2009) 15.
[436] Walker Bynum, Caroline, *Metamorphosis and Identity* (New York 2001) 23.
[437] Oswald, Dana, *Monsters, Gender, and Sexuality in Medieval English Literature* (Suffolk 2010) 23.

The most important aspect that needs to be examined, is whether or not the motif of the "benevolent" werewolf can be seen in each of these werewolf stories and then whether this is an Insular Celtic phenomenon, or an Insular phenomenon as a whole. To reiterate, the definition used in this investigation of a "benevolent" werewolf is that it is a werewolf who is able to conform to societal norms while still in wolf form. With this in mind, the "benevolent" werewolf can be seen in the Insular Celtic werewolves and in Alphonse. Hence, it can be argued that the answer to the question is in the affirmative: it is an Insular phenomenon. As mentioned in the introduction, Curtis Runstedler analysed the "benevolent" werewolf regarding realistic human and lupine traits. However, the "benevolence" exhibited by the werewolf does not always have to include the lupine traits that Curtis Runstedler mentioned in his theory since the majority of them were still human in mind. Indeed, it is important to note that during the medieval period there were different ideas around the traits and symbology of an animal, which includes the wolf (see chapter one). The modern ideas on the traits of a wolf are not the same as the medieval traits. In term of this investigation's definition, the wulver can be considered to be "benevolent" as he exhibits a very charitable character with vulnerable families and even when angered, it does not lash out irrationally.[438]

The *faoladh* leant closer to the idea of the *garulf*, despite having a form of human reason and *voluntas*, due to the fact these werewolves are "especially furious and cruel in battle", and appear to have little regard for human life and focus on attaining glory.[439] As discussed previously in chapter three, glory is a distinctly human motive for violence. However, the manner in which the *faoladh* went about it in order to attain it, was arguably more bestial than human, in both the medieval and modern perspective, which gives credence to their classification as *garulf*.

While in wolf form, the werewolves of Ossory retained their human minds, their human devotion to God, had *voluntas* and never showed any ill will to the priest and his companion, which gives the primary indications that these two werewolves can be considered "benevolent". The secondary indication for their benevolence is that they displayed human politeness, human kindness and respect towards the priest.

Alphonse, the benevolent werewolf prince, is one of the most obvious cases of benevolence, next to the wulver and the werewolves of Ossory. He remained "witty" despite being transformed by his stepmother and this is rather exceptional, given that Alphonse grew

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[438] Redfern, Nick, *Shapeshifters: Morphing Monsters & Changing Cryptids* (Llewellyn Publications 2017) 7.
[439] Bystrický, Peter, 'The Image of the Werewolf in Medieval Literature', *Historický Časopis* Vol. 63 (2015) 798.

up into adulthood as a transformed werewolf. He never once harmed any of his victims, even if he initially intended to do so. He did not allow his wrath to cloud his judgement. Through the metamorphosis there was no loss of rationality or intelligence. Alphonse's human nature overrode most of his lupine traits. Even when exhibiting lupine traits, those traits link very closely to Alphonse's human traits. His wit, his control over his emotions and his gentle nature all contribute to Alphonse's benevolence. What gives further evidence for his status as a "benevolent" werewolf, is that he is not only able to let vengeance against his stepmother go, as he does not try to attack her again after his failed attempt, but he is able to forgive her. Forgiveness does seem to contribute to benevolence. The werewolves of Ossory are comparable to Alphonse in forgiveness as they still hold onto their faith and do not seem to blame the saint or God for their curse. The wulver too is also able to forgive those who wronged it as he never attacked the ones who disturbed his grave once they put his skeleton back.[440]

The "benevolence" of Bisclavret closely follows Alphonse's. The first piece of evidence for this is the fact that Marie makes it clear from the start to her audience that Bisclavret is not a *garulf*. Furthermore, the king and the court viewed him as someone with chivalric and courtly virtues, even though he was a wolf and treated him with the same respect because they were aware of his benevolent nature. This was why Bisclavret's attack upon his unfaithful wife and her lover was recognised as out of character and eventually ensured Bisclavret regained his human form. Despite not being able to forgive his wife for her betrayal, Bisclavret is able to let go of his anger towards her.

As for Melion, his "benevolence" is not as pure as the wulver's, the werewolves of Ossory's or Bisclavret's benevolence, as previously mentioned. Unlike a *garulf*, Melion was not mindless; he was in complete control of his actions. However, like the *faoladh*, Melion fought viciously in a brigandage for a cause he believed to be right and did not spare innocent people. Despite his loyalty to King Arthur, Melion used his liege lord in order to find those who wronged him and take revenge on them. He is unable to forgive his wife but does eventually let his anger go. Like Bisclavret, there is a benevolence to Melion, before his transformation and after, but his violent revenge counters it considerably. Hence Melion is in the middle between "benevolent" and *garulf*.

The benevolence of Gorlagon, the werewolf king, follows a similar pattern to Melion but as mentioned previously in chapter five, to a modern perspective there was a much darker

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[440] Redfern, Nick, *Shapeshifters: Morphing Monsters & Changing Cryptids* (Llewellyn Publications 2017) 7.

side to him that may make him worse than a *garulf*. Gorlagon was not mindless when he carried out his acts of violence, thus ruling out that he could be considered a *garulf*. Like Bisclavret, Melion and Alphonse, Gorlagon shows courtly and chivalric respect and loyalty to the king, his brother, who has earned his loyalty. He also showed the love of a parent when his cubs were killed, along with his she-wolf. Gorlagon illustrates his ability to show self-restraint against Gorgol's unfaithful queen by only severely injuring her lover and leaving her unharmed. He helped Gorgol to find his son, alive and well. Regarding his wrathful behaviour, it makes it harder for a modern audience to see Gorlagon's benevolence. Gorlagon is relentless in punishing the people who wronged him and their associates. To a modern audience, he simply cannot let his thirst for vengeance go despite learning to control his bestial impulses. However, the medieval perspective would concur with the statement that Gorlagon is benevolent. The medieval author stated that the werewolf king's behaviour was justified, even considering it merciful, as Gorlagon's queen ought to have lost her life for betraying her husband.

While investigating each of these werewolves and their stories, there arose a pattern in the benevolence they exhibited. An interesting aspect to the benevolence of these werewolves is that the humanity in them, and their courtly and chivalric behaviour, had to be recognised by, not just the reader, but the other human characters in the stories and the narrator. The two characters in the story O'Donnell told of the irate wulver initially view the wulver as an oddity, which is why they took its bones. But when the wulver's ghost comes for its skeleton, the characters, though terrified at first, realise they were in the wrong and put the skeleton back. The humanity of the wulver, and the right to have its grave to not be disturbed, had to be recognised by these two characters. The *faoladh* is in a similar situation, only in reverse: Nennius emphasised their warrior and bestial like behaviour over any possible aspect of benevolence to their behaviour. Gerald of Wales showed the benevolence of the werewolves of Ossory, especially in their piety, and despite his initial fear, the priest did recognise the humanity of the werewolves at the end since he allowed the male werewolf to eat and drink with him and his companion. In the case of Bisclavret, Melion, Gorlagon and Alphonse, each of them had to have their benevolence and their humanity formally and publicly recognised by their kings, who each had the final say in judgements, as was the custom for the leading knights and nobles. The recognition of the benevolence is on the part of the reader, and in the majority of the stories it is also internal. It is not internal in all the stories, because some stories, like the ones around the *faoladh*, do not aim to show benevolence. The aim in the *faoladh* tales is to show the ferocious nature of the werewolves concerned.

It is clear from this research that, as Chantal Bourgault du Coudray states, regardless of genre and material relating to the werewolf, every period has been influenced by prevailing cultural attitudes and dominant "ways of knowing or speaking" about the world and the same can be said for these werewolves.[441] The werewolves either conform with embedded cultural influences or have the influences adapted to suit the needs of the author or codifiers. In some cases, it is obvious to spot where the influences of the "werewolf renaissance of the twelfth century" have had a profound impact on the vast majority of these werewolves. Save for the wulver, much latter attested, and the *faoladh* each of these werewolf stories adhere to 'Christian metamorphosis' and address further the issue that is mentioned in chapter one: that metamorphosis blurred the line between humans and animals. It awakened fears of loss of rationality and spirituality, and descent into sins such as lust and wrath. In short, the stories force the reader to think about what makes a monster and about the permanence of human identity.

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[441] Bourgault du Coudray, Chantal, *The Curse of the Werewolf: Fantasy, Horror and the Beast Within* (New York 2006) 2.

Conclusion

This investigation set out to explore the extent to which the "benevolent werewolf" as seen in Celtic werewolf stories is a phenomenon unique to the Irish, Welsh, Scottish and Breton peoples. The collection of stories studied are the wulver, the *faoladh*, the werewolves of Ossory from the *Topography of Ireland*, Bisclavret from the *Lai de Bisclavret*, Melion from the *Lai de Melion*, Gorlagon from *Arthur et Gorlagon* and Alphonse from *Guillaume de Palerne*. By comparing and contrasting these cases to one another, this thesis should help to fill a gap in comparative werewolf studies that exists in the history of werewolves. Joyce Salisbury's theory on the physical and spiritual boundaries between man and beast, such as clothes, rationality, behaviour and form; Thomas William's chapter on the medieval belief in the difference between "a will" and "the will" as well as human intellect; and Thomas Aquinas' theory of action, regarding *voluntas*, are important theories in this thesis. They assisted in examining the identity formations of the human and bestial aspects of the werewolf, but also in revealing cultural concepts and prevalent ideas of the time around metamorphosis, incorporated by the scribes.

Metamorphosis blurred the lines between humans and animals, and awakened fear of loss of rationality and identity. In terms of the physical and spiritual boundaries between man and beast, such as form, clothes, rationality and the Medieval belief in the difference between "a will" and "the will", and behaviour, many interesting similarities and differences have arisen from the werewolf stories. The forms of the werewolves were the clearest indicator of differences between them. The wulver is not a shapeshifter and looks like a humanoid wolf. The *faoladh* could physically shapeshift in older generations, but over time the family line lost this ability. Thus, the younger generations could only conform to the Scandinavian principle of psychic metamorphosis, making them closer to the *úlfheðnar*. The werewolves of Ossory's transformation was facilitated by a wolf coat that when removed, still revealed the human form underneath it, conforming to both the Scandinavian magical coat idea and the principle of 'Christian metamorphosis'. 'Christian metamorphosis' is defined by the fact the outside can take on the form of an animal but the inside stays human. Bisclavret, Melion, Gorlagon and Alphonse all looked like normal wolves, but still retained their human minds. Hence, only four out of the seven case studies had similar forms. The others either were not shapeshifters, could no longer shapeshift or were changed by magical coats.

Magical coverings were not the only physical boundary between man and beast: prosaic

coverings (i.e. clothes) played a varied role in this. Clothes played a large part in Bisclavret's duality, but not so great in other cases such as the wulver, the *faoladh* and the werewolves of Ossory. Clothes only facilitated in covering up Alphonse's shame; it did not affect his metamorphosis. This disparity between Bisclavret and Alphonse could have been due to close adherence to the medieval idea that clothes made someone human, but showing the extent of it in two different ways. One is physical transformation, while the other symbolises a reintroduction into society. Clothing did not play a large part in other Welsh stories that contained metamorphosis, which could indicate why Gorlagon was unaffected by clothing. Clothing played a role in Melion's transformation. For Melion to transform into a werewolf, he needed a magic stone but in order to return to human form, he needed the second magic stone in his ring and his clothes. Thus, the role of clothing varied possibly due to conscious or unconscious choices made by the authors, influenced by the prominent ideas and literary culture of the time.

In terms of rationality, each of the werewolf case studies showed they were capable of rational thought. The key indicator of this was that each werewolf, even the *faoladh*, all exhibit *voluntas* – whether it be "a will" or "the will". They adhered either to Thomas Aquinas' theory or Peter Abelard's theory. This shows that none of the werewolves could be called irrational in terms of medieval philosophy. They each had the rationality that medieval church thinkers believed was unique to humans.

Each werewolf shows a semblance of their culture in which their stories were written down, in addition to very overt Christian elements. The Viking invasions had a profound impact on Ireland, England and Scotland, which cannot be underestimated, but the extent to which that could be seen in these werewolves studied varied. In the case of the wulver, despite not being a shapeshifter, it bears a striking resemblance to some portrayals of the *úlfheðnar* and it shows a desire to care for the less fortunate. The Shetland Islands have always had a culture that leant closer to the Scandinavian than the Scottish culture, which explains why these traits remained in the wulver. The *faoladh*, despite being independent of the Vikings in Early Irish literature, showed a similar interest in war and had a frenzy in battle that was akin to the frenzy shown by the *úlfheðnar* and had a desire for glory that Vikings were known to have. The werewolves of Ossory may have been of a more benign, Christian spirit, but the fact that their metamorphosis was facilitated through a magical wolf

coat, indicates the use of a universal trait also found in Scandinavia.[442] Hence, there were Christian undertones blended with remnants of Scandinavian influence.

Given that neighbouring cultures often have semblances between them, cultural products such as werewolves might have similarities too. The invasions of England into Ireland, Norman invasion into England in 1066, Norman expansions into other territories such as Sicily[443] facilitated increased communication between the cultures, which led to more communication of new ideas and new cultural concepts.[444] This, the romantic literary culture of the time and most the adherence of scribes to 'Christian metamorphosis' and Christian philosophy likely had some influence on Alphonse and Bisclavret. *Bisclavret* was meant to bring the Breton *Lais* to a wider audience while possibly praising the Norman-French King Henry II. Alphonse may have been influenced by the 'twelfth century werewolf renaissance' beyond simply the "sympathetic werewolf" motif, but the extent is difficult to say.[445] Alphonse's own transformation was facilitated through his stepmother's witchcraft, not by a magical coat or clothes. By the end of the story, Alphonse learned to forgive his stepmother and put the needs of someone else before his own, thus developing himself further into the medieval image of an ideal noble. William of Malmesbury's man was transformed into a donkey using witchcraft and like Alphonse, the man never lost his human mind (see chapter one). This was likely as a result of being written during the time Ovid's *Metamorphoses* regained popularity, also in England and France, when people viewed change through metamorphosis not as replacement, but as an evolution or development. The Breton-Old French Melion showed Irish influences during a time where there was a growing interest in Ireland on the European continent and the British Isles. There was cultural communication between the Insular Celtic countries, England and Europe, which cannot be ignored in respect to the benevolence seen in the majority of the werewolves studied.

Alphonse, Bisclavret, Melion and Gorlagon's stories also conformed to the romantic literary culture of their time. They all had an undertone of chivalry, knightly codes and proper courtly manners, which reveals the nature of the audience for which they were written or codified. They were members of the nobility, and maintained their nobility as a wolf, showing their background despite savage circumstances. However, unlike Alphonse, all of

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[442] The werewolves of Ossory's physical transformation using a coat also fell in line with motifs seen in Irish myths and legends before, such as in the case of the selkie and the merrow.

[443] The Normans expanded into the territory of Sicily, which is where the story of *Guillaume of Parlene* plays out in. Lampert-Weissig, Lisa, *Medieval Literature and Postcolonial Studies* (Edinburgh 2010) 46-56.

[444] This possibly led to new questions about identity, including what makes a human and what makes an animal.

[445] Wood, Lucas, 'The Werewolf as Möbius Strip, or Becoming Bisclavret', *The Romantic Review* (Columbia 2011) 11.

these knights did harbour a bit of a dark side as they all had no problem handing out justice in different measures of extremes: Bisclavret tore his wife's nose off, Melion went on a brigandage against the Irish and Gorlagon took revenge on his wife three times quite brutally. The extent to which they could be considered "benevolent" differ according to the modern and medieval perspectives. On the one hand, for modern sensibilities they often went too far, but on the other hand, contemporary audiences would have sided with the werewolves as the audiences would have considered the justice handed out as acceptable and merciful, especially regarding Gorlagon's revenge on his unfaithful wife. The werewolf stories written during and after the twelfth century showed signs of adhering to Joyce Salisbury's concept of 'Christian metamorphosis'. This must have had a profound effect on how these werewolves were perceived by their audience. To summarise, the stories were affected by political and cultural factors.

Now it is time to determine if the "benevolent" werewolf is an Insular Celtic phenomenon, or whether it is an Insular phenomenon as a whole. The answer to this question is that it is an Insular phenomenon as a whole. The majority of the werewolves display "benevolent" behaviour, especially the wulver, werewolves of Ossory, Alphonse and Bisclavret. Melion and Gorlagon are considered "benevolent" in a medieval perspective, despite showing violence that shock a modern audience. It should be noted that their "war" was done with something other in mind than simple cruelty and glory. Their "benevolence" was influenced by their human mind surviving the metamorphosis, retaining rational thought, intelligence and showing loyalty to their king as wolves. What is clear is that the "benevolence" exhibited by the werewolf does not always have to include the realist lupine traits that Curtis Runstedler mentioned in his theory. To reiterate, in this thesis, the "benevolent" werewolf is defined as a werewolf who can conform to societal norms while still in wolf form. From this, the "benevolence" of the werewolf is primarily centred around their humanity, which all save the *faoladh* exhibit, due to retaining their rational minds. While investigating each of these werewolves, there arose a pattern in the "benevolence" they exhibited: control over their animal side and the display of human behaviour. An interesting aspect to the benevolence of these werewolves is that the humanity in them, and their courtly and chivalric behaviour, had to be recognised by the other human characters in the stories and the narrators. Gerald noted the Christian behaviour of the werewolves of Ossory, Bisclavret was recognised and protected by leading advisors and nobles of the court, Melion was advocated for by Arthur and Gwaine, Gorlagon was recognised by his brother, which likely saved him from execution and Alphonse's humanity was recognised by Meliors' father and eventually his own family.

The only ones that do not display benevolence is the *faoladh*, who show semblances of the *garulf*. One warrior-like clan of werewolves with a hankering for glory does not take away the fact that the "benevolent" werewolf motif is found elsewhere. Concluding, all these stories forced people to think about what makes a monster and about the permanence of human identity. According to church doctrine, only God could bring about true metamorphosis, hence why none of them truly lost their wits.

The secondary sources used in this investigation have contributed highly to this analysis, and also upon my own personal perspective. It is unsurprising that the major sources on prevailing cultural attitudes outlined in chapter one, are largely based on faith and have little to do with modern scientific knowledge. Medieval thinkers try to reconcile their belief in the superiority of humans and our animalistic tendencies, such as kneeling being only a temporary state of debasement. There was a belief that animals do not abide by social conventions, but humans do not always abide by them either. We follow the ones that suit us, and then adapt the ones that do not suit us. The idea that animal violence is irrational and human violence is rational, is not always correct. The theories of the medieval thinkers and laws were entwined with faith and church doctrine, which may have resulted in a level of bias, which needs to be kept in mind. In a medieval context, the bias is largely to be accepted as a fact of the time. As for Thomas Williams' chapter on *voluntas*, which was paramount to this investigation, it gave the exact amount of information needed for this investigation, that being the perception of early church fathers and medieval thinkers on *voluntas*, and it came from a reliable source. Jessie Saxby's book is a good source, but as one of two sources extant on the wulver, it is difficult to gauge if there are other plausible interpretations of the wulver. Elliot O'Donnell provides an example of an angered wulver, but once more is the only source and is largely based on one person's account of an event. This affected the investigation into the wulver as these two sources were the only reliable ones extant.

Jeanne-Marie Boivin on one hand gives interesting insights but then on the other hand, simply reduces the metamorphosis of werewolves to a simple trick, which was not the case, especially in the Irish context. Despite this, the different perspectives provided by Boivin allowed for debate and provided modern adherence to Augustine's theory of metamorphosis as a "phantasm", which in itself was interesting (see chapter one). Philippe Ménard made observations that were too curt at times and did not take other factors into consideration, which ensured the need for counter arguments and evidence to make the argument or subject more well-rounded. On the matter of identity, Caroline Walker Bynum provides a trustworthy source but am not so sure if metamorphosis means a "loss" of identity as the werewolves do

regain their human identity or never lost it for themselves as identity is personal. Perhaps "change" would be a better word, which would be interesting to research further. Leslie Sconduto's book provided detailed and relevant evidence, especially in the investigation of the individual werewolf cases. Gerald of Wales provides a more than decent source on a case of benevolent werewolves, but the work does have underlying political elements that need to be considered. It is difficult to say just how the political context of the werewolves of Ossory affected this investigation. Robert Bartlett, one of his biographers, also notes that Gerald's notorious dislike for the Irish is also a factor that needed to be taken into account carefully, which hopefully has been done. The reliability and the bias of Gerald admittedly ensured that a degree of caution was taken while studying his *Topography*. The translations of the werewolf stories likely affected this investigation the most. The *Lais de Bisclavret* and *Melion* show cultural concepts of the time, but are both written by anonymous authors or authors whose identities are unknown. This likely affected the analysis at it is difficult to precisely gauge the origin and the purpose of the two *Lais*. *Arthur et Gorlagon* has the issue of not having a Welsh version extant, a non-debated claim that it is a Cymro-Latin story, and that the Latin version of *Arthur et Gorlagon* survives in one manuscript. This forced the choice between accepting the claim that it is a Cymro-Latin story or looking at the story as a Latin one influenced by Welsh cultural elements. Admittedly, it must have had some effects on this analysis. Finally, *Guillaume de Palerne* was originally Old French and the Middle English translation does have 216 lines missing from it, which forced both the Old French and the Middle English versions to be investigated.

Despite the interesting academic work that has been done to further the historical understanding of the relationship between these werewolves, both to each other and their cultures, this type of investigation can still be pushed further. The benevolence, both from a modern and medieval perspective, is present in the majority of the werewolves but that does not mean it is only Insular as it could appear in other medieval werewolves not covered in this investigation. There is still the *loup-garou*, the *varulv,* the Dutch and Flemish werewolves in addition to other courtly werewolves such as Marrok and Biclarel. Indeed, modern werewolves such as Remus Lupin, Fenrir Greyback, the werewolves in the *Cry of the Icemark* series and werewolves featured in television series and Gothic horror movies, as cultural products, would also make this investigation so much more revelatory in seeing how far the "benevolent" werewolf can be seen in those examples. It could potentially reveal the true extent of the werewolf's cultural evolution. The *Epic of Gilgamesh* and other pre-Christian werewolf stories could contribute to giving a very extensive overview of when the

"benevolent" werewolf first emerged. The works of Clemence Housman, Leonard R.N. Ashley, Matthew Beresford, William de Blécourt, Chantal Bourgault du Coudray and others would contribute massively to such an investigation. Thus, the next step in the study of werewolves would be the branching of werewolves from the Ancient, the Medieval and the modern era by scholars of the history of werewolves. If more effective communications with one another would be established, a broad and detailed vision of the werewolves, their differences and similarities and their relationships to one another could be extrapolated and reveal just how similar or different these cultural products really are. Hence, a more detailed picture of the werewolf across history and cultures could be provided.

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